Dr. Arun Gandhi Visits UCF

Peace activist Dr. Arun Gandhi – the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi – has long shared his wisdom with audiences and administrators at UCF, where he advises The India Center and the Global Perspectives Office. In October, Gandhi delivered his insights in a special setting, as the keynote speaker for UCF’s annual interfaith forum. He drew lessons from his own experiences growing up in South Africa under apartheid and life in India at his grandfather’s side. Then he focused on what he described as the responsibility of the world’s religions to help address and resolve human-rights issues – such as human trafficking – that plague society. Also during his visit, Gandhi addressed listeners off campus and recorded a TV show for WUCF-TV/PBS. He appeared to draw particular satisfaction from explaining how violence presents a never-ending invitation to shape positive change. For example, Gandhi told the story of making an extraordinary effort to host an official from South Africa’s old repressive system who was visiting India. In the end, Gandhi’s counter-intuitive gesture succeeded in opening the visitor’s eyes and heart.

Making New Friends through Professional Exchange

Another Fall 2017 highlight for The India Center was welcoming a large delegation from India representing think tanks and print and broadcast media. The World Affairs Council of Central Florida facilitated the visit. John C. Bersia, UCF’s Special Assistant to the President for Global Perspectives and co-chair of The India Center, hosted the group, along with Amanda Fleming, the center’s Senior Program Assistant, and others from the university. “International professional exchanges such as this one provide endless ways to enrich the understanding of other countries and cultures, and leave open the potential for mutually beneficial networking and other ties,” Bersia said. The visitors were particularly eager to learn more about The India Center’s work, he noted, and expressed their interest in serving as resources for it. “We now have a new group of friends in India. One cannot put a price on the value of such relationships – for The India Center, UCF and the Orlando area – and they will only grow in importance as India, a rising power, expands its influence on the world stage,” Bersia said. Photo courtesy of the World Affairs Council of Central Florida.
Honoring Dr. Narsingh Deo

In early December, The India Center at UCF hosted a dinner honoring the retirement of Dr. Narsingh Deo. Deo serves as the Charles N. Millican Eminent Scholar’s Chair in Computer Science and Director of the Center for Parallel Computation in the College of Computer Science and Engineering. The dinner celebrated Deo’s contributions to the Indian community as well as his accomplishments at UCF, including his service on The India Center Board. Dr. Kerstin Hamann, Co-chair of The India Center, attended the event and stated, “We are proud to have the India Center at UCF.” For more information about this event, please click here. Photo courtesy of COS News.

Exploring U.S.-India Relations with Dr. Tanvi Madan

The India Center at UCF was honored to host Dr. Tanvi Madan in early December. Madan is a fellow for the Project on International Order and Strategy in the Foreign Policy program at The Brookings Institution, and director of The India Project. Her work explores Indian foreign policy, focusing in particular on India’s relations with China and the United States. She also researches the intersection between Indian energy policies and its foreign and security policies. While in Orlando, Madan engaged with faculty of the UCF Political Science Department and spoke with community partners about U.S.-India relations under the Trump Administration.

Spotlight on The India Center Fellow

The Fall 2017 India Fellow was Stephanie Melendez. She is a senior at the University of Central Florida pursuing a bachelor’s degree in International and Global Studies, with a minor in Diversity and Social Inequality. She is a member of the National Organization for Women at UCF and a LEAD Scholar. Her research interests include women’s rights, LGBTQ+ rights and guerrilla warfare in developing countries. As part of her fellowship, Melendez completed a research, “Fertility Rates and Natural Disasters in Rural and Urban India.”

For more information about the India Fellowship, please click here.