

FROM THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Greetings to Calcutta
International School Society
members!

In the pages that follow, you will
find key updates from the
Board as well as the sub-
Committees.

As always, please email us at
pabog@calcuttais.edu.in with
any questions or comments.



Upcoming events

- > **13 August 2024**
Finance Task Force Meeting
- > **16 September 2024**
AGM

BOG

In the past few months, the Board has honed in on critical issues to drive long-term improvement for the School.

A key development was the society approval for the Vision CIS Infrastructure Project, details of which were shared in the last newsletter. The Board is hard at work on taking that forward.

Preserving integrity, monitoring adherence to process, and investigating red flags are key governance issues. After a concern in procurements was raised by the Facilities Committee, a forensic audit was conducted and it concluded that there had been irregularities and mismanagement in CIS projects. The Board took cognizance of the report and after numerous discussions, restructured teams and processes to address the issue. In making its recommendations for change, the Board strongly considered the long-term health of the school's systems especially in light of the upcoming infrastructure development project.

The Board also finalized a direction for the drafting of the Vision Statement for 2040. With the current vision statement expiring in 2025, the School needed to create a new vision to take CIS into its next era. Vision 2040 will be drafted in the background of a major expansion in the school's infrastructure and will be a guiding light for this growth phase for CIS.

Facilities Com

After the audit, and in efforts to create more efficiencies in the systems, the Facilities Committee has restructured the Facilities Team and created the plan for a robust vendor management system. These two changes should reduce non-conformance and promote process integrity.

The Admin team has moved to porta cabin blocks, creating space within the school for additional classrooms, and for work on the infra project.

As discussed in the special facilities newsletter, the summer was busy with repair and maintenance projects, and the new infra project is moving full steam ahead. See detailed project updates below.

◆ SPOTLIGHT ON Vision CIS

Finance Task Force has met and set up the contours of its work: project cash flow management, debt raising and management, and hiring and supervising the project auditor. FTF has recommended and the Board has accepted the creation of a separate bank account for the project funds. FTF will be reviewing proposals from and recommending a Project Auditor to the Board by the end of next week.

Fundraising Team has met three times and has created its scope of work. Donation request letters and a donation structure have been drafted and proposed to the Board for adoption. The Team has developed a creative set of donation acknowledgement platforms, including an *aesthetic donor wall sculpture*. By next week the team will start contacting donors and moving forward on its funding vision.



◆ SPOTLIGHT ON

Vision CIS



The Infra Task Force has had 3 meetings, including one meeting with the principals.

- 1) Created Construction Sub-Team (Planning, Management & Execution, Procurement, and Safety) and Design Sub-Team (Interiors & Green Building).
- 2) Signed the contract with architect, Mr. Subir Basu.
- 3) TS Survey drawings are being prepared by Jarip Karyalaya.
- 4) Mr. Basu will prepare his finalized drawings after inputs from all stakeholders and conduct a final meeting with the principals to finalize plans for sanction.
- 5) Structural tests have been conducted (USPV & Hammer Test) by Dr. Majumdar of Jadavpur University to ascertain the strength of the existing columns.
- 6) Document prep for sanctions filings is underway with members of task force.
- 7) Design team are looking at spatial planning and optimal utilisation of existing spaces. They will also address mismatched aesthetics in the current building. Key areas of guidance: branding guidelines from IOSIGNITE and CIS Vision 2040 will be used to define brand/color/low-maintenance materials for use and creation of an Approved Technical Spares List.
- 9) Pending KMC tax issues are being addressed to get an NOC so that there is no hold up when plans are put in for sanction.
- 10) An approximate monthly projected cash requirement for the infra project is to be planned for the next 3-6 months so that an initial budget can be prepared by the Finance Task Force.

AcadCom

The Academic Committee has spent a significant amount of time working with Mrs. Nayar and her team to assess the introduction of new teaching methods to create a more interdisciplinary approach to teaching. This new project would help students build a more conceptual understanding of subjects, and would enhance the curriculum delivery in the junior school. The project is in a review and pilot phase and the Committee will provide more updates as we progress.

A key appointment was made during the last quarter. An Examination Officer has taken charge of her responsibilities and this shall complement the Student Development Office. The academic committee has also discussed the position of an academic coordinator to work on key activities related to the development of the whole school.

