
DESI DANCE CONVENTION

FACULTY & STAFF

July 22-24, 2016



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DANCE CLASS INSTRUCTORS

BHANGRA: KINNEL SHAH

Thrust into the world of dance at the age of eight when a local dance aunty needed guys for a folk dance, Kinnell Shah's first encounter with dance was anything but magical when he realized that his awkward hand motions was doing nothing but invite amused giggles from the girls in the class that he had sought to impress. He really didn't think there was much of a future in dancing for him, but little did he know, one day, his love of dancing would become fourth only to his love of drinking scotch, riding motorcycles, and listing things in groups of three. As a teenager, Kinnell would end up joining the acclaimed Charlotte Klein Dance Studio in Westborough, MA, where he was trained in ballet, jazz, and hip-hop. A



performance of Hrithik Roshan's rendition of 'Dil Ne' from 'Kaho Nah Pyaar Hai', a reflective Kinnell would later credit to singlehandedly (which was also a 2 thumbs up from H. Roshan) give him the motivation to start his own Bollywood/Bhangra high school dance team that performed at local cultural shows and gave him a sense of redemption after #AwkwardHandMotionsGate. Kinnell would go on to become actively involved in the North American collegiate dance circuit as a dancer, choreographer, captain, that-guy-pretending-to-be-that-character-from-Glee-on-BTF, and media producer. Since 2006, he has competed at 41 bhangra competitions, 6 raas competitions, and was a bhangra gimmick at Elite 8 Naach 2012. In the past few years, he has showcased his creativity and demonstrated his competence by placing at/ winning 16 of the last 20 competitions that he competed at. Amongst other accomplishments, Kinnell is most well-known for his contributions as a dancer and choreographer for two of the more successful all-male bhangra teams in the U.S. - Anakh-E-Gabroo (AEG) of Queens, NY and FAUJ Bhangra of Boston, MA, the latter of which he is a founding member. He was also the media producer behind KINGS Productions, a design brand that has designed and produced logos, intro videos, flyers, websites and mixes for various dance teams, organizations and competitions. In the last three years, Kinnell has also had the privilege of judging 21 bhangra competitions, including Bhangra Blowout, World's Best Bhangra Crew, and Bhangra In The Burgh.

BHANGRA: LAVESH PRITMANI



Lavesh began teaching Bhangra at Natya Academy in North Carolina in 2006. Over the course of 9 years, he taught over 300 students and also started the independent (non-collegiate) competitive Bhangra movement in NC. He established over 20 teams (youth and competitive) and performed across North America at cultural, diversity, corporate, competitive, and social events.

In 2010, Lavesh won his first competition in NYC with his team Gabroo Alliance, a mixture of music and live (Dhol). He also was a part of UNC Bhangra Elite during the years of 2006 - 2010 where he competed twice and placed 2nd at a competition.

In 2007, Lavesh started Gajjde Gabroo, an all-male live (Dhol) team that competed until 2010. The team competed in Virginia, California, Toronto, and also won first place in Texas. In 2008, Lavesh created a “junior” co-ed music team called Gajjdi Jawani, which also competed across the USA. Lavesh coached Gajjdi Jawani to win a local competition in NC and also competed numerous times in NYC, Virginia, California, and

NC. The team recently rebranded to North Carolina Di Tohr and continues to compete under his guidance.

In Nov. 2014, Lavesh and his team launched the Learn Bhangra App for iOS and Android devices. In just 1.5 years, the App achieved over 25K downloads and 8K registered users! The App continues to grow at a rate of 1.5K downloads a month and commands a strong Social Media presence with a 15K+ user reach. In 2016, his “Fetty Wap Bhangra” video went viral, amassing over 13M views even got a BuzzFeed article.

Additionally, Lavesh began teaching Bhangra workshops internationally. He has conducted workshops in Mexico (twice), India, China, NYC, NC, Atlanta, and Argentina. In 2016, he plans to do workshops in Colombia, Malaysia, India, Hong Kong, Houston, NYC, Chicago, and potentially more locations. Due to his vast competitive and teaching experience, Lavesh judged numerous Bhangra competitions across the USA. His prior experience includes judging at Aaj Ka Dhamaka (3 times), Nachte Raho (2 times), ATL Tamasha (once), Nach Ke Dhikha (once) as well as being invited to judge Bhangra Blowout, Bruin Bhangra, amongst others.

