

MESSAGE BY THE DIRECTOR AND SYMPOSIUM CHAIR



It is with great pleasure and deep anticipation that I welcome you all to the 7th International Research Symposium in Humanities and Social Sciences (IRSHSS) 2025, organised by the National Centre for Advanced Studies (NCAS). This year's symposium convenes at a pivotal moment-when higher education is being reshaped by the sweeping influence of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**. Under the theme "*AI in Higher Education: Prospects and Challenges*," we gather here to explore the transformative possibilities, the ethical complexities, and the human dimensions of this technological frontier.

It is evident that Artificial Intelligence has evolved from being a supporting tool to becoming a co-creator of knowledge. Despite its promising efficiency and innovation, it also challenges us to reconsider the essence of human intellect, creativity, and moral reasoning. Thus, our theme this year calls for novel explorations convincing both the *prospects* and the *challenges*. While the *prospects* are vast, the *challenges* are equally deep, since it raises the question of academic integrity, equity, data privacy, and calls for preservation of the humanistic spirit in education.

It is thereby our responsibility as scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences, to ensure that technology serves humanity, not the other way around. Our disciplines provide the moral compass and the reflective depth needed to navigate this AI-driven age with wisdom and care. It is our understanding that AI can replicate knowledge, but it cannot replicate empathy, ethical judgment, or cultural understanding. Therefore, IRSHSS 2025 is more than a forum for presenting research; it becomes a **space for re-imagining and sharing new experiences in education**, by considering the philosophical, social, and ethical inquiries which becomes a quest only within the Humanities and Social Sciences, to find their depth.

With that holistic understanding, we evolve the philosophical and semiotic values of nature's beauty, especially considering its dramatic colours. We have been emphasizing the notion for years, and we have taken the colour **Mocha Mousse (Pantone 17-1230)** - a soft, warm brown tone evoking *earthiness, stability, and connection*, which reminds us that while technology may accelerate our pace, wisdom requires stillness; while algorithms may simulate thought, genuine understanding requires heart. As we open IRSHSS 2025, let us elevate the concept that education is not only about acquiring knowledge- it is about becoming wiser, more compassionate, and more connected. I wish that this symposium be a space where AI and humanity meet not in competition, but in collaboration, and explore how to teach with AI, think with AI, and live meaningfully alongside it.

On behalf of the Council of Regents, Council of Management, and the Organizing Committee of IRSHSS2025, I extend my heartfelt appreciation and congratulations to all our researchers, presenters, reviewers, and participants. Their scholarship enriches not only academia but the world beyond: one step closer to an education system where technology uplifts the human spirit.

Thank you, and welcome to IRSHSS 2025!!

Senior Professor (Mrs.) Prashanthi Narangoda
Director and Symposium Chair