

The Role of Colleges and Vocational Training Institutes in Canada-India Higher Education Corridor: Unlocking its Full Potential

SICI – ACCC Keynote and Roundtable

Toronto, Humber College – April 23, 2014

Three keynote addresses and five roundtables on “The Role of Colleges and Vocational Training Institutes in the Canada-India Higher Education Corridor” were jointly organized by Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI) and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC). The five roundtable topics were 1) Student Mobility, 2) Faculty Mobility, 3) Curriculum Development, 4) Institutional Partnerships, and 5) Industry Linkages and Applied Research.

The event was opened by Diane Simpson from Humber College, who welcomed all attendees. Dr. Shanthi Johnson then gave a short address, in which she welcomed participants and emphasized the relevance of the three-part slogan, *Futures Here, Futures Emerging, and Futures Full of Opportunities*. Dr. Johnson provided a brief history of the Shastri Institute, describing its founding in 1968 the Indo-Canadian higher education corridor, its evolution through the education continuum from a concentration on the social science and humanities to its current inclusion of science and technology, engineering, management, trade and investment, as well as the organization’s emerging relationships with governments and institutions in Canada and India.



ACCC President and CEO Denyse Amyot then addressed the participants, thanking Diane Simpson and Humber College for hosting the event. She spoke of common misconceptions of the current college system, addressing their prevalence in Canada, the broad range of their programming, the success of their students, the increase in attendance amongst post-university students, and the advantage of small class sizes. Ms. Amyot emphasized the relevance of applied learning and research, referencing the Government of Canada’s two-year funding for social innovations projects as well as the Research Excellence Fund for post-secondary international exchange. She described ACCC’s current international presence, including their office in Delhi, as well as the importance of targeting markets in specific countries in order to build strong relationships. Ms. Amyot concluded by explaining ACCC’s current strategy in transitioning from previous CIDA funding to new partnerships, their desire to work with the private sector, and their continued focus on India’s National Skills Development Corporation.

Mr. Akhilesh Mishra, Consul General of India, Toronto, gave the first keynote address. He applauded SICI and ACCC for their initiative and planning and expressed a deep appreciation for the “social harmony” and sense of community that Canada provides. He stressed the importance of the Canadian college as a global role model,

with a focus on the relationships between educational institutions, communities, and industries. In particular, he mentioned that the education-industry relationship moves beyond corporate funding to incorporate “fluid, two-way interaction.” Mr. Mishra also stressed the importance of the education sector more generally in terms of its importance in transmitting values and building communities. He went on to describe the massive economic growth that India has experienced, as well as the Indian Government’s pursuit of the ‘Three ‘E’s Strategy’: Expansion, Equity, and Excellence. Mr. Mishra emphasized the Indian investment in education in terms of the declaration of education as a right in

2010, the increased funding toward the education sector, and the creation of strategies and missions on education. He enumerated four key drivers in the changing Indian landscape: 1) demographics (the young age of the Indian population); 2) organization (the increasing urbanization in India); 3) industry (the growth of major manufacturing corridors and changes in manufacturing more generally); and 4) technology (the changing role of media and the importance of technology in the India economy). Finally, Mr. Mishra stressed that Canada is “uniquely positioned to be a strategic, critical partner” for three reasons: 1) the appreciation of democratic values and the synergy between Canadian and Indian populations; 2) the image of ease and transparency in Canadian trade and the large amount of contact between the two countries; and 3) the holistic vision and approach of Canadian businesses in terms of professionalism, planning, skills development, and the culture of security and safety.

Dr. Dan Patterson, President of Niagara College, then gave the second keynote address, in which he suggested that the roundtable event might hold two goals in mind: 1) to make the case for colleges to play a larger role in the India-Canada post-secondary discussion; and 2) to discuss the enormous benefits that might come from SICI’s involvement. He asked the roundtable participants to consider what the value proposition at hand is in responding to India’s goal to have 500 million people skilled by 2022. Reiterating the college-community connection, Dr. Patterson referenced the need for an Indian solution for India discussed during the morning’s Information Session. He concluded by enumerating nine transformational claims to keep in mind in further developing relationships in the Canada-India higher education corridor: 1) career-focussed programs; 2) quality assurance; 3) strong economic mandate; 4) applied research and learning; 5) brand recognition; 6) unique products and services; 7) industry advisory committees; 8) flexibility and innovation; and 9) people.