Lavesh’s Bhangra background derives from the PAU Agriculture school of thought, under the guidance of Ustaad Janak Raj Ji. Lavesh’s coach, Master Gurinderbir “Pearl” Chahal, helped him understand folk elements and transformed Lavesh’s approach towards Bhangra and how the teachings incorporate into everyday life.

BOLLYWOOD: DHRUV NAIK



Dhruv Naik is a recent graduate from Ryerson University with a Bachelor of Commerce specializing in Hotel Management; he is currently pursuing further education at Ryerson. He has been dancing for 15 years, and as you'll see, Dhruv's experience with dance expands quite far, beginning with his appreciation for dance as an art.

First and foremost, his true passion in life has always been an involvement in the world of dance, food, and networking. His love for dance is clear if you knew how involved he was with his undergrad team at Ryerson University, where he was the lead Bollywood choreographer and co-captain of the team for 3 years.

For the past 2 years, Dhruv has been heavily involved in an international Bollywood Fusion dance team known as Aluminati. Despite being the only Canadian on the team, Aluminati has become his international dance family.

Furthermore, 7 years ago Dhruv and his elder brother Parth Naik, co-founded their own dance company called Jadoo Entertainment Dance

Company, which has since then reached great heights. Originally Jadoo began performing at cultural festivals, weddings, conferences, and started offering dance classes for students of ages 5 and above, all across the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) in 2008. However, it has further evolved and it most recently has found success with its critically-acclaimed Bollywood Dance Musical Production, 'Devdas', which sold out 4 times over in the past year with Dhruv as one of their principal choreographers and creative directors for the show.

Dhruv's aim has always been to expand his skill set to ensure he is able to explore the realm of dance in its entirety. Quite simply, dance is magic. He's extremely humbled and excited to be a part of America's first Desi Dance Convention, and is looking forward to bringing his Canadian flavour over to the American side.

BOLLYWOOD: NEELAM PATEL



Prior to graduating high school, Neelam studied Ballet, Hip Hop, Modern, and Jazz at Cary Ballet Conservatory, was a part of Enloe's Dance Ensemble and Payal Dance Academy. In 2010, Neelam was selected to attend the Governor's School of North Carolina for dance, participating in a number of showcases while completing coursework in Theory and Composition. After completing her Bharatanatyam Arangetram under Guru Karnataka Kalashree Smt. Supriya Desai, at the age of 13, she began teaching Bollywood at Arya Dance Academy. Over the years Neelam has choreographed and taught: Garba, Bhangra, Bollywood, Modern, Raas, Bharatanatyam, and Contemporary.

While completing her B.S. in Biology at North Carolina State University, Neelam founded the university's first competing Bollywood Fusion team, NCSU Nazaare, bringing in 5 trophies during her 3 years as Co-Captain.

Having been selected as one of the top 20 Bollywood dancers in America, Neelam competed on India's number one dance reality show, Dance India Dance, and placed 2nd runner up. She has also been selected to perform at the International Indian Film Academy Awards alongside Shiamak Davar's Dance Company, Madhuri Dixit, Priyanka Chopra, Hrithik Roshan, and many others. Recently, Neelam was chosen by Deepika Padukone as an International dance finalist for the Bajirao Mastani Competition.

Currently, Neelam works at Diapharma as the Southern Territory Manager, teaches through her company Bollywood Empire, and recently began her adventures with Aatma Performing Arts.

