

## Industrial Interactions for Universities of Excellence

Prof.C.S.Dubey

Centre for Advanced Studies  
Department of Geology  
University of Delhi  
E-mail; *csdubey@gmail.com*

On the eve of a new century, there is an unprecedented demand for and a great diversification in higher education, as well as an increased awareness of its vital importance for sociocultural and economic development, and for building the future, for which the younger generations will need to be equipped with new skills, knowledge and ideals. Higher education includes 'all types of studies, training or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent State authorities' (Preamble UNESCO higher education 2008).

We must have the vision to see where higher education can take us in a future where both freedom and competition are on the move," Spellings said in his maiden speech as Education Secretary in 2005 "This is a world defined less by where you live and more by what you know. We must find a way to give all Indians (*Modified*) the skills they'll need to lead in this new world. This will take all of the foresight and imagination we can muster.

The curriculum should be devised in such a manner where the arts, social and cultural development is intermingled with science and technology to inculcate ideological human societal values and ethics into the young generation besides the knowledge and vision for future of India in 2020 in an economically sound and planned Business management in professional manner with utmost sincerity and integrity, as it is being the need of hour in progress and growth of the country.

I am going to talk in detail about **5 factors** that I think any Indian University should pay attention to, in order to become a leading institution. I think that these 5 factors that I am going to talk about will be the real pillars of educational strategy that I bring to the table. These are **creating Centres of Excellence, providing Global Education, leveraging Collaboration especially with Industries, enabling Networking, and finally providing Experiential Learning**. Technology is the key driver of competitive growth in today's integrated global economy. It is one of the greatest product differentiator and is also showing a remarkable impact in services sector. A strong partnership among

research and development institutes, academicians, industry and the community is required to accomplish the vision of a developed India (*APJ Abdul Kalam, 2007*).

We need to ensure that across the board we provide education keeping in view the social, economic and ethical context of life. Social – because we all operate in a society that we want to prosper with, Economic – because the students are paying money to get the education and they are going to expect to be paid after this is over, and finally ethical – because in today's time and age when ethical dilemmas present people at every stage and when the learnings are available in the lives of organizations like Satyam and Enron, we need to educate students about what is right and what is wrong.

I suggest that we improve our curriculum and offer more practical courses – those that provide the students *with learnings that they will be able to apply in their jobs*. The best people to tell you what courses you should introduce are your alumni (as part of Industries) – because they have gone out there and know what they were taught and what they would've learnt to be better. We should look at courses like CRM Management, SCM Management, Product Lifecycle Management, Process Improvement, Six Sigma, IT Service Management, etc. We should have partnerships with Companies/Industries for education – VMware Academic Program, MicroUniv, etc.

Nandan Nilakani – Ex-CEO of Infosys told Thomas Friedman – The World is becoming flat. This is the age of information, and information travels fast. The entire world is available to me on my phone with a data plan and browser, *and yet we teach our students from material that is in books*, that is local and that is constrained by the boundaries of our nation. **We need to provide Global Information to students – use international material, provide global perspective on things. That will help students convert that into Global Knowledge – provide cases which have global relevance.** Do you think they can learn software engineering without knowing what is a legal and illegal software feature in Europe? And **finally, give them an international experience** – by providing them with cross cultural programs, international virtual teams and in-all a work environment where they don't work alone anymore, because they will certainly not be working alone in the world in respective industries.

There are industries/companies that offer facilities that will help you enable all this and they would do it because for them it's Corporate Social Responsibility points and free publicity. *You get resources and visibility in front of the companies with that.*

I have mentioned a number of things here. Multicultural Learning Teams – groups of people who think different from each other. Isn't that what we are? This group listening to my talk – is comprised of people from different places, backgrounds, and thoughts – yet we come together to make a decision. That is what we need to prepare our students for.

Technology – there are a million software out there that can be used to enable this collaboration platform – Huddle, OPPapers, etc. And I would suggest visiting these places to know what is useful in our particular situation.

**Collaboration needs to be a part of curriculum – people should have to know how to work in collaboration with others, in teams, in board rooms, and should know that this will make a difference to their final score.**

Networking – that’s what we do eventually in life. You and me, we are all networking with each other. We are building this network of like-minded people around ourselves so that when we need something, we know where to go.

Networking is very useful tool for both career building and reputation building. One good place to start will be to have mixer events where current students can meet with alumni and make connections. That way they can build relationships, and then leverage them to possibly get a job or get a reference for one.

The final pillar is Experiential learning. We learn the best, when we do it. Most globally acclaimed schools use these methods currently, and I propose that we use them as well.

**Consulting Field Projects** – are basically projects for our student teams from real companies. The students get a chance to apply their learning and get feedback from the companies, and the companies get their problems solved at no cost to them. The best way for getting Jobs in the industries will be if the students takes up field projects in Geology in such a way that they can evaluate and solve the industrial problems as part of their professional trainings or dissertations which will give a chance to the academicians’/students in the Universities to know the needs and capabilities of the industries and vice versa thus facilitating each other’s interest. **Case Competitions** are a good way to show our capability on a world map. These are events in which students solve a real problem for a industry/client and compete in a competition for the best solutions where the Judges could be from industries looking for placements.

There are global simulations in which people can play on a computer (like a game) with real life scenarios and make management level decisions. And on-campus or online jobs, to get them a feeling of responsibility early in their life.

The other part is to treat Students as professionals. The Dean of Wharton School of Business (University of Pennsylvania) said once – Your students are your customers, keep them satisfied – that’s our aim. So allow the students to make their own decisions – customize their curriculum and decide what they want to study and how. Allow them to provide feedback on the courses and use that feedback to then improve yourself. The best thing that an education institution can do to make a mark on their students – is to show that the institution is willing to learn from its students as well. This is what will enable us to be a continuously improving institution.