



International Briefs *for* Higher Education Leaders

Higher education leaders today recognize the urgency of developing an international strategy for their institutions but often lack the knowledge and perspective needed to inform good decisions. Students are graduating into an increasingly integrated international environment that, while offering exciting opportunities, also presents many challenges. Institutions must create educational environments where students will begin to appreciate the complexity of global integration but also develop skills to navigate it successfully. Faculty are seeking opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in other countries to develop globally-attuned academic programs and to expand research networks and collaborative projects. International outreach and initiatives enrich institutional culture but must be based on good information and analysis.

This series reflects a strategic collaboration between the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Center for International Higher Education (CIHE) at Boston College. Each *Brief* is designed to provide a succinct overview of current issues in international higher education and features articles written by leading scholars, policymakers, and practitioners with relevant statistics. Ultimately, this series is designed to help senior leadership develop cumulative knowledge to inform institutional strategy.

This issue sponsored by



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INDIA—The Next Frontier

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Introduction

The third in our series, *International Briefs for Higher Education Leaders*, is devoted to an examination of higher education in India and the amazing array of opportunities it presents for engagement with colleges and universities in the United States. The Indian government has signaled in a variety of ways, if not always by empowering legislation, that it welcomes partnerships and other forms of cooperation with US higher education institutions. Yet, along with these opportunities comes a complex set of challenges. Understanding both the opportunities and the challenges will be important preparation for mutually beneficial and long-lasting partnerships. This issue seeks to provide well-informed perspectives from India and the United States that will support successful higher education relationships between the two countries in the years ahead.

India has a rich and complicated history of higher education, beginning with its ancient institutions of higher learning—such as Nalanda University and Vikramshila University. Its colonial period broke with those early moorings. T. B. Macaulay’s famous derogatory statement—that all the books of India would fit on one shelf of an English library—signaled a shift to the West for higher education models. In the post-Independence period, India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, viewed the development of higher education as critical to India’s self-determination and future development.

Economic growth has been a major feature of India’s development over recent decades. Yet, the capacity and quality of higher education has not kept pace with many of the essentials for India’s modernization. The numbers are overwhelming. There are nearly 34,000 colleges and universities serving about 20 million students (excluding students involved in open and distance learning). Enrollment ratios for the college age population are low and face increasing pressure from population growth and greater completion rates at the secondary level. Access to higher education has been a tenacious issue for India. Equally important has been the need to set standards for quality and accountability, as higher education attempts to address its access problem.

Leaders and policymakers in India are well-aware of the depth and breadth of this challenge. There is a long tradition of government commissions being tasked with these issues. Many reports have been issued, but the accompanying recommendations for reform of higher education have often fallen on fallow ground. The latest of these, the National Knowledge Commission, faces similar hurdles. While many laud its recommendations, the jury is still out on whether they will be fully implemented.

For those US institutions that take the long view on the establishment of partnerships with their Indian counterparts, it will be an exciting as well as daunting experience that has the potential to benefit both sides of the relationship. We hope this *Brief* will help light the way forward.

Patti McGill Peterson

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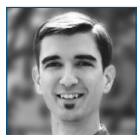
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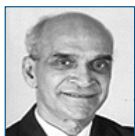
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India's Strategic Importance

David J. Skorton

For US colleges and universities that aspire to international engagement, India is a vibrant, intriguing, strategically important country. It is a place of great potential for mutually rewarding partnerships, as long as all partners fully understand each institution's educational and research cultures—and provided US educators understand and respect the conditions and priorities of higher education in India.

India's Intrinsic Importance

For centuries, India has contributed richly to the world's music, art, literature, philosophy, religion, mathematics, and medicine. Its booming population is now the second largest in the world, with a Hindu majority but also the world's third-highest Muslim population, as well as many other religious and ethnic groups. This enormous human diversity is one of the reasons that India is so relevant and important to all of us.

Significant economic and political ties bind the United States to India. Not only is India a market for US business, but Indian entrepreneurs and industrial conglomerates are major contributors to the global economy—and a source of employment for some American students and graduates. The subcontinent is also crucial to US interests in global and regional economic and political stability.

Anything but stagnant, India is engaged in rapid urbanization and profound economic and social change. By 2030, India will have over 600 million people living in cities, which is 218 million more than it had in 2011. As a result, it faces daunting challenges in the immediate need for infrastructure

(sanitation, water, transportation, housing) as well as health care and education. Meanwhile, the old social order is being disrupted by the erosion of the caste system and the rise of a new system, based on a meritocracy and on economic success.

Common Interests

Engagement with India offers several direct and obvious benefits to US colleges and universities, as well as more subtle ones. India and the United States share some common challenges, representing opportunities for fruitful joint research and scholarship. Students, staff, and faculty at US institutions seek better understanding of India and the surrounding area. Partnerships with Indian institutions may be sources of increased global presence and prestige, larger enrollment, and in some cases additional revenue. Also, India is a major source of science and engineering graduate students, who are crucial to research programs in US universities.

In many respects, India is ready for further US engagement, given the current state of its higher education system. Indians greatly value education and have a high regard for many universities in the United States and elsewhere. With a rapidly growing young population (the college-age cohort will reach 400 million by 2030), the country is very short of places for eligible students who wish to further their education. The proportion of college-age students actually enrolled has been increasing rapidly, with estimates ranging from 17 percent to just over 20 percent. Industry faces skill shortages in many science, technology, engineering, and mathematics areas. In short, the country needs many more high-quality institutions, faculty, and skilled graduates. At the same time, India has many well-respected sectors—including agriculture, medicine, technology—as well as some top-quality education and research institutions.

India also presents an opportunity for meaningful public engagement—a way for US colleges and universities to contribute to the lessening of global inequality. We can help to build the capacity of Indian institutions by enhancing education through joint programs, by initiatives aimed at faculty development, by making faculty available as mentors, and by enhancing research capacity. Yet, leadership for planning these efforts must come at least as much from Indians as from Americans, who must recognize that their Indian counterparts know best what they need and to what they aspire.

In general, international partnerships work best when the partners have complementary strengths (skills, knowledge, resources) and when the resulting gains are ones that neither organization could have achieved on its own.

Challenges for US Universities

Cultural differences abound in any international partnership, and this is true between the United States and India. But these differences are narrowing as the world becomes more interconnected.

More significant are the challenges presented by the structure of government and education in India, which features divided responsibilities between the central government and state governments, with greater power vested in the states. Laws prevent foreign universities from setting up independent branch campuses (a proposal to change that has been in Parliament for some time). Foreign institutions can partner with Indian ones, but a complex government bureaucracy (two-dozen agencies regulate higher education) means the partner needs to be a strong one, and it can be hard to choose in a country with more higher education institutions than anywhere else in the world—nearly 34,000.

In August 2012 India announced new regulations for joint- and dual-degree programs involving foreign universities, including a rule that only institutions in the top 500 of the world rankings are allowed to partner with Indian institutions (Neelakantan 2012).

As elsewhere, international partnerships can be costly in terms of resources, time, and energy. And their effectiveness may suffer if the partners do not feel equally empowered and respected, or if benefits are distributed unequally.

All in all, such conditions mean that apparently well-designed projects can sometimes fail, despite the best intentions of both partner institutions.

Avenues for Cooperation

US universities currently engage with Indian colleges and universities through student exchange, research collaborations,

and joint- or dual-degree programs; they also collaborate on development initiatives with nongovernmental organizations.

US institutions enrolled nearly 104,000 Indian students in 2010/11; however, only 4,300 US students studied in India that year. India was the largest origin of international students studying in the United States for 2001–2009 and is still second, after China.

Numerous research collaborations are ongoing between US and Indian institutions. Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, for example, has a long history of working with agricultural institutions in India. These partnerships include the Tata-Cornell Agriculture and Nutrition Initiative, which aims to accelerate India's agricultural productivity and reduce malnutrition, and a collaboration with two Indian institutions involving faculty exchange and curriculum development (Bakum 2012). Cornell also is part of the Agricultural Innovation Partnership, a consortium of Indian and US universities and agribusinesses cooperating to bolster food security in northern India (Bakum 2011).

About 340 Indian institutions offer joint or dual degrees with international partners. US-Indian programs are usually at the master's level and represent 14 percent of US colleges' collaborative degrees with foreign institutions. Cornell conducts a dual master's degree program in food science, entomology, horticulture, and plant breeding with Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. This program has helped Cornell faculty learn about education in India and appreciate the problems of Indian colleagues and students.

According to the chair of India's University Grants Commission, the number of foreign institutions operating in some way in India has been growing rapidly, rising from 144 in 2000 to 631 in 2010.

Looking Toward the Future

Although the possibility of India opening its doors to branch campuses of foreign universities presents interesting opportunities, many factors need to be considered. In addition to the challenges of working in India, mentioned above, universities contemplating branch campuses must consider whether the US university model needs modification to function appropriately in this culture. And branch campuses will not immediately build the capacity of Indian institutions, although they may contribute in the long term as graduates become the next generation of faculty, researchers, and leaders.

Other types of engagement with India demand far less investment by universities and may build capacity more effectively. Research collaborations can advance knowledge, while giv-

ing valuable experience to Indian and US graduate students alike. Joint- and dual-degree programs, though involving a greater administrative burden than research collaborations, may benefit more students and faculty and, even if eventually terminated, may leave a legacy of strengthened programs. In either type of engagement, committed faculty leadership is essential.

With appropriate understanding and leadership on both sides, US and Indian institutions have a valuable opportunity for productive and mutually beneficial engagement. Such endeavors are complex but eminently worth pursuing.

Creative Solutions to India's Higher Education Challenges

Pawan Agarwal

India's challenges in higher education are not merely about access and equity, where significant progress has been made in recent years—but rather of colonial legacy, poor academic culture, and faulty assumptions. Several countries face similar challenges. India's case is unique, however, due to its huge size and many contradictions.

The legacy of an affiliating college system, in which India's more than 34,000 undergraduate colleges affiliate to universities that control curriculum and examinations, has prevented curricular innovation. It has resulted in fragmentation and leaves students with little choice of courses. Cumbersome governing structures make curricular revision an extremely arduous task.

In the absence of an effective incentive structure, it becomes difficult to ensure that the faculty can perform effectively. Neither teaching nor research is carried out efficiently, since these are not linked. Similarly, general education is segregated from skill-based or professional education. Addressing these problems requires creative solutions.