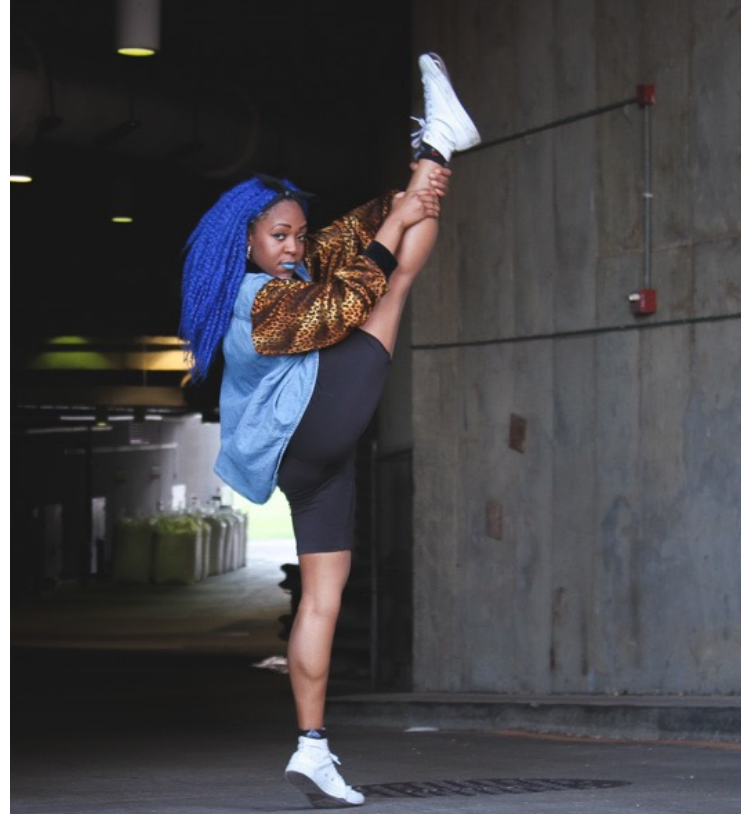
CLASSICAL (BHARATANATYAM): RAINA SARMAH

Raina Sarmah is from Atlanta, GA, and has been dancing for 18 years. She started out with ballet, then joined Kruti Dance Academy. There she learned Bharatanatyam for 8 years under her guru, Dina Sheth. Raina performed her Arangetram in 2009. In 2011, during her freshman year at the University of Georgia, Raina was a member of Champa & Chameli, UGA's female fusion team, and competed around the Southeast. Over the years, she has developed a passion for classical fusion choreography. She and her sister have performed at conventions around the United States and India, and she was also part of the Kruti team that competed on "America's Got Talent" in 2010. Raina graduated from the University of Georgia in 2015 with a degree in Health Promotion and will be pursuing her MPH at Columbia University starting in September.



CONTEMPORARY: BOBBI PONDER

Bobbi Ponder is currently a third year Fashion major at the University of Cincinnati. Her passions include design, dance, and travel. She began her training in ballet, tap, and jazz 16 years ago. Bobbi has trained under some of the best ballet instructors in Chicago including Homer Bryant of Chicago Multi-cultural Dance Center, Lisa Johnson-Willingham of Alvin Ailey, and Pierre Locket from the Joffrey Ballet. During high school Bobbi was a member of Whitney Young Guys and Dolls where she primarily focused on contemporary and modern technique. She began training in hip hop, afro-fusion, and Jamaican dancehall in 2013. She began bollywood dancing in 2014 during a trip to India and went on to become a member of UC Dhadak and was voted captain in 2015. She currently dances with Boom Crack! Dance Company and Fiyah Fit Inc in Chicago, IL. Bobbi has traveled to more than 25 countries where she has picked up many styles of dance and she plans to continue traveling and expanding her knowledge of dance around the world.



FREESTYLE WORKSHOP: RAJ BHAKTA & KHIRY BROTHERS



Khiry "K-Pryme" Brothers is a multi-faceted dancer and instructor from the D.C metropolitan area. His journey as a dancer began in the Urban dance community where he focused on styles such as Popping, House, Locking, Dancehall, and Lite-Feet before eventually joining George Mason University's Hip-Hop team, Urbanknowlogy 101. Khiry is a founding member on GMU's Fusion Dance team Mason Ke Rang, and over his 4 year tenure he served time as captain, manager, and artistic director. During his last year on Mason Ke Rang he joined an Alumni Fusion Dance team East Coast Beast Coast(ECBC). Khiry credits his dance minor for providing him multiple opportunities to expand his knowledge into many areas including Modern/ Contemporary, African, Ballet, Afro-Cuban and more! Khiry has been an avid member of the Fusion dance circuit since he entered from being a DesiDanceTeams professor to most

recently a DDN moderator. Although his time with the fusion circuit is over Khiry is an active member on GMU Bhangra and Style Jackerz (house dance crew). From training with Industry professionals and pioneers to attending sessions and jams, Khiry believes that proper foundation is key to everything. Not just learning technique, but being able to fully engulf yourself in a style. From its cultural significance to historical background each movement has a purpose.

Raj Bhakta is currently a graduate student in textiles engineering at North Carolina State University working on next-generation wearable devices for healthcare. He began writing reviews for teams in 2011 and was a finalist for DesiDanceTeams.com, "reviewer of the year" in 2012 and the winner in 2013!