The Committee is also focused on reviewing and enhancing academics in senior school. Working closely with Ms. Servaia, the Committee has started with an audit of predicted grades, with the focus on highlighting any gaps in the system and creating more streamlined ways of recording data. While the audit is ongoing, a tech solution for grade management has been requested, and the Tech team is working to create centralized databases for student transcripts and other key information.

The Academic Committee also takes this opportunity to congratulate all the stellar performers of the graduating A2 and IB2 batches.

TechCom

The Technology Committee has created a map for the redesigned school website and is in the process of identifying developers to carry out the project. The upgraded CIS website will have new functionality for prospective families, students, and society members.

The Committee is also working in creating a student data management system, which will make it easier for teachers, students, and alum to record and access information.

ECAM

The ECAM Committee has finalized and retained an educational Marketing company to oversee its marketing work, including defining its brand image, building the brand, and consolidating activities to promote the brand. This new initiative will particularly be valuable as we undergo key new initiatives over the coming year.



Alumni activities are building up, with a small alumni reunion planned for August 8th as well as main Alumni Day scheduled for January 2025. A new alumni website created by a CIS student has been launched, helping alumni register and link with the school and one another.

ECA Activities have begun for the year with redesigned curricula, new ECA offerings, and new coaches where needed.

HRCOM

These few months, the HR Committee has focused on **performance reviews, department restructuring needs,** implementing the **whistleblower policy,** and the **vision-mission** exercise.

By the end of July, all employees went through the year-end Performance Review. Individual performances were reviewed, and feedback shared, while putting together the annual plan for every employee. The year-end performance review for the principals was also carried out by the Board.

A key policy addition has been the implementation of a Whistleblower policy for employees of CIS. This was put together after considerable deliberation at the Committee level. The implementation of the policy has been intimated to all employees. This is one step towards nurturing an environment of fairness and accountability within the organization.

A considerable effort has gone into preparing the groundwork for embarking on a **Vision 2040** exercise. The Board has selected a world-leading educational consultant to help CIS craft a meaningful, inclusive, vision and mission statement. The output of this exercise will be a new Vision statement along with a 50 page implementation document. The Vision project will require active participation from parents and other stakeholders of the society. **We look forward to your invaluable contribution to this important exercise.**

Over the last few months, the board has also debated the efficacy of the current administration set up. In the existing set up, there is a General Manager who oversees the functioning of the administrative side of the school. This includes, finance, HR, Facilities as the main areas of focus. Based on the internal board discussions, a decision has been made to change the structure where there will now be an Operations Manager and a Company Secretary. These two positions will divide the functions of the administrative department between them.

FinCom

The Finance Committee has begun the process of finalizing new Stat and Internal Auditors for the school. A GST firm has also been hired who will be applying for GST registration on behalf of CIS, and will be retained to keep CIS in compliance going forward.

The Committee has recommended certain changes to the booking of expenses to assist with planning and budgeting. Members are committed to closing gaps and improving the flow of processes for the accounts team and the Management.

The committee is driving the implementation of a vendor management system. This system will streamline procurement and vendor payments, while also ensuring greater integrity in every step of the process.

AGM & Nominations Basic Info

The next AGM is coming up and we wanted to give you some information to consider if you would like to run for election to the Board of Governors for the Calcutta International School Society.

Any society member may run for the Board.

Members are elected for a 2 year term.

Being a Board Member requires a significant time commitment. We have regular Board meetings and sometimes emergency meetings are called to deal with urgent issues. There are 6 committees and each Committee has regular meetings. Being an engaged member means joining at least two committees, attending the meetings, and reviewing and replying to Board and Committee emails. Members are also required to conduct Parent Interviews, this is usually once or twice a month during the peak admissions months.

Being a board member comes with legal responsibilities; each Board Member has a fiduciary duty to the school. The primary responsibility of a CISS board member is the management of the school's assets and affairs and ensuring compliance with all laws and regulations. Members are bound by laws and regulations and are liable for any breach. Board members are not representatives of the society, but are required to act in good faith to promote the objects of the society.

Board Members are bound by the Rules & Regulations of the Society (the Red Book) and govern through the Policy Manual.

Board of Governors

Saroj Kumar Agarwal
Shraddha Baid
Jai Vardhan Kejriwal
Harsh Vardhan Modi
Deven Patodia

Atul Almal
Shannon Jhunhunwala
Anurag Mohta
Karan Samtani
Dr. Dibyendu Ray

*Anirudh Kothari resigned from the Board in July 2024.
We sincerely thank him for his valuable contributions during his tenure as a Board member.

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