ABOUT THE INDIA INITIATIVE

The India Initiative, founded in November 2015, builds on Georgetown University’s core strengths—academic excellence, location in Washington, D.C., and Jesuit mission of service to the world—to advance research and teaching around India and world affairs and create a platform for high-level dialogue among American and Indian leaders from government, business, civil society, and the academy.

ABOUT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Established in 1789, Georgetown is the oldest Catholic and Jesuit university in the United States. One of the world’s leading academic and research institutions, Georgetown enrolls more than 17,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students across nine schools. A global institution, Georgetown provides a unique educational experience that prepares the next generation of global citizens to lead and make a difference in the world. The university’s educational mission and international partnerships seek to advance the global common good.
As we near the end of the third year of the India Initiative’s existence at Georgetown, we look back with pride at all we have accomplished, and look forward with humility at how much further we have to go to fulfill our ambitions. Over the 2017-2018 academic year, the India Initiative organized major cultural events on campus, convened significant discussions on U.S.-India relations, and held its second annual India Ideas Conference to showcase that which is most exciting in the subcontinent. Student interest in India continues to inspire us to do more, with more students choosing India as a destination for study abroad opportunities, and two Georgetown students winning Fulbright fellowships for post-graduate research in India.

We are especially pleased to acknowledge the tremendous energy and support provided by our partners. The Embassy of India in Washington, D.C., worked with us to organize two incredible evenings of music and dance to showcase Indian artists of global renown. We worked with international NGO Conciliation Resources to organize a high-level roundtable on Kashmir. With USAID and Indiaspora, we hosted an event to showcase the successes of India’s remarkable fight against tuberculosis. Leading businesspeople, entrepreneurs, and activists visited classes and spoke to students as part of our commitment to bring India to Georgetown, and generously welcomed our India Innovation Studio students when they visited Mumbai and Delhi in March and June 2018. Loyal Hoya alums in India hosted receptions for visiting deans, admissions representatives, faculty, and students from the College, Walsh School of Foreign Service, McDonough School of Business, and the Law Center, and extended their networks and expertise to grow Georgetown’s visibility in India.

The academic year culminated with a momentous visit from the Honorable Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Devendra Fadnavis, who delivered a keynote address about his vision for infrastructure development, good governance, and poverty alleviation in Maharashtra. This visit built on a growing collaborative effort between Georgetown and the Government of Maharashtra, which has now had three students intern in the Chief Minister’s War Room in Mumbai. We are working hard to deepen this relationship in the coming years to provide our students and faculty more opportunities to learn from the work being done there.

Given the speed of change in India, we must work even harder to build on this foundation that we may keep up with all that is happening on the ground. In 2018-2019, with your help and support, we will redouble our efforts to create a leading program in Washington, D.C. that advances the study of India and meaningfully supports academic and cultural diplomacy between the world’s oldest and largest democracies.

Sincerely,

Irfan Nooruddin
Director
INDIA IDEAS CONFERENCE

In an effort to address India’s ongoing achievements and challenges, the India Initiative launched the inaugural India Ideas Conference in April 2017. The conference gathered scholars, practitioners, diplomats, and public and private sector thought leaders for high-level dialogues on a variety of topics including urban planning and development, sustainable energy, subnational governance, regional security and diplomacy, and the future of the U.S.-India bilateral partnership.

The 2018 India Ideas Conference focused on India’s rising prominence on the global stage with the theme “Empowering India.” The conference featured topical keynote speakers and panel discussions, and breakout sessions focused on the drivers of India’s growth: the role of women in business, investor-friendly business climate, and technological innovation across sectors. The 2018 conference was a collaborative, solutions-oriented platform, convening thought leaders from the United States and India to explore India’s complexities, challenges, and opportunities in the twenty-first century.

Panels were co-sponsored by the Georgetown University South Asian Business Alliance, Georgetown University Women in Leadership, Georgetown University South Asian Society, and Indiaspora.

“Building on the strong foundation of shared values and democratic principles, leaders in both our countries have recognized the immense opportunities to work together to address global challenges and provide prosperous futures for our peoples.”

