Information boom

International School of Information Management is a strategy and a model to confront the challenges of crossing borders in terms of disciplines, institutional frameworks, sectors, and geo-spaces.

Mysore will soon have a new generation centre called ‘International School of Information Management’ (I-SIM). This endeavour and initiative of University of Mysore is perhaps first of its kind in the country and also in Asia.

Establishment of I-SIM and joining the I-Consortium of I-Schools, could be described as a trail blazing effort of the University of Mysore.

The University of Mysore is laying the foundation for the establishment of collaboration with International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT-B), Bangalore and School of Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, USA and many other organisations including industry.

Its origins

As a first step towards laying the framework for I-SIM, University Vice-Chancellor Prof J Shashidhara Prasad, Prof Ronald Larsen, Dean, School of Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, USA and Prof S Sadagopan, Director, IIIT-B will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today (September 15), at the InfoVision2005 Summit in Bangalore.

According to Prof Urs, the domain of information/knowledge has occupied centre stage with the emergence of knowledge based economy. Knowledge and information have become the key resources of any organisation and society. "But managing this key resource demands a new breed of professionals with the requisite knowledge and skill sets drawn from a multitude of disciplines across the information landscape," she explains.

The Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have brought about paradigmatic changes and shifts in the world of information. "This new domain is multidisciplinary spanning sciences, the technologies and the management of information and has many stakeholders—the academia, the knowledge industry and the scholarship and society at large," she adds.

"At the turn of the 20th century, the emergence of industrial society engendered the growth of the field of management sciences. The 21st century is witness to the dawn of a new domain—information/knowledge management," Prof Urs who heads the Library and Information Science Department at Mysore University, points out.

The universities in the USA, Canada and other countries have established I-Schools either de novo as in the case of School of Information Management and Systems at the University of California, Berkley, USA or some other such as the I-School at the University of Washington, School of Information at the University of Michigan, School of Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, which have integrated the different existing schools and morphed them under one umbrella, she explains.

These universities have formed a consortium of I-Schools and the first I-Conference of the fifteen I-Schools deans is being organised at the Penn State University between September 28 and 30.

I-SIM model

Explains Prof Urs, "The I-SIM would be an innovative centre for a newly emerging new discipline based on a new model of global partnership across the academia and industry. I-SIM is modelled as a Collaborative Knowledge Enterprise - a cluster of partners and alliances."

The partners are institutions or agencies in different sectors such as academia, industry and the government and non-governmental agencies. The SIM cluster is international, she adds.

Speaking to Deccan Herald, Prof Urs said I-SIM promoted by the University of Mysore, will be physically located at Mysore in University of Mysore campus. But specific activities could be in any of the partner/alliance institutions.

"The centre will be an independent autonomous entity formed on the basis of 'core-alignment' principle. The founding partners form the core and establish the Governing Body to drive the cluster forward, set and review objectives and manage resources.

I-SIM Programmes

I-SIM will offer a Masters Programme in Information Systems Management. "The curriculum would be in tune with the curriculum offered at the University of Pittsburgh, USA or University of Michigan, USA and progressively move towards joint degree programmes. Admission to the programmes would begin by the end of this year once the founding partners work out specifics for launching the courses," she says.

She said the I-SIM will join the American I-School consortium. Faculty and student exchange between partner institutions would provide international setting for the students of I-SIM.

SHANKAR BENNUR