



Newsletter

Office of International Relations, IIT Bombay
April, 2020 – December, 2020

This has been a strange year. We were stuck in our homes, taking care of our families and our health, delivering or being on the receiving end of online teaching, and trying to adjust to the new situation created by the global pandemic. The institute's IR activities faced the same hurdles. We found that our international visitors were not able to travel to the campus, but many of the partners were keen to continue our engagements with online workshops. These turned out to be very effective and we hope to leverage this activity even after the pandemic settles down. The interest in working on and signing new MoUs also continued and there are interesting joint degree programs ready to go into the implementation phase. We also managed to get Senate approval for students to do virtual semester-exchange. While the numbers were small, at least some of these activities continued during the pandemic. I am happy to inform you that the numbers of students enrolling for the Master's degree program, with online instruction, were actually a bit higher than our usual intake. So despite all the difficulties, IR activities kept going. We hope you enjoy reading the IR newsletter that is much the same, but has very few photographs this time. We are looking forward to the regular activities of the IR office resuming in 2021!

Virtual Meetings

Many of us haven't had as many video meetings in our whole lives as in the past nine months. During the lockdown, virtual meetings became the new norm all around the world. In spite of growing prevalence, virtual meetings are often still seen as inferior to in-person meetings – a temporary solution until people can meet up again, or a fast fix to a slow problem. The Office of International Relations use to have visits by



many international delegations but now we have these meetings virtually. These meetings led to building new partnerships as well as reviving the activities with our existing partners.

- (1) The Ambassador of France in India, H.E. Mr. Emmanuel on 11th June 2020.
- (2) Prof. Ted Sargent, Vice President International, Prof. Alex Mihailidis, Associate Vice President International Partnerships, Prof. Ramin Farnood, Vice-Dean Research, Ms. Gwen Burrows, Executive Director International & Ms. Vanessa Laufer, Director International Relations from the University of Toronto, Canada on 19th June, 2020.
- (3) Prof. Richard Davies, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Engagement and Internationalisation & Ms. Lesley Jackson, International Relations and Partnerships Manager from Newcastle University, UK on 24th June, 2020.
- (4) Prof. Andrew Martin, Chancellor, Prof. Kurt Dirks, Vice Chancellor for International, Prof. Aaron Bobick, Dean, Prof. Pratim Biswas & Prof. Rajan Chakrabarty, McKelvey School of Engineering & Ms. Teresa Sarai, Associate Director from Washington University in St. Louis on 20th August, 2020.

- (5) David J. Ranz - U.S. Consul General in Mumbai, Jonathan Hwang - Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer & Ms. Behrooz Avari - Education Outreach Specialist on 9th September, 2020.
- (6) Mr. Mark Charnley - Senior Manager, International Recruitment, Office of the Vice-President & PVC (International), Mr. Tapam Srivastava - In Country Representative (India) & Ms. Sadhana Lalla, Manager, International Recruitment and Partnerships (India) from Flinders University, Australia on 20th October, 2020.
- (7) Prof Jimmy Hsia, Vice President (Alumni & International Affairs), Prof Lalit Goel, Director, NTU-India Connect & Prof. B.V.R. Chowdari, Senior Executive Director from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore on 22nd October, 2020.
- (8) Prof. Richard Dashwood, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Mr. Michael Yap, Regional Managing Director for Singapore hub & Ms. Patricia Chengliong, Regional Policy Analyst from Coventry University, Singapore on 16th November, 2020.
- (9) Ms. Danielle Scott, Director International Relations, Mr. Jinjia Xu, Regional Manager (Asia) & Mr. Peter Carter, International Relations Coordinator (Asia), from the University of Alberta, Canada on 4th December, 2020.
- (10) Prof. Elizabeth H. Bradley, President, Prof. Wesley Dixon, Special Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees & Prof. Bill Hoynes, Dean of the Faculty from Vassar College on 14th December, 2020.
- (11) Prof. Nathan Urban, Provost, Prof. Cheryl Matherly, Vice President and Vice Provost for International Affairs, Prof. Steve DeWeerth, Dean of Engineering, Prof. Mayuresh Kothare, Dept. of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering, Ms. Stacy Burger, Director Global Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives & Ms. Emily Groff, Director of Communications and Marketing from Lehigh University on 17th December, 2020.
- (12) Prof. Erik Lansard, Vice President Research, Prof. Gremillet Patrick, Director Research, Mr. Sekhar Sahay, India HR Head & Mr. Shyam Vaidyanathan India recruiting lead from Thales group on 18th December, 2020.
- (13) Prof. Milette Shamir, Vice President International Academic Collaborations and Prof. Gary Sussman, Advisor to TAU on India from Tel Aviv University (TAU) on 28th December, 2020.

