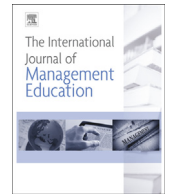


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Research notes

An innovative model for delivering business education in India



DJ Sandhu, Fiona A.E. McQuarrie*

School of Business, University of the Fraser Valley, 33844 King Road, Abbotsford, BC V2S 7M8, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to describe the development and establishment of the University of the Fraser Valley's (UFV) unique Bachelor of Business Administration program in Chandigarh, India. This program offers the entire four-year BBA program in Chandigarh, with the students enrolled as UFV students and receiving UFV course credit. The article also makes recommendations to other post-secondary institutions considering entering the Indian education market.

Design/methodology/approach: The article describes the conceptualization, development, and implementation of the program, using the experiences of the paper's first author.

Findings: The Indian education market has distinctive characteristics that institutions must take into account when entering that market. A considerable amount of groundwork is necessary for non-Indian institutions to be able to offer a marketable program in India, and institutions embarking on such a program must be prepared for the reality that the program will not immediately be profitable. However, there are many potentially beneficial outcomes from such a venture.

Originality/value: This paper describes an international education program that is distinctive in its approach and structure. The article provides information that will be valuable to other institutions considering the possibility of offering programs in India.

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1. Introduction and purpose

The internationalization of post-secondary education is an area of increasing activity for many universities and colleges. In Canada, that activity has been driven by government policies aimed at increasing international student numbers, and by the need for post-secondary institutions to develop new revenue sources to offset declines in government funding. In 2013, the most recent year for which complete data are available, there were 222,530 international students enrolled in Canadian post-secondary programs (Deacon, 2015); an earlier survey indicated that international students in Canadian university programs paid on average nearly \$17,000 CDN per year in tuition and other educational fees (Kunin, 2012). Business programs are often a focus of internationalization efforts by Canadian post-secondary institutions because of international students' interest in studying business in Canada. In the 2013–14 academic year, 53,112 international students in Canadian post-secondary institutions were enrolled in undergraduate business, management and public administration programs (Statistics Canada, 2015). Undergraduate business-related programs were the most popular field of study for undergraduate international

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: dj.sandhu@ufv.ca (D. Sandhu), fiona.mcquarrie@ufv.ca (F.A.E. McQuarrie).

students in Canada, representing 33% of total international student enrollment in Canadian undergraduate programs (Statistics Canada, 2015) – an increase from 23.2% in 2008 (McMullen & Elias, 2011). In British Columbia, 32% of international students enrol in business programs – more than double the 14% rate of domestic students (Heslop, 2014).

India is a country of interest to many Canadian post-secondary institutions recruiting international students because of the long-standing business and demographic connections between Canada and India. The annual value of trade in manufactured goods between Canada and India is nearly \$3 billion CDN (Asia Pacific Foundation, 2014). Over 1.5 million Canadians identify themselves as being South Asian (Statistics Canada, 2012) and since the mid-1990s, India has been the second-largest source of immigration to Canada, outnumbered only by immigration from China (Gee, 2011). India is also an attractive source of international students for Canadian universities because of the large numbers of potential students, the well-established Indian secondary and post-secondary education systems, and Indian students' familiarity with English. In 2011, over 20 million Indian students were enrolled in primary and secondary schools where English was the language of instruction (Rahman, 2012). In the 2012/13 academic year, more than 2000 international students from India were enrolled in British Columbia's post-secondary institutions – the highest number of students from any country other than China (Heslop, 2014). However, it can be challenging for foreign post-secondary institutions to establish an educational presence in India or to recruit Indian students, because of India's complex regulatory systems and the difficulties that non-Indians face in understanding and functioning within India's distinctive culture.

The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) in British Columbia, Canada, has taken a unique approach to recruiting Indian students for its business administration programs. Since 2006, UFV has offered its entire four-year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program in Chandigarh, a modern city in the northwestern region of India. The UFV Chandigarh BBA program is unique because of its structure. While the courses are offered on the campus of a partner institution, the Chandigarh students are enrolled as UFV students, and the program's courses are UFV's courses. Students in the program can transfer to UFV in Canada at any point during the program, or can complete the entire BBA program in Chandigarh.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the process of creating UFV's Chandigarh BBA program, and to outline some of the challenges and benefits of the program over its nearly 10 years of operation. This information will be of interest to other post-secondary institutions recruiting Indian students, or those exploring partnerships with Indian post-secondary programs or institutions. The UFV Chandigarh BBA program may not be easily replicable elsewhere because of its structure and because of the resources required for its design and implementation, but UFV's experiences in establishing and operating the program may provide useful ideas to other post-secondary institutions interested in the Indian education market.

The paper will begin with a description of the process through which the program's location and structure was determined. It will then turn to a description of how the program was established and opened. We then present an overview of the outcomes of the program to date, including the challenges that have been encountered as the program has grown and developed. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations to other institutions considering similar ventures.

2. Program location and structure

India was a logical region for UFV to explore for educational opportunities. UFV, as its name indicates, is located in the Fraser Valley, east of Vancouver; approximately 23% of the population of the Valley's largest city is South Asian (City of Abbotsford, 2014). The majority of these South Asians are affiliated through family or business connections with the Punjab region in northwestern India. One of the major cities in the Punjab is the city of Chandigarh, a modern and planned city designed in 1947 by the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier. With a population of 1.1 million, Chandigarh serves as the capital for the two states of Punjab and Haryana, which have a combined population of 52 million (Bindhyeshwari, 2011). The strong connections between Chandigarh and Canada are demonstrated by the fact that a Canadian consular office – one of only four Canadian consulates in all of India – is located in Chandigarh.

UFV's School of Business has offered a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree since 1995. This degree program was seen by UFV's senior administration as the ideal program through which to create educational connections with India, because of the popularity of business degrees in India's education market. Even though there are more than 3000 post-secondary business schools in India, there are still more potential students than there are programs to accommodate them (Bhutiani, Nair, & Hicks, 2014). North American degrees also have a strong reputation in the Indian educational and labour markets (Times of India, 2011).

However, despite its international dimension, UFV's Chandigarh BBA program was primarily an initiative of the UFV School of Business. UFV has an International Education department, but unlike other initiatives administered by that department, the Indian BBA initiative had two purposes. It was intended as a student recruitment initiative, but it was also intended to give UFV a direct presence in India by creating a platform through which other UFV programs could be offered. Additionally, the BBA program that was to be offered in India was an established UFV program, and was (and is) the same program that is offered at UFV in Canada. Thus, it was felt that the School of Business should have responsibility for the Chandigarh program, to ensure consistency and quality control in program delivery across all locations where the BBA is offered.

International and transnational post-secondary programs have many different types of structures, each with their own benefits and drawbacks. For most Canadian universities, degree-level program offerings outside Canada usually take the form of joint degrees (two institutions offering a single degree), dual degrees (two institutions jointly offering a program that results in a degree from each participating institution), or branch campuses (a physical location offering the institution's own programs) (AUCC, 2014). While more than 130 foreign universities have some form of academic relationship with an Indian

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