

October 10, 2006  
Soumyaa Souvik Hati  
General Secretary, BECSU

Dear Soumyaa:

Thanks for inviting us to attend the convention at the Institute hall to discuss the conversion of BESU to IEST (an INI) on October 12, 2006. As we are living far away from the campus, we will not be able to join you at this meeting physically. However, your efforts will be in our thoughts.

You are probably aware that our Global Alumni Association and BESU Faculty Association made a joint appeal to the WB CM requesting him to agree to the MHRD proposal for converting BESU to an IEST. We noted in our appeal the benefits of such conversion to the State of WB. You may also have read that Andhra Pradesh CM have decided to accept a similar MHRD proposal for converting two of its best state engineering schools to IESTs, which comes as no surprise.

Just after independence, both BEC and Calcutta Medical College were selected for conversion to IIT and AIIMS, respectively, but the ruling WB Govt of that time did not accept that proposal, unfortunately. After 50 years, now we all know how the IITs and AIIMS have prospered and received world-wide recognition. This has been possible by i) selecting students on a national basis and ii) receiving large scale funding from the central Govt – almost 5 to 8 folds higher than the support usually received from the State Govt - which allowed these institutions to build far superior and state of the art infrastructure and recruit highly qualified research oriented faculty by offering a much higher salary package. Although there is concern about the chances of local students getting admitted in an INI, we must not forget that in a globalized world, they have to compete at least nationally, if not globally. This is a prerequisite for future growth, success and well being of the institution and the students. An INI (funded by the Govt of India) with better infrastructure and faculty will allow the local students to get proper training to compete with others around the globe.

We are sure that our WB CM, Mr. Bhattacharya, who has been tireless in his efforts to attract industries to West Bengal, will not miss this opportunity to get another technical INI with a strong mission for research and innovation, since the existence of an INI will make it easy for him to convince the businesses to move/start their operations in WB. This will undoubtedly create well paid jobs for our graduates.

We know that a group of alumni together with the faculty have been driving the conversion effort for the last 3+ years. It is very exciting to see that the students now have joined in this initiative and have arranged to gather all stakeholders of BESU under one roof to get their views on this issue. The students are the most important stake holders and they are to benefit the most from such conversion. The research and innovation mandate in an INI will create new infrastructure that will be available to students both at the undergraduate and post graduate levels. The student experience through student engagement will be extremely satisfying. Industries will be linked with the institution even more than before, which will allow the faculty members to bring challenging projects into the class rooms, and this will provide the students with necessary experience to be successful in the job market after graduation or go for higher studies. It is not a coincidence that the industry representatives have also agreed to join in the discussion as they have a

stake in finding out the commitment of the WB Govt in ensuring the supply of top quality technical personnel within the state, necessary for expanding or relocating their businesses in WB. We are certain, and the industries will concur, that this conversion will play a significant role in their final decision of relocating in WB.

As our chapter is supporting it for the past 3+ years, we now strongly support IEST, Shibpur and wish that your efforts are successful in building a consensus on this issue.

Sincerely,

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