



Fond Memories of Dear Shah Sir,
We will miss you immensely. You have left a void that is difficult to fill and yet we know that your blessings are with the department, a domain that you built in the college with a dedication and commitment unmatched, with hard work and vision that resonates till date.

Doyens in this field say a life well lived, leaving a legacy to take forward, and we will do so knowing that it is a big responsibility.

You have been a father figure to us, mentoring us and supporting us in all our endeavors. Expressing our gratitude for always being there for us.



The inception of Biochemistry in our college by Fr Jose Changanacherry was in the form of a certificate course, which at the ground level was the hardwork of Shah Sir. He relentlessly pursued with Gujarat University to finally give the course the cognition of a degree course. As a member of Adhoc Board, he took the responsibility of the program, designed the syllabus and introduced new techniques and instruments to meet expectations of the program.

He recognized the importance of experiential learning and thus the department has by far organized several science fests, successfully seen projects to completion, and supported in spirit the research program initiated by Fr Vincent Braganza.

Shah Sir was one of the pillars of the department not just until his retirement but even after his retirement as a member of our Board of Studies, constituted post the college got autonomous status. Every board meeting, he was the first to arrive and the last to leave, giving valuable insights, the necessary push and motivation and more than anything else, a trust that spoke more than words.

Shah Sir graced our second International Conference! As the chief guest, he showed us the path that will take the department and the college to new heights. He has contributed in shaping the careers of thousands of his students, he has touched the lives of all who have worked with him and has gone out of the way to help all.

Dr. S.S. Shah: Memories of 1983 batch

Meena Patel
On behalf of 1983 batch



It was the summer of 1982 and 28 of us were all upbeat about having selected our “major” and “minor” subjects. We were second year BSc students. All of us at different level of consciousness regarding our respective careers and where we would be or like to be two years hence. While selecting Bio-Chemistry as our major, we were entering into an unknown realm academically. We were only the second batch in Gujarat University to have been offered this subject at the graduate level. Our senior batch had all sorts of inputs to pass on. Some hilarious anecdotes about faculty and the subject and some scary stories about tough viva questions. Also, much needed counsel to understand the theory behind the practical exams, which was the bane of their existence.

One fact that remained constant in their narrative was the kindness and gentleness of Dr. S. S. Shah. We

all remember as if it was yesterday, his was the second class on our first day in college. We were already overwhelmed with the first class by the HoD and did not know what to expect from this demure looking professor who would teach us Bio-chemistry (Protein Bio-chemistry & Metabolism to be precise). We all heaved a sigh of relief with his practical but no-nonsense attitude with which he introduced us to the subject. He seemed to read our minds and put to rest our anxiety by opening us up to several career possibilities. He gently took us through the challenges of the subject and what the future could hold once we were out in the real world.

Little did we know that day, that he himself was at the cusp of completing and submitting his PhD thesis. It was our privilege to be present at MS University, Baroda while he defended his thesis, which coincided with one of the many National Seminar hosted by the university. He had very meaningfully organised an exposure trip for us to coincide with his viva. We sat through his viva, a little lost but nevertheless very curious as to the process of how one earns a PhD. He had the foresight to include us in this very important benchmark of his career. Years after we graduated, the enormity and gravity of this event and his achievement dawned upon most of us. It was a humbling as well as an illuminating experience. He had envisioned far and ensured a benchmark for our future growth.

In 1982, the HoD introduced a system of study called the Personalised System of Education (PSE). We were given the option of opting for this system in any of the three subjects. This meant that we were not required to attend class but study on our own under the guidelines provided by the faculty. six of us opted for this system of study. Every week, the respective faculty would give us the syllabus they would cover in class with guidelines and a list of reference books. We were required to study on our own and give a viva every Saturday to ensure that we had indeed studied and understood the topics. We were 19 year olds so we tried our tricks to get away with minimalistic study. Dr. Shah was the first one to understand our tricks and devised ways to beat us at our own



game. He very knowingly and gently rebuked us to keep us on track of academic excellence. He never underestimated our potential and strived to make us realise it. Years later, we were grateful for his firm handling of us. He did not suffer fools gladly when it came to studying. He pushed us firmly and unwaveringly.

We owe him a part of what we are today. We will remember his kind and gentle soul. His demise has robbed us of yet another chance meeting with him. But our memories of him will remain with us always. May he rest in peace and shower his blessings on the student and teaching community. Amen.



