

Workshop Title

Envisioning Tomorrow's University: A Transdisciplinary Dialogue on the Future of Education

Mandi, Himachal Pradesh | 6 September 2025 | Sardar Patel University

1. Overview (Short Intro Block)

On 6 Sep 2025 at Sardar Patel University, Mandi, the National Visioning Conference brought together senior academics, policymakers, incubator leads, industry partners and student representatives to co-create a roadmap for a transdisciplinary, future-facing Indian university. It produced concrete commitments — a Collective Declaration, the MIT-WPU National Academic Innovation Network Hub, pilots and policy briefs — to feed WPU Goa's national co-creation process through pilot→evaluate→scale place-based labs.

2. Key Highlights

- Co-creation of a Collective Declaration on the Future of Higher Education to capture shared principles and next steps.
- Agreement to establish the MIT-WPU National Academic Innovation Network Hub to coordinate collaborative initiatives and exchanges.
- Commitment to pilot transdisciplinary curricula and place-based labs (examples: apple-chips micro-enterprise; ergonomic load-carriage design).
- Strong emphasis on embedding AI literacy, ethics, and human judgement across curricula.
- Actionable governance reforms suggested (leadership fellowships, procurement/finance training, faculty incentive realignment).

3. Objectives of the Workshop

- Draft and co-create a Collective Declaration on the Future of Higher Education.
- Establish the MIT-WPU National Academic Innovation Network Hub.
- Launch collaborative initiatives, academic exchanges and joint research proposals.
- Prepare policy briefs and institutional roadmaps for curriculum reform, AI integration, sustainability and global alignment.
- Strengthen academic ties between India and international partners and operationalize pilot → evaluate → scale cycles.

4. Participants & Institutions

- Dr. Neeraj Mahindroo — Dean, SoHST (Convenor).
- Senior Faculty & Support: Dr. Bharat Kale (Dean R&D), Dr. Ashwin Kuchekar (Associate Dean SoHST), Mr. Rajendra Pachange (EA to Dean — Online Support).

Theme 1: Evolving Higher Education Ecosystem and Stakeholder Expectations

1. Prof. Lalit Awasthi, Vice Chancellor, School of Computer Science and Engineering, Sardar Patel University, Mandi (H.P.) Vallabh Government College Campus, Paddal, Kartarpur, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh 175001 – (Chairman)
2. Prof. Satinder Sharma, Professor, School of Computing & Electrical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (H.P.), Parashar Road, Tehsil Sadar, Near Kataula, Kamand, Himachal Pradesh 175075
3. Prof. Rajendra Ray, School of Basic Sciences Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (H.P.) Parashar Road, Tehsil Sadar, Near Kataula, Kamand, Himachal Pradesh 175075
4. Er. Kapil Vaidya, Managing Director, Shyam Silk Udyog Mandi, Himachal Pradesh

Theme 2: Transdisciplinary Curriculum Development and Pedagogy

5. Dr. Pamita Awasthi, Associate Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, National Institute of Technology, Hamirpur (HP) (Chairman)
6. Dr. Pavan Kumar Chand, Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Sardar Patel University, Mandi (H.P.)
7. Dr. Vir Vikram Singh, Medical Officer and Founder Himachal Pradesh Student Parliament, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh
8. Avani Solanki, Marketing Content Associate, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh
9. Brigadier Naveen Kumar Goel, Officer in the Indian Army, Defense Forces, Chandigarh Defense Forces, Chandigarh

Theme 3: Institutional Governance for Transdisciplinary Education

10. Prof. Venkata Krishnan, Professor, School of Chemical Sciences Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (H.P.) Parashar Road, Tehsil Sadar, Near Kataula, Kamand, Himachal Pradesh 175075 (Chairman)
11. Dr. Surya Prakash Upadhyay, Chairperson, School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (H.P.), Parashar Road, Tehsil Sadar, Near Kataula, Kamand, Himachal Pradesh 175075
12. Dr. Rakesh Kumar Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Sardar Patel University, Mandi (H.P.), Vallabh Government College Campus, Paddal, Kartarpur, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh 175001
13. Mr. Ankit Sood, Co-founder, Ecotourism, Sunshine Himalayan Group, Mandi (H.P.)