Partnerships

The rate of internationalization is growing rapidly, with unhindered communication channels. Universities across the world are already seeking to make the most of the possibilities this presents by forming global partnerships and fostering relationships with other institutions. International partnerships are exceedingly valuable and are of greatest importance in terms of learning from each other. International university partnerships need to ensure there is mutual benefit for the institutes involved including their students, faculty & staff.

We have signed agreements with the following university in past nine months:

- * Washington University in St. Louis, USA (Joint Master's Degree Program)
- * Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo, Italy
- * Kookmin University, Korea
- * Technische Universität Ilmenau, Germany
- * Lehigh University, USA



IIT Bombay – Lehigh University : MOU E-signing

Virtual Workshops

A virtual class brings students in different parts of the country together for learning, likewise the virtual research workshops facilitate interactions between the researchers from different parts of the world. The time difference, the online mode and the increase in screen time did affect the research initially during the beginning of the lockdown. But these issues did not stop our



researchers from interacting with each other and we switched to virtual workshops / symposiums. The virtual mode has indeed helped us have interactions with more researchers from many different universities at the same time. Many of the workshops / symposiums we conducted were multilateral besides bilateral workshops. We had four research workshops / symposiums with our partner universities in last nine months, and the details are as follows:

- (1) Russian Indian Network (RIN) of Institution of Higher Education's Online Symposium on Data Analytics – 6th & 7th October, 2020
- (2) IIT Bombay & University of Toronto, Canada on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Economic Development – 14th October, 2020
- (3) Russian Indian Network (RIN) of Institution of Higher Education's Online Symposium on Nano Materials – 3rd & 5th November, 2020
- (4) Indo-German Partnership (IGP) Workshop on Energy, Transport, Environment & Climate – 25th November, 2020

Indo-German Partnership

IIT Bombay has received an approval from the UGC for project titled "Exploration : New Opportunities in Indo-German Academic Co-operation" under the Indo - German Partnership in Higher Education (IGP). Our partners in this project are IIT Kharagpur and Technical University of Munich, Germany. This is an institutional project and will be driven by Office of Dean International Relations, IIT Bombay. We are the recipient of this grant and will be



coordinating the activities in India. The areas being * Climate, Energy and Environment, * Transport and Mobility, * Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Through this project, the IIT Bombay, IIT Kharagpur and Technical University of Munich will get an opportunity to develop joint research projects and upgrade study programmes in order to enhance their strategies of internationalization. The project will contribute to the internationalization of the participating institutions through exchange of Masters students, doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows, faculty and institutional managers or employees looking after the international relations of the institution. A series of activities and exchanges were planned under this project, but due to travel restrictions during the pandemic these could not be carried out. Nevertheless, we started with the online activities – IGP kick off meeting and thematic workshops which were held on 25th November, 2020. The opening remarks given by Prof. Juliane Winkelmann, Senior Vice President International Alliances & Alumni, TUM, Prof. S Sudarshan, Deputy Director - Academic and Infrastructural Affairs, IIT Bombay & Prof. Baidurya Bhattacharya, Dean International Relations, IIT Kharagpur during the kick off meeting were very encouraging and we look forward to more exciting collaborations together considering the interactions faculty members had during the technical workshop.

Activities under Consortia / Networks

IIT Bombay is part of many consortia and is associated with many networks as well. These consortia / networks provide a venue for universities to share their valuable experiences to improve higher education and international cooperation by fostering academic and cultural exchanges. There were some activities that were carried out under these consortia / networks, all in virtual mode in past nine months:

Asian Universities Alliance (AUA)

Asian Universities Alliance (AUA) is a consortium of Asian universities. It is a regional organization established with the aim of jointly addressing regional and global challenges, specifically related to higher education and economic, scientific and technological development by



strengthening collaboration among member institutions. AUA was established with a core of 15 universities, with IIT Bombay being a founding member university of AUA. There are many activities and interactions that happen under this consortium among its member universities, and amidst the pandemic these were carried out in virtual mode:-