Tributes by 1983 batch

Dr. Shah-a short man with a soft and gentle voice and yet could engage and inspire students-a mentor who guided his students to success. He provided the confidence to students with his high standards and settled for nothing less than then the student's best. He touched our hearts in special ways that we can never fully explain with these earthly written words...

- Rammohan Rao, PhD

I remember him as a kind hearted, soft spoken and a teacher who was concerned about student welfare. May his soul rest in peace.

- Abhay Shah

I remember Dr. Shailesh Shah as a teacher true to his profession. He was at once gentle and firm in dealing with students. I have also had the privilege of working with him subsequently as a colleague where I experienced him as an able mentor who played an encouraging role in facilitating my fledgling steps as a teacher in Biochemistry. His fond memories are associated with my formative years both as student and as a faculty. May he rest in peace.

- Tripura Sundari

A person who was sincere to his profession. I can't recall the exact circumstances yet I was left with an impression he could be firm if he wanted to. He was so compassionate he wouldn't hurt a fly. All the hallmarks of a great teacher and a human being.

- Jayram Sashty

Absolutely a no-nonsense type of personality! I remember him as a very gentle, calm and sincere teacher. May he rest in eternal peace.

- Vandana Gajjar, Chhaya Saha

Dr. Shah was a very simple person with lots of patience. He was always cool & very helpful whenever we approached him. May he rest in peace.

- Aashith Modi

Shailesh Shah Sir as we called him, was a quiet unassuming man. He was one of the pillars of the Biochemistry department and played a crucial role not only in its formative years but continued to contribute for a long time even after he formally retired. As an NCC cadet attending the Republic Day Camp, I missed nearly two months of regular classes. I recall how special arrangements were made by the department to allow me to do practicals out of turn as a special case. Dr. Shah would diligently ensure that the blood samples were made available and that I did not suffer due to my absence. I sincerely thank him for the role he played in my education. Incidentally he was the external examiner for my daughter who graduated from the department many years later. My condolences to his family and the Department.

- Kirtida Oza

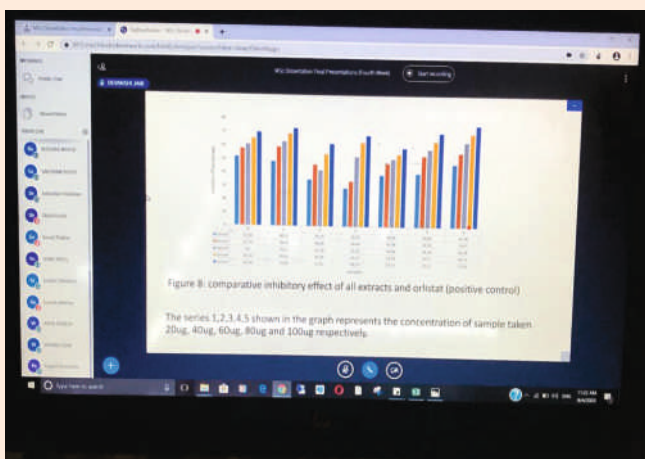
Dr. S. S. Shah was a simple, unassuming, academically inclined scholar who tried very hard to inculcate in us an interest for the newly introduced subject of Biochemistry. In a way he was victorious, as many in the batch went on to pursue a Master's degree and in fact some of us chose Biochemistry for post-graduation.

I remember that he was awarded the PhD degree from the Department of Biochemistry, MS University of Baroda and had faced the final thesis defense when our batch (1980-1983) was in the final year. In fact, in those days many of us were aspiring to join MS University and he was a source of inspiration, but never did he mention the difficulties he faced while at Baroda. Probably he wanted us to aim high and did not want to discourage us from attempting to achieve challenging goals.

We all remember him as a sincere, hardworking and a good teacher. His passing away will have left the Department bereft of a father figure and an expert at the subject. He will be deeply missed, and we offer our heartfelt condolences to the members of the Department and the Shah family.

