

Fact Sheet on MoU between Department of Science and Technology, Department of Space and US Universities on E-Learning.

Washington, DC
July 20, 2005

During the US visit of the Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, a Memorandum of Understanding is stated for conclusion on July 20, 2005, between Indian Department of Space, Department of Science and Technology (DST), Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (Amrita University) and the following US Universities - The University of California, at Berkeley and San Diego, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, The University at Buffalo, New York, Stanford University, California & Research Centers: California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology, (Cal-IT2), Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS) & Corporate Partners: Microsoft Corporation and Qualcomm Incorporated.

This agreement would offer Indo-US cooperation on e-learning to enhance technical education in India. In cooperation with US Universities as Resource Partners. The Resource Partners would encourage their faculty to participate in this programme and allow them to share their teaching material with the Indian counterparts. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) would provide the necessary transponder capacity and bandwidth on their satellite EDUSAT that is already dedicated to education. ISRO will also provide VSAT Hubs/teaching-end infrastructure and establish the ground infrastructure at participating educational institutions. Initially, around 25 selected educational institutions are expected to participate in the programme. The Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), an autonomous body under the Department of Science & Technology, will enable the creation of e-learning contents, capture them in multimedia rich course material and archive them for continued use. The Indo-US S&T Forum will facilitate implementation of this initiative. Microsoft India has committed to defray the expenses of visiting faculty from the US institutions.

The proposed program holds great promise of taking advantage of the

tremendous synergy between the United States and India, and makes it possible to build a truly ambitious education system in advanced technology areas. The program exploits efficient digital connectivity through satellite and interactive technologies developed by ISRO and Amrita University with a view to further enhance academic standard in educational institutions. The program also ensures quick and simultaneous delivery of lecture sessions to undergraduate (BS, B.Tech, B.E.) and postgraduate (MS, M.Tech, M.E. -and Ph.D.) level college and university students and for teachers training all over India using the ISRO's Satellite network, and the eLearning facilities at Amrita University. It also provides access to subject experts and repeatability of delivery of lectures from the archives. All the parties have agreed to work together for effectively imparting quality education and research covering the disciplines of Computer• Science & Engineering, Information and Communication Technologies, Electronics & Communication, Manufacturing, Biotechnology and Bioinformaticg, Healthcare, etc.