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Two-Year
Review

Dr. Renu Khator: Taking UH to Tier 1 and Beyond



Houston, I am very happy to find a perfect fit.

Do you now feel Houston is now your home?

Yes! We didn't know much about Houston, its diversity and the strong Indo-American presence, having been here only once ten years ago to attend a wedding. The way I judge whether Houston is home is that now we have to think back and try to remember, "What street was that in Tampa?" Suresh is also pleased to the Associate Dean at the College of Engineering.

Are you receiving support from the Indo-American community here?

I am very pleased with the personal support that the Indo-American community has given me. Even the University of Houston is receiving significant financial support from the Indo-American

community. I am on the board of India House and India's Permanent Gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston. I now feel proud to be a contributing member of the Indian community here.

What are some of the outreach programs UH is conducting with the Indo-American community here and with India?

We have established the Foundation of Indian Studies here at the University and we're working with the Government of India to further the growth of the program.

We have also relationships with about 30 universities in India for exchange of students and academic programs.

You had attended the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Chennai last year. Are you attending the event this year?

Yes, I'm going to New Delhi in January to chair an academic session at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. I will also be attending a meeting of the Prime Minister's

high-level advisory council that includes business leaders such as Indra Nooyi and Vikram Pandit. I will be also visiting numerous universities in India to discuss potential relationships.

What is nature of the Indian presence here at the University of Houston?

We have about 800 students from India both in graduate and undergraduate departments. We could take more, but for the lack of scholarship funds. We're also pleased that many students from the Indo-American community are pursuing educational opportunities here close to home.

We have numerous outstanding faculty members here at the University of Houston with excellent international reputations.

I am pleased to tell you that we recently had a Diwali program organized by Dr. Durga Agarwal that was attended by numerous mainstream students and faculty.

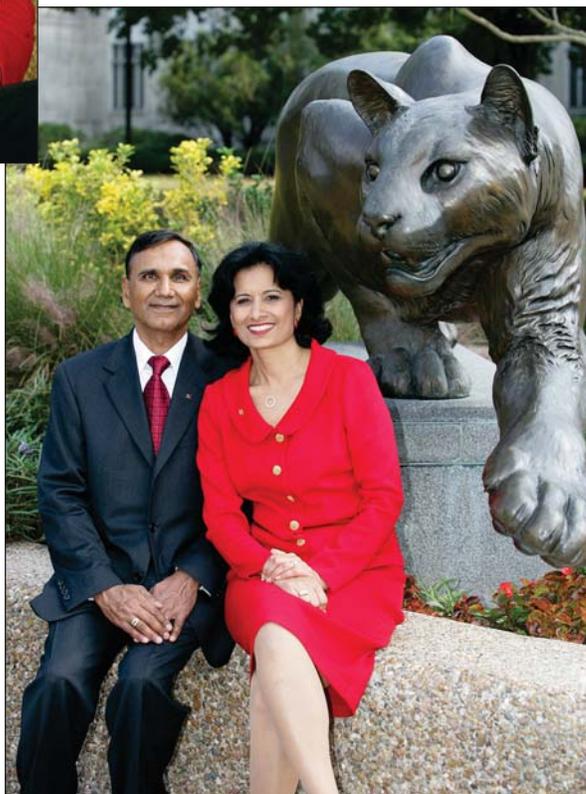
Our dormitory cafeteria is now serving Indian delicacies, such as chhole and samosas. I was skeptical, but they had brought in an Indian chef to advise them. The quality of the Indian food is excellent and even faculty members are going to the cafeteria to taste the Indian dishes!

I am also pleased that there was a large group of Indian students cheering on the Cougar football team during our successful season.

Now that Proposition 4 has passed, what's next for the University of Houston?

I am very pleased that the proposition passed with our community support to make it possible for UH to become a Tier 1 university. Now we're taking all the necessary steps for the university to achieve Tier 1 status and receive higher state funding. It has taken two years to get our feet wet and now we can expand on our accomplishments.

University of Houston graduates 12,000 students every year and has a huge impact on the local community. As the job market has become international, crossing political boundaries, UH is providing the diversity and the skillset needed to compete effectively in the international market.



Posing in front of the UH Cougar mascot, Drs. Suresh and Renu Khator feel at home at the University of Houston and the local Indo-American community.

Looking back over the last two years, Chancellor Dr. Renu Khator feels she has found the perfect fit at the University of Houston.

IAN EXCLUSIVE

By PRAMOD KULKARNI

HOUSTON: Dr. Renu Khator has been the Chancellor of the University Houston (UH) System and President of the University for two years. Having cast aside previous aspersion of being strictly a commuter school, the 667-acre Central campus and the satellite locations from Clear Lake to Downtown, Sugar Land, Cinco Ranch and Victoria are exhibiting new vigor under Dr. Khator's leadership.

She took time from her busy schedule to conduct an interview with Indo-American News to take a look back at the accomplishments over the last two years and elaborate on her special relationship with the Indo-American community in Houston.

Every young boy in India wants to grow up to be a cricket star. What did you want to be when you were growing up?

I grew up in Farukhabad, a small town in Uttar Pradesh and got married into a Marwari family at the age of 18. I remember that I wanted to grow up and get a PhD, the highest degree possible. I came to the U.S. and hardly knew any English. But people gave me educational opportunities and I was able to earn a PhD degree from Purdue University. Now I feel privileged to provide similar opportunities to young people to accomplish their goals through education.

Do you have a sense of accomplishment as the UH Chancellor? Do you have higher ambitions in public affairs or even politics?

I feel very happy where I am. I put my heart and soul in whatever I am doing without worrying about what comes next. In my life, windows of opportunities have opened and I was ready to take advantage of such opportunities. Here at the University of