The event continued with the roundtable sessions, opened up by Dr. Rajesh Tyagi. Each roundtable addressed one of five topics (student mobility, faculty mobility, curriculum development, institutional partnership, and industry linkages and applied research) by discussing existing programs, identifying best practices, and making recommendations for new or extended programs. Afterwards, one representative presented a summary of each roundtable's key findings:

Student Mobility:

- There is a need to help students participating in Canada-India exchanges learn about specific programs, their outcomes, and their strengths in related industries.
- How can SICI facilitate and foster programs for Canadian students to go to India, and how can more connections with Indian industry be established?
- There is a need to account for the long-term goals of students (e.g. jobs, settlement) and the roles of colleges in terms of educating the students and parents on related processes.
- We must keep in mind the values that students applying for foreign education seek, such as funding offered by institutions and their connection with the immigration process.



Faculty Mobility:

- Sending faculty and administrators to India will help them understand Indian students' culture and challenges.
- Connection with industry is very important, particularly for funding – e.g. ISTPP funding for applied research.
- There is a need to keep in mind the barrier of expense, and government and industry partners are essential.
- A train-the-trainer approach can be taken in working with the National Skills Development Corporation's to address the skills gap.

Curriculum Development:

- Curriculum development can be categorized as content, as well as the selling or franchising of content.
- There is a need for assessment and assurance of curriculum content and processes.
- Curriculum development is closely tied to faculty training as well as delivery methods.
- There are different choices in the curriculum development process itself, which could include working with industry.
- The Centennial Dubai project could be used as a model and translated elsewhere.
- SICI could provide strategic seed funding for curriculum development, and ACCC could work with SICI to facilitate relevant discussions and compare programs.

Institutional Partnerships:

- The lack of seed funding to establish relationships presents a challenge, as well as the legalities of starting campuses.

- Partnerships often emerge between individuals rather than institutions, so these must be built upon and expanded.



- There is a need to target specific fields (e.g. energy, food).
 - SICI and ACCC can work together to provide templates for launching new programs.
 - There is a need to provide streams within programs that are offered.
 - SICI and ACCC can engage in joint advocacy to the government for funding, and/or submit joint proposals for initiatives.
 - SICI and ACCC can provide lists and promote post-graduate programs in both Canada and India, and promote ACCC's Program Finder.

Industry Linkages and Applied Research:

- There is a need to promote community colleges in India.
- The industry and education sectors in Canada could lobby India's incoming government.
- SICI could lobby in India for more colleges to be established.
- The possibility of internships with funding from the Indian Government could be pursued.
- There is a need to involve industry in a key role in developing curriculum.
- Existing applied research with demonstrated practical uses should be highlighted to obtain funding.
- Co-op programs should be pursued as a way of linking colleges and industry.
- There is a need to focus on co-operative learning and social responsibility.
- There is a need to focus on teaching entrepreneurship through colleges.
- SICI and ACCC should focus on the 13 sectors identified by the National Skills Development Corporation.
- Executive leadership programs should be continued and supported.
- Colleges should have a presence at the Canada-India Education summit.

The roundtable was with Plenary Remarks from Mr. Michael Danagher, Director of Southeast Asia and Oceania Commercial Relations with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Mr. Danagher stressed the importance of learning from other countries' models and experiences. He addressed the worldwide recognition of the need for vocational training, and the high regard in which Canada's platform is held. Mr. Danagher also referenced the Government of Canada's Global Market Action Plan and the crucial role of education therein. He concluded by stressing that Canadian relations with India in terms of bilateral trade are below where they could and should be, and that there is huge potential for programs to fill India's needs in areas such as food and energy.

