

# **Global Encounter-India Community/Campus Cultural Understanding and Opportunities Individual Written Responses to Questions Related to the Topic**

Procedure used to generate this document:

Participants self-selected their group. Individuals were asked to write responses to selected questions before any group discussion. All responses are included and are typed verbatim with some explanation of acronyms or terms. There is no significance in the ordering of the comments as presented in this summary.

## **A. What opportunities exist for MSU in relation to your area of consideration in our current efforts and future possibilities in India?**

1.
  - Often Indian artists (vocal, instrumental, other) visit the “nearby town” (Ann Arbor) but not MSU. This could be easily tapped.
  - Culture, Language, and Religion are intertwined in the Indian subcontinent. When teaching languages at MSU (e.g. Hindi, Urdu), use these artists and other local resources could be tapped.
  - All the MSU faculty/ staff/ students from India could contribute to programs designed to communicate the cultural aspects.
  
2.
  - Programs & social gatherings
  - Marketing of programs needs more resources.
  - Business to Business (B to B) Business Exchange Groups
  - Tourism is the best cultural exchange.
  - Legal/ Justice Exchange
  - Sister Cities programs
  - Sister university programs
  - Speakers panel
  - Film Festival?
  - Service Projects?

3.
  - There have been a number of study abroad programs going on in India every year. This is the best avenue for cultural exchange and understanding. That is to say, providing opportunities to current MSU students in participating through these opportunities provide access to hands on experience of understanding Indian culture.
  - Technology & Indian leadership in this area help foster larger understanding.
4.
  - Art Festival in Greater Lansing area
  - Global Festival at MSU
  - Culture event for local community for cultural exchange and understanding
  - Folk Festival
5.
  - Study abroad programs
  - Faculty with India expertise
  - FLAS for foreign language study
  - MSU as a leader in less commonly taught languages
  - Importance of Islam in Asia
6.
  - FLAS scholarships are available to US citizens for graduate students. Other nationalities? What is available for support?
  - Indian students on campus and faculty
  - Indian families in the community
  - International film festivals
7.
  - My topic/ area of study is Nepali Populations in Northeast India/ Nepal. So lectures, films, and cultural events related to this area and all of the diverse areas of India, not just South Indian dance, would be of interest to me.
8.
  - India – TANUVAS (Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University)
  - Madras Veterinary College
  - Great interest and enthusiasm from faculty and administration at TANUVAS
  - Other schools in India may also be interested (Bangalore, Punjab.)
9.
  - Partnering with local Indian Parents, Alumni & Religious groups. (Indian culture is very much intertwined with religious beliefs.)
  - Lots of Indian faculty members at MSU for long time – can serve for exchange programs
  - Local Asian Indians to be leaders in this effort

## **B. What challenges exist for MSU in relation to your area of consideration in our current efforts and future possibilities in India?**

1.
  - Time is a function of “what is its usefulness” in the broader context.
  - Resources (\$) and management issues (responsibilities)
  - What aspects to cover to entice a broader audience
  - How to communicate the “U.S.” side of it to the incoming Indian students and to the broader Indian community in India
2.
  - Resources are low.
  - Apathy
  - Time availability
  - Transportation & transportation costs
3.
  - The challenges can be categorized into the following factors:
    - Economic: Lack of support & vision in making education accessible to many Indians
    - Political: I would not say this is hindering but definitely playing a vital role as things happen with it.
4.
  - Communication between the local Indian community and the American mainstream society and media
  - Funding
5.
  - Lack of student interest
  - Too few faculty with area expertise
  - Cultural exchange, and understanding is not a priority for MSU – suffers relative to science/technology emphasis.
  - Diversity of Indian cultures
6.
  - Increasing communication about possibilities to the student and professional communities
  - Most spectators for cultural events/ showcases are of the presenting nation/ culture.
  - How can “culture” be defined? Religion- dependent, also upon language, food, etc.
  - The “culture” is highly variable in India,
  - Time limitations for faculty
7.
  - Lack of institutional support for area studies in sociology
  - The university offers only one course in India.

8.
  - Financial Resources
  - Faculty availability
  - Understanding of social & animal culture
  - Major differences in types of animal agriculture industries in India compared to Michigan/Midwest
  
9.
  - India has too many languages & too many regional cultures/ lifestyles/ food/living styles/habits.
  - Monetary needs for bright students to enroll due to financial inability to pay their own way
  - Weather – Most Indians are not used to cold weather & that takes them to West Coast or South.
  - Name recognition – India is familiar with Harvard – Stanford – also with NY and California.

**C. What advice concerning this region and this area of consideration would you like to pass along to future groups following through on these ideas?**

1. **\*\*No Response\*\***
  
2.
  - Focus on inclusion of others outside group being addressed (outside of Global Encounter: India audience?)
  - Often when there is an “event” only the group whose culture is exposed is the majority of the attendees- just the reverse should be true.
  
