

A Concise US Visit Report of Pokhara University Officials

Since its inception in 1997, Pokhara University has been continuously expanding its academic programs. Right now, there are four constituent schools of the university— School of Health and Allied Science, School of Engineering, School of Business and School of Development and Social Engineering. Currently, Pokhara University has a plan to set up a new constituent School of Mountain Environment and Natural Resource Management. In this process, designing curriculums, preparing text books and seeking research grants for the school are recognized as some of the challenging issues. For sometime, Pokhara University has been exploring to find collaborative partners interested in assisting in these areas. In this context, some of the officials of the University of Massachusetts, Boston showed positive response to support Pokhara University. Prof. Kamal Bawa of the University of Massachusetts formally invited the Pokhara University authorities in order to discuss the matter. A meeting was scheduled on November 04, 2011 between the officials of Pokhara University and the University of Massachusetts in Boston, USA. Officials of Pokhara University— Prof. Khagendra Prasad Bhattarai, Vice Chancellor and Dr. Om Prakash Sharma, Registrar visited the US to participate in the meeting. Dr. Ram Bahadur Bhandari, Consultant of Pokhara University and Mr. Nawaraj Pandey, Chairman of Nobel Academy also accompanied them. A concise joint report of the visit is as follows:

On November 02, we departed from Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu. Next day we reached our destination, the Hotel Comfort Inn, at MA 109 –900, Morrissey Boulevard Boston, MA, 02122, USA.

On November 04, we went to the University of Massachusetts and first we met Prof. Kamal Bawa in his office. He heartily welcomed our team and at the same time briefed about the University of Massachusetts including administrative and academic systems of the university. Reciprocally, Prof. Khagensdra Prasad Bhattarai, Vice Chancellor of Pokhara University briefed about Pokhara University. After a while, we went to the meeting room where other scholars of the University of Massachusetts were present.

The official program was commenced with the introduction of each participant of both the universities. We then enjoyed lunch which was hosted by the University of Massachusetts.

The formal meeting was initiated at 3:00. Authorities of both the parties i.e., the University of Massachusetts and Pokhara University, actively participated in the meeting. The scholars who participated from the University of Massachusetts Boston were as follows.

1. Dr. Winston Langley, Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs,
2. Dr. Eunsook Hyun, Professor, Associate Provost and Director of the Office of International Affairs (OITA),

3. Dr. Andrew Grosovsky, Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics,
4. Dr. William Hager, Associate Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics,
5. Dr. Richard Kesseli, Chairman of the Department of Biology,
6. Dr. Christine Murphy, Assistant Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics,
7. Dr. Zong Guo Xia, Vice Provost for Research & Strategic Initiatives,
8. Dr. Rajini Srikanth, Associate Provost and Director of the Honors Program,
9. Dr. Arthur Aisenkraft, Professor of Science and Director of Science,
10. Dr. Maria Ivanova, Assistant Professor and Co-Director of the Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security and Global Governance;
11. Dr. Kamaljit Singh Bawa, Professor, Department of Biology;
12. Dr. Robert Stevenson, Associate Professor of Biology;
13. Maria Mahoney, Administrative Director of the Department of Biology;
14. Mr. Uttam Babu Shrestha, (Nepali) Graduate Student,
15. Ms. Sujata Shrestha, (Nepali) Graduate Student.

In the meeting, some of the participants of the University of Massachusetts highlighted the magnificent history of the university and also the achievements and activities made in recent years. As the University of Massachusetts has been one of the top institutes for teaching and research, most of the participants focused on their research interest and the areas of their specialization. They also showed their interest to explore the areas of collaboration between the University of Massachusetts and Pokhara University. Some remarkable views expressed by scholars from both the universities are summarized as follows:

Dr. Arthur Aisenkraft initially raised his concern about the socio-economic and cultural issues of Nepal. He talked about his Nepal visit which he had made few years ago in his Peace Corps Volunteer program. He also suggested some important points for future areas of collaboration between the Universities. Dr. Zong Guo Xia highlighted Prof. Bawa's role as a world authority in biodiversity, ecology and conservation science in the mountain areas of the world including India and Nepal. He further emphasized that Prof. Bawa's role could be very important for Pokhara University with regard to set up the constituent School of Mountain Environment and Natural Resource Management.

