Partnership 2020: Leveraging US-India Cooperation in Higher Education to Harness Economic Opportunities and Innovation is a project funded by the U.S. Department of State and executed by the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) playing a key advisory role. It is a three-year project with most of the activities taking place in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

This quarterly newsletter serves as a way for college and university leaders, U.S. and Indian policymakers, and other relevant stakeholders to receive updates on Partnership 2020 work, new funding opportunities, policies, employment opportunities, and best practices in higher education partnerships.

How: Transitioning U.S. STEM Diaspora Back to India

In every edition we feature an article from a higher education leader explaining how they launched a U.S.-India partnership and what they are doing now. This edition's piece is by Dr. Aseem Ansari and Dr. Manali Ghosh. Dr. Ansari is the founder of WINStep Forward and Dr. Ghosh is the director of global STEM operations at WINStep Forward.

In 2020, there were more than 150,000 students from India enrolled in U.S. STEM programs. Once these students complete their training, transitioning back to India can prove arduous—both personally and professionally. To dismantle barriers for U.S.-trained STEM professionals to develop careers in India, WINStep Forward (WSF), a U.S.-based nonprofit dedicated to promoting transnational science and technology exchange, created Science and Technology Research Opportunities in India (Sci-ROI).
Sci-ROI was born in 2015 with the mission to create awareness of newly emerging opportunities and aid in the smooth transition of the Indian STEM diaspora back to India. Run entirely by a vibrant group of volunteers, Sci-ROI organizes annual events, recruitment drives, focused webinars, blogs, and newsletters to highlight the wide range of newly emerging career opportunities in India. Working closely with WSF, Sci-ROI also provides a platform for exploring new collaborative initiatives between India and the United States that leverage the strengths of both nations.

The need for such engagement was evident since Sci-ROI’s inception, as the annual events organized by Sci-ROI filled up quickly and included participants from a broad array of scientific and engineering disciplines. Attended by high-level policymakers, the in-person Sci-ROI annual event only benefited U.S.-based Indian STEM professionals. This changed with the first virtual annual event in 2020, which reached young Indian professionals across the globe and revealed common challenges, resulting in key recommendations for successfully launching a career in India. These include planning transitions one to two years in advance, tracking opportunities through multiple job and career portals, identifying responsive administrators at individual institutions and companies, addressing key stumbling blocks in application packages, applying for transition fellowships and grants beforehand, and building mentoring and support networks through organizations like Sci-ROI.

In 2021, WSF will launch Sci-ROI@India, a network of STEM professionals in India that will facilitate the following:

- Collaborative research and problem-solving between academic, industry, and non-academic professionals
- Mentorship of transitioning Indian STEM diaspora
- Mentorship of undergraduates in research initiation
- Open discussions of global scientific problems and their solutions in the local Indian context

With the creation of a high-quality network, Sci-ROI@India intends to nurture further thought leaders and visionaries to think globally, identify new modes of engagement, and present unconventional solutions to long-standing STEM challenges and opportunities.

What: Internationalization in India and the Imperative to be Locally Global

In this edition, we feature an internationalization perspective from Dr. Rajika Bhandari, founder of Rajika Bhandari Advisors and author of America Calling: A Foreign Student in a Country of Possibility.

The concept of internationalization is not new to Indian higher education. Whether in the form of Indian students’ mobility to the West since the 1800s to obtain a sought-after foreign degree or in the form of building institutions, the Indian higher education mindset has been significantly shaped by global ideas. Even the famed Indian Institutes of Technology, or IITs—widely regarded as a quintessential Indian academic brand—were influenced by institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, with nine U.S. institutions involved in setting up and shaping IIT Kanpur in the 1960s.

Today, India’s new New Education Policy (NEP) heralds a new era, offering the potential for a comprehensive and more empowered form of internationalization for Indian higher education institutions, which would enable them...
to be world-class and compete as equal partners on the global stage. One key aspect of this is the notion of “internationalization at home,” which means internationalizing the curriculum, pedagogy, and contributions by faculty and better integrating international students and scholars from other countries.

In my experience of researching global trends in international higher education for almost two decades, I have learned that there is an implicit belief that internationalization implies the movement of students. But this is an assumption that needs to be challenged, given the realities of access to global education opportunities as well as the pandemic and its short- and longer-term impacts on internationalization. While in absolute terms the number of Indian students studying abroad is large—750,000—this number represents only about 1 percent of India’s college-aged population. This raises the question: How are the remaining 99 percent to become global citizens and be competitive in a global economy?

The answer is for Indian institutions to develop and implement their own campus-based comprehensive internationalization policies, supported by the NEP, which allows for greater autonomy for institutions’ international activities as well as a greater focus on research. This will not only enhance the potential for India’s international research collaboration but will also help retain Indian talent in the STEM fields, where students typically go abroad in search of better research opportunities. It will also help attract more international students and faculty from around the world who value a serious commitment to research and innovation.

The moment is ripe to explore and experiment with internationalization models that work best in the Indian context while allowing for Indian and U.S. institutions to be true partners and collaborators.

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**Funding Opportunities**

**NASRA Foundation** is offering scholarships to U.S. citizens of Indian descent starting college. Accepting applications for 2022-2023. [Apply Here](#)

**Fulbright-Kalam Climate Fellowship** will be accepting doctoral, postdoctoral, and academic/professional fellows for 2022-2023. Apply by September 15, 2021. [Application Page](#)

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**Policy Updates**

**University Grants Commission (UGC)** notifies regulations for creating an academic credit bank. [Gazette Notification](#)

UGC publishes guidelines for internationalization on the one-year anniversary of the New Education Policy. [Guidelines for Internationalization](#)

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**Career Opportunities**

Harvard University is seeking an executive director for their Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute. [Application Guidelines](#)

UCLA is looking for a South Asia and Southeast Asia studies lecturer. Apply by March 2022. [Application Guidelines](#)