

GSIS MU ALPHA THETA CLUB MEET THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ALUMNI

Brendan Porter

Earlier this year an opportunity was presented to the Mu Alpha Theta Group at GSIS to host members of the Indian Institute of Technology Alumni here in Korea (IITAA-K). The idea was to bring the technical and professional expertise among the members and mould them in to simple insights for the high school students of GSIS. As a pilot project they chose the topic "Problem Solving" as the theme for the first session.

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) graduates are known to be the most highly trained, proficient, and intelligent thinkers from India. IIT has become a watchword for technological and business excellence. Its fame has spread far and wide, and today IIT Alumni are in leadership positions around the world.

"The problem that you are facing may not actually be the problem at all."

As a part of their outreach and community based events their president, Mr. Pankaj Agarwal got in touch with teachers at GSIS exploring various options on how they can contribute constructively to the community. The main focus of this open session was on "Problem Solving" which IITians are famous worldwide.

Jalaj Jain started the session bringing in his entrepreneurial and professional experience to the discussion. He highlighted the importance of strategy, experimenting fast and failing fast and deciding on your goals and directing resources in that direction. It was followed up by Vishnu Vinjam who illustrated few problem solving strategies by the STOP-THINK-ACT-REFLECT framework and did a live example on "Math difficulty" with student participation. Here he explained that the problem we may be facing may not actually be the problem at all, it may be a product of a deeper issue. So he helped us "backwards design" the problem to determine the deeper issue.

Next came Subhojit Chakladar who crisply summarized his insights in the form of three stories from his life. He talked about the need to learn from the past, to stand out and make place for oneself in this world, and the idea of comfort zone and transcending its boundaries. One of his stories highlighted the importance of decision making. His team found a problem in the Samsung S3 as it was about to come into production. 300,000 units of this phone were to be produced the following day and he had less than 12 hours to fix it. Does he work all night to fix the problem after working all day on the same problem? Does he sleep and work on the solution the next morning? He slept. After restoring his body and addressing tiredness and fatigue, he was able to focus on the task and fix it in two hours.

"Should I work all night on a solution or should I sleep and solve it in the morning?"

Pankaj Agarwal backed everyone up with his three golden rules for success, to report to oneself, to always stay positive and to know he/she is special. It was followed by a brilliant 7 minute video of World Speaking Champion Dhananjay Hettiarachchi.

This short 45 minute presentation was followed up a very lively Q&A session with questions from both teachers and students. Topics like importance of arts in a STEM based education, design thinking and effort vs intelligence in success were discussed. The question of the day came from Thomas Youn. "Should I follow my passions, or what I am good at?" The IIT graduates all had something to say to this question. Many of them have passions in art and nature and at this stage of their lives, they are able to enjoy their passions by working hard at their jobs. Their work becomes a means to enable their creativity and recreation to thrive.

"Should I follow my passions, or what I am good at?"

This pilot project was a huge success and has provided all parties with a framework for all community based activities in future, banking on the strengths of the members in the group and gearing it to the needs of GSIS.

IIT Alumni have been invited to continue this important relationship with GSIS. Students, parents and teachers are invited to attend the monthly meetings starting in September 2015. Dates and times will be posted on the school's website.

Mu Alpha Theta is an organization whose purpose is to stimulate interest in mathematics by providing public recognition of superior mathematical scholarship and by promoting various mathematical activities. It is co-sponsored by the Mathematical Association of America, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, and the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges. There are now over 2000 chapters in the United States and nineteen foreign countries. Colleges and major universities recognize membership in Mu Alpha Theta as an important part of a student's academic resume. Topics presented during club meetings, participation in our free mathematics competitions, and the interest generated by these activities help members gain a greater understanding and enjoyment of Mathematics.



▲ Alumni of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) spent time with the GSIS Mu Alpha Theta students sharing their insight and knowledge in the area of math and science.

GSIS Mu Alpha Theta Club 학생들과의 만남을 통하여 수학과 과학 분야에 대한 통찰력과 지식을 공유해준 Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) 졸업 동문



Dr. Harlan Lyso, Mr. Pankaj Agarwal and Mr. Brendan Porter at the signing of the GSIS and IIT Alumni partnership.

GSIS와 IIT 동문 간의 파트너십을 체결한 Dr. Harlan Lyso, Mr. Pankaj Agarwal, Mr. Brendan Porter

GSIS will be offering membership to GSIS's chapter of Mu Alpha Theta for the 2015-16 school year to grade 9-12 students who meet entry requirements.

GSIS will also have a Chi Alpha Mu chapter in 2015-16 – Chi Alpha Mu is the National Junior Mathematics club for grade 6-8 students which Mu Alpha Theta students will run as part of their service to the school community.

Please contact Mr. Porter (porterb@gsis.sc.kr) for more details about pending IIT Alumni talks, Mu Alpha Theta or Chi Alpha Mu Mathematics clubs.



▲ The IIT alumni around the world are committed to serving their community, including South Korea.

한국을 포함한 세계 각지에서 지역사회를 돕는 데 최선을 다하고 있는 IIT 동문