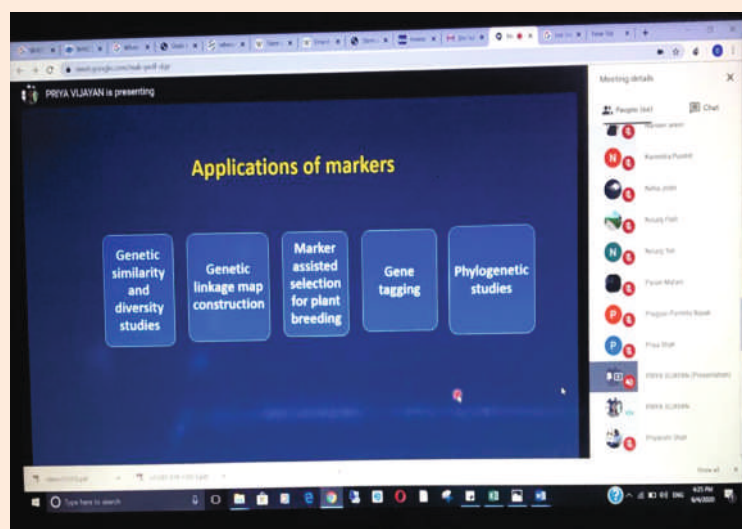
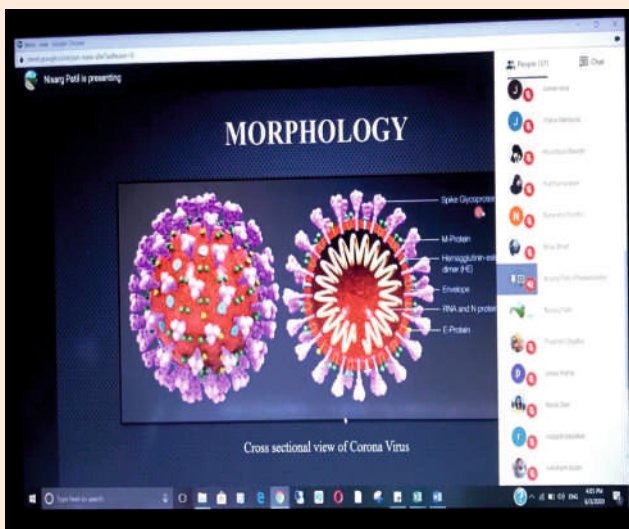
Dr. Ujjwala Kamat (Warawdekar)

Our endeavours during the Lockdown!



What was to get over in a great battle of 21 days, instead COVID-2 threw challenges beyond imagination. The realization dawned that all assessment and teaching will have to be completed online. Thankfully, the college has a learning management system in place, which we used for assessment and evaluation by conducting quizzes, assignments. Teaching online, we understood, is going to be a different ball game altogether. However, I think all our faculty prevailed and took up the challenge. We conducted all project presentations online beginning from last week of April to the end of third week of June. It was a great learning experience equally for both the students and the faculty, with each presentation being a stimulating exploration into the research that the students carried out.

Shital Doshi, one of our faculty was instrumental in enabling the possibility of conducting the presentations through our learning management system, MOODLE. She also went on to being one of the facilitators of a faculty development programme designed especially to get a skill set to teach online using Moodle. Suddenly, we started breathing and dreaming moodle, its different features, and most importantly the assurance that we can continue our teaching – learning activities. A completely new domain, but each member of the department took it upon themselves to complete the faculty development programme, and today we are ready to begin teaching in a virtual classroom, the best in these challenged times. We hope that we are able to share with our students through this platform.



During the same period, one of our MSc students, Nisarg Patil, made possible two webinars under the umbrella of β -helix Colloquia, which saw the participation of many across the state. One webinar helmed by Nisarg himself, who with his extensive reading on Covid, was able to give a very extensive and informative talk on the Drug and Vaccine Development for Covid. This talk had a registration of 243 participants from across the country, and to accommodate all of them we had to conduct it on three consecutive dates. The second talk was by our faculty, Ms. Priya Vijayan, who spoke on ISSR markers and its applications. The talk was very engaging bringing out the nuances of biomarkers and there were more than 100 registrations, however, only the first 100 were accepted as participants.





The department also decided to initiate a programme called β -ACE, which we envisage may help students to ace competitive exams. The β of course standing for Biochemistry-Biotechnology and the ACE standing for Acquire Competitive Edge. What does this programme comprise? Questions that students can answer to know how much they know, how fast they can answer, and more than anything else, lead them to read to find the answer. There may be quizzes, question sets, activities etc to help them ace the competitive exams. Currently, the programme is a fledgling and we hope that it will evolve into a strong capacity building programme. As part of β -ACE, a talk "Net the NET" by Jignesh Prajapati, one of our alumni, who cracked both the UGC-NET as well as GATE exam, was organized especially for post graduate students. The talk gave an insight into what are the necessary steps to ensure a journey of learning for getting through these competitive examinations.

