

## **First Glance: Design and Approach Behind SAI's "Multidisciplinary Approach to University Leader Development" Workshop**

From July 30 to August 3, the South Asia Initiative (SAI) at Harvard University hosted a "Multidisciplinary Approach to University Leadership Development" Workshop for university leaders from Maharashtra, India. Twenty-eight leaders and policy makers attended, including Vice Chancellors, Directors, Principals and Deans of both public and private higher learning institutions, as well as senior Government of Maharashtra officials.

### **Background**

---

In fall 2011, SAI coordinated a visit to Harvard by the **Honorable Rajendra Tope, Minister of Higher and Technical Education of the Government of Maharashtra**. Minister Tope's aim was to work together with Harvard to create a program strengthening the capacity of members of parliament and ministers from his state. To that end, he met with faculty and staff from the Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard University Division of Continuing Education, the Harvard Business School, the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education, as well as the Office of International Advancement, Alumni Affairs and Development.

Minister Tope's successful visit to Harvard was the impetus behind the development of SAI's University Leaders Development workshop. The goal of the workshop was to bring together educational leaders from Maharashtra in order to help them become more effective as policy makers and leaders in shaping a new path for equitable growth in Maharashtra.

In February 2012, **Harvard President Drew Faust** visited **University of Mumbai Vice Chancellor Rajan Welukar** and **Director of the Board of Colleges and University Development for the University of Mumbai, Rajpal Hande**, further strengthening ties between Harvard and universities in Maharashtra.

### **Role of the South Asia Initiative**

---

SAI's strong regional presence in India was instrumental in carrying out this workshop. **Namrata Arora**, Associate Director of SAI's Mumbai office worked closely with universities in Maharashtra to assemble thirty university leaders and senior bureaucrats to attend this workshop.

For the workshop, SAI brought together faculty from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Harvard Business School, the Harvard Kennedy School, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard School of Public Health, the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Harvard Divinity School to facilitate sessions of the workshop. In addition, SAI provided tours of the Widener and Baker Libraries, the Harvard Innovation Lab and the Peabody Museum. The Vice Provost for International Affairs, the Dean of Admissions and

Financial Aid for Harvard Business School, and the Executive Officer of the Harvard Academy for Area and International Studies met with the visiting university leaders. The multidisciplinary nature of the workshop offered the participants a comprehensive training on the leadership development of a world class institution.

## Workshop Structure

---

Each day of the five-day workshop was divided into four sessions focusing on both academic and administrative topics. For the academic sessions, participants prepared responses to readings assigned by the professors leading each session. Readings included journal articles, website case studies, news articles, and case studies. Participants met daily in small discussion groups, which allowed them to find relevance in what they were learning with regard to their own institutions in Maharashtra.

[Click here](#) for a complete list of sessions, readings and discussion questions.

As the workshop drew to a close, participants divided into separate groups according to their roles (vice chancellors, university administrators, or government officials) to discuss next steps and take-away points. Each group wrote their recommendations to the other groups based on what they learned throughout the workshop. Based on these outcomes, **Tarun Khanna** led a brainstorming session where participants produced short and long-term goals to carry forward the agenda of the workshop.

## Conclusion and Outcomes

---

This workshop, a first of its kind for SAI, was a remarkable success. The visiting leaders collected many ideas which they will bring back to their home institutions. Some of the specific goals which arose out of the workshop included increasing communication among university leaders in Maharashtra, actively engaging *all* stakeholders in their institutions in decision-making, incorporating new technologies for learning both in the classroom and in the library system, and institutionalizing a fund-raising network. Through discussion with workshop participants, Harvard University professors and administrators furthered their development as educators by gaining greater insights into Indian university systems and policies.