— Thomas Vajda

RIGHT
Suchit Bachalli speaks about entrepreneurship and the Indian diaspora.

ABOVE
Panelists discuss India’s future challenges and opportunities during a panel discussion at the 2018 India Ideas Conference.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

INDIA’S INVESTMENT IN TRADE
Nisha Biswal, U.S.-India Business Council
Vinay Singh, KPMG
Dilip Sundaram, Mahindra Group
Rick Rossov, Center for Strategic and International Studies (moderator)

POWER OF THE DIASPORA: SHAPING U.S.-INDIA TIES
Maya Ajmera, Society for Science & the Public
Balan Ayyar, Percipient.ai
Suchit Bachalli, Unilog
Sanjeev Joshipura, Indiaspora (moderator)

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP
Sadaf Khan, House Foreign Affairs Committee
Ranji Nagaswami, Hirtle, Callaghan, and Co.
Amita Poole, IPI USA
Sonal Shah, Georgetown University
Ridhika Batra, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (moderator)

INDIA’S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK
Mukesh Aghi, USISPF
Bhavani Parameswar, Indivate Inc.
Anoop Singh, International Monetary Fund
Anit Mukherjee, Center for Global Development (moderator)
Georgetown University India Initiative

INDIA IDEAS PANELS AND KEYNOTES

Opening Keynote
Thomas Vajda, U.S. Department of State
Ambassador Richard Verma, The Asia Group

Plenary Panel: Skill India
Raj Gilda, Lend-A-Hand India
Adrian Mutton, Sannam S4
Nandini Mullaji, McKinsey & Company (moderator)

Keynote Panel: Freedom of Expression in Media and the Arts
Gautam Adhikari, Center for American Progress
Sagarika Ghose, Times of India
Radhika Vaz, Comedian and Writer
Sadanand Dhume, American Enterprise Institute (moderator)

Top Left
Nandini Mullaji (SFS’17) poses a question about women’s employment in India.

Top Right
Mukesh Aghi speaks about upcoming economic trends for India.

Bottom Left
Balan Ayyar speaks about the diaspora and Indian American community.

Bottom Right
Bhavani Parameswar speaks as part of a panel on India’s economic outlook.
INITIATIVE EVENTS

Georgetown has long served as an international convener in Washington, D.C., attracting leaders from a variety of industries and disciplines for constructive discourse. Drawing on this strength, the India Initiative invites leading academics, industry practitioners, and policy experts to engage in dialogue with the Georgetown community. Initiative events raise awareness in political and scholarly communities as well as among the broader public about pressing issues facing India. The initiative also strives to make Indian culture accessible to the Georgetown community by engaging with leading artists, performers, religious leaders, and intellectuals to host cultural events and discussions.

CULTURAL EVENTS

RANGILA

The India Initiative co-sponsors the annual dance showcase, Rangila, put on by Georgetown’s South Asian Society (SAS). SAS seeks to raise awareness of South Asia culture, ideas, and issues through cultural dialogue, academic panels, and charity events. Rangila has aimed to fulfill these goals for 23 years. It is the largest charity showcase on the Eastern Seaboard, with over 500 students participating. This fall, Rangila featured 12 South Asian fusion dances performed in historic Gaston Hall. All proceeds from the show benefit Lend A Hand India, a nonprofit focused on providing career development resources and vocational skill training for youth in India.

NARAKASURA VADHAM

In November the India Initiative and the Embassy of India hosted the Kathakali Group, a world-renowned Indian dance troupe, for a performance in Gaston Hall. The Kathakali Group performed Narakasura Vadham, a Keezhupadam-style Kathakali dance that tells a story from Hindu mythology. Kathakali, which originated in the state of Kerala, is a traditional form of dance in which dancers act out the parts of different characters in a play. In this performance, the troupe depicted the story of the death of Narakasura, a legendary Indian asura.