Learning was also in the form of participation by our students and faculty in webinars, trainings and conferences conducted by other institutions. A majestic 160 certificates were submitted to the department by our students who attended different webinars, short term courses on CORSERA etc. Some of our students have enrolled for several courses on the SWAYAM portal. It is heartening to see our students making the most of the available time and the opportunities. These definitely bring in a lot of new perspectives, which in turn orient a thinking mind.

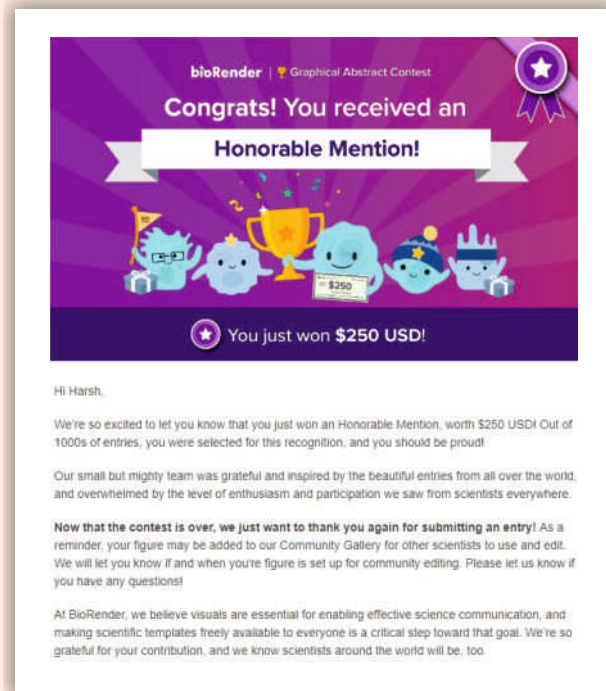
Our faculty members also took part in several such programmes. Dr. Shital Doshi, successfully completed an online training on "LATEX" from IIT, Mumbai. Ms. Priya Vijayan participated in a two day international conference held commemorating the great Prof. Satish Maheshwari, and had talks by eminent plant biotechnologists of the country. Fr. (Dr) Suresh Antony was an eager student of Research Methodology in a Webinar conducted on Research Methodology by Stella Maris College. To teach more as a teacher, he enjoyed being the student and was awarded certificate of participation.



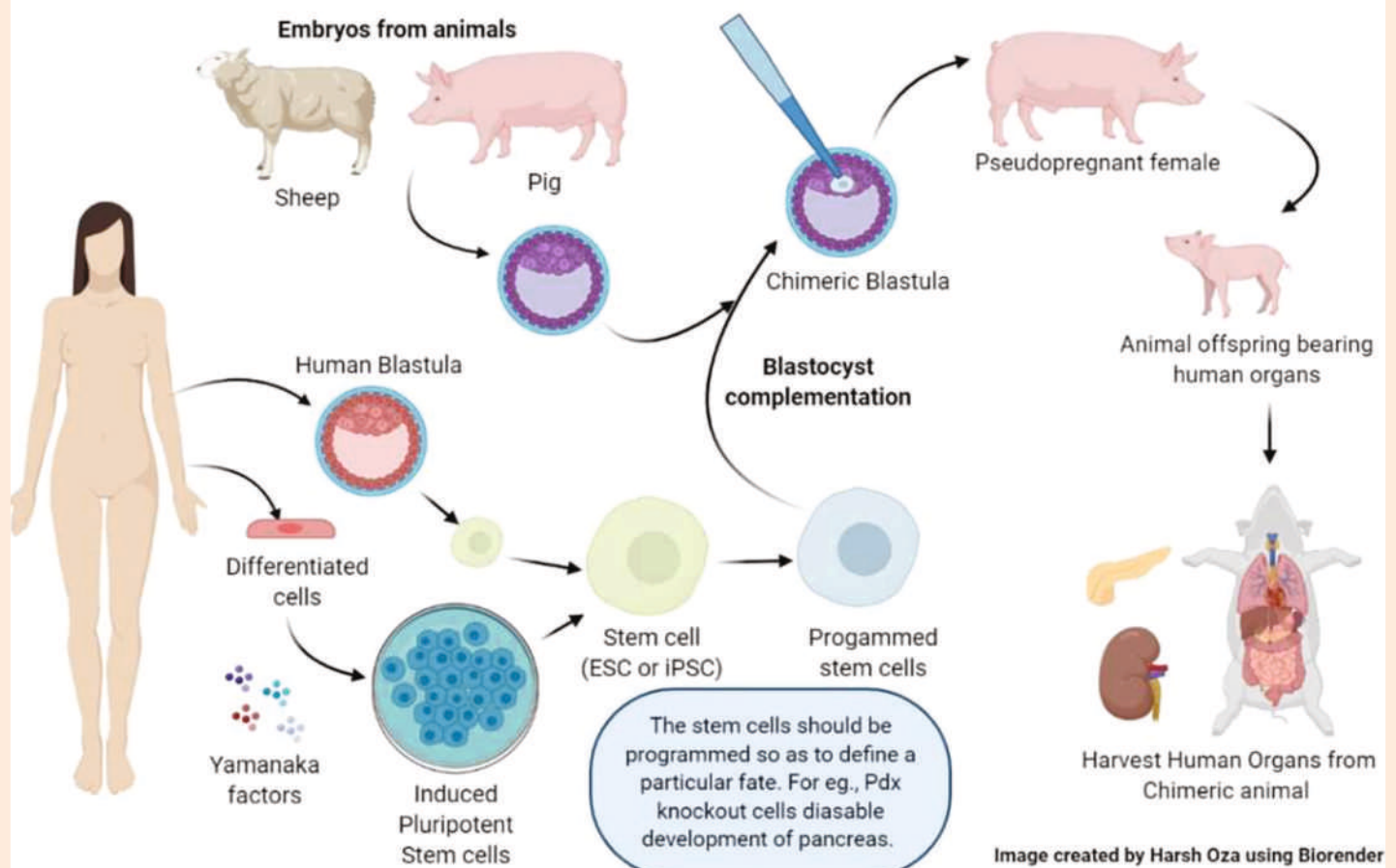
Fr. Suresh also prepared a short video addressing our students on Corona and ways of being positive during these times. A good way of connecting with our students to reassure that everything will be fine, if they knew a little about the virus and took proper measures towards prevention.

