

## First ERASMUS alumni meet in Pondicherry University



The Department of Management Studies (DMS), Pondicherry University has an active Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Koblenz University of Applied Sciences (RheinAhr Campus), Germany since 2020. This has so far supported 21 MBA students to do a semester abroad with an Erasmus scholarship from the European Union, covering all their expenses, including flights. During their exchange semesters in Germany, these students participated in GreenErasmus projects to promote sustainable and environmentally responsible businesses, completed internships in very international teams and even went on study tours to other European countries. Prof Laurence Borgmann, Director of International Affairs at Koblenz University of Applied Sciences, Germany had visited Pondicherry University from January to March 2024 to deliver special lectures on intercultural communication and also to promote 'Study in Germany' opportunities through this MOU.

The 'Returnees' who had benefitted from the Erasmus-funded 'semester abroad' opportunity met in DMS, Pondicherry University on February 24, 2024 for the first-ever Erasmus alumni meet. It turned out to be a

memorable homecoming for the alumni who spoke about how their semester abroad had prepared them for their current professional challenges and how it had opened up unique career opportunities to work with international teams. Learning to be independent, letting go of inhibitions, training to be decisive, adding new skills to their skill set, experiencing the German way of life and traveling around Europe were highlighted as key takeaways and memorable moments from the exchange semesters.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Borgmann urged the alumni not to 'rest on their laurels' but to continue their personal internationalization journey which started during their semester abroad in Germany. He expressed immense satisfaction with this 'privileged partnership' with Pondicherry University that has sent the maximum number of exchange students to his German university till date. He also unveiled a "Roll of honour" board listing the names of all the 42 exchange students during 2019-2024 from DMS, Pondicherry University to international partner universities such as University of East Paris – France, Koblenz University of Applied Sciences – Germany and School of Management Fribourg, Switzerland.

After listening to the heart-warming success stories of the alumni, Prof Kasilingam, Head, Department of Management Studies thanked Prof Borgmann for the opportunity extended to the students and pointed out how their experience at his university has demonstrably enriched their personalities and career prospects. Prof Victor Anandkumar, the MOU Coordinator attributed the success of this Indo-German student exchange to the robust selection process to identify the right candidates who would benefit the most from this fully-funded international opportunity. He also mentioned that in a next step, the German partner university proposes a double-degree undergraduate program in the near future. Internationalization is a key thrust area for DMS, Pondicherry University and this Indo-German partnership has contributed to expanding the global footprint of Pondicherry University and to providing students with a fully-funded semester abroad opportunity in Germany.