AUA Scholars Award and AUA Staff Exchange: AUA set up the *AUA Scholars Award* and *AUA Staff Exchange Program* with the purpose of increasing the mobility of scholars and staff among the AUA member universities. Scholars are encouraged to take this opportunity to advance research, share knowledge, conduct field study or establish international academic links in the community of AUA. AUA Staff Exchange program aims to enhance communications between staff of the AUA members as through this program, AUA members could have a better understanding of the programs, operations and management of other member universities. AUA provides financial support to scholars and staff to carry out short term academic visits at another overseas AUA university. For the year 2020-21, 5 faculty members from IIT Bombay are selected for two-week visit to AUA member universities and IIT Bombay will host 4 faculty members from other AUA member universities. Likewise 3 staff members are selected from IIT Bombay for a one-week visit to AUA member universities. These visits will be carried out when it is safe to travel and convenient for the host university.

AUA Board Meeting: The AUA Summit 2020 was scheduled to take place in April 2020, but due to the pandemic it did not take place. So the AUA Board Meeting was conducted by correspondence to take the major decisions related to next AUA Executive Presidency, Financial Statements and Budget, AUA Program Proposals and Framework. Each AUA member university had to send their votes, suggestions and feedback regarding these items to the AUA Secretariat and decisions were taken in the benefit of all involved. Prof. Subhasis Chaudhuri, Director, Prof. Prasanna Mujumdar, Deputy Director Finance and External Affairs and Prof. Swati Patankar, Dean International Relations collectively made decisions on related matters.

AUA Working Groups Meeting: The AUA Working Groups meeting to study and provide policy advice on Financial Stability was held on 9th September 2020 in virtual mode and Prof. Prasanna Mujumdar, Deputy Director Finance and External Affairs participated on behalf of IIT Bombay.

AUA Executives Meeting 2020: AUA Executives Meeting 2020 was held on 5th and 6th November 2020. Prof. Prasanna Mujumdar, Deputy Director Finance and External Affairs and Prof. Swati Patankar, Dean International Relations represented IIT Bombay for this meeting. The first day of this meeting included discussions on the progress briefing of the Working Group Meetings, Asian Higher Education Outlook 2020 report, policy of the financial support for online programs, and possible online activities for the coming year. The

second day of the meeting was assigned to the special session named as *Empowering Creative and Responsible Students and Scholars During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond*. In this Session, each AUA member institution shared their experiences and perspectives relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prof. Prita Pant, Associate Dean Academic Programme represented IIT Bombay for this session and she gave talk on *Restarting research activities after COVID induced lockdown*.

AUA Presidents Forum 2020: Prof. Subhasis Chaudhuri attended virtually the Asian Universities Alliance Presidents Forum 2020 scheduled on 26th November 2020. Prof. Chaudhuri was the panelist for the discussion themed - Knowledge is Power: The Resilience of Asian Universities in a VUCA World. The Presidents Forum provided an opportunity for AUA Presidents to engage with one another on key topics about universities' activities / initiatives post-COVID-19 era.

AUA Entrepreneurship Initiative (online program): International Innovation Center of Tsinghua University, Shanghai (IICTUS) hosted AUA Entrepreneurship Initiative online program for the students of AUA member universities from 19th November 2020 to 5th December 2020. From IIT Bombay 5 students participated in this program. The objective of this program was to encourage and empower AUA students to excel at developing solutions to regional and global challenges. The top 10 winners of the Entrepreneurship Competition will be awarded a competition certificate and up to 1,500 USD travel reimbursement to Shanghai to join events hosted by IICTUS when borders open (provisionally scheduled for summer 2021). We are awaiting results of this program.

SATU Presidents' Forum

The objective of Southeast and South Asia and Taiwanese Universities (SATU) Presidents' Forum is to strengthen the academic cooperation among Taiwan and Southeast and South Asian countries.



The SATU Presidents' Forum Steering Committee Meeting was conducted on 26th November, 2020 in a virtual mode. Prof. Swati Patankar, Dean International Relations participated in this meeting representing IIT Bombay.

Heritage Network

The Heritage Network aims to strengthen Higher Education Cooperation (research and training) between Europe and India in the field of Engineering Sciences. A virtual consortium meeting was held on 26th June, 2020 to get an overview of



the current situation linked to the coronavirus both in India and in Europe. Prof. Swati Patankar, Dean International Relations, Prof. Sugandh Malhotra, IDC School of Design and Ms. Tanvi Mehta, Executive Officer, Office of International Relations participated in this meeting. On 22nd September, 2020 a group made of 8 institutions of Heritage Network brainstormed over how covid-19 could foster innovative activities and incentives within the network. Prof. Swati Patankar, Dean International Relations participated in this meeting.