Alumni Shine!

Mr. Harsh Oza, pursuing his post graduation in Regional Centre for Biotechnology, Gaziabad is an ardent reader of Science and has his own blog. During this lockdown he participated in a contest conducted by Biorender, to make original abstracts (illustrations) on topics of choice. Out of five of his abstracts, two were chosen by a committee to be in the top 100 from 1000s of abstract. He surged ahead to the final round, which is based on voting. The voting ended on June 27, 2020 and we are absolutely delighted that he has been recognized for his efforts. His abstracts that have been chosen explain wonderful concepts through illustrations.



Human-animal chimera: Farming human organs!



Harsh also penned down several scientific shayaris, and we plan to include one shayari each in the coming Newsletters. We share with you his shayari that highlights an important system that is needed during this Covid period.

Harsh ke shayrana kalam se...titled "The Immune War"
"Aaj tum par Hydrolytic Enzymes ki barsat hogi.....
Apoptosis si qayamat ki raat hogi.....
Agar Inhibitory Signal nahi dikhaya,
Toh Natural Killer cells ke sath khoon bhari ladai hogi....
Aur phir Phagocytic cells se teri antim vidhi hogi.... "

Yogi Dholakia (Class of 2000), has found his niche in the music industry and how !!! In a live session on FB, focused on Gulzar's translations of Tagore's work, three maestros of the Hindi film music world – Shantanu Moitra, Shreya Ghoshal and Shaan, towards the end of their discussions, thanked Yogi Dholakia, who is a sound engineer, for making many of their songs beautiful. Yogi was with us during his undergraduate studies and then also did his post graduation at M S University. However, his calling was in music and it is great to hear them praise Yogi's talent to the sky. A great applause to him for his untiring struggle and dedication. Music has improved his Biochemistry. Pun intended!

He won an award for A TVC, "West Bengal Tourism. the sweetest part of India". Yogi was nominated for Mirchi Music Awards for best song recording for Ajnabee song from Madras Cafe, sung by Zeb from the Zeb - Haniya fame of Coke Studio Pakistan.

As a sound engineer, he has been associated with popular as well as National award winning films like Madras Cafe, Antaheen (Bengali), Aparajita Tumi,(Bengali) Na Bangaru Talli (Telugu), Pink, 3 Idiots, PK, Wazir, Inkaar, Chakravyuh and many more. It is heartening to see his success story and wish him all the best in all his future endeavours.



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You can reach us at:
biochemistry@sxca.edu.in