Message from the Chief Editor

I am proud and privileged to share the 3rd edition of the C-Global which attempts to encapsulate the happenings of significance with international connotations which took place within the CIIT System during the first half of 2015. Like the previous two editions I sincerely hope that the current issue would also appeal to the readers and that it provides a good sense of what COMSATS Institute of Information Technology truly stands for and aspires to become!

The International Office is in a continuous process of forging new and maintaining the existing international linkages and collaborations for the real benefit of the students, faculty and staff of the Institute. I am grateful to all those who help us make our initiatives a success with their wholehearted engagement, involvement and support.

The year 2015 beyond a doubt has been one involving changes for the International Office in terms of its team members. To all those who have embarked on new ventures and avenues in their lives, we wish them all the best that life has to offer, and to those who have joined us in the past few months we extend a warm welcome with the hope that they shall prove to be an asset for the office as well as the Institute.

Let me leave you to enjoy this edition of C-Global. Happy Reading!

Arshad S Malik

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CIIT Ranked among Top 250 Asian Universities

According to the 2014 QS University Ranking, CIIT ranks among the Top 201-250 universities in Asia while it ranks among the Top 301-400 universities in the world in mathematics. Published annually since 2009, the QS Universities Rankings Asia highlight the 300 top universities in Asia, providing an overview of higher education in one of the world’s most dynamic and rapidly developing regions. CIIT is one of the 10 Pakistani institutions in QS rankings.
Women Empowerment and Leadership Workshop

On February 19 – 20, 2015 a two-day workshop was organised in Lahore on Women Empowerment and Leadership, in particular in the arena of higher education. The organisers included CIIT Lahore Campus in collaboration with our Turkish partner, Duzce University, whose president Dr. Funda Sivrikaya Serifoglu is an active proponent of women rights and a key resource person for the event. Other resource persons included academics from Fatima Jinnah Women University, Punjab University, Beaconhouse National University; as well as entrepreneurs from Heartfile, Smileagain foundation and Rafi Peer Theatre group.

The aim of the workshop was to assist women managers, academicians and entrepreneurs who aspire to greater leadership roles in their career by developing their strategic thinking and negotiation skills, breaking the glass ceiling, overcoming self-limiting habits, learning the art of creating win-win partnerships, keeping work-life balance and unlocking their true leadership potential all in a regional cultural context.

The workshop was very well attended with participants giving positive feedback about not merely learning, but also applauding CIIT’s initiative as it provided a platform for them to discover and engage with female professional mentors from a wide wake of professions.

Strengthening Links for Rural Development

On Thursday 18 December 2014, the Secretary General of the African - Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO), Engineer Wassfi Hassan El Sreihin, visited COMSATS Institute of Information Technology. Eng. Wassfi was accompanied by Dr. Zafar Iqbal Nadir who is Director General of National Centre for Rural Development and has before remained Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). The two visitors met with Rector CIIT as well as Head International Office. Here they were given a briefing regarding the scope and vision of CIIT as well as its commitment to creating indigenous solutions to the national and regional challenges.

AARDO was appreciative of not just CIIT’s growth and achievements but also its commitment and looked to explore collaborations that strengthen the African and Asian region through technological solutions for a comprehensive approach to sustainable rural development. Together, the organisations explored potential mobility opportunities to generate an exchange of ideas and expertise; as well as develop an individual based relationship for collaborating in applied research.
Exploring the Future of the Pakistani City

On Monday 6 April, 2015, CIIT Islamabad organised a seminar on “The Future of the Pakistani City.” The seminar was led by Dr. Ammar Malik who is a visiting Research Associate from the Urban Institute Centre on International Development and

- Articulating a collective vision of a liveable city
- Broadening societal understanding of challenges facing Pakistani cities
- Building and expanding partnerships leading to a desirable future

The speakers drew upon the research being conducted at the Urban Institute, Washington, DC and shared the causes and consequences of global urbanisation including the spatial structures of cities, the political economy of public service delivery and the relationship between economic growth and human mobility within cities.

