

**Convocation Speech of
Prof. Bakul H. Dholakia, Director, IIMA
42nd Convocation – Saturday, March 31, 2007**

Hon'ble Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram, the Chief Guest of our 42nd Convocation, Dr. Vijaypat Singhania, Chairman of our Board of Governors, Members of the IIMA Society, the distinguished invitees, my colleagues, the proud parents of graduating students and the graduating class of 2007.

This is a memorable convocation for all of us at IIMA as we have had the pleasure of listening to our Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri P.Chidambaram. Sir, your thought provoking convocation address has inspired our faculty and the graduating class. We are all grateful to you for accepting our invitation to be the Chief Guest of this convocation and spend this evening in our midst despite your extremely busy schedule.

Today, IIMA is widely recognised as a top ranking management school not only in India but the whole of Asia. During the last four years, several external rating agencies have conducted independent

surveys of B-Schools. All of them have rated IIM Ahmedabad as the best business school in India. Leading international rating agencies such as EIU, Asia Inc and Asiaweek have ranked IIM Ahmedabad among the top three B-Schools in the Asia-Pacific region.

Our Alumni occupy key positions in Top organizations in India and abroad. A large number of IIMA Alumni have distinguished themselves as outstanding business leaders. While we are proud of our achievements, our aspirations are much higher. Our vision is to emerge as a top ranking management school in the world and our aim is to achieve global recognition as a leading player in the field of management education. We want to contribute to the evolution of Brand India in the global market for management education.

By now, it is well established that IIMA operates in the premium segment of the recruitment market and it has already emerged as the first choice of both domestic and foreign recruiters. The outstanding success of this year's placements has once again reaffirmed IIMA's position among the world's top ranking business schools, with 28% of the batch being placed overseas. The average salary for the domestic placements increased by 40%. The last three years

witnessed a growing preference among our students for entrepreneurship and this year as many as 11 students opted out of placements to set up their own business and some of them actually rejected highly lucrative job offers. We are confident that during the years to come, this number will grow.

This year we launched a unique one year Post Graduate Programme for Executives and today 60 bright executives of the pioneering batch have graduated. Their profile has been truly world class and their placements have been outstanding. All of us are excited about the highly successful launch of PGPX and we are confident that over the next few years, this programme would contribute significantly towards enhancing IIMA Brand in the global market.

IIMA has been making a significant contribution to management research in a wide range of areas which are relevant to practitioners and policy makers. The thrust of our research and training activities extends to the areas of concern for the society at large. Several initiatives were taken in this direction during the academic year 2006-07.

Ravi Matthai Centre for Educational Innovations conducted specially designed programmes for the Principals of CBSE Schools and also participated in the review of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship launched the fifth round of a unique national search cum competition called Anveshan. During the year the first incubatee exited from the Centre with successful commercialization of his product, while another incubatee succeeded in obtaining venture capital funding of Rs.3 crores.

The Centre for e-Governance completed two major studies on the Impact of ICT applications in Public Sector and impact Assessment Study of E-Governance projects in India. The Public Systems Group carried out significant research work in the fields of Health Systems Management, Energy & Environment, Infrastructure Management, and Urban Management.

The recently created Centre for Management of Health Services entered into 15 new research collaborations with North American, European and Asian Institutions. It also conducted specially designed programmes on Data Analysis for monitoring Health Programmes and Managerial Challenges for HIV/AIDS programmes.

I am happy to inform you that the Government of India appointed one of our faculty colleagues, Prof. Ravindra H. Dholakia as an Expert Member on the Sixth Central Pay Commission. This is for the first time that a faculty member from the IIMs has been appointed on a Central Pay Commission.

IIMA is a Founder Member of the Association of Asia Pacific Business Schools and this year the Institute hosted the 2nd Annual Conference of the Association and the theme of the Conference was "New Directions in Asia Pacific Management Education". Deans and Directors of around 60 Business Schools in the Asia Pacific Region attended the Conference and many of them were full of praise for what they termed as truly world class facilities at the recently developed New Campus of the Institute.

The PGPs organised Confluence, the annual international business school meet of IIM Ahmedabad in November 2006. Around 90 foreign participants from 20 international business schools and around 900 participants from 60 Indian schools attended Confluence 2006. The central theme of this year's Confluence was "The India

Phenomenon". The event got unprecedented response and coverage in national and international media. The Institute also organised another B-school Meet titled Amaethon 2007 with sole focus on Agri-Business & Rural Management and it also received an overwhelming response.

During the year, the Institute took several initiatives to establish international collaborations and strengthen its global linkages. A comprehensive strategic partnership agreement was signed in January 2007 between Duke CE and IIMA to deliver customised corporate education programmes in Asia. The Institute also entered into collaboration with Columbia University for International Immersion and Student Exchange programme. During the year, the Institute signed six new agreements with American and European Business Schools for International Student Exchange Programme, taking the number of foreign partner institutions to 48. During the year the Institute conducted two executive development programmes in Egypt for senior executives in Egypt and neighbouring countries. During the year, the Institute also launched short duration programmes in Muscat.

In December 2006, the Board had approved the proposal to initiate the process of EQUIS Accreditation for IIMA. I am happy to inform you that EQUIS Committee for European Foundation for Management Development has voted unanimously in its meeting held in February 2007 to declare IIMA eligible for entering the EQUIS Accreditation process. While the EQUIS Accreditation process is expected to take around 18 to 24 months and would involve a large scale intensive effort by the Institute faculty and other stakeholders, our success in getting EQUIS Accreditation will surely pave the way for enhanced global branding of the Institute.

I am happy to inform you that during the year 2006, Economist Intelligence Unit rated IIMA as one of the top 12 institutions in the world for excellence in Executive Education programmes. IIMA is the only Institution from the whole of Asia to get this recognition. This year, the Institute also received the Skoch Challenger Award for Academic Excellence.

Over the last four years, we have implemented a major expansion programme by increasing the intake in the PGP and FPM and launching PGPX. Tomorrow, we will be launching a unique One year

Post Graduate Programme in Public Management and Policy. As a result, the total student strength on IIMA campus including PGP, PGP-ABM, FPM, PGPX and PGP-PMP will reach the level of 800 by June 2007. In addition to this, the Institute launched a specially designed 6-month Certificate course in Business Management for the Officers of Indian Armed Forces in October 2006. This programme received overwhelming response and in view of the outstanding success of the first programme, we plan to offer two such programmes in the year 2007.

It is the endeavour of the Institute to ensure that no student be denied opportunity to pursue Post Graduate Programme at IIMA for want of adequate financial resources. To serve this purpose, the Institute implemented an enlarged and enhanced Need Based Scholarship Scheme during the year, under which 70 students were given Need Based Scholarships amounting to Rs.48 lakhs.

We have been able to achieve all this only through the sustained and dedicated efforts of our distinguished faculty and highly committed administrative support staff and I am confident that with their

collective effort and team work we will achieve our mission during the years to come.

Before I conclude, I would like to say a few words to the graduating class of 2007. I congratulate you on successfully completing the highly demanding programme of IIMA. As you leave us this evening, we wish each one of you brilliant success and sustained happiness in whatever you choose to do while climbing the ladder of progress in your career. Let me also add that we are delighted to welcome you as our Alumni. You are going to be our best ambassadors. Remember, no world-class institution has been able to achieve its glory without an effective contribution from its alumni. I am sure you would like to come back to your alma mater to make your own contribution to the fulfillment of its vision and future plans.

God Bless you. Thank you.