BITS Pilani launches new model for Multi-Campus Education with BITSConnect 2.0

Largest and first-of-its-kind in India: Project valued at over USD 5 Million
Simultaneously connects 1000+ faculty and students across its campuses
BITS Pilani's Vision 2020: To be among the top, research-driven Universities in Asia by 2020

National, January 9, 2013: Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani, India's premier independent University, along with BITSAA, its global alumni association, today launched a first of its kind multi-million dollar cross-campus technology initiative named BITSConnect 2.0. Pioneering a unique model of multi-campus education in India, the initiative comprises Immersive Telepresence, High-definition Video Conferencing and Live Streaming technologies, that are set to transform the learning experience by connecting all campuses at an unprecedented scale. This University-Alumni initiative was launched simultaneously at Pilani, Goa and Hyderabad campuses, while being connected to Cisco's offices in San Jose and Boston, jointly by Prof. Bijendra Nath Jain, Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani and Raju Reddy, Chairman, BITSAA, in the presence of His Excellency the Governor of Goa, Shri Bharat Vir Wanchoo and Shri J Satyanarayana, Secretary, Department of IT, Government of India.

BITS Pilani aspires to be among the top research-driven institutions in Asia by 2020. On course to realize its vision, BITS Pilani became one of the first Indian universities to set up IP Telephony, Gigabit Ethernet and Wireless accessibility on campus with BITSConnect 1.0 in 2003. With this latest initiative, the University takes a giant leap forward in using technology for education. By bridging the geographical distance across campuses and global knowledge centers, this platform will facilitate collaboration among its faculty, students, industry partners and alumni, for education, research and mentorship.

The Chancellor of BITS Pilani, **Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla,** says, "The launch of BITSConnect 2.0 from its three campuses in India signals a significant step forward that extends the boundaries of technology-enabled learning. The Telepresence system provides avenues for research collaboration and knowledge sharing among BITS' faculty and students, and for face-to-face communication between members of BITS' leadership."

New Era of Technology-powered Education
This semester, BITS Pilani will offer more than 14 specialized electives to 1000s of students across its campuses by professors working from any of its campuses. To collaborate, Faculty and Staff no longer need to travel. Academicians from across the world will be able to collaborate with and mentor research projects in BITS via Immersive Telepresence.

Elaborating on the benefits on campus, **Prof. Bijendra Nath Jain**, Vice-Chancellor, BITS Pilani said, "BITSConnect 2.0 comes at a time when the Institute is on its way to become a top research-led University in Asia. This joint University-Alumni initiative will provide seamless integration of all campuses, create new avenues of research collaboration and knowledge sharing among faculty, students and researchers worldwide. BITSConnect 2.0 will further strengthen industry linkage and enable remote placements with minimal travel costs to prospective employers."

Enhanced University-Alumni Collaboration
BITSConnect 2.0 is a joint initiative of BITS Pilani and BITSAA that was conceived during the BITSAA Global Meet (2011) which witnessed participation from 1200+ BITSians from across 20 countries. Having committed to a January 2014 deadline, they have successfully completed the implementation one year ahead of schedule. Many alumni have contributed significant funds for this project.

Speaking at the occasion, **Mr. Prem Jain**, Chief Mentor, BITSConnect 2.0 and Alumni Advisory Council Member said, "BITSConnect 2.0 is a part of the continuing Bridges to the Future campaign of BITSAA International. The best technical and business minds from the global alumni community have come together to architect this project with BITS Pilani. It continues the tradition of projects like BITSConnect 1.0 and Embryo, where alumni contribute not just by donating funds but significantly with their time and expertise".

This university-alumni initiative connecting the different campuses across geographies is powered by CISCO technologies valued at over USD 5 million.

About Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani
BITS Pilani is a premier independent University in India with 4 campuses at Pilani (1964), Dubai (2000), Goa (2004) and Hyderabad (2008). BITS Pilani employs 700 full time faculty and has 11,000 on-campus & 19,000 off-campus students. BITS has been accredited by NAAC with the most coveted 'A' grade in University accreditation. BITS Pilani has been a pioneer in the Indian higher education landscape with a world-class benchmarked curriculum and the largest industry-university network. The institute is one of the most selective in the world with a <1.5% admit rate. Intake is administered through an online exam called BITSAT. For more information, visit http://www.bits-pilani.ac.in/.

About BITS Pilani Alumni Association (BITSAA)
BITSAA International is the global all-volunteer alumni association for BITS Pilani representing 50,000+ alumni in 90 countries. It engages in charitable and educational activities by creating endowments, granting scholarships, rewarding teaching and research, enhancing the personal & professional lives of its alumni and promoting the general development at all BITS Pilani campuses. In the past decade, some of its key projects have been to network the campuses (BITSConnect), enhance the quality of education (Embryo, OLAB), promote entrepreneurship (NVC, BITS Spark, BITS2Startup), promote rural education and employability (Atmanirbhara), support professional development of alumni & students (BITS2MSPHD, BITS2IAS, BITS2BSCHOOL) & promote Brand-BITS (LPBP, BGM). For more information, visit: www.bitsaa.org.