

The Millennium Legacy Catalyst: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Very soon, a dedicated link will go live on the BITS Pilani website, enabling each one of us to contribute to the BITS Batch Endowment Fund. This cherished initiative is part of a proud tradition, carried forward every year by the reunion batch—our chance to give back to the institute that gave us so much.

It's not just a fundraiser. It's our *Batch Legacy*, a *BITS Pilani legacy*, and a tradition that has been upheld with pride since the very first graduating batch.

Below are answers to some key questions regarding the Batch of 2000's endowment initiative:

1. Why are we being asked to vote for only one objective, when all the causes seem important? An excellent question. The vision of *The Millennium Legacy Catalyst* is to build a legacy that is focused, powerful, and uniquely associated with the Batch of 2000.

Drawing from extensive discussions with senior alumni from previously successful batches, and through multiple consultations with the Institute, we've learned that a concentrated effort towards a single cause delivers significantly deeper impact. Attempting to support multiple objectives often dilutes the effectiveness of our contributions.

Additionally, from an operational perspective, managing numerous smaller endowments places a heavier administrative burden on the Institute. It becomes challenging to implement and track the outcomes efficiently when funds are scattered across diverse causes.

By uniting around one focused goal, we stand to make a truly *transformational* difference—one that is easier to manage, easier to measure, and easier to celebrate.

2. What is the story behind the proposed poll options? How were they chosen? The shortlisted options are the result of careful, collaborative planning.

They stem from detailed discussions with the Dean of Alumni Relations, Professor Arya, who highlighted the most pressing needs of the Institute. These initial recommendations then went through multiple rounds of refinement, with inputs from past batches, the endowment committee, our core reunion team, and Institute leadership.

What emerged are three high-impact focus areas—each selected for its long-term relevance, alignment with BITS' core values, and potential for meaningful change through our batch's collective support.

3. Can you explain the “Future Women Leaders” Scholarship in more detail? How does it help?

- **What It Is:** A full, four-year, unconditional scholarship that covers the *entire tuition fee* for one deserving female student—from admission all the way through graduation.
- **Why It Matters:** During our time at BITS, the gender ratio stood at a balanced ~40%. Today, in the post-BITSAT era, that number has dropped alarmingly to just around 16%. The Dean emphasized that the primary reason behind this drop is *financial*. With the total 4-year degree cost now at approximately ₹24 lakhs (in stark contrast to the highly subsidized fees at IITs), many academically brilliant young women are forced to turn down BITS, opting instead for more affordable alternatives—or even compromising on discipline choices—purely due to cost.
- **Our Impact:** By funding even one full scholarship, we remove this financial barrier for a meritorious student. The result? A life transformed—and a step toward restoring the gender balance on campus, which in turn strengthens the BITSian ecosystem as a whole. This model has been successfully adopted by previous batches, and the Dean reaffirmed that it remains one of the most impactful and deeply appreciated ways for alumni to contribute.

4. Why are the other two options—the “Entrepreneurship Grant” and the “Community Pillars” Fund—so important?

- **The Entrepreneurship Grant:** BITS has long stood as a beacon of meritocracy and innovation. This option seeks to honor that legacy by supporting students who dream of starting their own ventures while still on campus. The Dean identified this as a high-priority area—ensuring that talented students, regardless of their financial background, have access to seed funding for their ideas.
- This is a direct investment in the entrepreneurial spirit that has always been at the heart of BITS.
- **The Community Pillars Education Fund:** Think back to the mess staff, bhawan workers, and campus support teams—the unsung heroes who made our lives at BITS smoother and more comfortable. This fund gives us the opportunity to give back, by

supporting the *education of their children*. It's a heartfelt, meaningful way to say thank you—and to pay it forward to the BITSian community.

5. Can you explain more about the Faculty Support option? Absolutely. The *Faculty Support* initiative aims to elevate both the academic quality and international reputation of BITS Pilani. It enables the Institute to:

- **Attract and retain top international faculty** by offering competitive support packages.
- **Introduce performance-linked faculty awards** that recognize and reward excellence in teaching and research.
- **Sponsor global visiting faculty programs**, bringing world-class scholars from leading institutions to engage with BITS faculty and students.
- **Establish Chair Professorships**, creating prestigious, long-term academic positions in key disciplines.

In short, this initiative equips BITS to compete on the global stage while significantly enriching the student learning experience.

6. How does this initiative benefit our batch? This is about more than just giving back—it's about building our *legacy*. As the **Millennium Batch**, our identity is distinct. *The Millennium Legacy Catalyst* allows us to:

- **Create something uniquely ours**, permanently linking our batch to a cause we championed together.
- **Stay connected**, as we track the progress of our fund and witness the lives it transforms.
- **Establish a strong, unified voice** for our batch, earning long-lasting recognition within the BITS alumni and broader institutional community.