Mr. Milos Djuragic who is the Economic Assistant at the Embassy of the United States of America in Islamabad, was a special guest at this seminar. Mr. Djuragic was greatly appreciative of the Islamabad Campus as well as the students vitality he observed. He praised the Forum’s model for bringing together a variety of stakeholders which ensures a truly thorough vision and solution.

Collaborative Workshop with Community World Service Asia

While the entire CIIT community is always available to respond to the unfortunate conflicts and disasters Pakistan has faced over the last decade, CIIT Abbottabad Campus in particular, due to its location, has been part of disaster relief for many years. They have also developed a thriving Department of Development Studies that provides academic insight and research as a long term stratagem for disaster prevention, while in the short term spearheading the campus’s disaster relief activities.

As such, on April 16, 2015, CIIT Abbottabad organised a workshop with Community World Service Asia to help understand the concept of disaster relief, working with affected persons and bolster best practices amongst the campus community.

Community World Service Asia is a regional non-governmental organization which implements humanitarian and development activities in Asia with a specific focus on disaster management; education; health; livelihoods; peace and governance; water, sanitation, and the environment; and quality and accountability.

The workshop had an open audience but specifically aimed towards faculty members from Development Studies and Management Sciences. Community World Service Asia introduced the Sphere Project and how induction of Sphere standards can help improve the curricula of disaster related courses.
Workshop on Development in Post-Conflict Swat, Pakistan

On Wednesday 10 June, CIIT Abbottabad and Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) held a workshop on the topic of Understanding Gender, Human Security and Development in Post-Conflict Swat, Pakistan: Implications for Policy and Practice.

The objective of this workshop was to share the findings of a five year collaborative research project between these two institutions. This project was started in 2010 when Swat was still suffering from conflict, a situation that was aggravated by the floods of 2010. The project team aimed to explore in depth the implications of this conflict and lack of security and shape models for development and progress that now, should be translated into policy. The Research Council of Norway and HUJRA, a local organisation, provided support in making this project possible.

The workshop commenced with an introduction of the project by the lead researchers Dr. Ingrid Nyborg from the Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Noragric, at NMBU and Dr. Bahadar Nawab Head of Development Studies Department, CIIT.

The keynote address was aptly made by local expert, Dr. Fazal Mabood, who helped provide a sketch of the situation of the Swat region prevalent both then and now. The Guest of Honor was Mr. Lars Nordrum, Charge Affair and Acting Head of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad. The project team expressed their gratitude to the Norwegian Embassy for their support in marking this possible.

Creating Global Citizens

The United Nations has a significant presence in Pakistan and CIIT has developed strong relationship with the United Nations Information Centre, Pakistan, which was cemented in the spring semester.

Communication Workshop for Students

UNIC conducted a provincial Communication Workshop at The University of Central Punjab, Lahore on 14 April, 2015 designed for undergraduate students from select universities across Lahore.

Launch of UN Corner Competition and MoU Signing

CIIT has worked in collaboration with United Nations Information Centre Pakistan (UNIC), several times in the past year on issues of development goals and climate change. However, on 23 February 2015, this partnership was cemented with the launch of a significant design competition followed by the signing of an MoU.

The design competition, which was launched at the Architecture Department in front of a varied and interdisciplinary audience, brings together students from across the campus to develop a working model for a “UN Corner”, a physical set up providing access to global UN reports and publications. The winning design would be produced by UNIC and inaugurated at CIIT.

Mr. Vittorio Cammarata, Director UNIC was present at the competition launch where he shared his vision behind the UN Corner and encouraged students to participate with enthusiasm and vigour.

Following the launch of the competition, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNIC and CIIT, represented by Mr. Vittorio Cammarata and Dr. Arshad S Malik, Head International Office. We hope this MoU will make CIIT one of the leading academic partners of UNIC in Pakistan through which we wish to champion and integrate the global human rights values that UN promotes, within all our campuses.

Pakistan through Photography

A group of 25 students from the department of Architecture and Design, CIIT Lahore Campus, were invited to the opening ceremony of a photo exhibition “United Nations for Pakistan People” on 16 April, 2015 at Lahore City Heritage Museum, Tollington Market.

