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## Newsroom

### US and India Universities Collaborate on Engineering E-learning Programme

The University of California (UC) and four other U.S. universities will join with Indian institutions to enhance material engineering science and nanotechnology education in India, over a new satellite e-learning network.

Funding for U.S. participation in the program will come from QUALCOMM Inc., Microsoft Corp., and Cadence Design Systems, Inc.

Although representatives could not confirm precise details of the program, they do state that the focus will initially be on engineering and computer science, but courses will also include materials science, nanotechnology and potentially composites.

"We are delighted to forge this new partnership between Indian institutions and the UC system," said Gretchen Kalonji, Director of International Strategy Development for UC's Office of the President. "By expanding opportunities for international academic collaborations in critical fields, this partnership will not only help keep the University of California competitive -- but it will help drive global innovation and economic prosperity."

Under the agreement, UC Berkeley and UC San Diego, as well as Carnegie Mellon University, Cornell University, the State University of New York at Buffalo, and Case Western Reserve University will encourage engineering faculty to spend a quarter or semester of their sabbatical at AMRITA University in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. AMRITA will extend use of its e-learning centre, making it possible to be beamed over Edusat, a satellite launched by the Indian Space Research Organization to transmit educational programming to multiple educational institutions throughout India.

"It is in everyone's interest to raise the level of engineering education in the global economy," said Frieder Seible, Dean of the Jacobs School of Engineering, who represented UCSD at the signing ceremony. "We expect some of the very best and brightest students participating in this program to come to the U.S. for post-graduate education, giving U.S. technology leaders such as Microsoft and QUALCOMM access to more world-class engineers. So programs like this offer benefits to India and the United States alike."

Composed of four relatively new campuses, AMRITA - established by the world renowned humanitarian organization Mata Amritanandamayi Math -- is developing world-classis developing undergraduate and graduate engineering courses to be delivered over Edusat, a satellite launched by the Indian Space Research Organization to transmit educational programming. Other Indian partners in the project include the Government of India, and the country's Department of Science and Technology.

"The U.S. universities in this agreement are first-tier engineering schools that can help offset the imbalance in the quality of professors in India's fastest growing colleges and universities," said Venkat Rangan, Vice Chancellor of AMRITA University, a former professor of computer science and engineering at

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UCSD's Jacobs School, and a graduate of both UC Berkeley and the Indian Institute of Technology. "With the help of American professors, these satellite courses will turn more students into top-level engineers, not just for India, but potentially for Ph.D. programs and businesses in the U.S. as well."

Three U.S. research centers are partners to the agreement: UC's Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS); the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2); and Carnegie Mellon's CyLab.

The program will expose U.S. faculty to potential research partnerships in India, and could also help reverse the recent decline in applications to U.S. engineering schools from India and other countries.

"The number of non-U.S. nationals applying to UCSD's graduate engineering program has dropped almost 33 percent from the peak in 2002," said Ramesh Rao, Calit2's division director at UCSD. "For centers like ours that rely heavily on partnerships with global companies, globalizing our own activities is critical to sustaining the engine of innovation that we are called upon to drive. This initiative is also a living experiment in understanding the effectiveness of distance learning in an environment that is full of promise, but also rife with pedagogical challenges."

According to the most recent figures from the American Society for Engineering Education, nearly 58 percent of students enrolled in Ph.D. engineering programs in the United States are not U.S. citizens.

Visiting U.S. faculty will also be encouraged to explore research collaboration with participating institutions in India. The U.S. universities have also agreed in principle to make teaching materials available on a non-exclusive basis for a new digital content library being created by AMRITA for future students.

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**WWW Link:** <http://www.jacobsschool.ucsd.edu>

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