



IEEE INDIA COUNCIL

IEEE Interactive Talks

With Sunita Williams, Astronaut at NASA

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Overview & Purpose

IEEE Interactive Talks is an initiative by IEEE India Council, to get students to interact directly and ask questions to well known speakers from around the globe. This kind of an interactions helps students draw insights from the speaker's experience as an expert in a field and thus, make informed decisions about their own careers.

Objectives

1. Bring global resources to local venue.
2. Obtain insider tips into how industries work and how to pursue a career in that field.

Statistics

1. Number of venues : 24
2. Expected reach to students: 1000
3. Duration of session: 1 hour 15 minutes.
4. Questions received: 121

Tools Used

1. Skype: For direct interaction with speaker
2. Hangouts: To stream the interaction
3. Wirecast Pro: To connect Skype and Hangouts by creating virtual ports.

About the Speaker

Sunita Williams (born September 19, 1965) is an American astronaut and United States Navy officer of Indian-Slovenian descent. She holds the records for most spacewalks by a woman (seven) and most spacewalk time for a woman (50 hours, 40 minutes).

Williams graduated from Needham High School in Needham, Massachusetts, in 1983. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in physical science from the United States Naval Academy in 1987, and a Master of Science degree in Engineering Management from Florida Institute of Technology in 1995

She has won several laurels including the Padma Bhushan, (third-highest civilian award) from the Government of India (2008)

Activity

The first session in this series, was conducted on the 25th of June, 2016, called the *Virtual Astronaut Appearance* with the NASA Astronaut, Sunita L. Williams as the speaker. The event was live from 05:15 p.m. to 06:45 p.m. IST.

The following are some of the interesting questions that were asked from the pool of 121 questions submitted by students and professionals from across India.

Q. Have you ever been held back because you were a woman astronaut?

Ans. No, never. I've never been held back because I was a women. 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.

Q. If you weren't an astronaut, what would you have become?

A. I'd be a science teacher at a junior school.

Q. Have you seen the movies “Gravity”, “Martians” and “Interstellar”? How close are they to reality?

A. I haven't seen the movie 'Interstellar'. I really need to set aside some time for that. "Gravity" comes very close to the reality of space exploration even though certain things in the movie are not real. In "Martians", the filmmakers have done a wonderful job creating the effects.

Q. Do you believe in extraterrestrial life?

A. Yes, I do believe in them. I think somewhere out there, something is looking for us.

Q. How do feel about getting a record for having the longest cumulative spacewalk time conducted by a female astronaut?

A. It was never about breaking records. I'd rather want my record to be broken because breaking records means the technology is progressing and that we are moving towards development.

Q. What does the Earth look like from space?

A. In one word - wonderful. The photographs they sent across from space do not convey the whole experience of seeing the blue beautiful globe through the wide window of the space station. The oceans and clouds make up the most spectacular swirling patterns.

Q. Do you prefer space or Earth?

A. I like space but on a long term, I'd rather live on Earth. I wouldn't have to wear the masks and suits.

Media Coverage

1. [Business Digital Magazine](#)
2. [Mathrubhumi News](#)
3. [Deccan Chronicle](#)
4. [New Indian Express](#)
5. [Dailyhunt](#)

Feedback

“The interactions with sunita Williams was seamless and informative “

“The idea behind the event was good. “

“She is a very simple person. Down to earth.”

“The audio could have been better, but it was a great experience!”

Suggested Changes

1. Use Skype for business from next sessions of the program.
2. Record each session for future use.

Photos



