



St. Francis

College for Women

Begumpet, Hyderabad-500016

(Autonomous & Affiliated to Osmania University)

Yearly Report
Centre for International Studies
Academic Year 2024-25

MOUs for the Year

1. **California Baptist University**
2. **GECF**
3. **ISDC**
4. **DBIMA (Paris)**
5. **Anderson University (Cyber Security Certificate Course)**

Summary

The academic year 2024-25 was a year full of activities for the Centre for International Studies. Along with the long-term MOUs that the college has, this year we initiated conversations with 3 universities - University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, Dallas Baptist University and Canada West University - for the next academic year. This academic year we conducted one information sharing session on the immersion programs and study abroad programs the Center conducts. The Global Education and Careers Forum conducted multiple sessions on the scholarships they offer and the ways they can help students in their journey to study abroad. Scholsti (A Singapore based foundation) conducted a session with students with regards to how to choose universities abroad. We also had faculty and staff of three universities - Dallas Baptist University, California Baptist University and Ulster University visit the college. One of the major highlights of the year was the visit of Lt. Governor of the State of New Jersey that was coordinated by the Center.

1. Seminar - GLOBAL EDUCATION AND CAREERS FORUM

Date: 21.06.2024

Time: 12 pm

Venue: Gerosa Hall

This report encapsulates the key discussions of the seminar, aiming to inform and inspire students considering international education opportunities.

The seminar on 'Thinking of studying abroad', supported by the Government of Telangana, featured Mr. Venkatesh and Mr. Vamshi as key speakers. The session commenced with an interactive discussion with students about their current academic year and aspirations for pursuing masters abroad. Students expressed reasons such as career opportunities, quality of education, and personal growth. The discussion highlighted the financial implications of pursuing masters abroad, acknowledging the substantial costs involved.

Addressing the question of 'why countries should allow students to pursue education abroad', the speakers emphasized the potential for these students to become skilled workers and contribute positively to the economy. India's demographic dividend was underscored, with its youthful population seen as a significant asset for the nation's future workforce needs.

Mr. Vamshi elaborated on various scholarships available, including those requiring competitive exams like TOEFL and GRE. Students were informed about a scholarship of ₹2.5 lakhs for achieving a score above 80/120 in the relevant tests. An additional competition offered a prize of ₹4 lakhs, aiming to encourage and support talented students. The seminar emphasized personalized guidance and support, including free training for exams like IELTS and assistance in college selection. They are a non-profit organization highlighting affordability and comprehensive support services. The session concluded with an invitation for interested students to fill out forms and pursue further opportunities. Organizational heads addressed queries from students, ensuring clarity on various aspects discussed during the seminar.

The seminar provided valuable insights into the benefits and challenges of pursuing higher education abroad. It encouraged students to consider their career goals critically and offered concrete pathways through scholarships and support services. The engagement with students reflected a proactive approach by the Government of Telangana in facilitating global education opportunities for aspiring Indian students.

2. Introduction to Centre for International Studies and CBU

Date: 05.07.2024

Time: 12 pm

Venue: Auditorium

Centre for International Studies and Academic Progression Cell had organized an orientation on Introduction to Centre for International Studies and Immersion Program at CBU on 5th July, twenty-twenty four. The resource person for the same was Dr. Sinjini Bhattacharya, Department of Political Science. The event was organized for B.A, B.S.C, B.COM and BMS 1 and 2 students in the Auditorium of PG block.

The one-hour session was conducted to brief the students about the opportunities provided by the college in relation to international studies. The students were made aware of the various Memorandum of Understandings the college had with universities abroad, like California Baptist University, Don Bosco International Media Academy, Paris, Anderson University, Miami Herbert Business School, etc. They also had students, Pavaki Yadav and Darakhsan Razvi who had been to California Baptist University share their experience on what it was like to study abroad for the duration of 2-3 weeks and the places that they travelled. They also briefed the students on the accommodation and their day-to-day life on the campus.

The session was attended by more than 200 students who showed a lot of interest in engaging in these upcoming opportunities. The session proved highly enlightening and educational. Dr. Sinjini concluded the meeting requesting students to approach any of the faculty from the committee for doubts or for future information.