DR. L. SUBRAMANIAM LIVE IN CONCERT

Dr. L. Subramaniam, known as “the god of Indian violin,” has performed in venues all over the world, from Singapore to Paris and from Delhi to Los Angeles. In September, he performed in Georgetown University’s historic Gaston Hall at a concert sponsored by the Georgetown University India Initiative and the Embassy of India. A child prodigy, Dr. Subramaniam trained with the greatest musicians until he became a master of the violin. Today, he has produced, performed, collaborated, and conducted nearly 200 recordings and is one of the only musicians to have mastered South Indian and Western classical musical technique and style. He has also composed and conducted major orchestras, scored films including Salaam Bombay and Mississippi Masala, and collaborated with a wide range of musicians from genres including jazz, occidental, and jugalbandhi.
TRANSCHEANIC EMOTION: FEELING GLOBAL IN A LIMITED WORLD

The coastline of the Indian Ocean is home to hundreds of millions of people. Historically, the Indian Ocean region has been a cradle of civilization that supported seafaring trade and the flow of culture, language, and religion. In the nineteenth century, tens of millions of migrants left India, Africa, and China to resettle throughout the European empires after the formal abolition of slavery. Their histories have not been written or shared extensively.

This conference, hosted in October 2017, examined the experiences, languages, customs, culture, and identities of those who embarked on these journeys. Participants considered not only the diversity of the region, but also the transnational forces that have united the people and places of the Indian Ocean, including trade; science; and the faiths of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, and Buddhism. Speakers also discussed the simultaneous embrace and rejection of collective national history and identity in an era when nations were not yet formed.

READING THE OCEAN

In November 2017, Georgetown University convened a group of leading scholars from around the world for a seminar on how studying the Indian Ocean and the Indian Ocean region enables understanding of the vital issues of culture, narrative, and the projection of power across national boundaries. The speakers at the conference emphasized both the importance of large-scale, oceanic thinking in the humanities, and the vital place of the humanities in the construction of knowledge about the world.

Speaker List:
- Abdulrazak Gurnah, University of Kent
- Yvette Christianë, Barnard College
- Sam Pinto, Georgetown University
- Lahra Smith, Georgetown University
- Isabel Hofmeyr, University of the Witwatersrand and NYU
- Antoinette Burton, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- Ashley Cohem, Georgetown University
- Sangeeta Ray, University of Maryland

ABOVE
Namita Goswami (top), Paromita Chakrabarti (bottom), and other participants in the “Transoceanic Emotion: Feeling Global in a Limited World” event speak about the culture and history in the Indian Ocean region.

SECURITY AND THE KASHMIR REGION

INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND KASHMIR: 70 YEARS LATER

In September 2017, the Georgetown India Initiative, alongside Conciliation Resources, hosted the event “India, Pakistan, and Kashmir: 70 Years Later.” This event convened participants with diverse views, backgrounds, and areas of expertise. Ambassador Richard Verma, former U.S. ambassador to India, led the discussion alongside Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, a Pakistani senator and chairman of the Senate Defence Committee; Ambassador Nirupama Rao, former foreign secretary of India; and Shujaat Bukhari, a journalist for Rising Kashmir and a member of the Kashmir Initiative Group.

ABOVE
Chitradebha Zutshi, a College of William and Mary history professor who specializes in South Asia, speaks about Kashmir.

TOP LEFT
Policy experts and diplomats from India, Pakistan, and the United States discuss the current diplomatic impasse in Kashmir and identify possible paths forward.

REMEMBERING SHUJAAT BUHKARI

The Georgetown India Initiative would like to take the time to honor and remember Shujaat Bukhari, who spoke at our campus in September 2017. In June 2018, Mr. Bukhari was shot and killed outside his office in Srinagar. We remember Mr. Bukhari as an insightful Kashmiri journalist and editor of Rising Kashmir. We also remember him for his legacy of peace and dialogue in Kashmir; Bukhari was the president of Adbee Markaz Kamraz, a cultural and literary organization in Kashmir, and he served as a key player in organizing several Kashmir peace conferences between India and Pakistan.
Aparna Pande speaks about the evolution of India’s foreign policy.

The Honorable Chief Minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis speaks about his vision for infrastructure development.