Prof. Kamal Bawa fully supported the plan of Pokhara University to open a new constituent School of Mountain Environment and Natural Resource Management. Particularly, he showed

his interest in designing the curriculum, preparing text books and seeking research grants for students and faculty. Dr. Winston Langley suggested some important points about the needs and the scopes of collaboration between the Universities. Interestingly, Dr. Eunsook Hyun asked the Nepalese team why the University of Massachusetts was selected for international collaboration.

Prof. Khagendra Prasad Bhattarai tried his best to clarify why Pokhara University purposively selected the University of Massachusetts as a collaborative partner. He expressed that the University of Massachusetts has very senior Professors and Research Scientists in different areas of knowledge and innovations. The knowledge and innovations could well be transferred from the University of Massachusetts to Pokhara University. The faculty and students of Pokhara University could take advantage of such transferable knowledge and resources from the University of Massachusetts. In the meantime, Prof. Bhattarai invited the authorities of the University of Massachusetts to visit Pokhara University some time next year so that the MoU could be signed to establish a long term collaboration between the two Universities.

Dr. Om Prakash Sharma in his power point presentation mainly focused on the mission, vision, activities and some successful stories of Pokhara University. He pointed out the areas of future collaboration between the Universities, particularly for opening the School of Mountain Environment and Natural Resource Management.

Mr. Nawaraj Pandey expressed his views that the future collaboration between the universities could play a significant role to satisfy the interests of both, the University of Massachusetts and Pokhara University. Dr. Ram Bhandari in his presentation focused on the importance of establishing the International Center for Himalayan Biodiversity at Pokhara University for future research and conservation of mountain resources. At the same time, he distributed a concept paper, entitled International Center for Himalayan Biodiversity: Conserving Himalayan Biodiversity—A Global Responsibility. Mr. Uttam Babu Shrestha and Ms Sujata Shrestha promised to contribute in the future to the collaborative mission between the Universities. They were interested in sharing their expertise in the area of plant science research in the Himalayas.

As soon as the formal meeting was over, we visited several departments, library, laboratory and seminar hall. In the evening, Prof. Kamal Bawa offered a dinner party in a restaurant. During that time, informal discussions were held on various issues. This meeting was very useful to shape the future development of the curriculum for Master's level in the field of biodiversity, water and energy at the School of Mountain Environment and Natural Resource Management.

The meeting was very useful. Particularly the initiation taken by Prof. Kamal Bawa was more significant. We appreciate his promise to contribute to and support Pokhara University. We also visited Dr. Kuntess's Lab at the Harvard University. In the afternoon, we left for New York.

On November 06, we went to Columbia University and visited different parts of the University including departments, ancient and historical monuments. In the afternoon, we were welcomed

and honored in a program organized by the Times Magazine (Nepali) to celebrate its fourth anniversary. About 500 Nepalese [Diasporas](#) were present in the program. Prof. Bhattarai was invited as the Chief Guest. Addressing the gathering Prof. Bhattarai thanked those who have contributed to transfer remittance in Nepal on which the current economy of the country largely depends on. He appreciated their continuous love for Nepali language, culture and values. He also acknowledged the contributions of Nepalese [Diasporas](#) for the restoration of democracy and peace process in Nepal.

On November 7, we departed from John F. Kennedy International Airport and arrived in Kathmandu next day, i.e., on November 08. This was a very successful, meaningful, and fruitful visit indeed. We acknowledge many people who directly or indirectly helped us to make our visit a success. Particularly, Mr. Nawaraj Chaulagai, a PhD Student of the Harvard University and Dr. Krushnamegh Kunte a Postdoctoral Fellow of Harvard University helped us to visit the Harvard University. Mr. Hari Acharya, Dr. Tara Niraula, Mr. Dhani Ram Sapkota, Mr. Harish Hamal and many other Nepalese helped us to visit different places of New York and other cities and also to make the visit successful.