3. Guest Lecture on “Study Opportunities in UK/ Northern Ireland Ulster University” for B.Com, BMS, BA Final Year Students

Date: 10.08.2024

Time: 2 pm

Venue: Capitanio Hall

The Centre for International Studies organised a Guest Lecture for B.Com, BMS, BA final year students in the Capitanio Hall on 10th September, 2024. St Francis College for women entered into an Memorandum of understanding with Global Education and Career Forum, International Studies Center in collaboration with Global Education and Career Forum organised a guest lecture on opportunities to study in Ulster University, Northern Ireland. The Guest Lecture was given by Ms Karen McCormack (Global Recruitment & Engagement Officer) and Ms Yasmin Roberta (Global Recruitment & Engagement Officer).

Ms Yasmin Roberta (Global Recruitment & Engagement Officer) administered the session where she spoke majorly about the programmes offered by the Ulster University. Alongside she also laid down the pathway to get into the University with an ease as there are multiple scholarships offered by the University. She further highlighted that the University recognizes the admission to top graduate programs as a great achievement in the academic and professional development of its undergraduate students, and it aims to empower its undergraduates to pursue advanced studies in their desired fields, enabling them to further expand their knowledge and contribute to their chosen disciplines. She further added details about the fee structure, amenities available, English Language Requirements, and key Deadlines. This informative session by Ms Yasmin Roberta was appreciated and applauded by the students and staff present in the Capitanio Hall. The students were highly benefited from the session and posed several questions to Ms Karen McCormack. At the end of the session, they seemed to get a good idea about Ulster University, Northern Ireland.

4. Guest Lecture by Scholist

Date : 04/10/2024

Time: 12 pm

Place : Auditorium, St. Francis College for Women.

Ms. Rashna Bhojwani, CEO and Co-founder of Scholist, addressed students regarding the process of choosing education abroad. Scholist is a company headquartered in Singapore, with team members across the globe. It was founded by former students (including graduates of Stanford University, Columbia University School of Law, and IIT Kanpur), for students. Their mission is to bring transparency to the study abroad counselling and recruitment process since many students receive guidance from consultants or universities whose interests are not aligned with theirs. Their goal is to educate and inform students about studying abroad before they make the choice to start their application process, seek out consultants or recruitment agents, or potentially choose the wrong university to pursue their higher education. In the long run, their goal is to build a technology platform that allows students and universities to transact directly with each other, so we can bring higher-quality guidance to students at an affordable cost.

She informed students that they offer Webinar/Seminar tailored to your university's students; examples include: a. Future-Ready: How to Pick the Ideal International University for Your Goals, U.S. Fall Admissions including How to Craft Your Profile: Personal Statement, CV and LORs, Group-based class to learn about the study abroad process, 1:1 counseling/application process assistance

5. Guest Lecture on Study Abroad Session by GECF

Date : 04/12/2024

Time: 12 pm

Place : PG Seminar Hall, St. Francis College for Women.

A session on study abroad opportunities was conducted on 4th December 2024 in the PG Seminar Hall for final-year students. The session provided insights into higher education abroad, covering application procedures, scholarships, and career prospects.

The speaker, Mr. Lakshmi Narayanan, Secretary, Public Speaker and social media influencer from Global Education and Career Forum discussed essential aspects of studying abroad, including selecting the right country and university based on tuition fees, cost of living, career opportunities, and cultural adaptation. The application process was explained in detail, covering

academic requirements, standardized tests such as GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, and IELTS, and key documents like the Statement of Purpose (SOP) and Letters of Recommendation (LOR).

The session also focused on visa procedures, part-time work opportunities, and post-study employment prospects. Students engaged in a Q&A session, seeking guidance on scholarships, country-specific admission requirements, and career pathways after graduation. The session concluded with an emphasis on early preparation and informed decision-making for those considering international education.

17 students and two faculty benefitted from this session.

6. Town hall gathering with Ms. Tahesha Way.

Date : 12/12/2024

Time: 10 am

Place : Auditorium, St. Francis College for Women.

The event commenced with a warm address by the host, Dr. Sinjini Bhattacharya, who invoked the powerful words of Maya Angelou:

"I am a woman phenomenally, Phenomenal woman, That's me."

This set the tone for a celebration of empowerment and leadership. Sister Carmeli Thaniath led a heartfelt prayer, followed by a melodious performance by the college choir. The cultural segment included a vibrant Bharatanatyam swagatham and an elegant dance performance to Mere Dholna and others which enthralled the audience.

A video presentation chronicled the college's journey, showcasing its achievements in student development, social outreach, eco-conscious initiatives, and research by staff and students. The college's commitment to values and sustainable growth was portrayed as the cornerstone of its success.