3.
  - I would recommend MSU making strategic plan for next decades or so about engaging with MSU-India partnership.
  - Educational institutions are better served NOT by business-like model though most of things happen at MSU with this motive.
  - Learn from Cornell University to model our programs

**(Note:** South Asia Program: Cornell University –Website information 4/1/08;  
[www.einauda.cornell.edu/sourthasia/about/history.asp](http://www.einauda.cornell.edu/sourthasia/about/history.asp))

“Since 1953, the South Asia Program has coordinated teaching, research, and campus activities focusing on the Indian subcontinent, which comprises the modern nations of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Its special resources include a library collection of more that 290,000 volumes, faculty in more than 25

disciplines teaching more than 110 courses, and an extensive collection of films and video tapes.

Providing a forum for interchange among students, faculty, and visitors, the program enriches the study of the sub-continent on campus. Since 1986 Cornell has been in consortium with Syracuse University as a National Resource Center for South Asia, one of nine sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Program draws on the resources of the joint center to provide expertise in South Asia. Undergraduates, graduate students, and professionals all have opportunities for specialized training and interdisciplinary course work. Students may take courses in any of Cornell's colleges and graduate students may enroll in South Asia offerings at Syracuse University.

In the Fall of 1998, the South Asia Program was delighted to receive a generous gift to fund an annual lecture series. Designated the Rabindranath Tagore Lectures, we will bring in distinguished writers from South Asia to present a series of seminars on aspects of modern Indian literature (prose, poetry and fiction). Writers will include those who write in Indian regional languages plus English.

A core faculty of 35 representing more than 25 disciplines focuses their research not only on India, but also on the rim countries of the sub-continent. This range of expertise encourages the linking of the foundational curriculum (in religion, anthropology and social sciences) to applied research and teaching (in agriculture, communication, demography, and nutrition). We sustain various levels of language study, including the regular teaching of Hindi, Bengali, Sinhala and Nepali during the academic year (<http://lrc.cornell.edu/asian/courses>), and intensive summer language programs in Sinhala, Nepali and Tibetan. The Cornell Abroad Program in Nepal provides a unique opportunity for North American and Nepali students to engage in jointly-supervised field research and language study (<http://www.cuabroad.cornell.edu>). An extensive library collection of over 290,000 volumes, films and video tapes highlight the program's special expertise in India as well as in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. (<http://asia.library.cornell.edu/ac/SouthAsia/>)

The South Asia Program at Cornell is doubly distinctive. First, many Cornell faculty members focus their research not only on India, but also on the outlying countries of the sub-continent. Second, Program

members are located in diverse Cornell colleges, many concentrating on applied work in Agricultural fields, City & Regional Planning, Art, Communication, and Labor Relations. The Program attracts students engaged in regional history and the social sciences and our students are well known for their research on questions concerning the environment, rural inequality and agrarian change, labor market dynamics, economic liberalization, social movements and questions of governance. Through a weekly seminar series, yearly workshops and cultural events, students, faculty and invited speakers exchange ideas, research experiences and on-going research.”

4. **\*\*No Response\*\***
5.
  - Develop undergrad study abroad programs.
  - Develop a culture at MSU that values language and cultural expertise.
  - Develop resources for grad research in India.
  - Recruit faculty with India cultural and language expertise to teach culture, history and language.
  - Insist that MSU researchers, etc. interacting with India in any ongoing way have some cultural sophistication.
6.
  - Expand past the MSU physical space to connect with the larger local community with special events.
7.
  - India is an extremely diverse place. Play to those strengths.
8.
  - Time and resource requirements will be greater than anticipated.
  - Need to involve students as they are our future.
9.
  - Create awareness about Indian languages and religion.
  - Focus on similarities (not differences.)
  - Focus on tolerance.
  - Focus on communication of cultural behavioral aspect.

## Additional Comments?

1. \*\*No Response\*\*
2. \*\*No Response\*\*
3.
  - Thanks for organizing this and helping to shape MSU's future and promote leadership as a model university.
  
  - India is a very rich country for culture. Even a small country like Nepal has vast ethnic diversity. Please provide opportunity to learn from them.
4. \*\*No Response\*\*
5. \*\*No Response\*\*
6.
  - Try to put more emphasis on Asian faculty creating/offering opportunities for exchange of culture.
7.
  - I really felt like the choice of topics for this breakout session (afternoon session) were arbitrarily chosen; I feel like I had to choose this topic but not particularly an area of concern. Furthermore, if the university wanted to do something on this topic, it doesn't really need any inputs from us. We will see how the discussion goes, however.
  
  - For the record, I would have liked to attend a second brainstorming session on how to improve the academic environment for Indian studies at MSU.
8. \*\*No Response\*\*
9. \*\*No Response\*\*

**This material was generated from Global Encounter-India, <<http://www.isp.msu.edu/globalencounter/india>>, held at Michigan State University on September 22, 2006. This interactive and participatory event was designed to obtain input and to elaborate in a country-specific forum on relevant themes, opportunities, issues, and opportunities affecting MSU's current and future engagement in India and to a lesser degree southeast Asia.**