NEW FRONTIERS AT OUR DOORSTEPS:
TRANSFORMING CHALLENGES INTO UNIMAGINED OPPORTUNITIES

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This is no new revelation to you that our world has enormously shrunk with the approach of the internet, information technology, travel, and with people and cultures moving across once impregnable borders and forbidden frontiers. Do we understand the talents and energy that this convergence is bringing and transplanting here; the promise it holds for our future? Do we, or should we care? Can the emerging information revolution and global culture usher in a long-awaited renaissance, an enlightened and cooperative era among nations and communities? It may depend on our ability to transform the new realities into unimagined opportunities; enter the global century and citizenship fully awake or stay on the fringes imbued with our self-importance and national strengths. The aggressive new generations in many nations would not wait, nor compete fairly to catch-up or get ahead of us and capture the rich rewards of international trade and transactions.

We are at a new crossroads. I share my personal perspective as an immigrant, foreign student at the University of Michigan, founding member of the International Center in Indianapolis and an active advocate for ethnic, cultural, and spiritual diversity, and as a self-employed professional. I truly believe that we must recognize the enigmatic and complex human component as the foundation of our new dynamic frontier. We must explore and identify unique and shared interests; nurture and celebrate our collective hopes, strengths, and visions. We must focus on the vital and special assets of our emerging human universe and integrate them into promising ideas for shared prosperity. We must adapt our community institutions, policies, programs, education, technology, and strategies that best reflect and guide civilization towards peaceful accommodations.

I do not mean that we forget science and math and focus entirely on understanding and relating to the ethnic, cultural, and spiritual concerns of people. I do think though, that we will be better scientists, educators, researchers, and professionals if we placed the human component in the middle of our educational focus and learning. We must make the unfamiliar, familiar. We can anticipate a rough ride ahead unless we take responsible steps to adapt to this changing world as it becomes increasingly interdependent, multicultural, multinational, fiercely nationalistic, and more unpredictable each year. We need to include a strong international component: languages, history, culture, society, and political infrastructure and laws of other countries, especially those that represent strong competition, in our educational programs and make our studies more relevant. Our students must be able to fairly compete and excel in the expanding global marketplace.
I suggest that we focus on four things to prepare our students to survive and excel:

* UNDERSTANDING OUR TIME AND PLACE
* RECOGNIZING OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES
* PREPARATION AND PURSUIT TO GET THE MOST
* FACING THE UNEXPECTED AND BEING READY

Let us examine and further define each of these areas:

UNDERSTANDING OUR TIME AND PLACE

. We are inheriting an interconnected world through internet and international travel
. Interdependent economies; a global technological, scientific and information exchange
. At times unfamiliar and complex; often unfriendly and intensely nationalistic
. Increasingly diverse and competitive; uncompromising and confrontational
. Emerging new power centers; rivalries and unrealistic expectations; forces of change
. Interesting and unique character, heritage and history; assets and infrastructure
. Problems and challenges; ideas and attitudes, experiences and entrenched systems

RECOGNIZING OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES

. Teach and learn to adapt to the global environment and opportunities
. Willingness to embrace the brightest and best ideas of others
. Willingness to step cross the outdated culturally and land-locked thresholds
. Learn to compete, to work hard, and excel in a highly competitive marketplace
. Learn about others (their interests, culture, traditions, and spirit) in our circle of frequent contacts or occasional encounters; develop inter-personal relationships
. Understand important concerns, special needs, and sound alternatives
. Seek opportunities for personal growth and cultural enrichment
. Learn to appreciate and respect perspectives other than our own
. Exhibit sensitivity; dispel ignorance; reject unfounded stereotyping of others
. Create our own opportunities; enhance our potential for success through imaginative and resourceful homework; build trust and emphasize a cooperative spirit
. Learn about innovative ideas and approaches that build pride without prejudice

PREPARATION AND PURSUIT TO GET THE MOST

. Develop healthy and thoughtful strategies for success; for rewarding experience
. Develop a sense of humor; positive energy to resolve unforeseen conflicts or crises
. Always pursue a policy of appreciation and understanding of the unfamiliar and unusual; and respect for the distinct and different
. Leave behind the formidable baggage of superiority complex, attitudes that distract, destroy or diminish our human dignity and sacred space; cultural arrogance can greatly
jeopardize a positive outcomes and the chances of success in some critical pursuits.
- Build bridges that connect and strengthen our shared values; foster friendships and cooperation; and display healthy attitude and advance mutual respect.
- Find common ground; avoid alienating your competition, chances, and friends.
- Understand the time, place, prize; prepare for the mission by learning and adapting.
- Remember in today’s world, here or abroad, we are not the center of the universe; everyone has their own universe, native pride, and a center uniquely their own.

FACING THE UNEXPECTED AND UNIMAGINED

- Employ critical skills, discipline in a culturally-adverse or charged environment.
- Learn to survive/adapt and excel in a less than perfect, unfamiliar situation.
- Adjust to the unexpected change or challenge; unforeseen trial or circumstance.
- Be perceptive; seek thoughtful alternatives and help; avoid unnecessary confrontation.
- Show consideration, not indifference to others; keep both eyes on the prize.
- Expect the unexpected; prepare ahead for such possibilities and unwelcome surprise.
- Treat life as an adventure; reveal the best of your character and true mettle.
- Call upon your noblest instincts that make you, your mentors, and country proud.

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“Let us not be troubled by the growing diversity around us:
   New ideas, inspirations, interests, and perspectives;
But by persistent expectations of conformity at this critical moment:
   In a world of transcending thresholds and transforming promise.”

The Art and Spirit of K. P. Singh ~ Selected Drawings and Writings
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