

Conference Closing Session:

Comments by Krishna Vedula, Professor and Dean Emeritus, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Good Afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been requested to review some of the important points made by speakers in various sessions regarding Globalization of Engineering and add my own comments. I will try to do my best in the few minutes I have.

In his Plenary Talk on “Globalization of Engineering”, Dr. C.D. Mote Jr., President National Academy of Engineering pointed out ten “Drivers for Globalization”:

1. Accelerating Change
2. Accessible and Inexpensive Global Communications
3. Global Partnerships and Engagement
4. Globalization
5. Expanding Access to Higher Education
6. Expanding Opportunities for Talent
7. Cost Control
8. Innovation
9. Great Global Problems
10. Leadership Challenge

He did a very insightful job of discussing these drivers and the strategic consequences to anticipate from these drivers.

After that there were several excellent and insightful sessions and discussions on

- On-Line, Open and Digital Education,
- Panel Discussion - Impact of Globalization and Information Technology on Engineering Education;
- Digital Education (Focus on Hybrid/Blended Learning),
- MOOCS and Digital Education;
- Global Aspects of Research and Engineering Education in a Globalized World

Overall the participants were able to benefit from the outstanding examples and results shared by some of the best institutions in the world on all these topics relevant to globalization of engineering. There were several insightful questions and comments.

The overarching theme was the use of technology to improve access of high quality of engineering education and research. The participants at the Conference had a large number of deans from countries where access to high quality engineering education and research is limited. These sessions provided them with very valuable information to take back to their own countries and institutions. I am confident that the information along with the personal contacts made will enable them to explore the extent to which these new approaches will be applicable to their own environment.

I would like to make one observation which may assist in the planning of future sessions of this nature. I felt that there was not adequate provision for interaction and discussion among the

participants. This was of particular concern to me because the speakers were for the most part all from elite institutions. I would use the phrase “top of the pyramid” for this group of speakers, borrowing from similar concepts discussed in the business world. On the other hand, many of the participants come from countries all over the world which are struggling to even provide some basic quality of education with limited access to technology. I would use the phrase “bottom of the pyramid” for these participants who were from several new GEDC Chapters formed recently in developing nations. There was an excellent opportunity for small group interactions which may have enable the participants to go back to their countries with a better idea of the relevance and applicability of the innovative approaches discussed in the presentations. Perhaps a more interactive environment can be arranged in future GEDC conferences.

I personally gained deeper insights in all the topics discussed and I thank the organizers of the Conference for doing an excellent job.

Thank you.