Ms. Shwetha Rachel introduced the distinguished chief guest, Ms. Tahesha L. Way, the Lt. Governor of New Jersey and the 34th Secretary of State of New Jersey. Known for her remarkable contributions to governance, women's policy research, and advocacy for equality, Ms. Way's impressive career as a judge, public servant, and advocate for women in law exemplifies her role not only as a leader but also as a unifying symbol. She was felicitated by the college's correspondent, Sister Carmeli Thaniath, and Vice Principal, Dr. Sister Sherly.

In her keynote address, Ms. Tahesha Way conveyed gratitude for the warm welcome and reflected on the significance of female leadership. Sharing her personal journey of rising from humble beginnings, she conveyed that education, determination, and service are key to overcoming challenges. Her parents, a bus driver and a railroad clerk, inspired her to strive for excellence despite limited resources. She underscored the importance of authenticity in leadership, encouraging young people to be active citizens, join student associations, and contribute to social betterment.

Ms. Way spoke passionately about mentorship, motivating attendees to seek guidance from mentors who can help open doors to new opportunities. She credited Dean Ashley's mentorship for enabling her accomplishments and shared her mother's timeless advice, "Just be present." This message, which focuses on the power of engagement and showing up, was a recurring theme in her speech.

The interactive Q&A session addressed critical global and community issues, beginning with a discussion on the role of women in conflict zones. Ms. Tahesha Way advocated for respectful and informed advocacy, emphasizing the need to understand the nuances of each situation and connect with governmental institutions to provide meaningful support.

On the topic of building resilient communities, Ms. Way articulated the importance of understanding the specific needs of local populations. She recommended implementing gender-specific policies and taking incremental, achievable steps to foster sustainable development, with collaboration between government agencies and NGOs playing a key role.

Addressing the issue of minority security, Ms. Way shared her confidence in leadership's commitment to ensuring equal treatment for all under the law. She acknowledged the

complexities posed by diverse environments and encouraged negotiation and finding common ground to create inclusive spaces.

When discussing the role of women in conflict resolution, Ms. Way illustrated the unique perspectives women bring to the table, particularly on humanitarian grounds. She credited female leadership with qualities such as perseverance and empathy, which can drive impactful solutions. Reflecting on women's historical struggles, she encouraged them to stay informed, uplift others, and actively pursue leadership roles to enact meaningful change.

Ms. Way also delivered an impassioned message about voting rights, recalling the struggles faced by women of color during the passage of the 19th Amendment. She inspired attendees to draw strength from their roots, sharing personal anecdotes from her upbringing in challenging neighborhoods. Closing her address, she invoked the teachings of Jesus Christ, reminding everyone to "Never forget where you came from."

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Ravi Kumar, Head of the Department of Mass Communications. He extended heartfelt appreciation to the college's leadership, including Dr. Sister Sherly, Vice Principal, Sister Carmeli Thaniath, Correspondent, and Dr. Uma Joseph, Principal, for their unwavering support and guidance in making the event a success. Special gratitude was also extended to the chief guest, Lieutenant Governor Ms. Tahesha L. Way, the organizing team, the US Consulate General in Hyderabad, and all contributors who played a vital role in making the event a resounding success.

7. Meeting with Dallas Baptist University and Guest Lecture on Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Date : 14/2/2025

Time: 10 am

Place : Gerosa Hall, St. Francis College for Women.

Mr. Sanjay Purushottam and Dr. Ross O'Brien visited the college on the 14th of February. During their visit the possibilities of an immersion program and dual degrees were discussed. This meeting was followed by a Guest Lecture by Dr. O'Brien.

St. Francis College for Women's Centre for International Studies conducted a thoughtful guest lecture on 'Sustainable Entrepreneurship' on February 14, 2025, for final-year B.Com and BMS students. The purpose of the lecture was to highlight the growing importance of sustainability in entrepreneurship. The session included honoured speakers, Dr. Ross O'Brien, the Program Director of Dallas Baptist University (DBU), and Dr. Sanjay Purushottam, an associate of DBU. The session was hosted by Miss Deeshna, a third-year BCom Honors student. The session was designed to give students beneficial information about entrepreneurship, sustainability, and higher study opportunities at DBU.

Dr. Ross O'Brien, a PhD graduate from the University of Texas and the Program Director at DBU since 2023, gave the keynote address. He had come to India for the first time and spoke of his admiration for India's hospitality, highlighting his fondness for interacting with people here and the cuisine.

