

History of the Alumni Education Center and the Formation of the Gandhi Medical College Global Alliance

The idea of creating something special, with an enduring legacy for our alma mater (“nourishing mother”), was conceived by Ravinder Surakanti, a former President of GMC student union, now a practicing internist in Crawfordsville, IN, USA. The seed for this idea was sowed in the mind of Ravinder Surakanti, even as the preparations for Gandhi Medical College Golden Jubilee Celebrations had started. Following this, the evolution of Gandhi Medical College Global Alliance (GMCGA), and the building of the Alumni Education Center (AEC) became intertwined with planning for the Golden Jubilee Celebrations. Ravinder Surakanti was made the Chair of a Committee to prepare for this event of Golden Jubilee by the then President of the Osmania University Alumni Association (OUMA), Jagan Ailnani.



In June 2002, Ravinder Surakanti presented a concept plan for the Alumni Education Center (AEC) during an AAPI meeting in San Antonio, TX. Two months later, this concept was again discussed at a wedding gathering in Cleveland, OH. During that briefing, Ravinder sought volunteers and drafted Sudhaker Rao to head an ad hoc committee to study the feasibility of such a project. Sudhaker Rao requested Vithal Kusuma to serve as its co-chair, to which the latter kindly agreed. An ad hoc committee was formed with approximately 20-25 Gandhi Medical College (GMC) alumni.

The committee consisted of the following members: Narsingam Gatla, Govind Rao, Vithal Kusuma, Babu Ramdev, Koppolu Sarma, and Sudhakar Rao. Advisors: Raja Reddy, Gopal Kishan, Vidyasagar Dharmapuri, and Ravinder Surakanti.

As a result of discussions, it was decided to draft a letter to the then CEO of Government of Andhra Pradesh and Honorable Chief Minister, Nara Chandra Babu Naidu. This letter was to request allocation of land at the GMC’s new campus for healthcare-related and medical college purposes, and to ask for funds for restoration of an original plan for the hospital that included construction of 9 floors. Sudhakar Rao, as a member of the ad hoc committee, was given the task of drafting this letter, which was to be forwarded to the OUMA for further action and proper presentation to the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Koppolu Sarma also called attention to the fact that there was no cancer institute in the vicinity of Secunderabad and suggested a radiation oncology unit be included in the teaching complex. Subsequently, overseas alumni and Gandhi Medical College Alumni Association (GMCAA) members prevailed upon the AP government to allocate 1000 square yards for the construction of the proposed AEC.

During the first six months, this committee worked very hard in collaboration with other volunteer alumni in creating the committee infrastructure, vision and mission statements, and on the concept of building the AEC. It was proposed that the AEC should have an auditorium, lounge area, classrooms for workshops and demonstration sessions, a library, rooms for visiting faculty and alumni, and a heritage hall to preserve the history of Gandhi Medical College & Hospital. It was estimated that the AEC would cost around \$250,000 for a 3-story building: on the first floor, an auditorium and a lounge; on the second floor, a library and workshop rooms; and on the third floor, faculty rooms with full facilities.

It was anticipated that with a strength of about 1500-2000 GMC alums in the USA and about 500-750 around the globe (UK, Australia, Middle East, the Caribbean etc.), we could easily raise \$250,000 if each alumnus contributes a one-time lifetime membership donation of just \$1000. Additionally, it was envisioned that this could provide another \$1-2 million for a corpus fund, which would support the AEC in perpetuity. Raising \$250,000 for AEC seemed achievable.

However, it became apparent early on that only a few alumni were enthusiastic about contributing \$1000. It was then decided that each ad hoc committee member would donate \$2000, which became the seed

money to begin the fund raising activity.

