

21st Century India Center 2025-26 Academic Year Highlights

In the 2025-26 academic year, with support from our community and donors, the 21st Century India Center at the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy moved decisively into the center of the U.S.-India policy conversation. Through the inaugural U.S.-India Forum, a new fellowship program, and faculty research on migration, clean energy and economic development, we advanced our conviction that rigorous research and genuine people-to-people connection are essential to a stronger U.S.-India relationship.

Policy Engagement and Outreach

From large-scale convenings to intimate exchanges, we sparked dialogue and deepened engagement across the U.S.-India policy landscape.



Convened one of the year's most substantive forums on U.S.-

India relations: The U.S.-India Forum brought together 130 participants across 16 panel discussions on the UC San Diego campus, drawing academics, policymakers, entrepreneurs and practitioners from both countries. Conversations centered on three defining questions: U.S.-India collaboration on AI, the role of universities in anchoring deeper bilateral ties, and the future of the relationship amid current geopolitical tensions and opportunities.

Sparked dialogue on the issues that matter most: Our virtual Policy Seminar Series brought together 14 academics and seven policymakers across four sessions attended by over 180 participants. Topics included the [impact of U.S. tariffs on the Indian economy](#) and the [shifting triangular relationship](#) between India, China and the United States.

Brought policy practitioners and diplomats to UC San

Diego: We hosted [Arti Ahuja and Manoj Ahuja](#), distinguished former Indian civil servants, in partnership with the Global Leadership Fellows Program. Their public talk gave the UC San Diego community a rare, direct exchange with practitioners who shaped India's technology-enabled policymaking. We welcomed Steve Olive, the last USAID Mission Director to India, for a candid conversation about on-the-ground lessons and the future of U.S.-India engagement. We also welcomed K.J. Srinivasa, India's first consul general in Los Angeles, and former U.S. Ambassador to India Tim Roemer to campus.

Investing in the Next Generation

Building the next generation of leaders who deeply understand India is central to 21CIC's mission. Thanks to a generous commitment from the Motwani Jadeja Family Foundation, we launched two programs designed to deepen American leaders' understanding of India, from high school students to mid-career professionals.



Launched the inaugural Motwani Jadeja India Fellows

Program: Seven mid-career policy professionals spent a month in India, hosted by three universities, building networks and conducting fieldwork on issues at the heart of the bilateral relationship, including AI and development, cybersecurity, social innovation and workforce development for India's critical minerals supply chains. Fellows came to campus in June to share their fieldwork experiences and engage with the UC San Diego community.

Expanded our investment in the Future Leaders Summer

Program: In partnership with the Global Leadership Institute and the 21st Century China Center, we cohosted this three-week immersion for high school students on UC San Diego's campus. In summer 2025, with support from the Motwani Jadeja Foundation, we funded nine high-potential students to deepen their curiosity about India at a formative stage in their education.



Created unique mentorship opportunities for UC San Diego

students: Drawing on our extensive network, we connected motivated students at UC San Diego's School of Global Policy and Strategy with policy professionals from the private sector, nonprofits and think tanks, including former U.S. Ambassador to India Tim Roemer and the inaugural cohort of Motwani Jadeja India Fellows. Students gained dedicated time to explore policy careers, receive candid career guidance and learn how to create meaningful impact.

Research That Shapes the Conversation

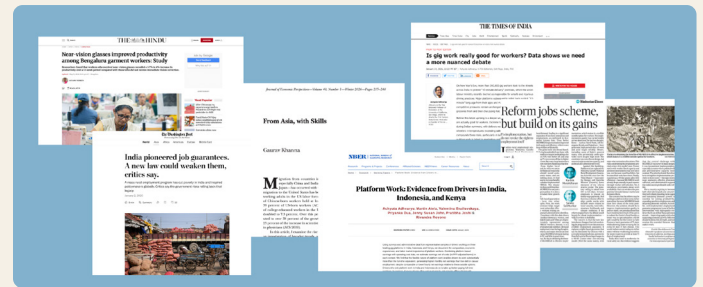
Our faculty affiliates at UC San Diego continued to produce rigorous, evidence-based research on the most pressing policy debates facing India and the U.S.-India relationship. Their work, alongside the emerging scholars we platform through our seminar series, reflects our commitment to ensuring that consequential research insights on India reach the audiences who need it most.

Achyuta Advharyu published [research findings on platform work and labor welfare among drivers in India](#). He found that

while gig work offers higher monthly earnings than low-skill employment, hourly earnings remain comparable or lower, and that for many workers, gig work serves as a stepping stone to better-paying full-time employment.

Gaurav Khanna continued to publish influential work on how migration flows affect the Indian and American economies and why the H-1B visa remains valuable to both countries, offering a rigorous, data-driven perspective that [reached policymakers and the public alike](#). Learn how U.S. immigration policy influenced India's IT boom and access the full [research paper on high-skill migration and its consequences on sending and receiving economies](#).

Karthik Muralidharan and Paul Niehaus completed research with direct implications for how India designs and delivers social programs. Their [large-scale randomized evaluation](#) found that cash transfers to new mothers significantly improved calorie intake, dietary diversity and children's functional development — while also revealing that poor sanitation may be limiting the full nutritional benefits of these interventions.



Our virtual [India Economics Seminar Series](#) continued to showcase new research on the economics of India by high-potential, early-stage researchers from around the world. We hosted nine speakers and welcomed 262 attendees globally, representing close to a 50% increase in attendance from the previous year.

A Final Word

None of this would have been possible without the generosity of our supporters, who funded research that shaped real policy conversations, created opportunities for students and fellows, and helped build an institution that India and the U.S.-India relationship genuinely need. As we look toward 2026-27, questions about AI, clean energy, trade and strategic cooperation feel more urgent than ever. We warmly invite you to stay engaged, deepen your support and continue this journey with us.