The Need for Systemic Reorganization

India's higher education system needs fundamental reorganization, particularly in regard to responsibility for the curriculum, which has profound implications for systemic innovation and responsiveness. The affiliating system has provided a semblance of quality control since 1857, when the country's first universities were established. However, decentralization of part of the curriculum holds great promise. With greater academic autonomy, the core courses could be retained by the university, while the entire responsibility for the remainder could be devolved to the colleges. This would create the desired innovation

culture in the colleges. Clustering and even merging colleges that are small should also figure into this reform. In addition, universities that affiliate a large number of colleges need to be reorganized into two or more universities, with each of them affiliating a reasonable number of colleges in order to improve overall academic effectiveness.

Historically, research in India is done in research institutes and laboratories outside the university system. It is essential to connect teaching with research—bringing India's large research laboratory system into the fold of the university system is crucial for creating a vibrant research ecosystem in the country.

Similarly, India has a binary system where vocational training is done in institutes and centers that do not fall within the purview of the universities, and thus vocational education is separated from general higher education. It is necessary to merge general higher education with skill-based and professional education in order to bring in greater curricular diversity and to ensure the mobility of students, scholars, and academics between these sectors.

Improving Academic Culture

Despite a very large academic profession, India has failed to establish an academic culture that promotes meritocracy, honesty, and academic freedom. Indian academics acquire full-time appointments early in their careers and have a predetermined career path, leaving them with little motivation and no incentives to perform.

As a result—and notwithstanding the fact that academics in India receive decent salaries on a comparative global scale (and on average much higher salaries than those in China)—academic research performance is poor; and teaching standards have consistently fallen over the years.

There are a large number of vacancies and, despite thousands of applicants for each position, selection committees often find it difficult to appoint qualified faculty. There is very little mobility of academics among institutions. Hiring practices are highly centralized and suffer from inbreeding and nepotism. It is encouraging to note that several institutions, particularly new central institutions and well-regarded private universities, are adopting innovative hiring practices; these include instituting probation periods of five to seven years for young faculty and offering top-up salaries and variable pay to motivate the faculty. However, much of the rest of the system is inert.

Academics are not very enthusiastic about their evaluation based on academic performance indicators, a process that was introduced after the recent pay revision. They rightly feel

that this assessment is excessively focused on research and not suited to most of them. It is feared that this practice will become nothing more than a “ritual” after a while. Few universities conduct student evaluation of teaching and, even among those that do, it generally has little impact.

Improving academic culture based on professional ethos, merit, and competition is critical to higher education reform. This would require repositioning the academic profession to attract the best-qualified people to work in universities. Furthermore, in order to enthuse and motivate college teachers—as well as promote innovation and experimentation—their involvement in curriculum design, pedagogy decisions, and in examination matters is essential.

Creating a Diverse Higher Education System

It is wrongly assumed that all institutions of higher education in the country must engage in both teaching and research. This is both unfeasible and wasteful. A mass higher education system is necessarily comprised of diverse types of institutions. These institutions must meet a variety of economic and social needs within the country and provide a range of alternate paths to success for young people. While the country must have some world-class research universities, it must also have a large number of sophisticated teaching institutions and of institutions that impart vocational or generic skills.

Left to themselves, all institutions of higher education gravitate toward a research orientation. For this reason, government at the central and state levels must assure, through policy and funding mechanisms, that different types of institutions focus on their defined missions.

New Developments and Ongoing Challenges

India faces other key challenges. For example, the country has to regulate its increasingly dominant private sector. At the same time, it must govern its public system better and address the problems of coordination, duplication, and complex bureaucratic requirements. More than 90 percent of students study in academic institutions controlled by India’s 28 state governments. These institutions require special attention. Growing divergence and tensions between the central and state systems of higher education require skillful coordination. In tandem, the rapidly expanding system of higher education in the country requires much higher levels of funding, from both public and private sources.

On the opportunity front, India could better leverage technology and turn several of its disadvantages in higher education into significant advantages. For example, the affiliating college structure provides an obvious “hub-and-spoke” arrangement that could ensure that the lectures from the best

teachers are available to hundreds of thousands of students through synchronous video streaming. Facilitated by trained instructors located on-site to enable interaction, this method has the potential to bring about a significant improvement in teaching and learning processes in the affiliated colleges. The structure also provides opportunities for large-scale use of massive online courses.

There are also prospects of learning from the experiences of other countries and peer learning within the country—from one state to another and from institution to institution.

Moving India Forward

Change in higher education cannot be brought about through top-down policy, but only by engaging the system’s various stakeholders in the change process. Legacy issues require reconsideration in the context of new developments. Fundamental and systemic reforms will take time and demand significant (and sustained) efforts to bring about the necessary changes in mind-sets, behaviors, and the overall culture of higher education.

The Indian government’s recent 12th Plan (2012–2017), prepared through a long and elaborate process of consultation, is based on the above philosophy. It adopts a systemic approach that will enable the country’s higher education system to reach its full potential by raising the overall quality of midlevel institutions and creating new pinnacles of excellence.

India: The Dilemmas of Reform

Philip G. Altbach

India’s higher education achievements since independence in 1947 are impressive. With some 20 million students enrolled in postsecondary education, India has the third-largest higher education system in the world and is about to overtake the United States and become number two—although it serves approximately 18 percent of the age group. Continued expansion is inevitable. Further, higher education institutions are located throughout the country, including in many rural areas. India, through its various “reservations” (affirmative action) programs, has been able to provide access to disadvantaged students. Without question, the higher education system—and particularly the world-renowned Indian Institutes of Technology—has educated the brains that fueled India’s impressive technology development, as well as a significant part of Silicon Valley.

Yet, on the whole, India’s higher education system suffers from a quality deficit, is poorly organized, overly bureaucratic,

lacks direction, and does not yet serve a large-enough proportion of young people demanding access. This article takes a “glass half empty” approach in order to highlight the challenges facing India’s higher education future. Those wishing to interact with India’s colleges, universities, and research institutes need to have a realistic picture of the country’s dynamic yet troubled higher education environment.

A Pattern of Inadequate Investment

Higher education has never been adequately funded. In 2011/12 India spent a modest 1.22 percent of its gross domestic product on postsecondary education—a more modest investment than some other rapidly expanding economies and well below European levels of expenditure. Much of this expenditure comes from students and their families, through tuition payments, rather than from the state. From the beginning, emphasis was placed on meeting the demands of mass access and expansion, rather than building up a meaningful high-quality university sector; and even financial support for mass access has been inadequate.

Gigantic and Poorly Organized

It is estimated that half the world’s postsecondary institutions are in India—more than 34,000 undergraduate colleges, 174 universities, and in addition 12,748 diploma-granting entities. In most cases, undergraduate colleges do not have the authority to grant their own degrees; they must be “affiliated” to a university that supervises the curriculum, examines students, determines entrance requirements, and ultimately awards degrees. To some extent the affiliating system provides quality control but also eliminates autonomy from the colleges. As Pawan Agarwal points out in his article in this *Brief*, the affiliating system prevents innovation. Of the universities and other degree-awarding institutions, 152 are centrally funded and most of them do not have colleges to supervise—these tend to be the best ones. One-hundred-thirty additional institutions hold “deemed” status; and they are recognized by governmental authorities to grant degrees. These vary from low-quality private universities to top-quality specialized institutions in a variety of fields, from fundamental research in the sciences to management schools.

A variety of governmental entities have authority over higher education. Higher education is a shared responsibility of the state and central governments, but most funding comes from India’s 28 states. The states have varying policies and differing abilities to provide financial support. Few of the states have coherent policies concerning postsecondary education. The central government sponsors 40 universities and 112 other prominent institutions—such as the Indian

Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institutes of Management, National Institutes of Technology, and others—among these the best in India. The central government funds innovation, much of the country’s research, and has some control over standards. The University Grants Commission, for example, funds innovation and has some regulatory responsibility. The All-India Council for Technical Education has authority over the nonuniversity postsecondary technical institutions. There is a veritable alphabet soup of central (i.e., national-level) agencies providing various kinds of support to higher education. This shared responsibility often leads to a lack of coordination, duplication, and complex bureaucratic requirements.

In part, as a result of this lack of clear authority and planning, India has no higher education “system.” All of the universities are free to compete for resources and seek to develop a research mission, even if this is impractical. At the same time, most of the undergraduate colleges are prevented from innovating because of their tight administrative controls.

Politicization

Significant segments of Indian higher education are highly politicized. Colleges and universities are, in much of the country, coveted local institutions. They have significant budgets and offer employment to many—from professors to janitors to tea-wallahs. Thus, local and state political authorities want to control academic budgets, staffing decisions, and other aspects of academic life. Politicians like to establish colleges in their districts as sources of patronage. Academic life, in many colleges and universities, is also politicized. Academic appointments, election to governance bodies, and other decisions are sometimes influenced by local or party politics.

An Increasingly Dominant Private Sector

India’s higher education system has always been a curious, and perhaps internationally unique, combination of public and private institutions. Almost from the beginning, most undergraduate colleges were established by private interests and managed by private agencies—such as philanthropic societies, religious groups, or others. Most of these private colleges received government funds and thus were “aided” institutions. The universities were all public institutions, for the most part established by the states.

This situation has changed dramatically in recent years. Most of the private colleges established in the past several decades are “unaided” and thus fully responsible for their own funding through tuition charges or other private sources of funds. Some “in demand” colleges, particularly in medicine and health professions, charge “capitation” fees—up-front payments to secure admission. Similarly, many of the “deemed

to be universities” are also private institutions—receiving no government funds. Some of the unaided colleges and universities seem to be “for profit,” although management and governance is often not very transparent. Most, although not all, are in the lower ranks of the academic hierarchy. The unaided private colleges are affiliated to a university in their region, and it is increasingly difficult for the universities to effectively supervise the large number of colleges, particularly when the financial aspects of the institutions are not obvious. There is also a small but growing number of mainly nonprofit private institutions moving toward offering high-quality and usually specialized higher education.

Conclusion

India has, without doubt, a functioning higher education establishment, which is characterized by, as India’s new Minister of State for Education Shashi Tharoor has noted, both a “sea of mediocrity” as well as significant “pinnacles of excellence.” The basic challenge is to improve the sea while supporting the pinnacles. This will require a lot more resources, new ideas, and a commitment to both access and excellence.

India’s National Knowledge Commission

P. J. Lavakare

Over the millennia, Indian civilization has been known for its scholarly contributions to fields as diverse as religion, philosophy, medicine and surgery, mathematics, and astronomy. In fact, India was home to one of the world’s first universities, established in the 5th century AD—the Nalanda University, which drew scholars from around the globe to study and learn together. Unfortunately, India has seen substantial turmoil in the subsequent centuries, and political and cultural upheavals have resulted in a higher education system that has not fulfilled the promise suggested by its grand beginning. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) was established by the Indian prime minister in 2005, with the goal of reviewing the current Indian higher education system and making recommendations for improvements. This article will focus on the NKC’s findings and recommendations, as well as progress toward implementation and future prognosis.

