

Maths training partnership for African students

The University of Chicago and the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) have announced a new partnership to educate and train talented African students in mathematics.



With new partnership, AIMS students will collaborate with researchers and graduates from the University of Chicago.

With new partnership, AIMS students will collaborate with researchers and graduates from the University of Chicago.

Thierry Zomahoun, President and CEO of AIMS and Eric D Isaacs, Provost of the University of Chicago a Professor in the Department of Physics made the announcement at the AIMS South Africa Centre.

"Discoveries in science and scholarship that can change the world require scholars to work together across institutions and national borders," said Zomahoun. "Global programmes that connect educational institutions and produce entrepreneurial, innovative graduates will create jobs and opportunities for investment and can propel Africa into the quantum age."

The new agreement will bring UChicago faculty members and graduate students and scientists from Argonne National Laboratory to Africa to participate in the education and training of AIMS graduate students. UChicago faculty will join AIMS faculty in the development of new curriculum and experimental programme content and scholars from both UChicago and AIMS will work together on joint research and future academic collaborations. The partnership will also help to identify talented and qualified AIMS students to apply to graduate programs at the University of Chicago and it will support UChicago faculty members who are interested in developing joint-research projects or advising on new research programs developed at AIMS centres.

AIMS recruits Africa's most talented university graduates and provides them with the cutting-edge training in mathematics they need to enter technical professions or to pursue graduate studies in technical and scientific fields. Founded in 2003 with its first centre in Cape Town, South Africa, AIMS has since

established four additional centres in Cameroon, Ghana, Tanzania and Senegal with plans to establish a network of fifteen centres of excellence by 2023.

"AIMS and the Next Einstein Initiative seek to unlock and nurture scientific and technical talent across Africa continued Zomahoun. "The University of Chicago will join AIMS as an institutional collaborator across the whole network of AIMS centres and we are excited to work with the University and their affiliated laboratories Argonne National Laboratory, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory and the Marine Biological Laboratory.

Faculty working group to advance teaching curriculum

At the event, Provost Eric Isaacs announced that he will form a faculty-working group to discuss the possibilities the University of Chicago can work with AIMS to help strengthen teaching curriculum and to identify other avenues of engagement for UChicago faculty and students.

"The partnership between AIMS and the University of Chicago is designed to facilitate and develop a genuine and mutually beneficial collaboration for education, training, research and public engagement activities," said Isaacs. "We feel it is critical to bring outstanding scholars from the University of Chicago across Africa together to address great teaching and research."

The University of Chicago is engaged globally in order to facilitate faculty-led collaborations, create student opportunities and enrich knowledge and education around the world. "Scholars from the University of Chicago have been working in Africa since the early 1900s and we hope that the AIMS partnership will increase and deepen collaborative relationships between UChicago and African scholars," said Ian Solomon, vice president for global engagement.

Panel discussion

Following the announcement, Isaacs and Zomahoun were joined by Paul Wiegmann, the University of Chicago Robert W. Reneker Distinguished Service Professor in the department of Physics, the James Franke Institute, and the Enrico Fermi Institute; Dr Thifhelimbilu Daphney Bucher, AIMS alumnus, and Professor Barry Green, Director of AIMS-South Africa and AIMS Chief Academic & Research Officer for panel discussion.

Entitled 'Innovating Curricula for the Transformation of a Continent through Maths and Sciences: Gaps and Opportunities for Quality Post-Graduate Education for Africa's Brightest Minds', they discussed the current math and science curricula offered to mathematical sciences students at post-graduate level at most African universities and explored innovative ways to transform educational training and research to better meet the expectations of industry, academia, and the public sector.