2010 IIE International Academic Partnership Program (IAPP) Strategic Report

Focus Country: India

Florida Atlantic University
January 30, 2011
Introduction

Florida Atlantic University was one of ten schools participating in the Institute for International Education International Academic Partnership Program (IAPP) India 2010 initiative, which was designed to assist U.S. universities seeking new partnerships with higher education institutions in India. Since March 2010 the faculty and staff of Florida Atlantic University have been studying changes in Indian higher education, identifying interests within Florida Atlantic University (FAU) colleges and departments for more interaction with universities and formulating pilot strategies to a) increase faculty and scholarly engagement with Indian institutions, b) send more FAU students to India for study abroad, and c) attract more Indian students to FAU for degree and non degree exchange studies. These efforts have been led by Dr. Catherine Meschievitz, Director of the Office of International Programs (OIP) and an 18 member India Task Force from across the university and local community.  

The highlight of the calendar 2010 activities was an IIE IAPP Study Tour sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education November 5-15, 2010. Dr. Meschievitz represented FAU on this tour and extended her visit to India for an additional week to visit selected schools in New Delhi, Chennai and Manipal. A trip report by Dr. Meschievitz was distributed widely across FAU faculties, departments and colleges to share information gleaned from the study tour, and also sent to fellow representatives from the 9 other participating universities on the Study Tour. The FAU India Task Force will resume meetings in late January 2011 to finalize recommendations and monitor next steps in expanding ties to India. These steps are likely to include identification of top schools to approach for selected fields (e.g. engineering, medicine, global health, business, arts and letters), follow up travel to and from India, fund raising and expanded international student recruitment activities.

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1 Director of the Office of International Programs and coordinator of the India Initiative at FAU.
2 India Task Force Members: Piyush Agarwal (GOPIO of South Florida), Som Bhattacharya and Donna Cooke (Business), Camille Coley (Division of Research), Adriana Cronin and Barbara Pletcher (Undergraduate Admissions), Dott Dunn (Nursing), Jacqueline Fewkes (Honors College), Greg Gayle and Charlene Hickson (Graduate College), Hari Kalva (Engineering), Rainhald Kastner-Schmidt (Medical School), David Kumar (Education), Salvatore Lepore (Chemistry), Doug McGetchin (Arts and Letters), Catherine Meschievitz (International Programs), Mihaela Metianu (International Students and Scholar Services), Mara Schiff and Alka Sarpate (Criminal Justice).
Campus Conversations - The FAU community engaged in a series of campus conversations from March to December 2010 on the potential for and interest in expanded ties to universities and academic institutes in India. Initial notices and emails to faculty, deans and staff alerting them to the initiative were followed by an open Town Meeting and Forum to discuss the IAPP effort and solicit ideas and expressions of interest. Then FAU President John Pritchett wrote about the effort in his monthly column on the main FAU webpage to highlight the initiative and show strong leadership and support from his office. A campus India Task Force was formed in April 2010 with the approval of the Provost Office and campus Deans for each college representative. Dr. Meschievitz invited a faculty member from each college to serve, seeking those with special experience, interest and ties to India. We specifically wanted to create a separate targeted committee that was not overlapping with the already existing advisory FAU Council on International Education. Representatives from several offices engaged in international activity were also added to the Task Force (e.g. international student services, admissions for undergraduate and graduate students, graduate college and the division of research).

The Task Force met as a group in June 2010, early November 2010, and December 1, 2010. During the summer several colleges also held smaller focus groups of faculty and staff to drill down for college specific interests and plans. Other colleges have decided to wait and hold college forums in 2011. Dr. Meschievitz also met individually with Task Force members on different issues. Beneficial to the work of the Task Force was the simultaneous creation of the FAU International Education Working Group (IEWG), a group organizing activities to increase international student recruitment efforts. OIP also created a web page labeled “India 2010” where we provided a short description of the IAPP India efforts for FAU and loaded various documents on Indian higher education, Task Force members and how to contact them, minutes of all meetings, and essays and articles from blogs and newsletters of interest. (see http://fau.edu/goabroad/India_2010.php).

Fall 2010 Strategic Planning Worksheet - Dr. Meschievitz completed the Strategic Planning worksheet document in late August on behalf of the Task Force. The worksheet was meant to be a work in progress, since many faculty were gone in the summer, and summarized tentative plans as of that date. Our IIE mentor Dr. Molly Easo Smith President of Manhattanville College provided a useful feedback document, followed by a phone call to Dr. Meschievitz that noted the happy confluence of the IAPP India effort and recent UISFL federal grant for curriculum development for Asian Studies. Linked to the latter grant were goals to increase study abroad activity to locations in Asia, including India. Dr. Smith also recommended we ask Dr. Piyush Agrarwal of the South Florida Global Organization of Persons of Indian Origin (GOPIO) to join the Task Force, and we are pleased he accepted our invitation. A quick review of the planning worksheet reveals no major changes to our overall strategies, however Dr. Meschievitz’s visit to Manipal University and the related TAPMI business institute in the second week of the trip to India may result in more activity in the area of business education, the medical sciences, and global health than we had originally predicted.