He has danced on, choreographed, and captained Texas Nach Baliye during his undergraduate years at University of Texas-Austin (2010 – 2014). In his last year, he was able to help lead them as a Captain and Lead to World of Dance-Dallas 2014. His team was the second only Bollywood-Fusion dance team in the world to have competed as an upper-division team at this prestigious dance competition.



He has also been a part of East Coast Beast Coast Alumni dance team, Ishaara Dance Company, and is currently on Aluminati. His forte is in Hip-Hop and he's an avid freestyler; he believes it to be at the core of his dance style. He has also served on Jhalak's executive board in multiple positions and is a part of the board of directors for Desi Dance Network, Inc. In addition, he loves judging dance competitions and helping teams out in any way to progress the dance circuit.

Most recently, he was on a popular dance-reality show "Dance India Dance North America 2015" as a Top 10 finalist. He hopes to keep dancing and helping the dance community grow. Besides dance, he loves science, engineering, philosophy, soccer, entrepreneurship, and food.

He's honored and excited to be teaching fundamentals of freestyle dancing alongside Khiry Brothers and hopes to learn from his fellow dancers at DDCon!

HIP HOP: ELLIOT YOU & VIJAY SADANANI



Elliot You (also known as Elliot "YJ" You) is an artist who has fallen in love with dance. Since discovering dance upon entering college, Elliot has joined multiple hip hop dance crews and a Bollywood fusion team. During his junior and senior years, Elliot served as one of the head choreographers for Fusion Dance Crew. He was also artistic director and a choreographer for NCSU Nazaare during the 2015-2016 season. Being fairly new to dance, Elliot has been inspired by his peers and has been training diligently in order to be the best that he can be. The bulk of his training is from various workshops within North Carolina and Virginia, but he has also trained at some of the most well-known dance studios in California including Movement Lifestyle, Debbie Reynolds Dance Studio, and Millennium

Dance Complex. He has also trained at numerous dance conventions such as Monsters of Hip Hop, The PULSE on Tour, Elementz Dance Convention, the Movement Lifestyle Tour, and has branched out to take ballet, tap, and social dance at North Carolina State University. After graduating, Elliot plans to move to California to pursue a career in dance.

Vijay is a recent graduate from the Poole College of Management at North Carolina State University. Vijay started Bollywood dance lessons at a very young age but upon entering college found an interest and love for hip-hop dance. Vijay joined NCSU Fusion Hip-Hop Dance Crew his freshman year and has been a member of Fusion up until his Junior Year where he served as Fusion's Director for the 2014-2015 season. Vijay also joined NCSU Nazaare his sophomore year and was recently one of the Co-Captains of Nazaare during his senior year for the 2015-2016 season. He also recently founded and served as the Oak City Revolution Director - a Bollywood Fusion Dance Competition in Raleigh, NC. He hopes to continue learning more about dance and growing as a performer and individual while also giving back to the local dance community.



RAAS & GARBA: AVNI SURESH



Avni Suresh is a proud alumnus of Texas Dirty South Dandiya from The University of Texas. She competed with them for the past four seasons, 2011-2015. Her final year, their pirate year, she was a co-captain, leading the team to their first ever Raas All Stars National Championship win. Since, she has appeared as a judge at various competitions including A-town Showdown, and ATL Tamasha, performed on the Raas All Stars Alumni Team, and has sat on the Raas All Stars VIII board as the public relations chair. She is currently a nursing student at Emory University. Avni's passion lies in helping dancers grow both as dancers and as people.

SOUTH INDIAN: AAHLAD VADREVVU & SRIHARI SRITHARAN



Aahlad is a University of Illinois at Chicago alumni where he majored in Industrial Engineering. At UIC he began his dance career with Chicago Dhamaal, a co-ed fusion team where he was a lead for two years and a captain for the latter. After that experience, he co-founded The Men Of Dance Project which he has helped direct for the past 3 years, choreographing numerous segments and producing all their mixes. He just finished a successful season with the team as repeat champions of Nachte Raho, Best Male Lead and Best Choreography at Tufaan, and a 2nd place finish at Bollywood America as Best Male Group among other awards. His specialty is footwork, groove and a deep understanding of the character

within different style.