In June 2002, R.D. Kumar and Sarala Rao were selected as fund raising co-chairs. Between June and October of 2002, over 2000 appeal letters were mailed to all the GMC alums in the U.S. and around the globe for whom contact information was available. Despite ambitious expectations based on feasibility study estimates, the response was rather anemic and caused concern. As a result, it was decided that an individual approach to the GMC alums might be more rewarding. In addition, naming opportunities based on contribution amounts were proposed and adopted as follows:

Auditorium:	\$100,000	(Sponsored by Manchikanti Laxmaiah)
Heritage Hall:	\$150,000	
Class Rooms:	\$50,000	
Faculty Rooms:	\$25,000	(Sponsors: Mohan Reddy, Govind Rao & Manchikanti)

Further, contribution categories as below were created:

Honorary Benefactor	\$100,000 & above	Distinguished Benefactor:	\$25,000 & above
Diamond Sponsor	\$20,000 to \$24,999	Emerald Sponsor	\$15,000 to \$19,999
Platinum Sponsor	\$10,000 to \$14,999	Golden Sponsor	\$5,000 to \$9,999
Silver Sponsor	\$2,000 to \$4,999	Lifetime Membership	\$1000 to \$1,999

Additionally, some fund raising events in key cities in the United States were planned to bring awareness of the Golden Jubilee celebrations to our alumni. The first such meeting was hosted by Prem Rupani in 2004 in Chicago and \$70,000-\$100,000 were raised by the class of 1972 and his close friends. Individual solicitations were made by Ravinder from his circle of friends, who came up with large donations that included the Manchikanti family donation of more than \$125,000. Following that, there was an outpour of contributions from people like Mohan Reddy, who initially donated \$2000, but asked if we needed more and gave another \$5000, and finally contributed a total of \$25,000.

The next fund raising activity occurred in New Jersey hosted by Santosh Cheela. Several alumni from New York and New Jersey area gathered and raised funds in the region of about \$50,000. With these initial fund-raising efforts and the ad hoc committee members contributing approximately \$100,000, there were enough funds to initiate the construction of the AEC. However, it was soon realized that the earlier cost estimates were unrealistic and could reach more than \$500,000.

In September 2002, Sudhakar Rao visited India and met with Raja Reddy, Yadaiah Goud, and Chandra Sekhar, who were GMCAA officers at the time, to discuss plans for the Golden Jubilee Celebrations and creation of the AEC. This was followed by Ravinder Surakanti's visit to Hyderabad in March 2003.

After a year of deliberations, it was decided to change the status of the ad hoc committee to a standing committee of the OUMA at the request of the then OUMA President, Ravinder Surakanti. R.D. Kumar was appointed as the Chairman of the Standing Committee with Sudhakar Rao as secretary, K.P. Sarma as treasurer and a few board members.

As we moved closer to the Golden Jubilee event, preparations were made to lay the foundation for the AEC and begin construction. These earlier details are outlined in an article by Sudhakar Rao in the Golden Jubilee souvenir (please see reprint of this and of the Silver Jubilee article in this souvenir).

As no practical means of transferring funds to GMCAA existed at the time, discussions were held with Osmania Medical Alumni Charitable Foundation (OMACF), a tax-exempt organization, to help transfer funds. At the time, OMACF was headed by Sanku Rao as its Chair, later by Govind Rao, an alumnus of the GMC. GMCGA is grateful to both for helping us during the initial phases of the project. As part of initial discussions, it was suggested that 15% of the funds raised should be given to OMACF for use in general purpose activities of the OMACF, which included library renovation, and upgrades at the three medical schools and affiliated hospitals. After further deliberations on this point, the rate was reduced to 7%. Of this amount, 2% would come back to GMC as part of distribution to all three medical colleges - then under

the umbrella of the Osmania University. Once GMCGA was formally incorporated in 2005, all subsequent fund-raising and distributions occurred through the GMCGA.

During the first three years of the ad hoc/standing committee, close to three quarters of a million dollars were raised, thanks to efforts of the fund raising committee (headed by Kumar Ramiseti and Sarala Rao, who raised approximately \$500,000) with generous contributions from benefactors like Manchikanti Laxmaiah who donated approximately \$125,000, Mohan Reddy and Govind Rao, who donated over \$25,000, and from many generous platinum, gold and silver sponsors (please see the complete list of donors in this issue).