Establishing the NKC

While setting up General Electric’s largest research and development center in India in 2000, Jack Welch (then General Electric’s CEO) famously stated “India is a developing country with developed talent.” His comments were a clear nod to India’s 16 Institutes of Technology and 13 Institutes of Management, which are among the country’s most prestigious higher education institutions and have garnered worldwide attention for the quality of their graduates.

While the elite institutes of technology and management undoubtedly produce graduates of the calibre that inspired Welch’s comment, the information technology (IT) boom of the 1990s also resulted in the establishment of a plethora of poor-quality professional institutions. Many of these institutions are adequate in terms of infrastructure, but the quality of teaching and research is far below the expected standards. In fact, a 2005 study by McKinsey & Co. found that, “Currently only about 25% of technical graduates of Indian higher education institutions and 10-15% of general college graduates are suitable for employment in the offshore IT and IT related Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) services” (NASSCOM-McKinsey Report 2005, 16). The report was a blow to India’s pride in its higher education system and highlighted the pressing need to focus on quality assurance.

It was these concerns that inspired India’s Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, to establish the NKC in June 2005, under the dynamic leadership of businessman-technocrat Sam Pitroda, who is viewed as having brought the telecom revolution to India. The mission of the NKC was to prepare a blueprint for India to capitalize on its intellectual resources and enormous knowledge base in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Indeed, the NKC’s final report (National Knowledge Commission 2009, 62–151) covered the full gamut of Indian education, including literacy and adult education, primary and secondary education, and vocational and higher education.

The NKC Report on Higher Education

The commission acknowledged that Indian higher education has some important strengths and has contributed substantially to the economic and social development of the country. But in a frank assessment, the NKC’s report stated that the system “has weaknesses that are a cause for serious concern. . . . There is, in fact, a quiet crisis in higher education in India that runs deep. It is not yet discernible simply because there are pockets of excellence.” The report goes on to make recommendations for improvement in three key areas: expansion, excellence, and inclusion.

Expansion of the higher education system. The commission recommended an increase in the gross enrollment ratio from the 2009 level of about 7 percent to more than 15 percent by the year 2015. This would require the creation of an additional 1,000 universities during that period, building on an existing base of approximately 564 in 2010, by both restructuring existing institutions and creating new ones. Table 1 illustrates the magnitude of the expansion that has taken place and what is envisaged.

Table 1. Higher Education Expansion in India

Year	1950	1970	1990	2010	2015 (projected)
Number of universities	30	103	190	564	1,500 (including some restructured colleges)
Number of colleges	695	3,604	7,346	33,000	
Enrollment (in millions)	0.4	1.95	4.93	17	(Expected gross enrollment ratio~15%)
Teaching staff	24,000	128,876	263,125	817,000	

The government has increased its budget outlay for higher education considerably; and with the addition of funding from private sources, a large number of new institutions and universities have already been created or proposed. However, key concerns remain about quality-assurance mechanisms and the ability of institutions to recruit an adequate number of qualified teaching staff.

Excellence and regulation. An important concern of the commission was that the current system of higher education regulation involving multiple agencies at the national and state levels has eroded the autonomy of institutions and created barriers to innovation and growth. Institutions, they argue, have been prevented from making curriculum changes and introducing new courses; and in some cases, the establishment of much-needed new institutions has been hindered.

To address these issues, the NKC recommended the creation of a single national regulatory body called the Independent Regulatory Agency for Higher Education (IRAHE). The IRAHE would be independent of all stakeholders, including the government. This recommendation was not well-received in some disciplines—such as medicine, law, and agriculture—each of which demanded a separate regulatory body for its area. As a result of these objections, the IRAHE proposal has been shelved indefinitely, and the present multiagency regulatory regime continues.

However, the IRAHE in another form has been proposed by a separate body, the Yash Pal Committee, which was established by a former education minister, who disagreed with the approach of the NKC. The Yash Pal Committee recommended the establishment of a National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER), which is now pending in the Indian Parliament in the form of a legislative bill. The intention of NCHER was to reduce bureaucratic regulations, give autonomy to academic institutions, and enhance the quality of education. However, the proposal has not yet caught the attention of the government, as the bill has not yet come to the Parliament for discussion and approval. The bill has become entrenched in a more legislative and regulatory approach, which continues to keep the academic community on the fringe of reforms in higher education.

Access and inclusion. The commission very strongly advocated for providing access to higher education to all deserving students, irrespective of their socioeconomic background. Its recommendations included establishing well-funded scholarships and implementing affirmative action measures that address the multidimensionality of student deprivation. In particular, the commission suggested a “deprivation index,” which would take into account factors such as social background, family education history, family income, type of secondary school attended, place of residence, and physical disability.

This comprehensive approach to inclusion is an innovative but complex one that deviates from the religion- and caste-based “reservation quota” system currently used throughout the education system. Thus far, however, the government has not given any attention to this approach, due to political sensitivities related to voting patterns of various constituencies and an entrenched system of dispensing political favors based on the existing caste-based quota system.

Conclusion

The NKC’s extensive analysis and exhaustive recommendations have provided a very laudable road map for India’s higher education, for the coming decade. Unfortunately, the academic community and the government have not supported these recommendations with their full moral commitment. The community has been lulled into the dictates of the government machinery that runs the Indian higher education system with authority and control. Private education providers, not receiving financial support from the government, but still under its control in many ways, have been struggling to make the system more self-supporting. However, in the process of enhancing quantity, they have often cut corners that have affected the quality of education.

India may have fulfilled, to a certain extent, the agenda of “Expansion” set forth by the NKC, but it is certainly far from fulfilling the other objectives of “excellence” and “inclusion.” It is unfortunate that the NKC was disbanded at the completion of its term in 2009. As of now, the various education reform bills that are supposed to be the outcome of the NKC’s work are all in the hands of India’s parliamentarians. In order for progress to be made, the academic community should assert its rightful ownership of the higher education system in India and advocate for the implementation of the NKC’s recommendations.

Higher Education and the Indian Labor Market

Lakshmi Narayanan

The Indian labor market is in the midst of an era of rapid expansion. Recent studies—by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Lieberman Research Worldwide (LRW), and McKinsey Global Institute—have characterized India as one of the world’s “young” developing economies that are expected to lead global labor force growth through 2030, with a nearly 60 percent share. India alone will account for a net addition of 174 million workers to the global labor force between 2010 and 2030, compared to 132 million between 1990 and 2010.

As a number of the articles in this publication attest, Indian higher education is also growing rapidly, in order to meet the education and training needs of this expanding labor market. Currently, an enviable 4.4 million new graduates and postgraduates are joining the country’s labor force each year. India’s sizable young population presents a demographic advantage, in that the labor market’s high growth rate is potentially sustainable over time and may give India an edge over competitors in many sectors of the economy.

Supply and Demand: A Mismatch

For this growth to translate into meaningful differentiation for India, however, the country must not let the euphoria of quantity cloud the need for attention to quality. The aforementioned LRW study points out that 40 percent of Indian employers attribute job vacancies to their inability to find candidates with the right skills (McKinsey Global Institute 2012). While almost 60 percent of graduating students in India find jobs within three months of their graduation (compared to 55% in the United States), in many cases the job obtained is unrelated to the student’s field of study. In addition, many graduates secure only interim jobs, leading to significant turnover.

Such statistics indicate not only a mismatch in demand and supply but also a more worrying reality of recruits with less than adequate skill levels. The 2012 LRW study identified four key skill gaps among Indian graduates, in terms of meeting the needs of the labor market: English proficiency, problem-solving skills, written communication skills, and theoretical training. The need for institutions to take action to address these deficiencies is pressing, and the challenge is amplified by the absence of quick-fix solutions.

While the McKinsey report focused primarily on the higher education and skilled labor sectors, the mismatch between education provided and the needs of the labor market is even more pronounced in the vocational sector. With the “farm to factory” shift expected to accelerate over the next 10 years, the demand for medium-skilled workers is expected to rise significantly. Yet, when it comes to vocational training, only 10 percent of the workforce in India is formally trained, compared to 96 percent in Korea, 80 percent in Japan, and 68 percent in the United Kingdom. First and foremost is a quantity issue; there simply are not enough vocational education providers. In addition, the current public perception of vocational programs is problematic; such programs are often seen as a refuge for those who have failed to make a mark in mainstream education.

Complicating matters even further, the needs of the labor market are essentially a moving target. As India’s economy evolves and aspiration levels go up, workers with vocational skills are likely to want to move into white collar jobs and will seek opportunities to hone their knowledge and skills midway through their careers, in an effort to increase their value in the labor market. This will likely put additional pressure on the already stretched higher education system; and given the current challenges in terms of both quantity and quality, it is questionable whether the system as a whole will be able to adapt to the continually changing needs of the labor market going forward.

Bridging the Gaps

While the challenges presented by this mismatch are daunting, there is mounting indication that employers, educators, and the labor force itself are becoming increasingly cognizant of this unfolding reality. The marked consensus is that India must invest in building capacity in education, research, and entrepreneurship. Fortunately, there are already initiatives underway, as well as opportunities for new entrepreneurial models and innovative solutions.

Expanding and revamping the vocational education sector. In order to address the need for more vocational training, India has established, through a government

mandate, a National Skills Development Corporation and tasked it with creating a skilled labor force of 150 million in the next 10 years. The target may seem ambitious, but the magnitude of the challenge more than warrants an approach of this scale. The government has committed more than US\$1 billion to this effort, and it is expected that a number of vocational training institutes will be funded through this program. Several key industry players are already participating in it. Tantamount to creating an entire ecosystem very similar to the country's current mosaic of colleges and universities, this is a mammoth undertaking by any standard.

While the National Skills Development Corporation initiative addresses the quantity issue, the public perception issue still requires attention. One key requirement for broadening the footprint of skills development programs is to rid vocational training of its negative public perception, by showcasing its successes and redefining its role as a conduit to further education, including tertiary education. This can be better achieved by aligning vocational training—at existing and newly created institutions alike—closely with the current needs of the labor market, and complementing the curriculum with practical work experience and internship opportunities. The private sector can play an important role in these efforts.

Cultivating relationships with education providers abroad.

An important concern as India expands its vocational and tertiary education sectors is a potential lack of expertise needed to design and deliver high-quality programs. Partners abroad can be an excellent resource, particularly in the vocational realm. Many recognize that advanced economies such as Germany, Japan, and the United States have proven capability in the area of vocational training. Countries such as Brazil, South Korea, and Finland have, in recent years, done a great job of catching up and can potentially provide guidance.