Srihari is a graduate student at University of Pennsylvania doing research in neuroengineering. In undergrad, he left his high school life of baseball behind and joined Brown Badmaash, where he was a co-director for 2 years and led the team to three placing performances out of three competitions attended (Dance Fusion, Phillyfest, South Asian Showdown). After entering grad school, he danced with Penn Dhamaka for three years and Broad Street Baadshahz for one year. Having left the competition scene, he now dances and choreographs on Aluminati. In the past, he has been a judge at Purdue Nasha and Aag Ki Raat. In addition, he holds the title for two consecutive Best Mixes at Bollywood America, and has made competition mixes for over 38 different teams since starting in undergrad. Having mixed music and choreographed for all four of his own teams, his specialty is in making any choreo idea come to life by bending the music to his will. Favorite styles are South Indian and Bhangra, and looks forward to teaching a workshop in the South Indian style he helped spark in the fusion circuit in 2010-11.



MASTER CLASS (CONTEMPORARY): AMIT PATEL



Amit Patel is dancer, choreographer, and instructor from the Bay Area, California. He received his formal dance training under Mona Sampath Khan, Ishika Seth, Shannon Hanly, Brian Brooks, and Cassie Begley.

He has trained in top Contemporary Dance Intensive programs across the country, most notably the Nexus Project & The Hubbard Street Dance Intensive in Chicago, and the Conservatory for Contemporary Dance Arts in San Jose. Although he specializes in Contemporary Dance he has also trained extensively in Ballet, Jazz, Modern Dance & Hip Hop for the past 8 years.

His dance experience with the Mona Khan Company has led him to perform on a national platform, some of the highlights include making it to the Top 48 on America's Got Talent out of 70,000 teams,

performing at the Indiaspora Inaugural Ball in Washington D.C honoring President Obama's second term in office, the NBA halftime performance, and the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival and a performance shoot for the international Emmy award winning show "India" on the Spanish T.V Network, Univision.

Currently, he is a company dancer, choreographer, and instructor for the Mona Khan Company, a Bollywood fusion company, and Bliss Dance Company, a Contemporary / Modern company that supports women's issues through the art of dance.

He is fascinated by the fusion of Eastern and Western styles of dance and was a featured choreographer and dancer in "Soch" and "Between the Lines," a series of Indian Contemporary shows presented by the Mona Khan Company in San Francisco.

Most recently, Amit and Ishika Seth were awarded the Audience Choice Award in the 2016 sjdDANCECo ChoreoProject Awards Concert, for their choreography of "Broken Memories – A dance through time".

Amit hopes to continue his work exploring the space between Eastern and Western styles of movement.

MASTER CLASS (BALLROOM): NATALIE COX

Natalie Cox is a director of the University of Georgia Ballroom Performance Group. Natalie trained at the University of Georgia and during her travels from ballroom greats such as Ron Montez, Pierre Allaire, Mireille Veilleux, and Karina Smirnoff. Currently for the University, she serves as the Latin coach for apprentice and principle dancers alike and serves as a visiting instructor for the UGA Department of Dance. Natalie also performs, teaches, and directs CONTACT Dance Company at Dancefx, Athens, Georgia.

Natalie G. Cox is a Co-Director of the University of Georgia Ballroom Performance Group.

Natalie found her love for ballroom dancing during her undergraduate and graduate career at UGA. She was a member of the University of Georgia Ballroom Performance Group from 2002-2006, serving as president her last year. Natalie received her A.B. from the University of Georgia in 2003 and her J.D. from the University of Georgia in 2006. After several years in private practice, Natalie joined the University as Assistant Director for Legal Affairs.

Natalie also performs, teaches, and directs CONTACT Dance Company at Dancefx. Her favorite pastimes are dancing and traveling and she tries to combine these at every opportunity by attending classes, camps, and workshops worldwide. During her travels, she has had the great fortune of taking lessons from ballroom greats such as Ron Montez, Jean Marc Genereux & France Mousseau, Pierre Allaire & Mireille Veilleux, Karina Smirnoff, and Tomas Mielnicki & J.T. Thomas. Notable annual performances include DanceAthens, the DanceFX Spring Concert at the Morton Theatre in Athens, Georgia, and the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina. She is also a huge supporter of Project Safe (www.project-safe.org) and their annual fundraiser, Dancing with the Athens Stars.