The undergraduate students had the opportunity to not just witness the power of digital story telling but also to interact with professionals who are using art to integrate responsible, socio-economic statements into structural design and décor.
Awards and Fellowships

In the past semester, members of the CIIT family have had the opportunity to celebrate several accolades and awards ranging from national and international recognition of standing academics, as well as fellowships for nurturing future potential.

Science Ambassador Emeritus

Dr. Intinian Elahi Qureshi is the Executive Director for the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS), the parent body of CIIT, as well as a member of the Board of Governors of CIIT.

In February, Dr. Qureshi was unanimously conferred the title of “Science Ambassador Emeritus” in the field of Science Diplomacy by the 22 COMSATS member countries.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Intinian Elahi Qureshi said, “the genesis of COMSATS is based on the premise that Science and Technology plays a central role in socio-economic development agenda. Therefore, it follows that policymakers in developing countries have to be sensitised about the importance of S&T capacity-building as a fulcrum of development strategy.”

The COMSATS family congratulates Dr. Intinian Elahi Qureshi for the prestigious honor bestowed upon him!

ACU Centenary Awards

The Association of Commonwealth Universities offers 40 early career academic grants to allow young academics with limited international exposure to travel to conferences and symposiums in other Commonwealth countries.

This year, CIIT faculty members, Dr. Saddam Hussain Head of Management Sciences Department CIIT Attock and Mr. Hassan Qayyum Department of Chemical Engineering CIIT Lahore secured two of these awards. This vote of confidence in the CIIT faculty is a matter of great pride for the institution.

Capacity Building through ACU Titular Fellowship

The Association of Commonwealth Universities, a body of which CIIT is an active member, publicises annual titular fellowships. This year, Mr. Ammar Zia ud Din Qazi, who is Deputy Registrar at the Virtual Campus won the Jacky Maclear Award. The award enables him to travel to a UK higher education institution where Mr. Qazi will have a chance to work with his counterparts and learn from their challenges, experiences, systems and best practices.

CIIT Wins Horizon 2020 Research Grant

Dr. Habib Bukhari, Professor at the Department of Biosciences, Islamabad campus won the Horizon 2020 grant for his proposal in the field of bio-informatics.

The Horizon2020 is a collaborative European grant and the project is developed with the help of many partners including University of Camerino and University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy and Cambridge University, UK.

This research will significantly contribute to CIIT in laboratorial procedure and capacity building with the discoveries possibly helping in the manufacture of a new generation of ordinary facilities, as cleaning agents, biofuels and green technology.

Edinburgh Summer School Bursary

The University of Edinburgh, UK is amongst the most prestigious universities of the country and every year offers an academically and culturally rich summer school program. Summer schools, popular in Europe, bring together a diverse student body from across the world for a memorable month long learning experience.

This year the Edinburgh Summer School offered bursaries to two students from around the world, one of which CIIT’s student from the Department of Management Sciences, Ms. Samavia Shakeel, was fortunate to secure.

The bursary allows Samavia to travel to the beautiful city of Edinburgh in August and take part in a month long economics course with boarding and lodging at the university.
Our CERN Engagements

CIIT is fortunate to be an on-going partner in CERN research projects, the only one from Pakistan. Our leadership and researchers remain committed to nurturing this partnership as it is only through collaboration with the very best in the field that we can truly hope to raise the higher education profile of Pakistan.

Director General CERN Visits CIIT

Professor Dr. Rolf-Dieter Heuer, Director General, CERN along with Dr Rudiger Voss visited CIIT on 20th December, 2014. During his visit to CIIT he was shown the facilities at the Nano technology laboratory, Radiation Lab, RF lab and the ALICE grid in the department of Computer Science to assure the Director General of the standard of CIIT’s participatory equipment and the commitment of the researchers and technicians.

Following the visit, in a meeting with the CIIT leadership, the Director General highly appreciated the professionalism and quality of the work being carried out by CIIT researchers, a testament to Pakistani ingenuity and ability. He also extended all CERN’s support and expertise to CIIT, promising to provide valuable servers and hardware equipment to further build our capacity locally.

Rector Leads CIIT Delegation to CERN

Following the visit of Professor D. Rolf-Dieter Heuer outgoing Director General, European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN), Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi, Rector CIIT, led a delegation comprising of Dr. Sajjad Mohsain, Mr. Aumair Qayyum and Mr. Syed Ali Zahid Bukhari to CERN in March 2015.