Technology-led learning has yet to reach a critical mass in India. This arena offers exciting opportunities for collaboration with US universities that look at India as the next frontier for higher education and research. It is not impossible to adapt such technology-based models—for example, Coursera or MITx—to the Indian milieu, perhaps through the Indian Institutes of Technology.

Building teaching and research capacity. In India, research and education as career options are often seen as unattractive to graduates, in practically all disciplines. That is because the job market is lucrative and an academic career much less rewarding in comparison. The result is a dearth of new researchers and teachers who can staff newer colleges. The inevitable fallout is deterioration in the quality of education. In building expert faculty capacity for higher education teach-

ing and research, China offers an interesting example. By way of a centrally driven and meticulously managed program, which includes significant incentives for visiting faculty, China has been able to attract acclaimed international academics (under the Cheung Kong program) and young PhDs of Chinese origin to help spearhead education and research in the country.

In India, the opening of higher education and research to international institutions and freeing them from government regulation mark the first step toward attracting global talent and facilitating global mobility.

The Way Forward

First and foremost, institutions educating Indian students must engage much more effectively with the fast-changing realities and quality expectations of the job market. While recruiters and educational providers align well on the importance of different skills, there is significant divergence in their quality expectations. It is imperative for education institutions to scale up their teaching and learning processes, in keeping with the current and future needs of the job market.

Encouragingly, institutions that have made an effort to establish and nurture ties with industry are making significant strides in meeting employer needs. However, the number of such institutions is still insignificant, compared to the mammoth task that lies unaccomplished. If India seeks a premium position in the global labor market, it is the private sector, led by industries and education institutions, which will need to lead the way in raising the employability quotient. Perhaps drawing upon the rich experience of the likes of Babson College (Massachusetts, US) in training entrepreneurship educators around the world, the fast-growing services industry will take more spiritedly to incubating new types of enterprises.

By aligning skills development with industry expectations, fostering entrepreneurship and ties with partners abroad, and revitalizing teaching and research as attractive careers, India can unlock its full potential and define the next paradigm of competitiveness and growth.

Partnerships in India: Navigating the Policy and Legal Maze

Rahul Choudaha

Higher education in India has expanded at a breakneck speed. Over the last decade, nearly 20,000 new colleges were established and student enrollment has more than doubled, from 8.4 million to

around 20 million. Unfortunately, the rapid pace of this much-needed expansion has made it difficult for policy- and lawmakers to keep up. Indeed, at best, the current state of policy and the legal frameworks that guide higher education in India are complex; at worst, they are inadequate and incoherent.

As a result, foreign institutions interested in establishing partnerships in India face a dizzying and frustrating array of legal and policy questions. For example, are foreign universities allowed to start branch campuses in India? What is the impact of existing regulations and various proposed regulations on the expectations of foreign institutions? What rules govern higher education financing? This article focuses on key legal and policy issues that US institutions need to understand in order to successfully navigate partnerships and other ventures within India and with Indian counterparts.

Policy and Legal Developments

The roots of complexity of Indian higher education policy and law stem from the structure of higher education where hundreds of “teaching” colleges—private or public—are “affiliated” with one public university, which in turn could be funded by state or central (national) resources. To further complicate the matter, universities could be under the purview of central or state regulation, depending on how they came into existence. If they were enacted by a state legislature they are not required to comply with the central body—University Grants Commission (UGC)—which is a statutory body responsible for “the coordination, determination, and maintenance of standards of university education in India.” In addition, there are regulations specific to fields of study. For example, the All India Council of Technical Education is a statutory body responsible for the planning and coordination of technical education, including engineering and management, for colleges affiliated with universities. Thus, the complex structure of higher education reflects a regulatory and legal framework, where multiple authorities at both the central and state levels have their own agendas and turf to guard.

Additionally, new regulations are being proposed regularly, some of which pass and some of which do not, while others languish in limbo, awaiting decision. Consequently, foreign institutions seeking to establish operations in India need to not only understand and stay abreast of rules and laws that pertain to international ventures, but also broader regulations that impact higher education institutions more generally.

Former minister of Human Resources Development, Kapil Sibal, fueled momentum for improving the quality of higher education and coherence in regulatory structure by proposing nearly a dozen legislative bills. This included two policies and

regulations of particular importance to foreign institutions: the 2011 Higher Education and Research Bill and the 2010 Foreign Education Institutions Bill.

The 2011 Higher Education and Research Bill proposed to subsume multiple specialized regulatory bodies under one overarching umbrella regulatory body, called the National Commission for Higher Education and Research. The major opponents of this bill are state governments and professional education bodies, especially in law and medicine, which are concerned about a potential loss of autonomy. In December 2012, a parliamentary committee that studied the provisions of the bill released its report, stating that the proposed umbrella body will not be able to get on with its work without the active participation of the state governments. It also asserted that “a tendency in the Bill is that of centralization of power which militates against the principles of federal polity. There is a danger of the new body becoming an authoritarian one in nature and functioning.” In other words, the idea of a central regulatory body looks futile, and foreign institutions need to continue to work within the existing regulatory structure.

The 2010 Foreign Education Institutions Bill proposed “to regulate entry and operation of foreign educational institutions imparting or intending to impart higher education” in India. While the intent of the bill was to create an enabling pathway for foreign universities to engage with India, it created more confusion, higher barriers, and ultimately a political deadlock. Some of its clauses (such as the requirement of a corpus fund of nearly US\$9 million) represented major stumbling blocks for institutions, while the very notion of “foreign” institutions operating in India was not politically acceptable to some segments of society.

In June 2012, given the stagnancy in movement of the Foreign Education Institutions Bill, the UGC attempted a work-around by drafting its own version of regulations for facilitating partnerships with Indian universities under its purview. The draft bill was called UGC (Promotion and Maintenance of Standards of Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012, and was applicable to already existing and future foreign partnerships of any kind. It also laid down two criteria for eligible institutions: foreign institutions must rank in the top 500 globally, and Indian universities must receive the highest accreditation grade from one of the two accreditation agencies in India. The proxy of ranking as an eligibility criterion for foreign institutions to enter India received a lot of criticism. As a result, in December 2012, UGC came up with an updated draft to drop ranking requirements.

While many reforms were proposed by Minister Sibal in the last four years, a cabinet reshuffle in October 2012 led to his departure. Now, with the new minister in place and the political reality of elections in 2014, no major legal and policy changes are expected anytime soon. Overall, higher education in India will most likely maintain its status quo on policies, legal perspectives, and foreign institutions for the near future.

Working with the Regulations

Given the context of the regulatory landscape and developments, Indian and foreign institutions are uncertain about their future modes of engagement. Of course, the general rule for any foreign institution is to work within the framework. However, as noted, the framework is complex, which often forces institutions to find creative ways to accomplish their goals within the regulations.

An example of working with regulations through an entrepreneurial approach are twinning programs of “2+2” and “1+1” with institutions abroad. These continue to grow as they bypass regulatory confusion created by the Foreign Education Institutions Bill. Under this model, an Indian institution articulates its curriculum with the foreign partner institution and serves as a feeder for transferring students to the foreign institution. One such example of an innovative approach is Shiv Nadar University, which partnered with Carnegie Mellon University to offer a dual undergraduate degree program in electrical and computer engineering.

However, some institutions have gone far beyond their entrepreneurial intentions to ignore the existing rules, by suggesting that the rules do not apply to them. For example, partnerships between Lancaster University and GD Goenka, Leeds Metropolitan University (MET) and Jagran, and Strathclyde University and SKIL India all offer business programs that are not approved by respective regulatory bodies. In fact, at Leeds MET India’s campus, several students have filed petitions in the Indian High Court accusing Leeds MET India of misrepresentation, as the degrees they confer lack recognition from accrediting bodies in India. The High Court directed the Ministry of Human Resources Development and the Higher Education Department to explain “the law governing the functioning of foreign universities on petitions filed by students of Leeds MET India, Bhopal,” according to *the Times of India*.

This is a prototypical example of how the unresponsive legal and regulatory structure of higher education in India could not provide a clear entry pathway for foreign institutions, while at the same time, some institutions did not exhibit enough due diligence to safeguard their brand. As a result, students are left dissatisfied, and the institutional reputation was compromised.

Conclusion

Many foreign institutions interested in India already know that it is not an easy country to navigate and that its higher education system is even more complex, due to its political and legal environment. At the same time, opportunities to grow and engage are very high.

Effective engagement in India not only requires an understanding of the legal and policy framework but also the ability to translate this knowledge into practical and successful models for partnerships unique to each institution’s mission and needs.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for building international partnerships in India. As the Leeds MET case demonstrates, institutions are often caught in a “Catch-22” scenario. They can attempt to navigate through India’s regulatory and legal labyrinth haplessly, or ignore it, and expose themselves to considerable risk.

While it is important to be cautious and vigilant in finding partners, it is also critical to take an entrepreneurial approach by starting with low-risk engagements in order to experiment and evolve. Above all, be patient! It is no surprise that India is the birthplace of yoga.

International Partnerships: An Indian Perspective

Fazal Rizvi

India has a long history of international links with systems of higher education, stretching back to the precolonial period. Indeed, the modern system of Indian higher education is largely a British construct. Between the 1950s and 1970s, a large number of Indian students went abroad to study under various programs of development aid, while a number of mature systems of higher education assisted India in establishing major centers of learning—such as the Indian Institutes of Technology. Since the late 1980s, this developmental mode of collaboration has, however, been largely replaced with a more commercial approach—with an increasing number of fee-paying Indian students going abroad for studies and overseas universities expressing an interest in establishing a presence in India. As India becomes more economically open and globally networked, new partnership models are emerging, involving student and staff mobility and joint academic and research activities, while further possibilities continue to be explored.

Leveraging Global Resources

From an Indian perspective, the national interest in developing partnerships is located within a broader higher education policy agenda. The focus is more on the question of how global resources might be utilized to increase access, equity, and quality of Indian higher education, rather than on the commercial opportunities associated with the fast-growing global trade in higher education. Indian authorities recognize that the governance structures of Indian higher education need to be reformed and that neither a centralized bureaucratic strategy nor a devolved market-based approach will work on its own. New ways of thinking about the management of resources are required. Similarly, the government acknowledges the need to forge new approaches to curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation around a notion of quality that goes beyond audits and accreditation.

The Indian government views international partnerships as one instrument for addressing these issues. To effect a major improvement in India's weak academic culture, it is now widely believed that Indian higher education cannot rely on its own traditions of reform but needs to engage critically with global trends and debates about strategies of reform. Higher education leaders in India have at last recognized that for India to unleash the energy and creativity of its young people, it needs universities that are innovative and globally networked. They have noted that just as India has benefited from opening its economy to the world, so could its system of higher education benefit from international partnerships. Such partnerships could not only help to meet student demand but also enable Indian students to develop greater awareness of global issues. International experiences could also prepare them to participate more effectively in the global economy. Fresh thinking about the graduate attributes appropriate for the next stage of India's participation in the global economy can only emerge when Indian academics and administrators are exposed to the world's leading ideas about how higher education can be both economically productive and socially useful.

