

Building bridges in India

ASU engineering dean and global leaders discuss potential tech and education collaboration opportunities

By TJ Triolo, ASU News

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From late January through early February, [Kyle Squires](#), dean of the [Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering](#) at Arizona State University and ASU's senior vice provost of engineering, computing and technology, spent time in India with key government officials, education leaders and Fulton Schools alumni. Squires went with a mission: to affirm partnerships and build collaborations key to expanding the Fulton Schools' presence in the country and improve access to engineering education and technology solutions.

"Many of our Fulton Schools students are from India, and several have gone on to become successful leaders in their fields both there and in the U.S.," he says. "India is important to our strategy to assist learners around the world (with) gaining access to our programs and many opportunities at the university that's No. 1 in innovation."

Engineering mutually beneficial relationships with officials

The trip included a meeting with ASU President [Michael Crow](#); S. Krishnan, India's secretary of the ministry of electronics and information technology; and Surinder Singh, the senior advisor to the [India Semiconductor Mission](#), India's version of the [CHIPS and Science Act](#) that passed in the U.S. to boost the domestic microelectronics industry.

The meeting included a discussion of how to develop the microelectronics industry ecosystem in India and what role ASU can play. Through collaborations with industry leaders such as [Applied Materials](#), [Intel](#), [Micron Technology](#) and [TSMC](#), the Fulton Schools aims to be a model to help India build similar levels of collaboration between industry, government and academia.

Squires and his team also met with representatives from the Indian Ministry of Earth Sciences and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research to discuss opportunities for international collaboration with research labs throughout India, including through the [Southwest Sustainability Innovation Engine](#) and [EPIXC](#) Institute, as well as work in semiconductor research.

With a focus on education, Squires was part of an ASU delegation led by Crow that met with Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, India's minister of education. During the trip, they also announced collaborations with [five Indian universities](#) to expand education options for Indian students through the [Cintana Alliance](#), potentially involving the use of artificial intelligence learning tools and opening the door for students at partner universities to earn a second degree from ASU.

“The visit brought to life the excellence and impact of Fulton Schools students from India, and we’re excited to offer more students there the chance to learn from the largest and most comprehensive engineering college in the U.S.,” Squires says.

Building rapport with global industry leaders

Part of Squires’ trip also focused on building relationships with Fulton Schools alumni who returned to India after graduating and became leaders in their industries.

Prominent alumni he met with included Akash Saxena (’02 MS in computer science), chief technical and product officer at Viacom 18/JioStar; Jignesh Sharda (’02 MS in civil engineering), senior vice president at tire manufacturer CEAT Limited; and Amit Sharma (’99 MS in mechanical engineering), CEO of Tata Engineering Consulting.

During his conversations with alumni, Squires listened to their advice on how to better engage with the Fulton Schools alumni community in India, how to build stronger ties with educational institutions in the country, the state of India’s technology industry and how ASU can enhance its presence there for mutually beneficial collaborations with academic institutions and businesses.

Squires also dedicated time to exploring potential collaborative paths with Indian microelectronics industry leaders. He met with representatives from Applied Materials’ Indian divisions to deepen ASU’s relationship with them and explore collaborative opportunities, including for research experiences in the Fulton Schools [Summer Research Initiative](#) program.

In addition to meeting with industry leaders, Cintana and ASU hosted a semiconductor roundtable event with Squires as the keynote speaker. The speech focused on the development of the [semiconductor industry in Phoenix](#) and ASU’s initiatives to train the workforce needed for the sector’s rapid expansion.

“As India further expands into microelectronics as a vital part of the country’s long-term growth plans, we want to create research and workforce development efforts that can help both countries achieve their maximum potential,” Squires says. “ASU and the Fulton Schools looks forward to our microelectronics-focused future with India as a close ally.”

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Main image



Kyle Squires (second right from center), dean of the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering and ASU's senior vice provost of engineering, computing and technology, and ASU President Michael Crow (first left from center) pose for a photo with Indian government officials and ASU representatives. Crow and Squires visited India to build relationships with potential collaborators in government, industry and academia to expand engineering education access in the country and explore potential research collaborations. Photo courtesy of Kimberly Taylor/ASU