The delegation met Dr.Heuer and Dr. Fabiola Gianotti who succeeds the current Director General in 2016.

The main objective of the visit was to formalize the handing over of the High Performance Computing equipment which has been donated by CERN to CIIT.

CIIT is an Associate member of CERN and receives valuable support from the reputed organization, both professional and in terms of funding for Human Resource Development. CIIT has started building teams for undergoing trainings, internships and work positions and participation in conferences especially ACAT.

On behalf of CIIT, Dr. Junaid Zaidi also requested CERN that its laboratories be made accessible to the undergraduate students of computer science, physics and engineering. This step will undoubtedly serve as a nursery for the budding scientists of tomorrow. In addition, Dr. Junaid Zaidi discussed the possibilities of organizing a summer school at CIIT where it can host participants from European countries.
Developing Pak-Turkey Bridges

As an Islamic country strategically situated between Europe and Asia, Pakistan and Turkey have historically had friendly relations which are translating into the academic arena, in particular through the annual Vice Chancellors Forum that CIIT hosts.

Mevlana Exchange

Under the Mevlana Exchange program of the Turkish government, CIIT and partner Turkish universities can exchange faculty and students for supplement learning and teaching experiences. This year the following CIIT faculty members have been selected for visiting the respective Turkish partner universities:

- Dr. Muhammad Junaid Mughal, Professor, EE (Islamabad)
- Dr. Muhammad Mohsin Zahid, Assistant Professor, Management Sciences (Wah) to visit Duzce University.
- Dr. A. Mehmet, Assistant Professor, EE (Islamabad) to visit Dicle University.
- Dr. Kashif Ali, Associate Professor, Mathematics (Lahore)
- Prof. Dr. Tahira Haroon, Professor, Mathematics (Islamabad) to visit Mugla Sitki Kocman University.

In addition six students from Computer Engineering and Mathematics will also be spending Fall Semester 2015 in the above mentioned Turkish institutions. All students are from CIIT Islamabad Campus.

Visit of Yasar University Delegation

On 10 June 2015 a 3 member delegation from Yasar University, Izmir, Turkey, comprising of Ms. Patricia Turkmenoglu, Director International Office and Mr. Efe Carlik, International Education Officer, visited CIIT.

The delegates were desirous of pursuing collaborations with CIIT and through extensive discussions and meetings with various concerned individuals they agreed on potential collaborations that would help bring the two institutions towards an MoU.

Yasar University is a private.foundation university, in Izmir, Turkey and through collaborations with them CIIT hopes to enhance its research in food security and veterinary sciences. CIIT is already taking on the mandate of economic uplift and promotion of entrepreneurship through establishing Cubators, a tangible cooperation between YASAR University and CIIT could prove to be highly rewarding in the future.

Leading Turkish Universities Visit CIIT

In mid February 2015 a ten-member delegation of faculty members representing leading Turkish instructions visited CIIT. These universities included: Gediz University, Izmir; Ipek University Ankara; Zirve University, Gaziantep; International Antalya University, Antalya; Meliksah University, Kayseri; Ipek University, Ankara and Mevlana (Rumi) University, Konya.

The delegates, comprising of educationists, international office officials and faculty members, took keen interest in CIIT and its engagement with Turkey and expressed their desire to collaborate with leading universities from around the world, including Pakistan. They felt that Turkish universities, with English as a teaching language, are aptly placed to be a global melting pot for academic ideas.

Talks continue between the universities and CIIT to partner for the new Erasmus+ program which would enable a greater flow of mobility between the two countries.
COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) is a top ranking institution of higher learning with its footprints across the beautiful country of Pakistan. It is proud to have the highest number of students (41,000) in its eight campuses with a faculty corpus of 3,100 of whom 1,200 have PhD degrees. It has also achieved a singular distinction of having produced 1,000 research publications in a single year. Ranked by the QS system as amongst top 250 universities in Asia and top 300 universities in the world in the subject of Mathematics, CIIT is committed to being a part of the regional transformation of higher education and is always welcoming qualified international faculty to be a part of this vision. To learn more about the opportunities to work at CIIT, visit the website:

www3.comsats.edu.pk/internationaloffice/

Admissions for international students for Fall 2016 semester are open. For more information please visit:

www3.comsats.edu.pk/Internationalstudents
Scholarship Opportunities

CIIT offers a variety of scholarship opportunities to international students from different countries. Details available on www3.comsats.edu.pk/Internationalstudents

