IU Awarded Funding for India Studies Consortium

The India Studies Program at Indiana University Bloomington has received a $300,000 grant to further the study of India throughout central and southern Indiana. The Department of Education Title VI-A grant will enable IU to develop a university consortium called the Indiana Network for the Development of India Awareness (INDIA).

The other three universities in the consortium are DePauw University, the University of Indianapolis, and Indiana State University. Although the IU India Studies Program is only a year old, it is already able to offer an undergraduate minor, an undergraduate certificate, and a doctoral minor. The timely federal grant will accelerate development of the academic program as well as cultural and outreach activities.

Gerald James Larson, the Rabindranath Tagore Professor of Indian Cultures and Civilizations and director of the program, says that the three-year grant will enable the Indiana consortium to develop such projects as a semester-long core course on India Studies on CD-ROM for use at the other consortium campuses, and to expand the language programs for Hindi and Sanskrit, which are currently taught at the Bloomington campus. In the future, these languages may possibly be made available via interactive technology at the other consortium campuses.

After the initial three years, Larson hopes to compete for a comprehensive Title VI center to enable IU to offer the doctorate in India Studies.

In April, India Studies celebrated its first academic year with a week of activities on the Bloomington campus which included a lecture by Vasuda Narayanan of the University of Florida, an art exhibit, and a concert featuring renowned classical violinist Kala Ramnath.

IU’s Relationship With Helsinki Business School Prospering

This spring, the IU School of Business welcomed back one of its staunchest international friends and alumni, Heikki Urmas, dean of the BBA Program of the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration (HSBE) located in Mikkeli, Finland.

Urmas, a frequent visitor to IU, accompanied the HSBE’s top administrator, Rector Eero Kasanen, on his first visit to Indiana. During their visit, Urmas and Kasanen reiterated their vision of business education: “Globalization is serious business, and it should be integrated into the normal curriculum of business schools.”

The key is networking between universities and business partners, they said, citing a number of business and industry internship programs within Finland, where students may earn credit and even scholarships for problem-solving projects that they undertake as interns.

Since 1990, IU has been a partner with HSBE on a summer study abroad program and other student and faculty exchange programs. Through these programs, about a dozen undergraduate students from Finland take courses at IU each semester. For their part, IU undergraduates with an interest in the international environment of business may earn up to nine credits taking 10-week courses during the summer at HSBE, all taught in English. Students may choose among several courses on international marketing, Russia and her neighbors, the European Union—of which Finland is a member—and a study tour to St. Petersburg, Russia. At the graduate level, MBA students from IU may also participate in the institute’s international MBA program located in Helsinki.

The BBA and MBA programs at HSBE are rather unique in Europe, being taught entirely in English. Among the school’s foreign students, close to 50 percent are from the United States and Canada, and the rest are from Europe and the Far East. As HSBE has agreements with some 30 partner institutions worldwide, most of the faculty are international. About a dozen IU faculty have been to Mikkeli to teach there in short-term intensive modules. Urmas, a long-standing member of IU’s International Business Forum, says that Indiana University remains their most important international partner.

Last year, in recognition of the importance of the IU-Helsinki relationship, HSBE conferred upon Randall C. Powell, director of the business school’s Placement Services, the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa. Powell has been influential over the years in helping the Finnish institute develop their Career Services Program, as well as teaching in the program.

Before leaving Bloomington, Urmas and Kasanen expressed their wish to see all international business students spend some time studying or working abroad as part of their education. Praising the personal relationships and institutional commitment to international business at IU, they said that the IU-Helsinki partnership is a good model of how international exchange works.

—RMN