The November 2010 India Study Tour - The November 2010 Study Tour was an invaluable element of the entire initiative, since it allowed Dr. Meschievitz (and others at FAU vicariously) to learn first hand about the current situation in Indian universities and higher education trends. The trip took place at an exciting time, i.e. the same week when President
Barack Obama was in India. The excitement and potential for new ties and arrangements was palpable in every meeting with faculty and deans, matching the expressions of goodwill and new collaborative activities at the presidential leadership level. Different types of institutions were on the schedule, allowing each tour member to see the breadth and potential for different types of linkages. In addition, Dr. Meschievitz spent the second week visiting Jawaharlal Nehru University’s Centre for the Study of Social Systems to explore possible linkages, our current partner IIT Madras, and Manipal University on the west coast of Karnataka. Dr. Meschievitz’s trip report and appendices can be read at the OIP website noted above.

How FAU Can Benefit from More Robust Partnerships in India

FAU stands ready to benefit in many different ways from more robust partnerships in India. Our current Memorandum of Understanding with IIT Madras on Ocean Engineering and informal linkages with Nirma University will both be strengthened immediately this spring by new activities in Chennai and a new Agreement of Cooperation with Nirma respectively. Other activities with our current College of Education partner Kada Sarva Vidyalayawa (KSV) appear on track and will continue as before.

New activities we hope to develop with various institutions over time include:

--recruitment of international students for FAU undergraduate degrees (a co-op agreement can be created for full fee paying students in a 3+1 or 2+2 scheme)

--some fields in the sciences will be able to offer graduate level international students access to graduate degree programs with GTA stipends and tuition waivers

--1:1 non degree student exchanges to allow traffic in both directions and tuition to be waived at FAU if the exchange is balanced

--participation in summer or semester long study abroad programs in selected locations in India, including the development of faculty led short term programs to India

--joint research activities for faculty and scientists in the emerging biomedical research fields of the FAU Charles Schmidt College of Science, Charles Schmidt College of Medicine, the Scripps Institute and Max Planck Florida

--specialized training programs in the US or India (internships, field placements, J-1 interns to FAU)

--intensive English training linked to later admission to a degree program

--double degree programs

FAU will benefit from these activities since they will increase student and faculty exchange, expose of students to the unique culture and changing global economic scene of modern India, allow for innovative new courses on South Asia and India, strengthen the current
Asian Studies program, foster extramural grant writing, and enable expanded engagement with the local Indian communities of South Florida.

**Next Steps: Plans and Implementation**

- **Immediate follow-up at a few initial target schools in India**

  Nirma University – A new Agreement of Cooperation with Nirma will create a 2+2 program for undergraduate engineering students, create a summer workshop at FAU on rotating research topics for Indian and American students, and promote collaborative research and possible double degrees.

  Manipal University – Faculty will be encouraged to travel to Manipal to visit the TAPMI, medical science departments and the Engineering program looking for 3+1 partners. OIP will also follow the new Global Alliance Study Abroad Program at Manipal to see if it is a good fit for FAU students.

  IIT Madras – FAU College of Engineering and Computer Science and specifically the Ocean Engineers will work more closely with IITM staff on several grant projects, initially targeting funds in India. This will expand out existing activities to deeper levels.

  JNU Centre for the Study of Social Systems – FAU’s Arts and Letters College and Dept. of Sociology will host Prof Vivek Kumar on his Fulbright in 2011-2012; Kumar will teach a course on Dalits and help develop plans for more ties to the center.

  Lady Shri Ram College for Women – FAU’s Center for Womens Studies and Peace Studies Program will be encouraged to invite faculty from LSR to be a featured international visitor(s) at FAU in the next 12-18 months.

- **Faculty and staff travel to and from India.**

  OIP will work with colleges and units to help finance travel to and from India for partnership development from the above institutions and others than emerge as potential partners. OIP will try to create a flexible fund for this purpose that all colleges can apply to on a matching basis.

- **Identify funding sources to support India efforts**

  OIP will circulate news of the RFP for the Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative and assist faculty in developing competitive proposals with partners we have located.

  OIP and colleges will promote applications for Fulbright grants to and from India.

  The FAU Research Division will keep faculty alerted to science and engineering and NIH grants as part of the Obama “soft diplomacy” program in the sciences.
International student recruitment from India

The IEWG is distributing a new International Student Recruitment brochure and a Jump Drive loaded with specific FAU materials to over 300 EducationUSA offices around the world.

The IEWG will approach the Office of the Provost and President to discuss the formal creation of an international student recruitment strategy with adequate resources assigned to allow Phase II activities to be planned and executed between Spring 2011 and the AY 2011-2012. If this is approved a major emphasis will be placed on locating top students from India.

Moving Forward

In order to move forward with our plans for broader engagement with institutions in India, FAU will need to mobilize interested faculty and deans, convince campus leadership of the many potential benefits to the university noted above, and locate internal and external funding to support these and other activities for the foreseeable future. It is not necessary that every FAU college be engaged in India, since interests and capacities and “fit” will vary by field. However, it will be critical to get moving in a few strategic areas to show progress and the potential for successful engagement. Perhaps the most important tool for facilitating early actions will be targeted strategic travel to India of FAU faculty, staff and leaders and similarly targeted strategic travel to FAU our counterparts at Indian institutions. We will need to locate travel funds from various university sources. The Task Force will continue to meet through Spring 2011, and then in May decide what role if any it wants to retain. Specific Agreements of Cooperation and other collaborative activities that are pursued will be handled through normal operating and approval processes managed by OIP in coordination with the sponsoring College Dean’s Office, and the Offices of the Provost and the President.