Mr. Mamnoon Hussain, President of Pakistan and Patron of CIIT in a visit to Azerbaijan in March 2015, announced a large number of scholarships tenable at CIIT for graduate study in Pakistan by Azerbaijani students. This is an important step in seeing greater participation by Azerbaijani educational institutions in the region of South Asia.

Rector CIIT, Dr. S.M. Junaid Zaidi, extended ten Master level scholarships to the Government of Kenya as a gesture of promoting Pakistan-Kenyan academic relationships. His Excellency, Prof Julius Kibet Bitok High Commissioner of Kenya to Pakistan, has taken a personal interest to ensure the fruition of this gesture and we hope to welcome a considerable number of Kenyan students to CIIT in Fall 2015 Semester.

Pro-Rector CIIT, Dr. Haroon Rashid, at the 18th COMSATS Coordinating Council Meeting held from 12 – 13 May 2015 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, announced five post doctoral fellowships to all eligible young researchers coming from the 22 COMSATS member countries.

Get to Know our Commonwealth Scholar

This year CIIT welcomed an ACU Scholar into its fold, who is a Master’s student from a Commonwealth country being supported by the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

His name is Mahmood Hassan Dalhat. His Program of Study is MS Biosciences (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology). His previous degree was Bsc. Biochemistry at Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria. His professional interest is in Human Genetics research with Bioinformatics applications.

His life goal is contributing to humanity towards a better living.

“CIIT is one of the best universities in Pakistan, with standard research output, qualified lecturers of all disciplines, and friendly international office. The lecturers here are willing to help at all times, and they relate well with students.

The students here at CIIT are friendly and accommodating which makes it easy for me to fit in as a foreigner, it is actually fun hanging out with people of different backgrounds, and learning about new culture and norms.

I am happy coming to CIIT, long live CIIT!"

Farewell Dinner for International Students

CIIT bid its farewell to its first graduating international students with an Iftar dinner during the month of Ramadan in July 2015. All international students were invited to the festivities which took place off-campus in a congenial environment laden with fond memories of their time in CIIT and Pakistan.

At the end of the evening all graduating students were presented with a small memento for their time here apart from the degrees – of course!
Our Comings and Goings

Over the course of the academic year CIIT received many international visitors and of course, our faculty and students travel across the globe as well. We’ve highlighted a few of our highly impactful mobilities below!

Visit of H.E. Andrei Ermolovich, Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus

His Excellency Andrei Ermolovich, the Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus visited CIIT Islamabad on March 17, 2015. Among the attendees were two international faculty members, Professor Dr. Mais Suleymanov and Dr. Khusiniddin Olimov, from Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan respectively. Along with the selected senior officials, four young students from the Engineering and Physics Departments were also present in the meeting. A system-wide presentation was given by the Head IO, which was followed by discussion in a relaxed environment. The Ambassador while giving detailed information about the Belarusian universities informed that excellent opportunities exist for collaboration in the fields of Information Technology, Automotive Engineering, High Energy Physics, Biology, etc. He extended his full support in facilitating cooperation between CIIT and the Belarus State University and Belarus National Technical University.

UK Alumni Dinner

His Excellency, Philip Barton, High Commissioner of U.K, accompanied by Mr. Jim Booth, Director Programmes, British Council visited CIIT on Monday, the 10th August, 2015 for a dinner hosted by Pro-Rector, Dr. Haroon Rashid. The Alumni of the British Universities in CIIT including senior officials were also present at the auspicious occasion. Earlier, a workshop was held with young CIIT faculty who graduated from the Universities of U.K. The main purpose of the worship was to network with the fellow colleagues and to explore opportunities with British and other Universities for academic and professional collaboration.