Internationalization's Obstacles and Opportunities

While more and more stakeholders in Indian higher education are recognizing the importance of international engagement, this view is certainly not universally accepted. Over the past five years in India much of the debate about internationalization has been highly ideological and has taken place against the backdrop of the Foreign Educational Institutions Bill, designed to permit the entry of overseas universities in

India. The bill has been widely resisted and languishes in the Parliament due to the fear of exacerbating inequity, destabilizing India's own institutions, or reproducing practices of neocolonial dominance. Yet, the bill has also, perhaps paradoxically, created a space in which it has become possible to explore a variety of other forms of partnerships, given the eagerness on the part of both Indian and overseas universities to work together.

Many overseas universities have been keen on these partnerships, possibly as a way to get a foot in the door of India's lucrative education and training market, given its large middle-class population and the respect accorded to foreign university degrees. Indian higher education leaders argue that these partnerships represent the country's larger geopolitical interest in becoming an economic force, a crucial market, and a significant political player in the region.

Thus, in spite of the ongoing controversy surrounding the Foreign Education Institutions Bill, the Indian government has welcomed high-level delegations from various countries to explore new partnerships and enter into a variety of new bilateral arrangements. The US-India Higher Education Dialogue, for example, is now an annual event to plan strategic partnerships in education between the United States and India; and these and other discussions have resulted in concrete action and programs, including the Singh-Obama 21st Century Knowledge Initiative and an expansion of the Fulbright-Nehru partnership. The Indian government has actively pursued and supported similar programs and initiatives with Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, and other countries. This kind of ongoing engagement is a departure from the earlier ad hoc signing of agreements that did not result in sustainable benefits.

Reflecting the Indian government's enthusiasm for collaborations, many individual Indian institutions are eager to pursue partnerships with counterparts abroad. These encompass a variety of arrangements, from twinning (where Indian students enroll for a program in which a part of their education occurs on a campus in India and a part overseas), as well as dual- and joint-degree program options. Benefits accruing to Indian institutions from these efforts may include savings to students (for example, when only part of the study is required to be done overseas), as well as the laying of foundations for broader institutional ties—such as joint research projects, often in collaboration with industries. In some cases, Indian staff are trained in the partnering university and use courses developed by overseas institutions.

Considerations of Quality

Given the issues of quality of programs and teaching in India, international partnerships have the potential to steer quality improvement in Indian universities. However, it is important for the Indian government and individual institutions to recognize that the positive impact of partnerships in terms of quality enhancement should not be taken for granted. Not all foreign institutions that seek to engage in such arrangements are necessarily of high quality themselves. Indeed, some are of very poor quality and are even exploitative, taking advantage of the value placed on foreign degrees in India to provide substandard education. Monitoring the quality of such organizations and programs is a major challenge for India's creaky regulatory system. In addition, while there may be great enthusiasm for partnerships within individual institutions, many find that the day-to-day working of such programs is more challenging than expected. For example, differences in expectations and motivations—in language, as well as resources, and institutional culture—can pose major problems, hampering the positive impacts of collaboration. Even those institutions with a track record of successful partnerships need to carefully maintain their focus on quality; international universities interested in developing partnerships in India often approach the same set of institutions, potentially overloading the capacity of these Indian institutions to negotiate meaningful and sustainable links.

Essential Ingredients

Maximizing the potential benefits of international engagement by India's higher education system will require a deliberate and sustained effort by the Indian government, individual Indian institutions, and their foreign partners alike. Major rewards are possible, if the time needed to set up and run robust partnerships is not underestimated, when there is clarity about the contrasting academic and cultural traditions, and provided patience to work through the differences prevails. In an educational exchange, for example, it is important to reconcile and coordinate nomenclature, grading systems, and accreditation processes. Even more important is the need to ensure clarity in the purposes, responsibilities, and rewards being sought by each party. In identifying the synergies, it is essential to negotiate and resolve issues of evaluation, especially against competing interests and goals. Understanding and accommodating academic and cultural differences are also crucial, as is taking care to avoid a neocolonial approach, in which partners are not equally treated. In the end, mutual trust is essential.

India's Relationships Beyond the United States

Neil Kemp

Universities around the world are enthusiastic to grow partnerships in India and for similar reasons as their US counterparts: the quality of Indian students and academic staff; the enthusiasm of Indian counterparts, keen to build new relationships for research and teaching; the high English-language proficiency found across the Indian higher education system; and, of course, the attractions of Indian cultures and cuisine. Building long-term relationships with a country destined to assume a larger role in the world—politically, economically, and educationally—is a most compelling proposition.

Notwithstanding the exciting possibilities, some find it very difficult to navigate their way around the Indian sector and identify partners. The system is immense, the regulatory environment is perceived as challenging, and the many layers of bureaucracy frequently sap the will of all but the most determined. The net result is that foreign institutions frequently end up clustering around those Indian universities already internationally known. A consideration of successful experiences from around the world, however, yields some useful insights.

Student Mobility and Recruitment

Many foreign universities have targeted Indian student recruitment; but while some have been successful (including from the United Kingdom and Australia), all fall short of the United States. US universities enroll over half of all globally mobile Indian students, although the US proportion of the total has been steadily declining—it was 67 percent in 2003. Motivations are complex and varied, with some universities (and countries) seeking Indian students for revenue generation, others for campus internationalization, to attract quality researchers, or grow long-term relationships. From the student's perspective, international employment opportunities can be a strong pull; and Indian student mobility generally reflects immigration policies in the destination countries, particularly for access to post-study employment. The ups and downs of Indian students flows to Australia and the United Kingdom clearly illustrate this.

Education agents have also proved to be critical in India, and many foreign universities employ them. Serious concerns have been voiced regarding the probity of employing agents, particularly as some have proved to be quite unscrupulous. However, feedback from Indian students indicates their im-

Indian Bilateral Higher Education Development Initiatives

Yukiko Shimmi and David A. Stanfield

Two groundbreaking governmental funding programs attempt to cultivate higher education collaboration and strengthen bilateral relations between India and the United States, as well as India and the United Kingdom. The UK India Educational and Research Initiative (UKIERI) and the Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative (OSI) hope to capitalize on transnational partnerships to enhance educational links and address significant global challenges.

Established in 2006, UKIERI aims to develop higher education connections between the United Kingdom and India. UKIERI sponsors a number of programs in four primary focal areas: education leadership development, innovation partnerships, vocational skill development, and student mobility. For financial support and unique expertise, the initiative relies on a number of partnerships with governmental organizations and related associations—such as the British Council, University Grants Commission, and the Indian Department of Science and Technology. In five years, the program has established 182 research partnerships and granted 55 PhD scholarships and fellowships.

The success of UKIERI led to the development of the Trilateral Research in Partnership (TRIP) awards, a new initiative to promote multidisciplinary research collaboration between the United States, the United Kingdom, and India. Grants of approximately US\$75,000 each will be awarded to 10 initiatives for a period of two years. The TRIP awards specifically aim to increase the mobility of doctoral and postdoctoral students among these three countries.

OSI is an education fund designed to encourage faculty exchange and research collaboration between American and Indian higher education institutions.

Priority research areas include: energy, sustainable development, climate change, environmental studies, education and educational reform, public health, and community development and innovation. Selected participants use a variety of activities to accomplish their goals—such as curriculum development, joint research, team teaching, and seminars.

In 2012, the first batch of winners (consisting of eight US- and India-led partnerships) received grants of US\$250,000 each for a three-year period. For instance, a partnership led by Rutgers, State University of New Jersey, will work alongside the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai to enhance talent development capacity in both countries. In another example, Banaras Hindu University is researching renewable energy sources with the University of Pittsburgh. OSI plans to continue sponsoring 8–10 projects per year with a fund of US\$10 million jointly established by the governments of the United States and India. A special working group of Indian and American representatives will select the grant recipients each year.

UKIERI and OSI strive to create mutually beneficial partnerships and provide an opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations between countries. With several years of experience, UKIERI has a number of noteworthy successes and, as a result, the program was recently extended to 2016. Although much newer and with far fewer partnerships to date, OSI follows a similar model of mutuality and will likely increase in scope and size. Following in the footsteps of these programs, other countries will consider approaching India to establish similar programs in the near future.

portant role. In addition to direct recruiting, good agents will meet with families (crucial in India) and offer first-line filtering of applications for the university they represent, including against immigration requirements. If an institution abroad chooses to employ agents, it is important to contract carefully, require conformity to a code of conduct, and monitor activities.

Research Partnerships

Like the internationally renowned Indian Institutes of Technology and the central universities, the country's government-funded laboratories, including those of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), are in demand for research cooperation. Engagement with these entities normally occurs on the basis of some form of foreign government initiative or through the independent activities of a foreign university. The latter approach might seem easier; however, the reality is that few Indian government universities have sufficient autonomy to commit funds for international activities. Indian research partners generally need to secure their counterpart funding from a public source, including CSIR or the University Grants Commission.

While Indian private-sector universities are independent of government and might offer research opportunities, these are currently limited and are confined to a few older and wealthier institutions, such as Manipal University. However, it is inevitable that many private universities will grow research capabilities, driven by the need for quality enhancement, to match leading public universities, to differentiate from competitors, and to generate new revenue streams.

European and Australian universities look jealously at their counterparts in US universities and their ability to fund large numbers of young Indian researchers. As a response, many countries have sought to grow India-specific initiatives. Examples include:

Australia. The Government of Victoria has an Indian doctoral program targeting recruitment of Indian researchers, with individual awards totaling about US\$93,000.

Germany. The German government has strongly promoted opportunities for Indian doctoral researchers in German universities and research centers, charging no fees and offering stipends to cover living costs. The Indo-German Science Express Train, showcasing science, technology and Indo-German projects, attracted 2.2 million visitors during its 15,000 km journey around India in 2008.

France. The Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advanced Research was established in 1987 and has supported

over 400 cutting-edge research projects, linking French and Indian institutions.

European Union (EU). The EU supports partnerships with India, including through the Erasmus Mundus program and a special program, India4EU, which supports Indian mobility to Europe. The EMMA2012 initiative provides financing for Asian academics to spend time in European universities. Additionally, there are research initiatives, such as the joint project between the EU and the government of India for collaborative research in biosciences and water, with a budget of €32 million.