MASTER CLASS (HIP HOP): NOMAN AHMAD



Noman Ahmad is a Chicago-based hip-hop/bollywood fusion dancer originally from New York City and is most notably known for founding UT Ajooba, directing and choreographing Redefined Dance Company based in Austin, TX, performing with The Puzzle League in Chicago, IL, and founding and directing the premier Bollywood Fusion all-star alumni dance team - Aluminati. He has training in hip-hop, Bollywood, Latin dance, modern, jazz, and tap. He has choreographed over 15 teams, judged multiple national competitions, competed at five World of Dances (winning three of them) as well as a multitude of other national and international performances in the hip hop and Bollywood fusion dance circuits over the last 6 years. He is beyond humbled and excited to be teaching at the first ever DDN convention and he hopes everyone enjoys! This is going to be one for the books. :)

MASTER CLASS (CLASSICAL FUSION): SHEMONI PAREKH

Shemoni Parekh is the Artistic Director of Kruti Dance Academy. Shemoni's choreography has received national attention and has been featured on So You Think You Can Dance Canada, America's Got Talent, Chak Dhoom Dhoom, and the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade. Shemoni has been teaching Bharatanayam, Bollywood, Fusion and Folk dance for over 10 years since completing her Bharatanatyam Arangetram ceremony in 2001.

Shemoni's choreography has received international attention and has been prominently featured in the mainstream media. In 2009, Shemoni was invited to work with Longinus Fernandez (choreographer for Oscar award winning Slumdog Millionaire) as the assistant choreographer for Canada's most popular reality show So You Think You Can Dance Canada. Together they produced an opening dance number featuring the show's Top 18 contestants.



In 2010, Shemoni and a team of her Kruti Students participated on NBC's America's Got Talent. Out of 100,000 acts, Kruti made it to the Top 25 on America's Got Talent Wild Card Live show where they were introduced as Piers Morgan's favorite act.

In 2011 Shemoni along with six other Kruti students were selected to perform on the hit Indian dance reality TV show, Chak Dhoom Dhoom, on Aapka Colors in Bombay. Out of 5,000 international teams, Kruti made it into the Top 10. Most recently, in November 2015, Shemoni's choreography was featured live on NBC as Kruti was invited to perform in front of millions in New York City for the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade.

Shemoni received a degree in Industrial Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and graduated with High Honors. Prior to joining Kruti full-time she worked as a consultant for IBM.

PANELS & WORKSHOPS

Music Mixing Panel: G-tam, Baned, Prodiyy, Dr. Srimix

Networking & Professional Development Workshop: Raj Bhakta

Fundraising Workshop: Bryant Phan

Production Panel: Neelam Patel, Srihari Sritharan, Arpit Bhanderi

Judging Panel: Raj Bhakta, Noman Ahmad, Avni Suresh

STAFF INFORMATION

DESI DANCE NETWORK INCORPORATED OFFICERS:

NAME	POSITION	TEAM
Chinmaya Sharma	Events Chair	Mixer / Formal / Tech
Nikki Naik	Events Chair	Classes / Workshops / Panels
Shruti Patel	Events Chair	Registration / Logistics / Staff
Bryant Phan	CEO	Staff / Logistics
Shash Nayak	COO	Staff / Workshops
Avish Jain	CFO	Staff / Mixer
Chintan Parikh	CTO	Staff / Tech
Raul Larsen	PR Chair	Staff / Mixer
Bushra Rahman	Publicity Chair	Staff / Tech
Mari Young	Publicity Chair	Staff / Mixer
Armaan Gupta	Tech Chair	Staff / Tech
Karthik Rao	Tech Chair	Staff / Tech
Aditi Sharma	Moderator	Staff / Workshops
Khiry Brothers	Moderator	Staff / Panels
Srihari Sritharan	Moderator	Staff / Tech
Carlo Cruz	BOD	Staff / Tech
Raj Bhakta	BOD	Staff / Panels

VOLUNTEERS

NAME	POSITION	TEAM
Abhishek Soma	ATS Head Liaison	Staff/Mixer
Akash Patel	IN Hospitality / Sponsorship	Staff/Mixer
Anushka Panday	IN Registration / Director	Staff/Mixer
Ishani Patel	ATS Registration	Staff/Mixer
Khushboo Sarda	IN Hospitality	Staff/Registration
Kinjal Kakadiya	ATS Events/Director	Staff/Mixer
Neeraja Sarda	IN Logistics	Staff/Registration
Sachi Amin	ATS Registration	Staff/Workshops
Shalaka Patel	ATS Registration	Staff/Registration
Swathi Rammohan	ATS Events	Staff/Registration
Uma Kaladi	ATS Marketing	Staff/Registration