Visit of Otto-von-Guericke University Delegates

A delegation from Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg, Germany, visited CIIT Islamabad in April 2015. The delegation comprised of Professor Andreas Nuernberger, Dean Computer Science, Mr. JibranRajub, Delegate for foreign students recruitment and Mr. AzeemLodhi, Scientific Staff, Faculty of Computer Science.

The School of Computer Sciences at the university has a large number of international students out of whom 10% are Pakistani. Hence Professor Nuernberger had been highly motivated to meet with top Pakistani academic institutions for forming multi-faceted collaborations, being already aware of the individual quality of Pakistani students.

The delegation met with the CIIT Dean of Information Science and Technology, Dr. SajjadMohsin, as well as Head International Office, Dr. Arshad Malik, and a variety of other faculty members and administrators, to truly grasp the culture and goals of CIIT. They expressed their confidence in the CIIT infrastructure, laboratories and other facilities, as well as the human resource and we are confident that this will be the start of interaction of CIIT with yet another prestigious German university.

Seminar by Chief Executive Officer of Fusion Genomics Group, Canada

Fusion Genomics Group is based in Vancouver, Canada and works towards research and leadership in the field of molecular diagnostics. The CEO, Dr. Mohammad A Qadir is a renowned zoologist turned entrepreneur who gave a lecture at CIIT Islamabad on 16 February 2015 on detection of early childhood cancer.

The lecture was very well attended by students and faculty members from the Departments of Biosciences, Management Sciences and Computer Science. The talk combined scientific know-how with entrepreneurial education and life skills, impressing upon students the need to think in an innovative, interconnected manner across disciplines. Dr. Qadir also stressed upon the audience the need to promote and nurture academia-industry relationships.

In a country like Pakistan it is essential that our graduates engage in non-conventional trades and working systems to contribute to creating a dynamic job market and economy.
Macquarie University, Australia Visits CIIT

A three member delegation from Macquarie University, led by Mr. Matt Monkhouse Regional Director Asia, visited CIIT on April 15, 2015. Here they met with various staff and faculty members as well as Macquarie graduates who are currently working with CIIT.

During their visit, Macquarie University and CIIT agreed upon developing a collaborative doctoral program split between the two countries ensuring quality PhD education at a low cost and with local human resource development. The Macquarie team also announced a competition for the students on the theme of “Student Perception about Employability.” Participating students were to write an essay on the given topic with the prize conferment to be made by Macquarie University.

While earlier forays have been made to pursue Pakistan-Australian relationships in the field of higher education, this will be amongst the few concrete partnerships with a top class Australian university.

University Technology Petronas, Malaysia at CIIT

A two-member delegation from the Department of Electrical Engineering, University Technology PETRONAS (UTP), Malaysia comprising Dr. Aamir Saeed Malik, Director, Mission Oriented Research (Biomedical Technology) and Dr. Ibrahim Faye, Associate Professor visited CIIT on February 18, 2015.

Malaysia is an emerging venue of excellence in the field of higher education, in particular Asia, and there are over 100 CIIT faculty members currently gaining their doctoral and post doctoral training at various Malaysian universities including UTP.

The visitors presented the on going research on brain and cancer at UTP for which they were interested in finding more interdisciplinary partners. In view of the increasing Bio-Informatics and Bio-Sciences expertise available across the CIIT system, a mutual willingness for project sharing for funding and joint supervision between the two institutions was agreed upon.

CIIT Engages US Fulbright Specialist

CIIT established a Virtual Campus in 2012 to provide remote access to higher education. This was deemed necessary to provide nontraditional opportunities to the marginalized young communities which may not be able to attend routine university courses due to a number of reasons.

The Virtual Campus has an emerging Leadership Management systems as well as a blend of online and distance learning platforms. However, senior academics felt the need to develop further resources and capacity for which they sought training from internationally acclaimed and established experts in this field. In this connection, under the US Fulbright Specialist program, Dr. John Tashner of Appalachian State University, North Carolina, USA, was engaged by CIIT Virtual Campus.

The project spanned over a few months, the majority of which was done online. Dr. Tashner engaged with Virtual Campus faculty members over Skype to understand the local context and challenges and conducted a thorough needs assessment while familiarising Virtual Campus faculty with the various online platforms used by Appalachian State University.

