



INDICO STARKVILLE

President's Annual Report 2025



NOVEMBER 1, 2025

INDIA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF STARKVILLE
indicostarkville@gmail.com

President's Report

Organization: INDICO – Indian Cultural Organization of Starkville

Reporting Year: 2024–2025

Submitted by: Dr. Shrinidhi Ambinakudige, President

Date: 11/01/2025

1. Organizational Milestone

I am pleased to report that INDICO officially received IRS Exempt Status on October 24, 2024, under IRS Section 501(c)(3) with public charity status 509(a)(2). This achievement marks a major milestone in INDICO's journey toward becoming a sustainable, community-driven organization dedicated to cultural engagement and public service.

This designation confirms that INDICO operates exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, primarily supported through public contributions, membership fees, and program activities. The 509(a)(2) classification reflects our strong community foundation—demonstrating that INDICO thrives on active public participation and engagement rather than private or institutional funding.

In 2025, INDICO had 77 family and individual members and 14 life members. Following an interest meeting in late 2024, we formed an initial board representing the diverse backgrounds of our community—including university faculty, professionals, and local business leaders.

2. Founding Board Members

Our inaugural board was appointed for INDICO's first year to oversee the organization's administrative and legal establishment.

Executive Committee:

- President: Shrinidhi Ambinakudige
- Secretary: Elakiya Jayaraman
- Treasurer: Neeraj Vig

Board Members:

Raja Reddy, Shanti Bhushan, and Vijay Pacharne

Initially, Malvika served as Treasurer; however, due to health reasons, she resigned, and Neeraj Vig transitioned from board member to Treasurer. Mitesh Patel also stepped down as a board member after relocating out of Starkville. Both Malvika and Mitesh made significant contributions during INDICO's formative phase, and I am deeply grateful for their service and commitment.

3. Programs and Community Engagement

Throughout 2024–2025, we organized and participated in numerous cultural and community events that strengthened our connections both within the Indian community and with our Starkville neighbors.

Major Events:

- Sankranti Celebration (January): Held at the Boast Center with traditional games, cultural performances, and festive food, attended by over 80 members.

- Family Picnic (Spring): Hosted at Dewayne Haynes Park in Columbus, promoting family interaction and community bonding through sports, food, and fun activities.
- Ganesha Festival (August): A spiritually enriching celebration attended by families across the community and graced by Mayor Lynn Russler of Starkville. The event included cultural performances, a quiz, and a traditional meal.
- Diwali Celebration (October): Organized jointly with the Indian Student Association (ISA), featuring music, dance, sports, dinner, and our annual meeting.

We have continued to experiment with different organizational models to make our events cost-effective and inclusive, ensuring that our members and the broader community can experience authentic Indian cultural traditions right here in Starkville.

4. Community Outreach Activities

Over the past year, INDICO engaged in several outreach initiatives that helped us build bridges beyond our own community.

- Diversity Talk at Paccar Company (Columbus): I had the opportunity to deliver a presentation on the significance of the Diwali Festival as part of the company's diversity and inclusion program.
- International Fiesta Participation: We hosted an Indian food stall and coordinated dance performances, introducing local residents to Indian culture while raising funds for our community activities.
- Visit of the Indian Consul General: In partnership with ISA, we hosted an open house during the Consul General's visit to Starkville. The discussions included immigration services, research collaborations, and community support initiatives.
- Indian Independence Day (August 15): Celebrated jointly with ISA at Mississippi State University to honor India's history and heritage.
- Yoga for Kids: We conducted two four-week online yoga sessions exclusively for INDICO members' children, with eight participants learning yoga techniques to promote mindfulness and health.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make these activities successful.

Website Management:

Lakshmi has done an outstanding job managing our website, keeping it current, secure, and engaging. Recently, Gagana volunteered to assist her with this important work. I sincerely thank both of them for their dedication and technical expertise.

Election Commission:

My thanks go to Raju Bheemanalli and Vibor, who worked diligently to conduct INDICO's elections independently and transparently.

Food Preparation and Event Organization:

Many volunteers played crucial roles in preparing food and organizing our five major events this year. While it is difficult to name everyone, I truly appreciate each and every one of you. Several

members even covered the cost of ingredients themselves without seeking reimbursement—your generosity embodies the true spirit of community and made every event warm and memorable.

Collaboration with ISA:

I also want to acknowledge our close collaboration with the Indian Student Association (ISA). Their partnership has been invaluable in strengthening ties between students and the wider community. We look forward to continuing this collaboration and ensuring that students feel a sense of belonging here in Starkville.

Local Indian Business Community:

I would like to express sincere gratitude to members of the local Indian business community, including Mehul Patel and Mitesh Patel, for their generous sponsorship of beverages for some of our events. Their support played an important role in making our gatherings enjoyable and successful.

5. Future Directions

Looking ahead, we aim to:

- **Encourage greater participation:** Continue inviting and engaging more non-members to join and participate in our events.
- **Broaden community engagement:** Strengthen our presence in the wider Starkville community by taking part in events such as the Cotton District Festival, International Fiesta, Habitat for Humanity projects, the Farmers Market, and other charitable initiatives.
- **Further student–family connections:** Build stronger ties between student members and local families to create more opportunities for cultural exchange, mentorship, and volunteerism.
- **Offer member-focused programs:** Organize more activities that benefit our members, including wellness programs such as Tai Chi and yoga sessions, health and wellness workshops, sports activities, and informative sessions on financial and legal topics such as estate planning and wills. In addition, we plan to introduce more children’s activities and educational classes storytelling sessions, and art workshops, education etc. to engage our younger members and nurture cultural pride and creativity among kids.

6. Outlook and Acknowledgments

The 2024–2025 year was one of foundation-building, cultural celebration, and community connection. With our 501(c)(3) status secured, we are now well-positioned to expand our initiatives in cultural education, youth engagement, and community service in the years ahead.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all board members, volunteers, students, and community participants for their unwavering dedication and enthusiasm. Your collective efforts have made INDICO a vibrant and inclusive cultural organization at the heart of Starkville.

Respectfully submitted,
Shrinidhi Ambinakudige
President, INDICO–Starkville