Involvement Leads to Success

American research universities have often been the birthplace of new technologies, companies, and even industries. When futuristic ideas are combined with knowledge, creativity, and a penchant for problem solving, conditions become ripe for invention and innovation. CIT (the College of Engineering) has long been known for building and sustaining such an environment.

CIT is an incubator for innovation. Our faculty and students are accustomed to working with people from industry and government on relevant problems that offer opportunities for pursuing cutting-edge research. It is difficult for us to imagine academic research being disconnected from societal needs, and yet, this is the situation found throughout much of the world. Today, many other countries are looking at the United States and the role of our universities in advancing technology, science, and the U.S. economy. These countries are rethinking how government, business, and academia must interact if they are to improve technology, education, and, ultimately, the standard of living within their borders, not to mention their standing in the global marketplace.

These are some of the reasons why officials from Portugal, Greece, Taiwan, Japan, and other countries have sought out and worked with CIT to create collaborative research and education programs. (See pages 4 through 9 to learn more about our international ventures.) For six years now, we have been engaged in successful degree-granting programs and high-caliber research with international partners. They have benefited, and so have we. Students in Pittsburgh benefit through opportunities to interact with their overseas counterparts. CIT has gained new research opportunities and funding sources and established strong relationships with leading international companies. We have heightened international awareness of engineering at Carnegie Mellon as evidenced by the most recent London Times Higher Education Survey, which ranks Carnegie Mellon seventh in Engineering and Information Technology worldwide.

In order for CIT to prepare its students for the global arena, while simultaneously advancing technology, we must do more, and that includes exploiting the opportunities available in the United States. In the near future, we plan to make Carnegie Mellon’s West Coast location (at Moffet Field, south of San Francisco) a natural extension of CIT by offering there some of our existing Pittsburgh programs and by developing new ones. Our goal is to leverage the strong entrepreneurial environment in the Silicon Valley for innovative graduate education and research and perhaps provide our undergraduate students the opportunity to spend a semester or even a whole year on the West Coast.

Closer to home, we have been working on initiatives that will sustain and build our leadership in several areas, but more about this in future columns.

I want to close by offering our best wishes for the holidays to you and your loved ones.

Dean Pradeep K. Khosla