In early January 2015, Dr. John Tashner then visited Islamabad for a period of three weeks where he had in depth interactions with the various stakeholders and clients of the Virtual Campus. Together the project team identified and explored issues relating to student engagement, quality, assessment, as well as teaching methodology.

In addition, Dr. Tashner conducted multifaceted training sessions on online learning including: student engagement, global best practices and various digital technologies. The Virtual Campus of course treated Dr. Tashner to a complete cultural program without which no visit to Pakistan is complete! The Fulbright Specialist enjoyed the rich, local culinary experience as well as visits to local cultural and heritage sites.

Following Dr. Tashner’s departure, talks have continued between Appalachian State University and the CIIT Virtual Campus to take full benefit of on-line learning by developing collaborative learning programs between the two very distant institutions.
Strengthening Financial Governance

CIIT leadership is committed to improving and strengthening best practices in higher education management as they are an essential, if invisible, supporting pillar of an institution.

In this context, as staff development, Mr. Azharul Hassan, Assistant Treasurer, attended a training course on Public Financial Management from 26 - 29 January 2015 in Doha, Qatar. Participants included professionals from diverse nationalities such as Sri Lanka, Qatar, Maldives, Morocco, Somalia, Singapore, Tunisia etc.

Ensuring Food Security Through Bio-Technology

From 8 – 9 June, 2015, an international conference on “Agriculture, Food Security and Bio-Technology” was held in Cairo, Egypt. This essential conference, highly relevant to the future of the modern world, amongst whose organisers was the COMSATS Headquarters and hosted by the Egyptian COMSATS Centre of Excellence.

Dr. Tayyaba Yasmin, from Department of Bio-Sciences, represented CIIT at the conference. Dr. Yasmin presented her research work to the international audience, following which she received a significant amount of interest and an MoU was signed with CIIT for an international joint research project on “Bio-technological Approaches to Improve Wheat Lines Productivity.”

This project will not just strengthen the CIIT portfolio for research on sustainable development, but also develop linkages between CIIT and the National Research Centre, Egypt which plays a pivotal role in national and regional research.

CIIT Students Experience Morocco

Morocco is a historic country famed for the richness of its architecture, traditional bazaars and of course the cultural interpretation of art which runs through the customary media, as well as the unconventional such as cuisine, sciences and education.

A delegation of CIIT students had the opportunity to experience this first hand when they partook in an educational trip to Morocco from April 24 – May 5, 2015. The 20 students, both male and female, were from the department of Architecture at CIIT Lahore and Islamabad, and were accompanied by five faculty members.

The visit included tours to the International University Rabat and Al-Akawayn University, Ifrane where they familiarised themselves with the curriculum and teaching and learning methodology of both universities.

The CIIT visitors in addition presented a Pakistan Cultural Show at both universities to introduce our rich national heritage to their Moroccan counterparts.

Aside from Rabat the delegation also had an opportunity to visit the City of Fez and Casablanca where they experienced the cities as well as the various museums and art galleries.

The CIIT visitors were also invited to the ISESCO Headquarters which are based in Rabat. ISESCO is an important partner for CIIT and one of the hosts in the annual Vice Chancellors Forum organised by CIIT in Islamabad.

The students returned to Pakistan excited and inspired. In the upcoming academic semester they will also be making general presentations about their experiences to their peers, whilst maintaining artistic exchange at an individual level with their peers in Morocco.

University Presidents Forum 2015

The University Technology Malaysia (UTM) is a premier research university in Engineering and Technology and holds an annual University Presidents Forum in conjunction with the university’s convocation.

The purpose of the Presidents Forum is to identify common issues and opportunities for research universities that would further strengthen the roles and relevance of higher education in the modern world.

Dr. Qaisar Abbas, Dean Faculty of Business Studies, represented CIIT at the seventh University Presidents Forum that took place from 12 – 14 May 2015. The forum proved to be a valuable learning and networking platform, especially in view of the increasing visibility of Pakistan as an emerging higher education stakeholder in the region. CIIT held talks with the ASEAN networks as well as partaking in the thematic group of innovation and entrepreneurship for nation building.

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