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When Vasanth Kumar, an Indian graduate business student from the Loyola Institute of Business Administration in Chennai, won the 2010 Mindful Leadership essay competition, he knew he had won his first trip to the U.S.

But he didn't know he was in for a two-week VIP campus visit, complete with meeting top University leaders, participating in advanced learning, and experiencing the warmth of the University of Dayton community.

"This has been a phenomenal experience," Kumar said. "All of the interactions with the arts and sciences, engineering and business courses have just been exceptional. And it feels great to interact with the top leaders of the University."

Kumar was awarded an all-expenses trip to Dayton for winning the Mindful Leadership Competition in March, sponsored by the University of Dayton and academic partner Loyola Institute of Business Administration in India.

He's attended classes, engaged in science and engineering experiments, and met the top leadership of the University, including President Daniel Curran, Provost Joseph Saliba and Dean Matthew Shank of the School of Business Administration.

Kumar said he was particularly impressed with the graduate business courses he attended, calling it "cutting-edge education."

"The class was focusing on managing information and people. The case discussion was about the impact of the BP oil spill," Kumar said. "It was unique because the discussion directly reflected the current situation. There was no time lag at all with the current situation."

Kumar's essay about "Innovating for a Sustainable World - The Moral Challenge for Young Leaders," was selected as the best of 80 entrants in the Mindful Leadership Competition.

It's the third year for the competition, which emphasizes what it means to become global, ethical and mindful leaders.

For some activities, Kumar joined about a dozen international high school students visiting the University as part of the BEST (Business, Engineering, Science and Technology) two-week campus visit.

The students, primarily from China and Singapore, have been living on campus, working side-by-side with faculty, and learning what life is like at a top-tier national Catholic university.

The BEST program, now in its third year, has been successful in attracting international students to enroll at the University of Dayton. Two former BEST participants are now enrolled as undergraduates.

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