

Jain Academic Programs see a huge surge of interest in North America:

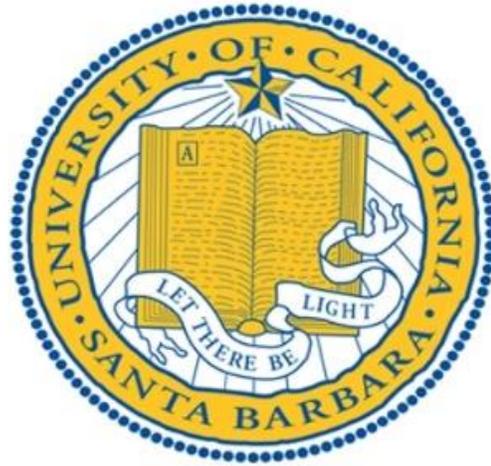
Jain philosophy and the Jain identity, until recently, was largely unheard of in North America, even within the academic community. This stark lack of information about Jain Dharma and its possible misinterpretation motivated some visionary and philanthropic Jains to work with leading universities in the US and Canada and establish Centers for Jain Studies at their campuses.

Over the past twelve years, this commitment has resulted in the establishment of Academic Centers and programs for Jain Studies in at least 18

universities with many more in the pipeline. The last two months alone has seen the launch of several new programs.

What makes this partnership even more creditable is that the academic institution, in every one of these programs, has contributed and matched more than 50% of the required financial resources. Additionally, nearly all the Academic Centers and programs have been named after a Tirthankara or a Jain Saint. A total of nearly \$12 million has been pledged and raised by the Jain community to date.

Six recently established Academic Programs:



Bhagwan Vimalnath Endowed Chair in Jain Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB).

The University of California at Santa Barbara's Department of Religious Studies is recognized as one of the best in the nation. It embraces an inter disciplinary approach to understand the religions around the world. The department was ranked #11 in the nation (2nd among public universities) by the latest National Research Council review while a recent external review considered it as one of the top four in the country. The department emphasizes religion in a global context but the study of South Asian religious traditions is its core strength.

In 2018, the Jain community in Los Angeles established the Bhagwan Vimalnath Lectureship in Jain Studies at UCSB. The academic success of this program inspired three Jain couples (Mrs. Raksha and Mr. Harshad Shah, Mrs. Rita and Dr. Narendra Parson and Drs. Meera and Jasvant Modi) in LA to raise one million dollars and upgrade the existing lectureship program at UCSB to an Endowed Chair. It is notable that UCSB has agreed to continue the lectureship program until the Chair position is filled. The virtual signing ceremony for the establishment of this Endowed Chair was held on June 18, 2020



Bhagwan Suvidhinath Endowed Chair in Jain Studies at the California State University, Long Beach. (CSULB)

CSULB's tradition of academic excellence, an outstanding faculty and an impressive mix of students and alumni has consistently earned it accolades and high rankings from national opinion leaders like U.S. News & World Report, CollegenET and Moneyall in their lists of Best Colleges.

With a pledge and support of one million dollars by Mrs. Raksha and Mr. Harsahad Shah, Drs. Meera and Jasvant Modi in Los Angeles, the Bhagwan Suvidhinath Endowed Chair in Jain Studies was recently established at the institution. CSULB has also agreed to offer Jain Studies by appointing a Lecturer or an adjunct faculty till the Chair position is filled. The donors and CSULB have already signed the legal papers for this Chair.



Bhagwan Shitalnath Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Jain Studies at the University of Toronto, Canada.

The birthplace of insulin and stem cell research, the University of Toronto is one of Canada's premier institutions of learning, discovery and knowledge creation. It is ranked as one of the world's top research-intensive universities for innovation.

Toronto also has the distinction of having the largest population of Jains and places of worship in Canada. For more than 30 years, the University of Toronto has been hosting the Lala Roop Lal Jain annual Lecture in Jain Religion, made possible by a generous grant from his children and grandchildren who all reside in Canada.

Recently, the Jain community realized its goal of giving Jain Studies a full time place at the University of Toronto thanks to the annual financial support of \$40,000 Canadian dollars in large part by Canadian donors with about 25% support from US donors. The University intends to hire a full time qualified scholar to offer classes in Jain religion every semester and conduct a 10 day intensive Jain Scripture study class during summer break. It is hoped that this will eventually evolve into a full time endowed Professor or Chair in Jain Studies there.



Shrimad Rajchandra Fellowships in Jain Studies. This is to support PhD students for Jain Studies at the University of California at Riverside.

In 2017, generous donors in Los Angeles raised one million dollars and established the Shrimad Rajchandra Chair in Jain Studies at the University of California at Riverside (UCR). Dr. Ana Bajzlej is holding the Chair.

In a one-of-a-kind and highly laudable initiative, Mrs. Usha and Mahesh Wadher of LA have pledged \$160,000 to support up to 4 students who enroll in the Doctorate program in Jain Studies at UCR. The goal is to train highly qualified Jain scholars to become academicians at various universities, engage in cutting edge research and through their publications highlight Jain Religion's significant contributions and ideologies in the academia along with other major world religions. A virtual signing ceremony for this pledge was held on May 20, 2020. Right from the start, this Program is a GO and a Scholar for this program has already been enrolled.