Dr. O'Brien started his speech by asking some questions regarding the students' interest in entrepreneurship. He provided a definition of entrepreneurship to include "seeking discontinuous opportunities, generating organization, and creating value." He noted that 'value' extends beyond money and material things to include family and human values.

He went on to define entrepreneurship as "a learning process to pursue opportunities without regard to resources currently controlled." Using a personal example, he told the story of his wife opening a bookshop even though she had no prior experience in business, demonstrating how entrepreneurship is a learning process.

Dr. O'Brien emphasized various forms of entrepreneurship, including corporate entrepreneurship, using the case of Gmail. He encouraged students to be entrepreneurial and have an entrepreneurial mindset in their professional pursuits, whether in business or other fields, and emphasized the value of creativity in solving problems. He regretted that education systems are suppressing creativity since every person is "creative by default" and displays creativity differently.

Turning to sustainable entrepreneurship, Dr. O'Brien termed it a framework that takes into account the interests of all stakeholders, not just the business and employees. He recognized that it was not easy and likened it to jumping off a cliff and assembling an airplane midair to fly to safety. He stressed the need for calculated risk-taking and learning from failure, asking students to be comfortable with ambiguity and curiosity. He ended his address on a note of urging students to fully engage in whatever they do and learn every day. He also showed his appreciation to the faculty of the college for organizing this guest lecture.

Dr. Sanjay Purushottam expressed appreciation to the college and sent regards from a college alumnus who is pursuing studies at DBU. He explained DBU's vision to produce "servant leaders" — people ready to serve society through leadership. He also discussed DBU's programs and advised students to prepare in advance and research universities thoroughly if they intend to pursue studies abroad.

The session had a video presenting good feedback from DBU Indian students, giving a glimpse into their experiences and opportunities being offered by the university.

The session ended with a vote of thanks by Miss Deeshna. The thought-provoking discussions and active student participation made the event engaging and insightful. The lecture offered valuable insights into entrepreneurship, sustainability, and higher education, inspiring students to explore new opportunities and take proactive steps in their careers.

8. Webinar Conducted by Ulster University, Ireland

Date : 05/3/2025

Time: 12 pm

Place : Online

Resource persons Mr.Selvin David Noel (Regional Director South Asia for Ulster University) and Ms. Smitha Shankar (Student Advisor for Ulster University) were introduced to the audience by Dr. Sinjini Bhattacharya. The session started with a video documenting life at Ulster University. The speakers gave an idea about Education in the United Kingdom & Northern Ireland as well as Ulster University. A detailed breakdown of the various programs and study

options at Ulster University was shared with the students. How to go about the application including the fee structure, amenities available, English Language Requirements, and key Deadlines. Other details of entry criteria, admission process and employability. The program ended with a questions and answer session where students asked questions about programs such as astronomy.

9. Meeting with Canada West University

Date: 4/03/2025

Venue: Video Conference

Mr. Stephen and Ms. Amy Hua from Canada West University joined with the Principal, Vice Principal, Ms. Deepa James, Dr. P. Roselin and Dr. Sinjini in an online meeting to discuss a possible MOU in the next academic year. Ms. Amy highlighted the major courses that the university offers and briefed the members present on the Office of Research for Teaching Excellence. The meeting identified areas of collaboration that included - faculty and student exchange, dual credit courses (2 years at St. Francis and 1 yr in Canada), Research collaborations, short and medium term immersion programs for students. The meeting ended with the both sides agreeing to work on future collaborations.

10. Meeting with Dr. Bryan Davis (CBU)

Date: 6/03/2025

Venue: Principal's Cabin, St. Francis College for Women

Dr. Bryan Davis paid a visit to the college on his India trip. During the meeting with the Principal, Dr. Bryan informed us about a possible tie-up in terms of dual degrees in Psychology and MBA. He informed the college regarding a 30% reduction in fee in case of a tie-up where the student gets to do a year at CBU. He also proposed the visit of Dr. Nathan Iverson who specialises in Industrial and Business Psychology. Prior to his visits there was a proposal for online sessions for Psychology students which would be followed by a 1 day workshop at the

end of July during his visit. Other proposals were related to a lecture series or two week course in Psychology. The other issue discussed was a revamping of the immersion program to include discipline-specific tracks and collaboration with other colleges and universities in India to reduce the number cut-off for the immersion program. The meeting ended with a promise on both sides to strengthen the partnership.

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