

Dr. Suj Chandrasekhar Named Chair of NSF Funded Manufacturing Centre's Business and Industry Leadership Team

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Center for Next Generation Manufacturing, funded by the National Science Foundation, today announced that Dr. Suj Chandrasekhar, president of Strategic Insights Inc., has been appointed chairperson of its Business and Industry Leadership Team (BILT).

This appointment reflects the Centre's commitment to aligning manufacturing education with employer needs—specifically across community colleges, technical schools, and four-year engineering programs—while signaling an expansion in [smart manufacturing](#) initiatives and positioning the Centre at the intersection of academic and industry collaboration. With a shift in focus toward preparing for the [Smart Factory](#) revolution, the National Centre for Next Generation Manufacturing leverages the BILT structure to bridge the gap between industry expertise and classroom delivery.

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Dr. Chandrasekhar's extensive background in smart manufacturing and her active role with the World Economic Forum in advancing Industry 4.0 concepts underscore her selection. Strategic Insights, under her direction, has partnered with leading manufacturing firms nationwide to accelerate the adoption of artificial intelligence, smart automation, and robotics across technical education programs.

The Centre's BILT initiative is designed to address these challenges directly by drawing on subject

matter experts to define skills and competencies necessary for the next generation workforce. This includes a deeper understanding of human-machine interaction, the redesign and micro-credentialing of programs to meet the demands of the current and future workforce. The BILT acts as a Business Advisory Committee, uniquely designed to invite industry leaders not just to advise, but to co-lead curriculum development through structured voting sessions and trend analyses.

“It is vital that subject matter experts drive both content and delivery so technical education reflects the dynamic needs of employers,” stated Dr. Suj Chandrasekhar during the announcement. “The BILT model provides a powerful mechanism for connecting colleges with the talent priorities of small, medium, and large manufacturers—ensuring that programs remain relevant and graduates are ready to meet changing expectations.” A design and test mindset will be essential in driving the successful deployment of tomorrow’s talent, making these programs especially vital.

Dr. Ann Beheler, BILT director, and Principal Investigator Dr. Karen Wosczyzna-Birch of the Center emphasized that Dr. Chandrasekhar's breakthrough [research](#) initiatives in smart manufacturing alongside her collaborative work with the World Economic Forum in furthering Industry 4.0 will be a great contribution to furthering the center's mission.

Higher education faculty from across the country join these sessions, using real-time feedback to align courses with what employers say are critical job skills—particularly in applied artificial intelligence, automation, mechatronics, and robotics. This ongoing exchange has led to curriculum updates in over 45 programs across 15 states, directly impacting student preparedness and increasing job placement rates by nearly 12 percent over the past year.

Individuals interested in engaging with the BILT initiative—including employers seeking to shape hiring practices or faculty seeking guidance on program design—can find more information about session times and participation requirements on the Center’s website. The initiative requires active input from technical executives and frontline technicians, serving as a continual link between industry trends and classroom instruction. There is no cost to participate, but registration is required for access to structured meetings and materials.

About The National Center for Next Generation Manufacturing

The National Center for Next Generation Manufacturing is a National Science Foundation-funded center supporting higher education institutions in aligning manufacturing education with employer-identified skills and industry trends nationwide. The Center is recognized for its work in employer-led curriculum design and received accolades from the World Economic Forum for its contributions to Industry 4.0 education policy. Its BILT model was cited in the 2024 American Association of Community Colleges report as "one of the most effective frameworks for technical workforce engagement." The Center continues to drive standardization and excellence in manufacturing education nationally.

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