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14. Dr. Chetan Chauhan, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, Sardar Patel University, Mandi (H.P.) Vallabh Government College Campus, Paddal, Kartarpur, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh 175001

Theme 4: Roadmap for a Global Indian University

15. Dr. Venkatesh Chembrolu, Dean Academics, IKSMHA Center, Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (H.P.), Parashar Road, Tehsil Sadar, Near Kataula, Kamand, Himachal Pradesh 175075 (Chairman)
16. Prof. Rajesh Kumar Sharma, Dean – SW, Department of Physics, Sardar Patel University, Mandi (H.P.) Vallabh Government College Campus, Paddal, Kartarpur, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh 175001
17. Dr. Dipankar Deb, Director Incubation, Center for AI and Robotic, Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (H.P.) Parashar Road, Tehsil Sadar, Near Kataula, Kamand, Himachal Pradesh 175075
18. Anshul Malhotra, Nari Shakti Award in 2022 for her contributions to handicrafts, Mandi (H.P.)
19. Dr. Jagdeep Verma, Assistant Professor, Department of Botany, Sardar Patel University, Mandi (H.P.) Vallabh Government College Campus, Paddal, Kartarpur, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh 175001

5. Thematic Insights

4 Themes – Standard Across Website

Theme 1: Evolving Higher Education Ecosystem & Stakeholder Expectations

Summary

- Curricula are misaligned with local and industry needs; participants urged shifting evaluation from placement-only metrics to measures of job-creation and community impact.
- Universities should embed community-facing, credit-bearing projects that connect student work to local value chains and SMEs.
- Employers seek graduates with applied experience, teamwork, and entrepreneurship skills.
- Industry–craft partnerships (e.g., textiles, handicrafts) were recommended — mandatory product projects, artisan mentorship, and market linkages.
- Conference examples (an apple-chips micro-enterprise and an ergonomic load-carriage design) showed student teams can produce low-cost, high-impact local innovations that also anchor learning.

Theme 2: Transdisciplinary Curriculum Development & Pedagogy

- Emphasis on **problem-led, interdisciplinary teaching** with mixed student teams across engineering, health, humanities and design.
- **Project-based, continuous assessment** supported by simulations and short, intensive cross-listed modules.
- **Domain-specific AI literacy** combined with ethics and critical judgement; focus on sensible, need-based AI use.
- **Faculty development and modular learning** needed to scale transdisciplinary programmes.
- **Pilot models** (e.g., AI–medical collaborative seminars) demonstrated effective domain integration with human oversight in assessment and deployment.

Theme 3: Institutional Governance for Transdisciplinary Education

- Key barriers to transdisciplinary work include governance gaps, rigid procurement and finance systems, and misaligned incentives.
- Participants recommended aligning faculty workload and evaluation with community-engaged scholarship.
- Cross-functional governance boards were proposed to guide capital purchases and partnerships.
- Leadership development (mandatory fellowships) and procurement/finance training for decision-makers can reduce poor investment decisions.
- Establishing dedicated transdisciplinary centres and translational labs, supported by strong monitoring and risk-management frameworks, will help convert research into community impact.

Theme 4: Roadmap for a Global Indian University

1. A phased roadmap was suggested: **pilot (3–12 months) → evaluate (6–12 months) → scale (12–36 months)**.
2. Funding sources include **seed grants, CSR, government schemes, and international partnerships**.
3. Priority areas include **place-based labs** connecting artisans, farmers, and SMEs with academic projects to build evidence for accreditation and adoption.
4. Institutions should mainstream **Indian Knowledge Systems, wellbeing, ethics, and flexible choice-based curricula** as India's distinct global strength.
5. **Self-sustaining incubation models** (equity, exits) aligned with **NISP 2019 and NEP 2020** were recommended to strengthen campus entrepreneurial ecosystems.

6. Key Takeaways

- Translate conference dialogue into a Collective Declaration and concrete pilots with named owners and KPIs.
- Prioritise governance and faculty incentives—leadership training and procurement/finance reforms are prerequisites for transdisciplinary change.

- Embed AI literacy and IKS into modular curricula, and use place-based labs to demonstrate measurable local impact before scaling.

7. Photo Gallery (Optional)



Felicitation of Prof. Lalit Awasthi, Vice Chancellor, School of Computer Science and Engineering, Sardar Patel University, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh



**Opening comments by Dr. Neeraj Mahindroo with the experts at Sardar Patel University,
Mandi, Himachal Pradesh**



Group Photograph of Participants – Collective photo of participating vice chancellors, deans, faculty, and industry representatives at Sardar Patel University, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh