

Robinson College Partnership with Indian Institute to Reflect Closer National Ties

by *Phil Bolton* | May 15, 2014



India's polls closed the evening of Monday, May 12, ending five weeks of a marathon general election and the largest democratic exercise in human history including more than 550 million voters.

Meanwhile, around 1:30 p.m. in Atlanta, nine and half hours behind India time, a program specific agreement was signed linking the **Great Lakes Institute of Management in Chennai, India**, with **Georgia State University's Robinson College of Business**.

Bala Balachandran, founder and dean of the Great Lake Institute of Management in Chennai, India, and H. Fenwick Huss, dean of the Robinson College of Business at Georgia State University, conclude their agreement at the Commerce Club.

Robinson Dean **H. Fenwick Huss** and **Bala Balachandran**, founder and dean of the Great Lakes Institute, signed the agreement at the **Commerce Club** downtown.

It calls for a five-year program enabling 30-to-45 Indian students to pursue a master's of science degree in managing information technology annually.

The Indian students are to begin their studies in Chennai and then transfer their coursework to Robinson where they are to complete the program requirements at the end of two semesters in Atlanta.

“This election is going to make for a closer relationship over the next three to four years,” Dr. Balachandran said.

Dr. Balachandran told **Global Atlanta** following the signing that the agreement was reflective of the closer ties that are to bind the **U.S.** and India in coming years.

Although the winner of the Indian election won't be announced until Friday, May 16, he said that he is confident the winner would be **Narendra Modi**, who leads the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), upending the left of center Congress Party that has ruled since 2004.

Dr. Balachandran's prediction has been repeated often in the Indian media based on exit polls, reportedly revealing the popularity of Mr. Modi's populist political messages and reputation for an authoritarian administrative style.

"This election is going to make for a closer relationship over the next three to four years," Dr. Balachandran said. "The new prime minister and President **Obama** both believe in business relations and development. If business doesn't flourish then jobs and development won't happen."

Under Mr. Modi's leadership as chief minister since 2001, the state of **Gujarat** has progressed as one of India's most industrialized states and is recognized as a powerhouse in general and electrical engineering, the manufacturer of textiles and chemicals. It also is rich in minerals.

Dr. Balachandran said that the U.S. denial of a visa to Mr. Modi in 2005 wouldn't negate his forecast of a close Modi-Obama personal relationship.

Mr. Modi was denied the visa under the terms of a 1998 U.S. law that bars entry to foreigners who have committed "particularly severe violations of religious freedom."

He was cleared, however, of any involvement in an outbreak against Muslims in Gujarat by India's Supreme Court in 2010.

"Now they certainly won't bar him from coming," Dr. Balachandran said. "You can't tell a country head not to come in, and he wants capitalism in a way that the U.S. understands."

Dr. Balachandran, who also is the Kellogg distinguished professor of accounting, information and management and the director of the **Accounting Research Center** at the **Kellogg School of Management** in Evanston, Ill., founded the Great Lakes Institute in Chennai 10 years ago.

In addition, he launched a branch of the institute in **Delhi** three years ago and would like to establish another branch in **Baroda** in the state of Gujarat.