

Neuroscience Postdoctoral Career Guidance Series

Dr. S. Somanath

Ex-Chairperson of the Indian Space Research Organization
Chancellor, Chanakya University



Saturday, October 4 @ 2 pm
Maryland Hall, 110 (Homewood Campus)

The Changing Higher Education Landscape in India

Abstract: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks one of the most transformative reforms in Indian higher education since independence. By reimagining curriculum design, pedagogy, and institutional frameworks, it seeks to foster creativity, research, and critical thinking across disciplines. In this talk, Dr. Somnath will unpack the implications of NEP 2020 for Indian higher education, especially in STEM fields, and share insights into how institutions -new and old- are responding to its call for flexibility, global engagement, and innovation-driven learning. The session will also explore challenges in implementation and how India can balance scale, diversity, and excellence in its educational journey.

Bio: Dr. S. Somanath, Chancellor of Chanakya University, India, is an eminent aerospace engineer and visionary leader. With nearly four decades at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), he brings exceptional expertise, strategic insight, and a deep commitment to scientific and national advancement. As the 10th Chairman of ISRO (2022–2025), Dr. Somanath led India's most iconic space missions, including Chandrayaan-3, which successfully achieved a soft landing on the Moon's south pole—making India the first nation to do so. His leadership also oversaw key developments in Aditya-L1, XPoSat, OneWeb commercial launches, and the groundwork for India's maiden human spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan. A mechanical engineer from TKM College of Engineering and a gold medalist in Aerospace Engineering from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, Dr. Somanath also holds a Ph.D. from IIT Madras. Recognized by the Distinguished Alumni awards of IIT Madras and IISc Bangalore, he also made pioneering contributions to India's launch vehicle programs, including PSLV, GSLV Mk-III (LVM3), and Reusable Launch Vehicles. His numerous awards include the ISRO Performance Excellence Award, the Space Gold Medal and National Aeronautics Prize from the Astronautical Society of India. He is a Fellow of several academies, including INAE and INSA, an international fellow of US National Academy of Engineering and a member of the International Academy of Astronautics.

Questions regarding this seminar, please contact us:

Ninad (nkothar2@jhu.edu), Qianwen (qzhu13@jhmi.edu), Yifeng (ycheng62@jhu.edu)