Foreign Degrees in India

The fitful progress of the Foreign Education Institutions Act through the Indian Parliament has been a fascinating reflection of the political tensions in the country. Currently, the legislation seems stalled. However, while many foreign universities have been awaiting the passage of the act before initiating work in India, over 600 are already reported by the Association of Indian Universities to be active in the country—with a few well-known foreign universities identified as operating outside the regulatory requirements!

Most teaching collaboration involves Indian private providers. While public universities welcome foreign partnerships, generally they are unable to charge sufficient student fees to meet the partnership costs. A study of foreign provision in India, supported by the British Council (Dhar, Bhushan, and Kemp 2008), offered insight into the variety of foreign programs available; over 600 were identified and these involved 161 non-Indian institutions. Most of the foreign institutions were based in the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and Canada, although small numbers of Swiss, German, French, and Singaporean entities were also represented in the mix. Research undertaken in 2010 for the Association of Indian Universities (Rahman, Mishra, and Bajpai 2012) identified 114 foreign programs and also indicated those ones that were operating outside the regulatory framework of India.

In terms of program structure and scope, the British Council study (2008) identified that 60 percent were full-time, degree-level offerings delivered by the Indian partner; 12 percent reported “flying tutor” support (whereby foreign faculty were occasionally physically present in India); and others included distance delivery. A limited survey of students indicated average fees of about US\$2,300 per year, although there were examples of some annual fees over US\$5,000. The low fee level suggests that reputable foreign providers would struggle to meet costs, if not working with one of the Indian “high-fee” providers. However, as many programs involve study at

the foreign partner's campus, typically within an articulation/twinning arrangement, these likely result in enhanced fees for the foreign partner.

The United Kingdom and India

Both the UK government and UK universities have in recent years prioritized growing relationships with India, building on significant historic and contemporary ties between the two countries. A primary example of this commitment is the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI), a jointly funded Indo-UK program supported by both governments. UKIERI is now in its second phase, with about US\$40 million committed to partnerships. Funding supports schools' "twinning" initiatives, research and teaching cooperation, student and researcher exchanges, vocational education and skills collaboration, and work placements in both directions.

Additionally, to support UK-India research growth, Research Councils UK (RCUK) opened an office in Delhi in 2008; this is one of only four RCUK overseas offices, the others being in the United States, China, and Brussels.

Most UK universities now have some form of Indian partnership and more than 30 have representative offices in India. These offices have varied roles but the priority for most is to grow research and teaching partnerships. They might also monitor the activities of their Indian recruitment agents and support staff and student exchanges. The complexities of Indian employment and taxation regulations mean that most foreign universities opt to manage their office through a local Indian company.

Understanding the Rules of the Game

It is immensely challenging to capture the full scope of the large number of foreign partnerships across Indian higher education. However, one simple observation is that research cooperation tends to involve India's publicly funded institutions, while collaborative degree delivery is mainly through partnerships with Indian private providers. Given the complexities associated with engaging with the latter (and Indian higher education, more generally), any foreign university seeking to develop programs is advised to seek local advice—including for appropriate partners and regulatory requirements (All India Council for Technical Education 2011). Patience and a commitment to relationship building for mutual benefit, over the long term, should also guide any serious approach to an "India partnership strategy."

Addressing Global Challenges: The University of Nebraska in India

James B. Milliken

Many of the world's most pressing challenges are global in scope and will require solutions that transcend national borders. These challenges include developing more sustainable agricultural production, so the world can feed itself; creating new approaches in public health; grappling with the causes and effects of climate change; exploring second- and third-generation sustainable fuels; and advancing early childhood development and education, to ensure that all people are better positioned to succeed.

As part of its mission as a 21st century land-grant university, the University of Nebraska is committed to addressing some of these great global challenges. We cannot solve any of the big problems confronting the world by ourselves. We are confident that solutions will come from important collaborations between American universities and their international partners who share a commitment to addressing these big issues. India is certainly one such partner, offering excellent opportunities for collaboration and advancement against global challenges.

Not surprisingly, collaboration with India today is taking a form different from many of the university's international activities over the last century. India presents us with some knotty issues to untangle if the promise of equitable advancement is to be realized. But in the long term, we believe the effort and the risks are more than worth it.

Why India?

Over the last few years, Nebraska has been developing and implementing a new strategic global engagement plan. That plan identified a number of the key elements related to choosing target countries with which we could collaborate to the greatest effect. India meets our criteria on several fronts:

- We have enjoyed a reasonable level of Nebraskan and Indian faculty engagement in research and benefitted from the flow of Indian talent to Nebraska for research, teaching, and study.
- We felt our students could be better prepared to play responsible roles in life with a deeper understanding of the dynamic and influential Indian nation and could find educational opportunities there to complement what our own university offers.

- The quality of many Indian higher education institutions provided excellent opportunities for peer-to-peer collaboration.
- In general, at the government and popular levels, India regarded the United States in a positive light, and there was great appeal to us in working with another diverse society with a strong commitment to democratic principles.
- Lastly, it was apparent that India's current leadership recognized the role of higher education in achieving economic prosperity and enhancing the quality of life. Though implementation will take time, India's plans to invigorate higher education and enhance its contributions to the nation marked India as the place we should seek partnerships.

Mutual Interests, Mutual Benefits

Throughout our approach to global engagement, we remain focused on our institutional mission: a 21st-century land-grant institution, charged with serving the people of our state—and the world—through teaching, research, and outreach. Our initiatives must first and foremost serve the people of Nebraska. But we and our stakeholders also recognize and embrace the fact that in doing so, we will have a role in helping to find solutions to some of the great challenges facing the world.

At the foundation, our agenda abroad is driven by mutual interest and mutual benefit. With India and other emerging global partners, we have shifted from traditional notions of development assistance. We believe what will sustain our collaborations in the long term—and attract other partners, as well—is our mutual interest in these areas, a mutual commitment of effort, and the mutual benefits we will experience working shoulder to shoulder toward solutions.

Thus, in India our areas of focus include improving agricultural productivity and water management in order to assure food security; developing treatments for diseases and enhancement of public health; identifying new energy sources; and providing opportunities for vulnerable children to succeed. Advances in these areas are important in both the United States and India, and they benefit the world at large. They are also areas in which the University of Nebraska has built significant strength.

Strategic Engagement

The key to our efforts in India has been our adoption of a strategic approach—not following up on every promising idea that comes along but rather taking advantage of targeted opportunities to really make a difference. Having identified our

thematic focus areas, we needed to choose the right partners—including partners on our own campuses and across the state. These include:

Faculty. At the University of Nebraska we have made it a high priority to break down traditional academic barriers through initiatives in our strategic focus areas that cross many disciplines on four campuses. Widening the stage for participation also allows us to draw in faculty with a personal commitment to India as well as those devoted to the disciplines of strategic focus.

Indian partner institutions. Careful discussion and negotiation has marked each of our successful and developing partnerships that have resulted in agreements and program activities. Face-to-face meetings in India and the United States between institutional leaders, including leaders in government, have been a necessary step to align specific agendas and reach agreement.

We sponsor symposia and joint discussion groups with prospective partners and invite representatives to speak at major conferences or on sponsored international meeting panels. An important element in our collaborative approach has been our willingness always to share full responsibility for leadership with our Indian partners.

We convey our seriousness of commitment through follow-on visits and invitations for students and staff to visit us in Nebraska, as well as requests for our students to participate in short programs at partner institutions or internships at business facilities.

Industry experts. Our efforts in agriculture also necessarily include farmers, ranchers, and industry across Nebraska, as well as scientists, policymakers, and farmers from India. We have engaged relevant leading private-sector partners—both Indian and US—governmental bodies in both countries, charitable foundations and nongovernmental organizations and, of course, leading universities.

International organizations and associations. Also, we find we can advance our joint objectives by involving international organizations and associations to magnify the importance of research and policy initiatives in India and the United States. For example, in the water for food area, we have worked with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, UNESCO-IHE, and the World Water Forum to help us identify the most-pressing priorities to address in sustainably increasing productivity, with less water.

We have been asked, as have other American universities, to create replicas of our institution in India. However, to a great extent the talent and institutional capacity allowing

significant progress already exists and is growing in India. We want to strengthen capacity and work with the public and private sectors there to advance their new ventures.

Challenges

Advancing our partnerships will require more than scholarship. We need to consider a number of issues that make collaboration in India less than easy. First, India is an institutionally complex society where decision making, even in the for-profit sector, proceeds at a pace and with a number of institutional and regulatory entities very different from those in the United States and in many other developed and/or developing countries.

Second, there is sometimes a lack of experience with or expectation of the need for bilateral equity of investment in new ventures, as well as a lack of understanding of the cost US public institutions must sustain to advance results-oriented research and practice. Although not insurmountable, such obstacles pose risk to even the most obvious cases for mutually profitable cooperation.

Finally, in the current economic climate, resources from the traditional US government development-assistance agencies for partnership building in India are limited, compared to the past. Where US government resources exist, they are not necessarily aligned with the specific global priorities identified by Nebraska and our Indian partners. The foundation sector, multilateral donor agencies and institutions, as well as US-backed entities—such as the National Institutes of Health and the US-Indo Science and Technology Forum—have helped in essential ways; but much of investment from our side is provided directly by the University of Nebraska.

Conclusion

We believe our work in India is an important investment that will pay long-term dividends for our university, our state, and the world. India is an indispensable partner in the transnational effort to address the truly big issues facing the world. At the University of Nebraska, we are confident that by engaging our faculty and those from higher education institutions in India in careful dialogue with representatives of the Indian government, the nongovernmental sector, and Indian and US business sectors we can make advances to meet global challenges and identify the resources necessary to support our shared priorities.

India and US Community Colleges

Miriam J. Carter, DeRionne Pollard, and Sanjay Rai

At the Wardha Conference in 1937, Mahatma Gandhi outlined several core ideas for an independent India—entitled *Nai-Taleem*, meaning “new education.” He described a model of holistic education for the masses that promoted vocational skills and social transformation. Education was seen as a tool to help eradicate poverty and build an egalitarian society. The community college model being envisaged in India today aligns with Gandhi’s ideals to democratize education, promote self-sufficiency, and encourage lifelong learning. Fulfilling the promise of *Nai-Taleem* means that 21st century community colleges must be flexible and responsive to meet the diverse social and economic challenges of India’s multilingual, multicultural, and multifaceted landscape.

