

# Canadian school launches BBA program in Chandigarh

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in Toronto

University College of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford, British Columbia, launched its industry-focused Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree program in India on May 10 by signing a partnership agreement with Chandigarh's Sanatan Dharma (SD) College.

The four-year delivery format, beginning July 17, is internationally recognized so that students may continue their studies anywhere in the world, said Prof D J Sandhu, UCFV President's Advisor on Strategic Initiatives who's currently in Chandigarh and signed the partnership agreement..

This BBA program should be extremely attractive to Indian students as it will be offered at a fraction of what it would cost international students to complete the degree in Canada. Also, after one year, students will have the option to transfer to the same program delivered at UCFV in British Columbia, Sandhu said.

More importantly, "one of the most unique features of this degree program is that it will operate on a semester system, where students are evaluated on far more than just their final exams (as in India). Class participation, project work, case analysis, feedback from industry sponsors and other elements will provide the basis of their overall marks within each course," Sandhu explained.

However, their research "indicates that undergraduate business education in India is not delivered with an applied orientation, but rather focuses on rote memorization and textbook learning" which, Sandhu said, "falls short of the employability skills sought after by industry."

Speaking to *India Abroad*, he said UCFV chose Chandigarh for this partnership "based on our research we have found the demographics in Chandigarh to yield a per capita income approximately three times higher than (India's) national average. This city also has the highest concentration



■ (Fromleft) Sanatan Dharma College principal A C Vad with University College of Fraser Valley's Prof D J Sandhu after signing the partnership agreement in Chandigarh s

of high-caliber, private, English-medium schools with an estimate of 120,000 Class XII students graduating each year, which minimises ESL (English as Second Language) training. We also recognized that the majority of people of Indian origin in Canada have roots in Northern India. Chandigarh is also becoming the third IT/biotechnology hub in India, after Bangalore and Hyderabad."

He also noted that UCFV "enjoys wide support from the largest Indo-Canadian community in Western Canada" and that that support was instrumental in their establishing "the Center for Indo-Canadian Studies and Research (CICSR) at

our Abbotsford campus" that resulted their signing "an MoU with Panjab University in Chandigarh in November 2004."

When asked how they would control the quality of teaching of their BBA program at SD College, Sandhu said the "program is entirely UCFV curriculum ... Our goal is to produce graduates who are equipped with sound managerial skills that are in demand by multinationals anywhere in the world."

They would be supervising admission of students in Chandigarh as "UCFV will have a permanent presence in Chandigarh. The entire program is a mirror of the same program at UCFV in Canada."

British Columbia's Minister of Labor and Citizens' Services Michael de Jong commented on UCFV's partnership agreement with SD College: "There's a striking dichotomy between Canada's rapidly growing economy that's facing a labor shortage, and India's rapidly growing economy that has a labor surplus. It's a good fit, and UCFV can play a big role in our development relationship (with India)."

"It is our aim," Sandhu said, "that the graduates of this program (UCFV-SD College) will provide an excellent pool of skilled professionals that Canada can attract to address these predicted shortages."

"This collaboration effort of the two institutions is a stepping stone on the path to further cooperation through educational, academic and cultural linkages," said SD College Principal Dr A C Vaid.

Similarly, Sandhu asserted partnership agreement with SD College "is just the first of what we hope will be many initiatives linking our institutions" as their long-term vision is to incorporate "several aspects including faculty, student and research exchange, curriculum development, master-level programming and the implementation of other applied and industry-relevant programs."

Their BBA program in Chandigarh "is a cohort program limited to 60 students." As described earlier, after one year, these students will have the option "to complete all or any portion of this (4 year) degree at UCFV in Canada."

There's an added bonus in this partnership: Deserving and bright students will get \$5,000 scholarships, said Sandhu.

UCFV has 10,000 students. Sandhu said "this initiative is yet another example of how the Canadian university is nurturing its ties to India. To underline its commitment to link education with industry in the two countries, UCFV houses the Center for Indo-Canadian Studies and Research and last year donated Rs. 10 lakhs to Panjab University in support of its Canadian Studies Center."