Ambassador Teresita Schaffer dedicates the “Challenges of Global Governance: A Conversation with H.E. Syed Akbaruddin” event as a memorial lecture in memory of her husband Ambassador Howard Schaffer.

Nobel laureate and world-renowned economist Amartya Sen speaks with Kaushik Basu and filmmaker Suman Ghosh about social choice theory and development.

H.E. Syed Akbaruddin, India’s representative to the UN, speaks about India’s role as a rising global power.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar speaks about interfaith harmony.
STUDENT RESEARCH

The India Initiative is committed to expanding educational opportunities for students. In addition to bringing practitioners and experts on Indian politics, industry, and culture to campus, the India Initiative promotes opportunities for innovative cross-curricular classes, issue-focused travel, and academic research. The initiative promotes project-based experiential learning through the India Innovation Studio, facilitates student travel to meet with local stakeholders and engage with the communities they study, and supports student research on India in topics ranging from environmental conservation to public policy to international security.

INDIA INNOVATION STUDIO

In fall 2016, India Initiative Director Irfan Nooruddin and colleague Dr. Mark Giordano, director of the Science, Technology, and International Affairs Program, launched the India Innovation Studio, a multidisciplinary, studio-based course in the Walsh School of Foreign Service. The class operates in partnership with Indian government and civil society stakeholders to design, prototype, and implement solutions to development problems facing India. Each year, the course examines a different challenge.

The 2017-2018 studio topic was public health and sanitation. The multidisciplinary course incorporated political science, economics, sociology, and science. The students developed policy solutions for implementation and discussed their proposals with visiting experts including Fulbright-Nehru Fellows, academics, NGOs, and politicians.

In March 2018, the students travelled to Mumbai and Delhi to study health and sanitation issues on the ground and discuss their policy proposals with local stakeholders and government officials. While in India, students met with political officials, toured parliament, and visited public sanitation infrastructure sites.

A second group of students travelled to India in June 2018, this time to Mumbai, Pune, and several nearby villages. In addition to meeting with local NGOs, government officials, and other stakeholders, the students also visited construction sites, slums, villages, and attended a fintech conference in order to learn from the varied perspectives on public health and sanitation challenges.

The India Innovation Studio will continue in 2018-2019 with a focus on community resiliency.

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA RESEARCH COLLABORATION

Through our ongoing research relationship with the Government of Maharashtra as a knowledge partner, the India Initiative strives to generate research-led solutions to policymaking and policy implementation challenges. Together, the Government of Maharashtra and the India Initiative have identified a series of research themes related to current public policy discussions in Maharashtra. The themes all center around the government’s current challenges in public policy and the efficient provision of services. They are:

- Drought and Agriculture
- Urban Infrastructure
- Electronic Governance
- Institutional Management

The India Initiative will work with the Government of Maharashtra to develop research proposals around these themes.
TOP LEFT
India Innovation Studio students visit a communal greenhouse and learn about village-level actions to adapt to drought.

TOP RIGHT
India Innovation Studio students learn about communal drought management infrastructure.

BOTTOM LEFT
Caroline Schauder (SFS’20) and Arjun Krishnan (SFS’18) review a village community development plan as part of an India Innovation Studio trip.

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INDIA INITIATIVE STUDENT FELLOWS

The India Initiative student fellows are a committed group of undergraduate and graduate students who assist in planning, developing, and implementing India Initiative events and dialogues. Rooted in the India Initiative’s mission to strengthen the U.S.-India relationship through bilateral dialogue and interaction, student fellows work to broaden the discourse on India at Georgetown and in Washington, D.C., by helping the initiative convene multidisciplinary lectures, roundtables, and working groups. In their work with the India Initiative, they bring politicians, diplomats, business leaders, social entrepreneurs, academics, and civil society leaders to campus. The India Initiative is committed to convening policy dialogues at the highest level while including students in these discussions. Student fellows are also instrumental in organizing the India Initiative’s annual policy summit, the India Ideas Conference.