Community Colleges: Multiple Needs and Roles

India is the world’s largest democracy, with over 1.2 billion people and an indisputably robust emerging market economy. Over the last two decades, India has experienced impressive economic growth and expects to add nearly 300 million people to its middle class by 2020. However, 37 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line, 70 percent lives in rural areas, and approximately 46 million Indians are currently unemployed. Eighty percent of new labor-market entrants have limited formal education and training. The gross enrollment ratio for higher education is only 12.4 percent, compared with 81 percent in the United States. Annually, 7 million youth complete secondary education; yet, only 36 percent enroll in colleges and universities. Also, a mere 25 percent of all postsecondary technical institute graduates are employable (NASSCOM and McKinsey 2005). This statistic is emblematic of a more pervasive disconnect between Indian higher education and the country’s workforce needs.

India has one of the youngest populations globally: the median age is 24, and around 40 percent of the population is under the age of 18. By 2025, India will have approximately 25 percent of the global workforce, a potential demographic dividend. Investing in high quality, affordable, and flexible education and training models is a national imperative.

Current Initiatives

To address educational inequities and massive workforce skills shortages, India has an ambitious goal to train 500 million of its citizens by 2022, with requisite skills and competencies for participation in the present and future labor market. Although 17 different ministries have training and

skills development portfolios, making coordination difficult, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) are the primary drivers of change. In an effort to integrate higher education and skills, the MHRD has an ambitious agenda to pilot 200 community colleges in the next 12 to 18 months. These institutions will be located in all 28 states, with a few additional colleges sanctioned for the northeast region. The amount of available funding has not been announced; however, rollout activities include a national conference on community colleges in the first quarter of 2013. Community college leaders from the United States will be among the keynote and content-specific speakers.

Adopting an Indian Approach

The Indian community college model is evolving after careful consideration of vocational education and skills development models around the world. The US community college is of particular interest due to its strong track record of preparing students for middle-level jobs. Adapting the American model to fit India's diverse sociocultural and economic milieu while delivering scalable, relevant, and sustainable vocational education and training is the present need, challenge, and opportunity for bilateral partnerships between Indian and US counterparts.

Unlike universities, US community colleges have historically provided open admissions to diverse populations, including marginalized students, adult learners, as well as first generation college students. Likewise, access and affordability will be key tenets going forward in India for community colleges to succeed in offering much-needed opportunities for educational and employment mobility, capable of nurturing and supporting the social and economic aspirations of all learners, and preparing them for the myriad challenges of a rapidly changing workforce.

The multiple missions of US community colleges—to provide career and vocational education, to offer transfer pathways to higher levels of education, and to stimulate economic and social development through community partnerships—will also have a central role in the Indian context. US colleges are tightly coupled with business and industry. Workforce development and career education programs align curricula to the needs of local employers within the knowledge economy, the service occupations, and the skilled, high-demand, blue-collar trades. Middle-class jobs are a specialty of community colleges, including those in construction and manufacturing, nursing and allied health, and green industries. US community colleges also partner with local stakeholders to advance development and growth. The American model fosters the possibility to connect. Practitioners in India will have to con-

nect with students and their families, helping them to understand the transformative role of the community college.

Immense Challenges

Like their US counterparts, community colleges in India will probably follow a modular, credit-based system that keeps abreast of technological and other workforce changes. Proposed courses and programs must have strong practical skills and general education components linked to global industry standards and requirements. Given high dropout rates and a strong informal labor market, multiple entry and exit points, and establishing systems for competency-based recognition of prior learning are essential in India. Transfer credit, however, is currently a novelty. Developing articulation systems and related policies and procedures between community colleges and anticipated vocational universities present multiple challenges in terms of bringing all stakeholders to common ground.

Moreover, another part of the equation is the need to change existing negative public perceptions toward vocations, in the face of the longstanding preference among many Indians for white-collar jobs. Obsolete training equipment needs to be replaced and with this are endless possibilities for innovative uses of technology and telecommunications, new pedagogy, and partnerships. Also, it is estimated that over 400,000 qualified community college instructors will be needed in the next 10 years, making teacher training an urgent concern.

Testing the Waters

Collaborative initiatives between Indian and US partners may prove useful for Indian advocates of a community college model for India—although US and Indian partners will need to bridge differences in work cultures and values to sustain multiple and often nuanced relationships with communities, government, and the private sector. One example of such collaboration can be seen in the relationship between Montgomery College (MC) and OP Jindal Community College (OPJCC), at the heart of which is an effort to build teaching and administrative leadership capacity. MC—one of the largest undergraduate institutions in Maryland—is a comprehensive, multicampus community college, which serves over 60,000 students from 170 countries annually through a combination of credit and noncredit continuing education programs. The college's curricula have traditionally emphasized global and cultural perspectives. The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at the United States Department of State awarded MC a US\$195,000, 12-month grant in 2010 to organize and coordinate a two-day national symposium on community colleges in New Delhi—to visit vocational and trade schools in

India and to host a delegation of Indian vocational instructors. The grant cultivated an enduring collaboration with OPJCC, a pioneering, philanthropic, nation-building initiative of Indian Industrialist Naveen Jindal. With five campuses and four adopted Industrial Training Institutes located across three states in India, OPJCC is a vanguard community college focused on developing a technically skilled, globally competent workforce among marginalized, rural youth. A shared vision and complementary capabilities have strengthened the bond between the two colleges.

Keeping an “Eye on the Prize”

The scale of need offers unique opportunities for US-Indo partnerships. Institutionalizing effective community college models will take time, staunch commitment, due diligence, and tactful tenacity to navigate differences in work ethic, infrastructure, and numerous practical implementation challenges. Bilateral knowledge exchanges and professional development, however, augur to be a win-win situation. Developing more employable learners for Indian and global industries will strengthen systems for international accreditation, student development, technical and curriculum/material development capacity, leadership development, continuing education, and educational research. These are a few new frontiers for US community colleges in India.

In today’s context of globalization, India and the United States have become natural allies with a history of successful collaboration in key sectors, notably the Green Revolution and the establishment of the globally renowned Indian Institutes of Technology. Collaborations in the development of a dynamic community college model for India have the potential to be of far-reaching global significance for US higher education and skills development in India.

Exploring Future Student Recruitment in India

Wesley Teter

Driven by demand for quality higher education and well-paying jobs, approximately 226,000 Indian students studied abroad in 2010, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Each year, over 100,000 of those students choose the United States, investing US\$2.9 billion annually in the US economy. It is worth noting that the Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institute of Science, Indian Statistical Institute, and Indian Institutes of Management are high-quality local

institutions, among others. However, due in part to a weak quality-assurance system, second-tier schools are of widely varying standards. As a result, students that do not make it into the top Indian schools are likely to explore their options abroad. Given limited local access to quality higher education, an increasing number of students will search for opportunities in Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and the United States. As the top destination for study abroad, the first question most of these students ask is not *why* study in the United States, but *how*.

Current Challenges

Despite the popularity of the United States as a study abroad destination, a number of challenges have led to a decline in degree-seeking students from India. In fact, most US institutions are now facing a steep decline in new student enrollment.

Over the past three years, participation in Optional Practical Training (OPT) increased 36 percent, offsetting a 14 percent drop in degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students (see figure 1). OPT allows up to 12 months of practical training to foreign students enrolled full time in degree programs, plus an additional 17 months to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) students. In other words, Indian students are staying in the United States longer through OPT while new enrollments have declined, which is detrimental to future trends. The latest enrollment figures paint a similar picture. According to a State Department official, preliminary statistics show approximately 23,400 F-1 visas were granted to Indian nationals from October 2011 to September 2012, a 9.6 percent decline from the previous year.

This downward trend is linked largely to financial and economic challenges in India. Increasing costs, as well as additional scrutiny during the visa interview (see below), are perceived as significant barriers. Facing market insecurity and weak investment, the Indian rupee dropped 24 percent against the US dollar from January 2011 to June 2012. Families are budgeting and leveraging resources, but many cannot keep up.

According to a survey of prospective international students by World Education Services, 27 percent of Indian respondents had adequate financial resources to afford an overseas education, compared to 60 percent of Chinese respondents (World Education Services 2012). Obtaining information about tuition, living costs, and financial aid was important for respondents from India: 46 percent selected “tuition and living costs” and 38 percent selected “financial aid opportunities” among their top three information needs. Common recommendations to better serve these students include

consolidating partial scholarships and promoting aspects of degree programs that enhance career prospects—such as internships and career counseling. The following section highlights these considerations and emerging recruitment opportunities.

Recruitment Strategies

Recruiting in India can be invigorating and exhausting and sometimes both at the same time. Student recruitment agents offer few certainties, yet they thrive in major cities like Hyderabad. Many of them guarantee admissions or visas to their students, but none of them should. Regardless of whether an institution uses agents, EducationUSA should be the first point of contact for accredited US institutions recruiting in India. The network of six advising centers and roughly 20 staff supported by the US Department of State offers US higher education fairs, country briefings, outreach presentations, and free counseling services to over 18,000 student contacts a year. From Bangalore and Chennai in the south to Kashmir in the north, EducationUSA can be a bridge to diverse and highly motivated applicants throughout the country.

India is a complex recruiting environment, with seemingly endless promotional tools and services; and yet no single approach will be universally effective. One of the few unifying facts is that prospective students and their families are looking for a high-quality degree that will lead directly to a promising career. Short of guaranteeing professional success, there are several key ingredients to attracting high-quality applicants.

Develop a clear and simple recruitment message. Most Indian students, families, and the government as a whole are sensitive, and rightly so, to being perceived as a “cash cow” for foreign colleges and universities. Emphasizing the high quality of the academic experience will help parents understand the value of a once-in-a-lifetime investment. Campus resources—like expensive athletic facilities, dorms, or dining halls—can raise questions about the academic rigor or seriousness of the institution, not to mention cost implications. Messages about academic quality, internship opportunities, and a vision for long-term career success should be deeply integrated into outreach presentations and customized materials. Institutions that deliver a clear recruitment message year after year will have long-term success.

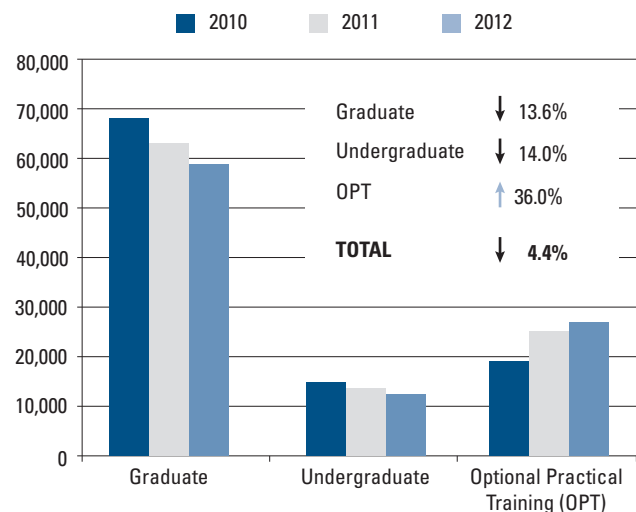
Come to India (and visit “Tier II” cities). As prosperity spreads, more recruitment fairs and groups of peer institutions will be traveling to “Tier II” cities—such as Ahmedabad, Pune, Jaipur, Lucknow (and many others)—which are worth visiting in person. An increasing number of people living in these large urban areas have high aspirations for social mobility. However,

they may face barriers such as a lack of proficiency in English and are more susceptible to misleading information, which make an in-person visit all the more important. Wherever possible, visiting recruiting staff should partner with alumni, parents of students, and other potential institutional ambassadors to help set up visits and meetings. US faculty traveling overseas or Fulbright Scholars can also be powerful advocates. These personal contacts and leads should be actively cultivated across a recruitment plan of three to five years.

