

AMERICAN ACADEMICS WELCOME INDIA'S PRIME MINISTER—OFFER PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

(September 14, 2015)—A broad coalition of United States based academics released a [statement](#) today welcoming India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his scheduled visit to California's Silicon Valley, later this month. The statement, signed by nearly 150 prominent faculty affiliated with colleges and universities in the United States, offers expertise and partnership in various areas announced as priorities by Mr. Modi, including technology and education.

Signatories include holders of prestigious endowed professorships, deans of schools and educators in engineering, medicine, business and the humanities from many of the most prestigious institutions in America. The text of the document highlights the prime minister's determination to complete the Digital India project, among other initiatives.

The Digital India project, the signatories state, "heralds a new age of participatory democracy and enhances transparency in governance in India, leveling the playing field for vast numbers of India's citizens."

The coalition letter also made mention of the late President A.P.J. Kalam's [Vision 2020](#) for India, and encouraged Mr. Modi to focus on educational entrepreneurship along with technological investment. It also noted that under Mr. Modi, "India's civilizational contributions of yoga, spirituality, religious pluralism, art, and music are enjoying renewed patronage and public acceptance globally."

Joining several prominent professors of engineering schools, having membership in prestigious societies such as the National Academy of Engineering supporting the welcome statement, the Executive Director of the American Society of Engineering Education, Norman Fortenberry, Sc.D., provided a welcome letter on behalf of the society of over 12,000 engineers and 400 engineering institutions.

"We express our hope that your visit will further provide opportunities to enhance partnerships between ASEE member institutions in the U.S. and Indian engineering and technological institutions, which will result in the engineering and technological skills development of the youth of India," Dr. Fortenberry wrote.

As the welcome statement continues to receive new signatories daily, the letter will remain available [online](#) continuing to accept support from American academics. It will be delivered to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) prior to Mr. Modi's arrival, and also to him personally when he reaches Northern California.

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The text of the statement with signatories is appended in the next page and [here](#).

TEXT OF LETTER:

We, the undersigned, as faculty representing diverse disciplines in the American academy, join fellow Americans in welcoming India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to California's Silicon Valley on his inaugural visit there September 26-27, 2015. We note that Prime Minister Modi's visit comes at a transformational moment in a relationship between the two largest democracies in the world representing 1.5 billion people—one-fifth of humanity.

We understand that Prime Minister Modi will interact with leaders of flagship technology companies ranging from Google to Adobe, and Facebook to Tesla, and that he will address over 18,000 Americans, members of the U.S. Congress, civic leaders, and others at a community reception. We believe that these engagements will promote economic, political, social, and strategic interests of the United States and India.

We welcome, also, Prime Minister Modi's support for the Digital India initiative that heralds a new age of participatory democracy and enhances transparency in governance in India, leveling the playing field for vast numbers of India's citizens. We recognize the indigenous talents of Indian scientists to develop the infrastructure to effectuate Digital India and other initiatives predicated on technological advancements, even as we express our hope that Prime Minister Modi will seek partnership with American academic and business leaders with the expertise and experience to ensure that Digital India realizes its potential without imperiling India's privacy laws and individual liberties.

We are encouraged by reports that 170 million new bank accounts have opened, accompanied by government-backed catastrophic insurance, bringing hope to the most needy in India. Tying these accounts into the [Aadhar](#) identity document program could give many citizens their first clear symbol of empowerment. We acknowledge also that under Prime Minister Modi, India's civilizational contributions of yoga, spirituality, religious pluralism, art, and music are enjoying renewed patronage and public acceptance globally.

As educators, we recognize that India is home to the largest youth population in the world, and success in improving basic facilities at over 400,000 government schools this past year, inspires confidence in Prime Minister Modi's commitment to education. We believe that partnerships in Silicon Valley and knowledge exchange with the American academy have the potential to offer solutions in educational entrepreneurship necessary to reach and inspire those 356 million young Indians and prepare them for the 21st century. And as with the prime minister, we too are inspired by the late Indian President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's vision for "[India 2020](#)," and are committed to join Indians in realizing that goal.

We welcome Prime Minister Modi to the United States and look forward to a mutually rewarding and productive dialogue between the United States and India.

Sincerely,

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