DROUGHT MANAGEMENT AND MANGROVES

Tithi Patel (SFS’18), Kelsey Harrison (SFS’18), and Madison Pravecek (SFS’19) were students in the first year of the India Innovation Studio course; for the past year they have continued to develop their previous projects on drought. Over the summer they spent several months in Mumbai and continued their work on drought, expanding to study small-scale irrigation and collective water management practices in Maharashtra as well as studying ecosystem services and conservation of Mumbai’s coastal mangrove zones. They presented their research to students and faculty at the Narsee Monjee College of Commerce & Economics.

AADHAAR AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Caroline Schauder (SFS’20) spent the summer in India working on a report focused on India’s AADHAAR program. AADHAAR is a unique identity number based on biometric and demographic data that can be obtained by residents of India and used as a government ID to access social services. Schauder set out to evaluate the social impacts of AADHAAR. Travelling between Mumbai, Pune, and Bangalore, she collected data, conducted interviews, met with officials, and attended conferences to gather information on this program.

THE SLUM REHABILITATION AUTHORITY

Kyra Kocis (SFS’20) spent three months this summer working on a research project related to the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA). The SRA is a department of the Government of Maharashtra that seeks to incentivize private developers to redevelop slum lands. In exchange for clearing the slums and building high rise accommodations for eligible, displaced residents, the developer is allotted a portion of the land where they can construct buildings that can be sold on the free market. Kocis spent the summer in Mumbai interviewing local residents, government officials, and other stakeholders to understand the benefits and shortcomings of the schemes and how legislative changes affect the SRA’s work.

MANN DESHI FOUNDATION

Three Georgetown students—Harsh Dubey (SFS’21), Chloe Quigley (SFS’21), and Bennet Assefa (SFS’21)—worked for Mann Deshi this past summer. Mann Deshi Foundation is affiliated with the Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank, which aims to address rural women’s lack of access to formal financial institutions. The foundation supports the bank’s mission through non-profit work on building business skills and market access for rural women and their communities. Dubey performed research on Mann Deshi’s water conservation efforts in Mann Taluka, Satara. He wrote an impact assessment after interviewing farmers about how Mann Deshi’s check dams have impacted water availability, crop outputs, and their livelihoods. Quigley worked on fundraising for Mann Deshi Foundation. Assefa specialized in creating promotional videos to communicate the important work Mann Deshi is doing.

FULBRIGHT

Georgetown Class of 2018 had three alumni receive Fulbrights to work and research in India. Katie Hyland is working as an English teaching assistant, and Megan Patel and Drew Diprinzio are working on research projects in India.

INDIA INITIATIVE STUDENT FELLOWS

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Rajesh Veeraraghavan is an assistant professor in the Walsh School of Foreign Service and a member of the India Initiative Faculty Advisory Committee. His work focuses on the intersection of information technology, development, and governance.

He is currently working on a book called *Democratizing Surveillance: Technology-enabled Information Politics*, which uses an 18-month ethnography on the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREGA) in Andhra Pradesh to address the possibility of institutionalizing information politics and technologies to increase government accountability. Another project, called the Digital Urban Observatory, is focused on developing new tools for visualizing inequality through mapping access to public services in Delhi. The Digital Urban Observatory categorizes unplanned settlements using satellite imagery and machine learning combined with field work to determine the accessibility of public services such as water, sanitation, ration shops, social infrastructure (health, child care facilities, schools), transport, and government offices.

Shareen Joshi is an assistant professor in the Walsh School of Foreign Service and a member of the India Initiative Faculty Advisory Committee. Her work focuses on economic development, human capital, and agency.

She is currently working on a project titled “The Challenge of Pollution in Small Industrial Clusters: Some Insights From Sanganer, Rajasthan.” This project focuses on chemical waste and water pollution from Sanganer’s textile industry, as well as related environmental legislation and collective action efforts. Joshi mapped local institutions, reviewed legal cases, and interviewed stakeholders in environmental management and the textile industry. Joshi studied initial conditions of the textile industry based out of residential areas, the barriers to shifting from residential to industrial production, the role of government, and social divisions as barriers to collective action in environmental regulation. Further work on this project will focus on the relationship between market production systems and environmental sustainability.