Leverage new technology and traditional media. The US Embassy in New Delhi maintains close contact with India’s bustling media complex, in addition to an impressive 142,000 contacts on Facebook and a popular e-magazine called SPAN. When US scholars or presidents visit, they should consider requesting a Facebook Q&A interview or offer to go on local television and discuss new research, relevant technology breakthroughs, or broader topics such as study in the United States. Previous TV and newspaper interviews have generated a buzz for the United States and raised the profile of institutional leaders.

Take the long view on student recruitment. In 2009, after suspicion that crimes in Australia against Indian students were racially motivated, the number of university applicants to Australia from India fell by half. There are no shortcuts to recruiting prospective Indian students; news about any missteps or abuse spreads rapidly. Ethical recruiting and strong international student services support the outstanding reputation of US higher education. The reverse is also true—a focus on commercial interests alone, both in the United States and India, poses a significant threat to confidence levels and mutual understanding.

Figure 1: Indian Student Enrollment Trends 2010 - 2012



Source: Open Doors (IIE 2011, 2012)

The full recruitment and enrollment cycle requires a somewhat conservative and long-term approach.

As recruitment efforts increase, it is important that international student services and career support on campus adapt and grow, as well. For example, international students need additional career services as they prepare for OPT and explore future employment opportunities, both of which are incentives to study in the United States. The additional engagement and emphasis on international student support will lead to long-term rewards and benefits, especially as students face the final hurdle of getting a coveted US student visa.

Play an active role on student visas. US consular officers aim to approve every legitimate student visa application. However, due to the well-publicized Tri-Valley visa fraud case in 2011 and related concerns, officers are on the lookout for students who may have been deceived by fraudulent institutions or who themselves intend to enter the United States for nonacademic purposes. Visa fraud and misinformation are persistent challenges, which the embassy proactively addresses through student outreach. Nevertheless, students express frustration with visa interviews, describing them as “brusque” and “terrifying,” creating a regrettably tense environment for qualified students.

To help address these concerns, consular officers at the US embassy and consulates are willing to meet with university and college representatives during their visits to India. These can be invaluable meetings to discuss visa-related trends, questions, and opportunities to help legitimate students reach the United States. Each US institution recruiting in India should track its visa refusal rates and monitor student perceptions of why they were approved or denied. These data can inform decision making about recruitment spending and enrollment management.

Planning for the Future

The trends and recommendations above outline a framework to evaluate and enhance student recruitment activities in India. With a deeper understanding of the rising middle class, institutions can confidently build on their plans to attract the next generation of leaders from one of the world’s great economic powers. The current student mobility trends also illustrate the urgent need for universities and colleges to work together to raise the profile of study in the United States and develop long-term goals for India-US cooperation. EducationUSA and the US Mission to India will continue to play a supporting role in ensuring the visibility and accessibility of US higher education to qualified Indian students.

US Study Abroad in India

Shannon Cates and Jonathan Ferguson

US study abroad has had a presence in India for decades. The University of Wisconsin has run a program in India since 1961, and Antioch College’s semester-length Buddhist Studies program began operations in 1979. More recently, however, there has been a surge of US students studying in India. Over the past 10 years, study abroad enrollment in India has increased by 479 percent, from 750 in 2000/01 to 4,345 in 2010/11 (IIE 2012). While students in India represent only about 1.5 percent of the 273,996 US students studying abroad annually, demand for programming in India has risen to new heights, and a variety of programs are now available to students.

Increasing Presence

Part of this growth is due to general increases in study-abroad participation, which grew 78 percent from 2000/01 to 2010/11. But there are also other factors at work. For example, the economic reforms of the 1990s have led to India’s increased participation in the international community, along with deeper engagement with the United States in diverse areas. As a result, more and more US students perceive India as a location of rapid change and development in a multitude of areas. This is a shift from just a decade ago, when the US students going to India tended to be largely focused on religious studies, anthropology, and the humanities. Now, students come from a wider swath of disciplines, including international relations, economics, business, journalism, and the health sciences. Today’s US students perceive India as a location of rapid change and development in areas like public health, environmental studies, social entrepreneurship, and women’s studies. Interestingly, undergraduate students majoring in engineering, math, and computer science continue to be underrepresented across study-abroad destinations, including India, despite India’s strengths in these fields.

The two countries’ higher education communities are also now coming together more frequently, and in a concerted way. Recent US-India Higher Education Dialogues have examined and sought to correct the imbalance of student flows between the two countries (McMurtrie 2011). In recent years, the United States-India Educational Foundation (US-IEF) has supported efforts to improve ties between American and Indian institutions by engaging and connecting institutions through its Office of US-India Higher Education Cooperation. USIEF also serves as one of the administrators of the Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative (OSI),

which distributes funding to American and Indian institutions that support faculty exchanges, joint research, and other collaboration. The US Department of State has also launched its Passport to India program, an initiative that seeks to build the next generation of leaders with India expertise by increasing opportunities for American students in India.

Program Models

In terms of undergraduate study abroad, the widespread institutional efforts to engage with India are usually manifested through one of three program models: direct enrollment; short-term/faculty-led programming; and programs administered by university consortia and/or third-party providers. It is important to keep in mind that the boundaries of these models often blur as many US universities now work together with consortia and program providers to provide students with a curated academic experience through customized programming.

Direct Enrollment

Direct enrollment, either through a bilateral exchange or a “one-way” institutional agreement, can provide undergraduates with an experience that is both unfiltered and inexpensive. This model affords participants a high degree of academic immersion and often represents the least expensive approach for universities in terms of tuition export. However, such arrangements may carry significant administrative commitments. Also, direct enrollment may provide only limited cultural orientation, student support services, and academic options focused on learning about India.

Short-Term/Faculty-Led

The faculty-led program model can meet both student- and faculty-focused institutional internationalization goals. Faculty-led programs are usually short-term, between two and eight weeks in length, in order to accommodate the faculty member’s on-campus teaching responsibilities. Such programs provide students with a more supportive environment than direct-enrollment options. Students may also feel less daunted because they are accompanied by a familiar faculty member. Short-term programs, including faculty-led options, continue to grow in popularity. During the 2010/11 academic year, students engaged in short-term programs accounted for 58 percent of all study-abroad participants (IIE 2012).

In the case of both direct-enrollment and faculty-led programs, operating in India requires a high level of administrative expertise, encompassing legal issues, employment policies, visa procedures, and banking regulations. In many cases, these factors will require collaboration with a service

organization like the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), in order to manage complexities related to visa issuance and money transfer, and to ensure that a given program operates legally in-country. In other cases, institutions with ample support from upper administration and a desire to commit to a presence in India for the long term can take the steps necessary to operate more independently, as a legally recognized entity in India.

University Consortia and Third-Party Providers

Due to operational challenges, a lack of dedicated staff and resources on US campuses, and the relatively small numbers of undergraduates seeking study in India, the US study-abroad landscape in India is largely made up of students participating in programs offered by consortia or program providers.

In general, most students going to India want to “study India” just as much as they want to study a specific discipline. Facilitated programs managed by organizations—such as CIEE, SIT, IES, SITA, AIFS, ISA, and the Alliance for Global Education—can offer courses designed to introduce US students to India. Often taught by Indian faculty, these are courses such as “Contemporary Indian Society” or “Introduction to the History of India,” which would not be offered by Indian universities for their own students. Through field visits, directed research, internships, apprenticeships, and homestays, the courses also help students access areas of Indian culture that they would not otherwise find on their own.

Challenges for Students and Advisors

Typically, US students have very high expectations regarding all aspects of the university experience, from academic rigor to student services. Few US students are prepared for a direct enrollment experience in India. Indian universities and the Indian higher education system are rooted in the British model, affecting assumptions about preuniversity preparation, calendar and scheduling, professor-student dynamics, style and delivery of lectures, difficulty of readings, assessments, and student services. And of course, the cultures are different: gender roles, issues of personal space, sense of time, bargaining, curfews, etiquette, and the emphasis on the community over the individual. There are physical challenges, too: living spaces are different, the climate is different, the food is different, pollution in cities is prevalent, and population densities can be overwhelming. Students often fall ill early in their stay and find themselves exhausted at the end of each day. All of this adds up to a very demanding study-abroad experience.

Helping students to manage and process their experience throughout their time abroad is critical to their success in

India. Equally important is the predeparture advising and preparation they receive before they go. Ethan Merritt, Senior Study Abroad Advisor at American University (AU) in Washington, DC, has seen students deal with these challenges firsthand. Over the past few years, AU has sent dozens of undergraduates to India. Mr. Merritt says that, “Students come back from India in almost unanimous agreement that it was one of the most difficult things they had ever done, but also that the experience was immeasurably rewarding and one they would do again.” He requires students going to India to meet with him before applying, and he conducts a required India-specific predeparture orientation for students each semester. Such orientation programs typically address issues ranging from health and safety to host family and classroom etiquette.

Advising is especially important given the differences in academia and the practical challenges of daily life in India. Advisors must help students temper romantic and “orientalized”

assumptions about India and present a balanced picture of what to expect. They must also work with students to set loose expectations for what they can accomplish during their time abroad. It is important to emphasize the ongoing need to be flexible, anticipate contradictions, and embrace ambiguity while in India.

Room for Growth

Establishing a presence in India can be difficult and full of obstacles, and US students do typically find their experiences in India academically, culturally, and physically challenging. But, these challenges yield unique rewards. The potential for higher education collaboration between the United States and India is immense, and while the American study-abroad presence in India has more than quadrupled in enrollment over the past 10 years, there is still plenty of room for future growth.

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Editors’ note:

Educational statistics in India can be difficult to gather and verify. The authors and editors have taken pains to provide the most accurate and up-to-date statistical information available, but readers will note that some statistics in this publication may be somewhat contradictory. The editors wish thank Mr. Eldho Mathews of the Indian Planning Commission for his assistance in our effort to assure statistical accuracy.

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