Leading edge technology is required to cater to the above needs. The system z has up to 120 GB of real memory and options of having additional specialized processors. The System z Integrated Information Processors (zIIP) is designed to support select data and transaction processing and network workloads. The System z Application Assist Processor (zAAP) is designed to help enable strategic integration of new application technologies such as Java™ technology based Web applications and XML-based data interchange services with core business database environments. The Integrated Facility for Linux (IFL) processor offers support for Linux and brings a wealth of available applications that can be run in a real or virtual environment.

In today’s world, IT is woven into almost everything that a business does and consequently is pivotal to a business. Business can run smoothly only if IT is reliable (high mean time between failure), available (uptime of 99.999% + i.e. a downtime of about 5 min a year) and serviceable (RAS). When IT fails, business incurs downtime losses that are very high.

As a considerable investment has been made in developing IT applications, these are business assets. It does not make sense to discard these assets with every change of operating system or introduction of a new processor. Hence strict backward compatibility is not a “desired” feature – it is a “must-have” for business applications. In addition the assets need to be reusable (to reduce cost of enhancements), scalable (to adapt to dynamic business needs of the internet world), flexible (to meet changing market demands), secure (loss of confidential data can expose business to legal and market risk) and manageable (to provide adequate governance at reasonable cost). No wonder 70% of business data reside in mainframes.

To meet these business needs, knowledge in large scale computing or enterprise computing is essential. There is a lack of this knowledge amongst university students. This has resulted in severe skill shortage. With the retirement of mainframe professionals worldwide (80% of mainframers are 50+ year old), the skill gap is estimated to grow in next few years. Thus students who possess mainframe skills are more marketable.

IBM has been providing enterprise computing solution to business for last 40 years and is a leader in this space. To meet this skill gap and help students to have marketable skills – IBM has launched Mainframe Academic Initiative (MAI) in many countries.
IBM Contacts: entindia@in.ibm.com

How will IBM help in making my students get this niche skill?
IBM conducts Technology Day on certain focus area. You can develop awareness on Enterprise Computing in one of the Technology Day session. Just ask the IBM's Campus Relation Manager for your institute to organize this event.

IBM Academic Initiative System z™ program is an innovative and flexible program designed to assist colleges and universities in the education of students in modern mainframe technologies and concepts. IBM will support you in this program with access to mainframe infrastructure, courseware, faculty education, contests, and many other valuable resources.

For further information, please email Enterprise Computing U R India (entindia@in.ibm.com)

For Further Information visit,
- Destination z (www.ibm.com/systems/z/destinationz)
- Profiles of some global schools teaching mainframe skills (www.ibm.com/developerworks/university/products/zseries)
- Articles & Blogs:
  - Chicago Tribune (http://archives.chicagotribune.com/2008/apr/05/business/chi-sat-tech-jobs-ibmapr05)
  - MAINFRAME (http://mainframe.typepad.com)