U7

The U7 Alliance is an international alliance of university presidents who engage both in discussion and in concrete action by making commitments that universities may take to address the most pressing global challenges in a multilateral context. It is the very first alliance of university presidents aimed at structuring and advancing their role as global actors across the multilateral agenda. Northwestern University

hosted the second annual U7+ Presidential Summit, convening presidents and top leaders from universities in G7 nations and other countries to explore solutions to the world's most pressing issues. The Mayor of Chicago, Lori Lightfoot gave the opening address. Prof. Subhasis Chaudhuri, Director and Prof. Swati Patankar, Dean



The Mayor of Chicago, Lori Lightfoot

International Relations participated in this summit held on 23rd and 24th November, 2020.

French Network

An umbrella memorandum of understanding between an Indian Network of Indian Institutes of Technology and a French Network of Engineering Schools members of the Federation Gay Lussac to better coordinate the Indo-French university collaboration between both Networks is finalised. The pandemic did not let all the participating institutes sign the agreement yet, but that did not stop us from carrying out the preliminary activities together. IIT Bombay is the co-ordinating institute for the Indian Network. We are working with Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Poitiers, the coordinating engineering school for the French Network. The partners are involved in initiating Masters student mobility between French Engineering Schools and IITs. Many departments of IIT Bombay and other IITs have shown interest in this activity and we look forward to a good number of Masters student exchanges.



Finnish Network

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Consortium of Finnish Universities, Finland and the Indian Institutes of Technology, India is finalised and awaiting signatures from both ends which could not take place early this year due to the pandemic. IIT Bombay is the co-ordinating institute for the Indian side and Aalto University for the Finnish side. We have tried to gauge interest from



the partners involved through a survey for the activities they look forward to doing in this network, and many have shown interest for joint research cooperation and joint research seminars/webinars. So we look forward to organizing a joint webinar with the Finnish partners on a selected theme/field in spring 2021.

Russian Network

IIT Bombay is the part of Russian Indian Network (RIN) of Institutions of Higher Education and has been co-ordinating activities for Indian Network of IITs involved. The aim of this network is to facilitate research collaborations, faculty and student exchange among the leading universities of both countries. IIT Bombay co-ordinated two workshops that were conducted under this network in the thematic areas of



Data Analytics and Nano materials. The faculty members from many IITs and Russian Universities participated in this exploratory workshop and presented their research. The objective of this workshop was to help faculty members identify the Indian / Russian researcher with whom they can work together and have fruitful collaboration.

Pen Pals

As the pandemic propels the world to come closer virtually, we resorted to creative ways to collaborate remotely. This virtual setting has opened up previously unexplored avenues for student communities to network and engage with the global community. It gives them the chance to learn from academic communities across the globe and grow together. To further this agenda, the IR office



launched a novel Pen Pals programme, the brainchild of our current Institute Student Secretary for International Relations. The programme kick-started on 10th December 2020. Interested students from partner universities are mapped to an IIT Bombay student for 6 weeks with similar academic interests and level of study. The students are encouraged to engage in academic discussions virtually during this period. They are utilizing this opportunity to broaden their knowledge horizons and learn about the academic atmosphere of their pal's university and country and 118 students from IITB and 7 partner universities from across the globe are participating in the programme. These include Cracow University of Technology (Poland), Kochi University of Technology (Japan), Fontys University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands), National Chiao Tung University (Taiwan), TU München (Germany), Politecnico di Milano (Italy) and Loughborough University (UK).

Inbound Students

Studying and exploring India is a big dream of many international students, and one way to fulfil this is through participating in exchange programs. Studying virtually did not fascinate the exchange students, hence none of the international students registered for the exchange program in the autumn 20-21 semester. Similar is the case with the students who were interested in doing project work at IIT Bombay. The COVID 19 pandemic



affected the exchange / research of international students but could not stop the Masters and Ph.D. students from registering. Though the autumn semester was running in the virtual mode, approx. 40 international students have registered for Master's / Ph.D. program which is more compared to last year. We are looking forward to welcoming these students on campus very soon.

