

Technology

Sunitha Williams inaugurates IEEE lecture series via Skype

US Astronaut Sunita Williams inaugurated the IEEE lecture series hosted by IEEE India Council at Federal Institute of Science and Technology in Angamaly via Skype on Saturday.

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Kochi: If not an Astronaut, I would have been a school teacher, a science teacher, said NASA astronaut Sunita Williams.

She was making a virtual appearance at Federal Institute of Science and Technology (FISAT) in Angamaly during an interaction through Skype organised by the IEEE India Council. This was the first in a series of interactive sessions with eminent scientists and educationalists the IEEE India Council is conducting for the benefit of its members.

In a very inspiring one-hour interaction, the famous NASA astronaut who holds records for seven space walks by a woman, shared her lighter side to young audience eagerly waiting for her words.

Sunita, in her bright blue uniform of NASA, began the session by wishing “Namasthe” and a good day to the audience.

Earth, she said, was still her favorite place.

Sunita said the photographs they send across from space do not convey the whole experience of seeing the blue beautiful globe through the wide windows of the space station.

“The fact that there is so much energy in the universe has thrilled me,” she said, sharing the experience of space walking and the preparation and complexity involved in it.



“Doing spacewalk is definitely not easy and demanding. The feeling that only a visor separates me from the vastness of space is overwhelming,” she remarked.

Sunita wants her record to be broken and said that every broken record means that there is progress in science.

Sunita was very jovial and responded to all the questions that were put across to her.

When asked about the movie ‘Gravity’, she said it comes very close to the reality of space exploration even though certain things in the movie are not real.

“But, again, movies need to have things which are also not real,” she feels.

Another movie she recommended was “The Martian” in which NASA has also collaborated.

She smiled when asked for her strengths, and said that determination was the key for her during her career as an astronaut for NASA.

She shared her childhood dream of wanting to become a veterinary doctor and then a diver and then becoming a test pilot which opened an opportunity for her to become an astronaut.



Sunita asked students to take up challenges and mentioned that life is not about going from point A to B, rather it is about the journey and enjoying it by pausing and looking around.

“One should never be disheartened by failure,” she remarked.

“In a male-dominated world of space exploration, I had no problems at all, rather, I had always tried to give my best in whatever that comes across,” she added.

Sunita accommodated the request of IEEE and identified a time slot in the early morning in US so that she can interact with the students here at 5:30 in the evening. The programme was beamed across 17 colleges from FISAT and was viewed by more than 1000 students across the country.

The event was hosted by Arjun R Pillai, Global Member, Benefits Portfolio Committee, IEEE.

Such events are golden opportunity for students as well as faculty to get inspired, remarked Praveen V, the IEEE student branch counsellor at FISAT.

The technical support was provided by IEEE volunteers Anand J and Jibin Thomas.



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