

B-school gets full-term director

Ex-dean Uttam Kumar Sarkar to helm IIM Calcutta



Uttam Kumar Sarkar
File picture

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Uttam Kumar Sarkar, a professor of management information system group at IIM Calcutta, has been appointed as director of the institute.

The search for a new head was necessitated after Anju Seth, the Joka B-school's first woman director, had resigned in March, almost a year before her term was to end. The institute has since been helmed by Subir Bhattacharya as officiating director.

Srikrishna Kulkarni, the chairperson of the institute's board of governors, announced Sarkar's appointment in a message uploaded on the board's website on Wednesday.

"The board observed that Prof. Sarkar has an outstanding academic record, both as a student and a teacher," the message reads.

Sarkar, 56, had passed the higher secondary exams in 1983 from Ramakrishna Mission Residential College, Narendrapur. He completed BTech, MTech and PhD from the department of computer science and engineering at IIT Kharagpur.

He was dean, new initiatives and external relations, at IIM Calcutta from April 2015 to April 2018.

His research interests include machine learning, social networks analysis, artificial intelligence and discrete optimisation.

Before joining the B-school in 1997, Sarkar had been a lecturer in the department of computer science and engineering at Jadavpur University. He was an assistant professor in the department of management studies at IIT Delhi from 1996 to 1997.

Sarkar joined the Joka institute as professor of management information systems group in 2005.

“I look forward to working on in areas like academic excellence and superior physical and virtual infrastructure,” he told Metro.

A teacher at the IIM said Sarkar should not face any difficulty in running the institute as he had been associated with it for over two decades as a teacher and a dean.

“Anju Seth had to spend a considerable part of her tenure, from August 2018, fighting with board members and teachers. The institute lacked in taking constructive steps and IIM-C is increasingly conceding its space to peers like IIM-Ahmedabad and IIM-Bangalore. Amid the pandemic, when online classes are posing new challenges, we needed a director who could lead,” the teacher said.

On March 10, IIM-C had invited applications for the post of director. The advertisement said the applicant “is expected to provide strong academic leadership”.

The newer challenges, an official said, included introducing facilities like hybrid classes that are becoming popular amid the pandemic.