There are about 20 international students currently staying on-campus. These international students managed very well in the past nine months and the institute tried to make the difficult months of the pandemic as smooth as possible for them.

Outbound Students

Our studying abroad program of semester exchange enables the students to spend part of their degree studying at a prestigious international university. Experiencing life in another country for a student is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. IIT Bombay has numerous program that offer the students to spend one semester or one year abroad at a partner university. Students who study abroad as part of their studies find that it is a deeply enriching experience, offering so

much more than merely giving their CV a boost. It also enhances future employability and academic success, allowing them to build up a network of valuable contacts, broaden their horizons, and develop an entire range of new soft skills.

Considering the existing situation and the unfortunate further development of COVID-19, many universities have cancelled the semester exchange program and are offering virtual semester exchange. We had two students who went to University of Geneva, Switzerland and a student went to Ecole Centrale de Nantes, France. Whereas two of our students got enrolled for virtual semester exchange with University of Calgary, Canada.



The students also have opportunities to study in short term programs with the partner university. Also, four IIT Bombay Undergraduate students have enrolled in the virtual program of International Linkage Degree Program (ILDP) at Hiroshima University (HU). The program will run from 15th to 23rd December 2020. ILDP is a project promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan (MEXT). This program offers a variety of educational programs including degree-based program for students of Indian institutions and HU.

Japanese Culture Session and Origami Workshop

On 19th December 2020, Sensei Sunauchi (Japanese Instructor) along with Koo International organized a Japanese Culture Session and Origami workshop for the IIT Bombay community. Sensei has organised an in-person workshop during the last few years but the modality was virtual this year. Kiminami Yumiko san who is a Washi (Japanese traditional paper) craft artist led the workshop. It was a 2-hour interactive workshop in which attendees made their own



Origami Cranes (Orizuru) and an Origami Masu box. The attendees also learnt about the process for making the Japanese Washi paper and the Japanese zodiac nomenclature for new years.

Kobayashi Nanae san from Koo International was also in attendance. All attendees ended up adding a few extra words to their Japanese vocabulary while enjoying a sneak peek into the Japanese culture through the virtual session.

Student Experiences

Ishan Patil (4th year UG), Department of Energy Science and Engineering, IIT Bombay: I was enrolled for a semester exchange at University of Geneva (UniGe) in Switzerland. This well planned move turned out to be the best decision of my insti life. An exchange in such perilous times was next to unimaginable to me but the constant directions and guidelines from the IR Office and Mobility Team at Geneva made it possible. Geneva is the heart of Europe; this cosmopolitan city gave me a chance to meet people from all around the globe which any other University couldn't have given me. I loved the academic flexibility in UniGe which allowed me to choose a diverse bunch of courses ranging from Finance to International

Law. The classes were a mix of online and offline methods depending on the course. The way of teaching differed from IIT Bombay in a way that the lectures in UniGe were a mix of theory, case studies, exercise sessions and reflection papers but I found the courses fairly easy and interesting. I was selected for the Heyning Rouelli Exchange Scholarship which was just enough to cover my complete expenses including accommodation, food and travel. I strategically chose my courses so that I can have four free days a week and started travelling as soon as my quarantine term got over. I explored cities like Paris, Milan, Athens; hiked through the Mountains of Chamonix-Mont Blanc and Zermatt-Matterhorn; road trip across Switzerland and Greece and cruise across the Mediterranean.

This exchange opportunity was like a dream come true, I got to live by my own, cook my own food, take my own decisions and I loved this feeling of independence. I can confidently say that this semester exchange has changed my perception of the world as well as of India.

Isha Rathoria, (3rd year UG), Department of Mechanical Engineering: "Being a part of the Asian Universities Alliance (AUA) Entrepreneurship Initiative Online Program was a great experience for me. The program consists of two workshops named Design Thinking for Human-centric Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Opportunity & Strategy and a Dialogue with Schwarzman Scholars followed by an entrepreneurship competition. After attending these workshops, I got further clarity in my mind regarding various aspects of entrepreneurship and the dialogue session was really informative as the speaker shared his experiences and how he dealt with them. Being a part of such a global program also gave me a chance to interact with students from different Asian Universities and to get an idea of their approach to entrepreneurship. The final competition gave me a platform to pitch my innovative idea in front of several panelists along with exposure to varied and greatly curated pitches. It was my pleasure to compete with such great minds and to grab a spot for myself in the final round."

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