

Photos:

Photo #1: Purdue circa 1998



Photo #2:



Pictured above is Dr. Reini Wirahadikusumah and her family at the Purdue University sign (do you still remember the sign). It was 1998, and Dr. Wirahadikusumah was one of Purdue University's international students. She was a Ph.D. student in Civil Engineering, advised by Dr. Dulcy Abraham. Dr. Wirahadikusumah started at Purdue in 1996 as a Master of Science student in Civil Engineering (MSCE), at the Construction Engineering and Management Program. Dr. Wirahadikusumah earned her Ph.D. in 1999 and completed a dissertation titled "Optimization modeling for management of large combined sewer networks."

Our distinguished alumna is now the President of Institut Teknologi Bandung, a renown university located in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. She was confirmed by the ITB Board of Trustees to hold the position from 2020 to 2025. The university is celebrating its centennial anniversary this year, and Dr. Wirahadikusumah is also the first woman President in the 100-year history of the university. She comments, "It is about time that ITB has a woman President- we have 40% woman students in our university. For me, there is a hope to lift up gender issues and conversations. I do not have specific working programs related to gender, but I will do the mandate as best as I can by giving examples to my communities, especially for young girls and young woman professionals."

Her leadership model? Dr. Wirahadikusumah states that she got a lot of mentoring from the ITB family and communities. She further emphasizes that "I always tell my children, nieces/nephews, and students, to just take good things from me and do not take the bad things. I am just a human being. They should be able to judge and differentiate, which ones are good, which ones they need to follow and even increase in their future."

Her leadership goal is that "I want to be an inspiration to the young generation through the examples of actions, with my strengths and weaknesses."

The vision for ITB is "In Harmonia Progressio - Becoming a Globally Respected and Locally Relevant University."

Walking down the memory lane, Dr. Wirahadikusumah told us that she was actively involved in the Indonesian Student Association when she was at Purdue, helping with event catering/food and also Islamic prayer recitation events [Indonesian: pengajian].

She attended different meetings of the Purdue Women in Engineering Program. During her time at Purdue, she states that she lived at the Married Student Housing (MSH). Both Dr. Wirahadikusumah and her husband, Dr. Erza Rismantojo (also a faculty member at ITB), were going to campus everyday as graduate students. We took our son to the daycare in the morning, and we picked him up late afternoon. I took turns with my husband to pick him up. My son has the fondest memories of West Lafayette. At the Married Student Housing, after school, the kids from many different parts of the world played together at the playgrounds. We were always busy taking him for a soccer practice, baseball practice, etc. Snowdays, with thick snow and cancelation of elementary school, were also really memorable.

Her words of encouragement for current Purdue students are “You are lucky that you are gaining knowledge at the best place, and interacting with the best professors and students. Please use this opportunity as best as you can so that you can contribute optimally wherever you will work later.”

For future Purdue University students, Dr. Wirahadikusumah says, “They will surely enjoy a productive time of studying at the best place, The environment and communities of West Lafayette have nice people!”