

Towards a gleaming, brighter future...

Congratulations to the entire SICI community as we celebrate 53 years since the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute opened its doors to scholars and researchers in 1968. We are vintage, wiser and proud of how we have come together to foster bilateral cooperation, promote institutional partnerships, facilitate higher education and research linkages between India and Canada. As Director, I take enormous pride in the fact that SICI continues to demonstrate its value to the intellectual community of both the countries by providing opportunities to learn, grow and expand in building and strengthening academic and cultural relationship through research and dialogue. We promise to continue to fulfil our mandate and do so in a way that is consistent with our values and the trust our community place in us.

Right off the bat, my heartiest congratulations & best wishes to all the awardees who are winners in different categories of programmes & grants for the year 2020-21. As the health pandemic continues its march through our populations, SICI continued to advance its mission of supporting all levels of higher education and research from undergrad to postdoc and from faculty to collaborative research and not just that but also as a special initiative facilitating collaboration on understanding the Pandemic. Even as we are closer to the end of this year, we have a few more opportunities for scholars and member institutions to explore - SICI-Mitacs - Globalink Research Award Programme Thematic Call & Golden Jubilee Conference & Lecture Series Grants (GJCLSG) - 2020-21. Don't miss, apply today!

I was all ears for Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi ji's virtual address at the Invest India 2020 conference held in October. His emphasis on attracting opportunities for investment and enhanced cooperation in Education, Manufacturing or Services and Agriculture are surely the areas that would need activation and acceleration in the upcoming times. Even during the recently held talks between the two Foreign Ministers – Honourable S. Jaishankar of India and Honourable François-Philippe Champagne of Canada – a need to take this cooperation was expressed explicitly, keeping confidence in the further growth of this bilateral relationship.

In any and all movements of acceptance, SICI is already embarking on an extensive planning process to set goals and strategies for the next five years by building on our past achievements and addressing areas of importance. Having already engaged key stakeholders to identify themes and opportunities that resonate with faculty and students and, of course, based on the recent interactions between the two governments, SICI is planning to roll-out special programmes and grants in cluster areas such as Urban Issues/Sustainability, Digital Technologies, Gender Mainstreaming, Indigeneity and Decolonization, One Health, Ocean and Marine life (including fisheries, oil and gas, and clean energy), Artificial Intelligence &

Robotics, Clean Energy, and so on & so forth. Our discussions on these aspects with the allied bodies, industry and governments is progressing superb!

We've spent this past year on panels and roundtables all on a screen! Creating this virtual community wasn't easy. Our ever-widening circle today is a result of our continuous outreach to institutions, governments, researchers, scholars – both in digital and non-digital times. The pandemic cannot be allowed to dim our light and shroud our years of hard work. As we ring in a new decade, and with hope and optimism, I can't wait to join all of you in this exciting and critical work ahead. On behalf of the Executive Council and my colleagues in both the offices, I wish a happy and peaceful new year to all of our partners, member institutions, peers and supporters.

Stay safe & take care!