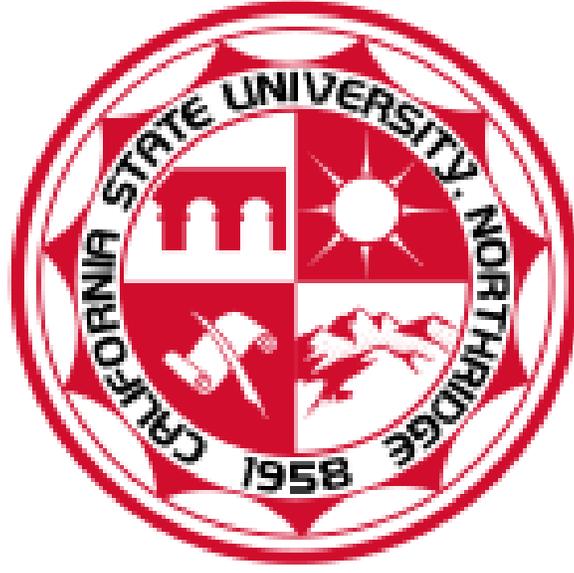
Dr. Shailendra Palvia Endowed Jain Scholar Speaker Series at Long Island University Post, Brookville, NY. (LIU)

Dr. Shailendra Palvia, Professor at Long Island University (LIU) Post, NY has established a permanent endowment for Jain Scholar Speaker Series at LIU with a grant of \$30,000.

Long Island University (LIU), founded in 1926, educates nearly 17,000 students each year across multiple campuses. The University's 330-acre scenic, historic, and scholarly campus offers a small-school environment with the access and resources of a major metropolitan university. LIU is also home to the world-renowned Tilles Center for the Performing Arts.

Each semester, a renowned Jain Scholar will deliver a seminar focusing primarily on two core Jain principles of Ahimsa (non-violence) and Anekantvad (multiplicity of viewpoints) under the auspices of the Philosophy department within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The Virtual Signing ceremony for this program took place on July 22, 2020



Bhagwan Ajitnath Endowed Professorship in Jain Studies at California State University, Northridge, California (CSUN)

California State University, Northridge (CSUN) is a public university in the Northridge neighborhood of Los Angeles, California. With a total enrollment of 38,391 students (as of Fall 2019), it has the largest undergraduate population as well as the second largest total student body of the 23-campus California State University system, making it one of the largest comprehensive universities in the US in terms of enrollment size.

A donation by Drs. Meera and Jasvant Modi of Los Angeles of \$800,000 helped establish the Bhagwan Ajitnath Endowed Professorship in Jain Studies at CSUN. Dr. Claire Maes, a Sanskrit scholar who has been teaching Jainism for several years at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas, has been appointed by CSUN to this endowed position as Assistant Professor. Dr. Maes will be moving to CSUN in August 2021. A virtual Meet & Greet event to welcome Dr Maes by CSUN and the Jain community was held on July 24, 2020.

Below is a list of all the programs established so far:

- *University of California DAVIS, Mohini Jain Presidential Chair*
- *University of California, Irvine, Shri Parshvanath Presidential Chair*
- *University of California Riverside, Shrimad Rajchandra Endowed Chair*
- *University of California Santa Barbara, Bhagwan Vimalnath Endowed Chair*
- *Cal State University Long Beach, Bhagwan Suvidhinath Endowed Chair*
- *Loyola Marymount U, Bhagwan Mallinath Endowed Professorship*
- *Florida International U, Bhagwan Mahavir Endowed Professorship*
- *University of North Texas, Bhagwan Rishabhdev Endowed Professorship*
- *California State U, Northridge, Bhagwan Ajitnath Endowed Professorship*
- *California State U, Fullerton Bhagwan Shantinath Lectureship*
- *San Diego State U , Bhagwan Sumatinath, Post Doc Fellowship*
- *Rice U, Bhagwan Mahavir, Post Doc fellowship*
- *University of Toronto, Canada , Bhagwan Shitalnath, Post- Doc Fellowship*
- *Claremont School of Theology, Graduate Program in Jain Studies*
- *UC Santa Barbara, Bhagwan Vimalnath Lectureship in Jain Studies*
- *Emory University, Atlanta, Jain Studies in Dept. of South Asian Studies*
- *UC Riverside , Shrimad Rajchandra Fellowships in Jain Studies (for 4 Ph.D. Students)*
- *Three Bhagwan Mahavir Full year Scholarships for Study of Prakrit to go and study in India*
- *International School for Jain Studies since 2004 (www.isjs.in)*
- *Long Island University, Post, NY. Dr. Shailendra Palvia Endowed Jain Scholar Speaker Series*
- *University of Toronto, Canada, Lala Rooplal Jain annual Lecture*
- *University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada, Chander Mohan Jain Annual Lecture*

These temples of knowledge (gnan mandirs) will now allow students to explore the tenets of Jain Religion and its philosophical insights.