

## **“Going Places” with HealthCare Management**

### **How GIM’s HCM programme has emerged as the most exciting new business education programme**

Rarely has a fledgling, 2-year old MBA programme found an international placement, let alone a programme in Health Care Management. But this achievement of GIMs HCM programme, hardly comes as a surprise to its management. Nicole Nunes of the 2nd batch of GIM’s HCM has been placed with Aster DM and will shortly leave for Dubai to take up her assignment.

“I am really excited about start my career at an international level, thanks to the HCM,” says Nicole.

While the first batch of HCM was very well-received by the industry - the average CTC was 6.3 Lakhs. This year, companies have recruited at an average CTC of 7.8 Lakhs per annum - a whopping 24% increase - with packages offered as high as 12 Lakhs. Nearly a dozen new companies recruited on-campus, including the likes of Abbott Healthcare, Cognizant, Dun & Bradstreet, Manipal Hospitals, Religare, Pidilite, Practo, Hinduja Global Solutions, Madaus Pharma, and Narayana Healthcare.

“In the United States, there are a lot of programs in Health Care Management. Harvard, Wharton, Berkley... even Yale has one,” says Dr. Ajit Parulekar who helms the HCM programme. “When we decided to do this highly-focussed program, we knew we were going to be the first one in India. It was uncharted territory... but the way healthcare was evolving in the country, we knew this had to be done.”

It was early in 2013 that GIM broke into the ‘Top 20’ B-schools in India, on the list of almost every credible media source, including *Outlook*, *Business Today*, and *The Week*. Riding on its brand new, sprawling 50-acre state-of-the-art campus in Sanquelim, GIM just grew better in every sense: faculty, student pool, placements, and alumni performance. Rather than just carry on its well-etched path, GIM introduced a brand new programme into the Indian management education spectrum - the Health Care Management programme. Dr. Ajit Parulekar, with a PhD in Marketing and a Masters in Pharmacology, was the natural choice to helm the programme.

One of the first things that Dr. Ajit Parulekar did was to make GIM a part of *Genie* – a global educator’s network for innovation in healthcare education. *Genie* has 60 deans of the leading healthcare management institutions across the world, most from the U.S. and Europe.

“We meet once a year and look at what’s going on in healthcare education. Specifically, what are the kinds of programs that we need to run for the future, for the next decade? In the year before the launch of GIM’s HCM, *Genie* came out with a 10-point agenda on what should constitute healthcare education. Today, GIM delivers on seven out of ten; nobody else in the world does that.”

It was a big ask. The HCM needed a clear programme philosophy... a differentiator that would help the industry see value in it. Dr. Parulekar and his team decided to kill two birds with one stone.

“Even before the first batch was admitted, we started with the industry connect. The program was designed at GIM in conjunction with a steering committee comprising of industry veterans and academics. We had the Managing Director of Abbott Healthcare, the Chief Operating Officer of Wockhardt Hospitals, and the Head of HR for South Asia of Sanofi Pharmaceuticals. We also had in our folds the then M.D. (India) of Johnson & Johnson (currently Sr. VP, APEC), and even the Sr. VP from Cognizant’s healthcare life sciences verticals. We balanced it out with a Dean of a Medical College, as well as the Dean of a Medical Institute’s Healthcare Management Programme.”

The steering committee met regularly over a year to decide on the nature and specifics of the program and curriculum. Every time they would get together, the HCM team would produce a new collection of market research, sometimes from the perspective of prospective students, and sometimes, prospective recruiters. It built a strong foundation for the course. It also revealed that while there are over a 100 healthcare management programs, these are basically run by pharmacy colleges, hospitals and such medical institutions, as in-house programmes or short capsules.

“AIIMS runs a hospital administration program, but it’s only for hospital doctors to acquaint them with the basics of finance, leadership, organizational behavior, people management, costing, marketing, etc. Primarily it’s a medicine-plus-management program, built specifically around hospitals. We realised there isn’t a program to develop future leaders who will look after diversified healthcare corporations. Today, large multinational pharmaceutical companies don’t see themselves as just that, but as healthcare life sciences companies that, apart from Pharmaceuticals, provide bulk drugs, healthcare solutions, services, medical devices, financing.... the entire gamut. It would create managers who would understand every part of the healthcare space – not just hospital management, or public health, or pharmaceutical management program, but all of these... and a lot more.”

Typical of GIM, a number of soft skills and exposure-oriented non-credit activities were built into the HCM programme.

“Indian business schools focus a lot more on the education, the theory kind of content. Nowadays, the reading habits of the students are not so good. So, we build in an exposure to language, the nuances of finer things in life, and networking, film appreciation, documentary appreciation, book reviews, grooming and etiquettes.”

While GIM’s HCM had all the trappings of global standards, it was only the recruiters’ thumbs-up that mattered the most. Industry connect and experiential learning was raised to 50% of the curriculum – standard B-schools put it around 30% – in addition to the summer project and course projects. Initiatives like *Give Goa* and *Give Goa Health* allowed students to engage with NGOs and the government on health-specific social issues.

“We started *Healthcare Thursdays*. Every single Thursday we would have students accompanied by faculty spend the entire day in a healthcare environment: in government hospitals, in corporate hospitals, in nursing homes, in Indian pharmaceutical companies, multinational pharmaceutical companies, production units, in research and development setups of pharmaceuticals, in medical device units and manufacturing units of X-ray, CT scan machines, all kinds of diagnostic machines... even behind the pharmacists’ desks, stocking products, managing expiry, observing consumer and retailer behaviour.”

Owing to these early initiatives, today, your average HCM student is exposed to an astounding 40 different healthcare organizations, in just 1 year! GIM's HCM programme has a sturdy relationship with 55 organizations for this activity.

With renewed thrust on healthcare by the current government, the industry is growing at an unprecedented pace. However, HealthCare Management is a highly specialised MBA. Creating capacity for such a programme is a long-drawn and painstaking affair, not many B-schools are can undertake in a hurry. Significantly, GIM has recently shifted the HCM programme to its main campus - the 50 acre, lush green sanctuary sprawled at the foothills of the Sahyadris. It is an indication that the HCM programme is headed for expansion. While certainly a step in the right direction, increasing the output may alone not be enough. GIM, as the leader in HealthCare Management programme, will have to play a larger role in this space.