In 2004, conversations were held for collaboration with the class of 1967 to join forces with the ad hoc committee to help with the creation of the AEC. This effort bore fruit with the help of Gandhiji Yalamanchili, a leading alumnus of the 1967 batch of GMC. The class contributed substantially to AEC construction, improvements in the college library and e-library in the AEC, which is now named after the class.

The architect's initial cost-estimate for a 3-story building was \$250,000. However, as is the case with most such undertakings, cost overruns were significant, partly due to the construction-based requirement of a cellar. Fortunately, this came to be a welcome addition, as it provided extra space in the AEC for exhibits, catering, and small gatherings. When it was finally completed, the total cost of building GMC-AEC reached approximately \$750,000.

After working as an informal group for a few years, Gandhi Medical College Global Alliance (GMCGA) became a formal entity in 2006 after its first official meeting in Chicago in 2006. It was incorporated (with considerable help from its leading alumni including Manchikanti Laxmaiah), in the state of Delaware, USA, as a tax-exempt organization. A reorganization of its structure at that meeting resulted in elimination of the CEO position.

All this time, GMCGA had worked in close collaboration with Gandhi Medical College Alumni Association in construction of the Alumni Education Center, which was successfully completed and inaugurated on January 5, 2006; one year after the Golden Jubilee Celebrations.



Alumni Education Center (AEC)

AEC has been utilized for educational activities by various institutions from its inception.

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION	Total
1977-1982 MBBS Batch - Reunion Event	1
1987 Batch	2
Aarogya sree	9
ACLS course	1
Agoicon - 2008 xvii Annual con. Of the Ass. Of Gyn. Oncologists of India)	1
ANNUAL DAY	6
ANNUAL MEETING	1
Apaidcon	1
Apaidcon 2008 Hyderabad	1
Association of Surgeons of India, AP chapter	1
Association of Surgeons of India, Gandhi Unit	1
Aurora Degree College	1
Bharat Soka Gokkai	3
BLS & ACLS course	1
BLS Course	8
Carestream Health India Pvt. Ltd.	1
Cellar	1
CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS	1
CME	32
Dept. of OBG. & GYN.	1
Dept. of OBG. & GYN. Gandhi Hospital	1
Dermatology Department	1
Directorate Insurance Medical Sciences	1
Endocrine and Growth Centre	1
Endocrinology dept.	1
ENT Department	2
ESI	2
Gandhi Hospital	1
Global Alliance and GMC Alumni Association	3
GMCAA	1
Govt. of AP Insurance Medical Services department	1
Gyn. Department	2
Heabal Medicine	29
Herbal Diet	95
IAP LDSC - FGM	1
Indian Academy Paediatricians	1
Indian Menopause Society	1
Indian society for study of pain	1
Indian society of perinatology and reproductive Biology	1
Lakshni Children Hospital	1
Laparoscopic skills	1
MEETING	1
Mini hall	1
National conference on recent advance in recombinant vaccines and ortho health care products.	1
New Millenium child Trust pedicon 2000, Hyd	2
NNE AP state chapter	1
Orthopaedic Trust department of orthopaedics GMC	1
Paediatric Epilepsy Society Hyderabad	1
Pediatric Ortho Con.	1
Pediatrician Department	3
Perionatology & Repreductive Biology	1
PG classess	37
PG Entrance Exam	12
Post Graduate Clinics	1
Scientific programme	1
Sridevi Maternity Hospital	2
The AP society of Genito Urinary surgeons	1
The Obstetric & Gynaecology society of Hyd.	9
Trichocon Conference AP 2008	1
Triumphant Institute of Management Education	1
Vith Annual con of Indian ITS con.	1
WHO Zonal Task force	1
Grand Total	302