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Cornell partners with Indian university to offer innovative degree in food science

By Linda McCandless

The world's food supply will be a little safer after students graduate from a dual degree program in food science now offered by Cornell and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) in India. Students at both institutions will study global issues related to food processing, technology, marketing and engineering.

"Global trends in the food industry demand that we train food scientists and food engineers transnationally and transculturally to ensure that food systems worldwide are sustainable, safe and nutritious," said Martin Wiedmann, associate professor of food science and director of graduate studies in food science at Cornell.

Susan A. Henry, the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with C. Ramasamy, vice-chancellor of TNAU, Feb. 13, when she was in Coimbatore, India. The MoU was approved by the Cornell Faculty Senate Feb. 19. Approval by the Cornell trustees is expected in May.

"This is the first such program to be established between a land-grant university in the U.S. and an agricultural university in India," said Henry. "Faculty and students will benefit from being able to develop case studies based on the global food system that improve the relevancy and effectiveness of the teaching. Graduates will be well-equipped to address domestic and global food issues in either the private or public sector."

The program combines a Master of Professional Studies (MPS) in food science and technology from Cornell with a Master of Technology (M.Tech.) in food processing and marketing from TNAU. The MPS program will be executed under Cornell's Graduate School, which will confer the MPS degree on those who successfully meet the program's requirements according to Cornell's stipulations. The M.Tech. program will be executed under the supervision of TNAU, which will confer the M.Tech. degree on those who successfully meet program requirements according to TNAU's stipulations.

Students enrolled in the program will complete two independent applications, receive two independent offers of admission, meet two sets of program and course requirements, earn two graduate degrees and receive two diplomas.

Indian students are being recruited to start the program on Cornell's Ithaca campus in summer 2008. After six months in the United States, the Indian students will return to TNAU to finish their degrees.

Cornell and TNAU have already established a strong working relationship through joint participation in the



Provided

Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University C. Ramasamy (left), exchanges the MoU for a dual master's degree program in Coimbatore, India, on Feb. 13, with Susan A. Henry, the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences.



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International Agriculture and Rural Development (IARD) 602 course at Cornell. Students pursuing the dual food science degree will be expected to participate in IARD 602's Cornell-in-India program.

Support for the new initiative draws upon the successful investment that has been made over the last three years by the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, partner universities in India and the Cornell-Sathguru Foundation, with the goal of generating internationally competent scientists and agribusiness professionals through the IARD course. The Sir Ratan Tata Trust will help support Indian students in the dual degree program, along with additional resources from TNAU, the participating students and the Cornell-Sathguru Foundation.

Wiedmann, K.V. Raman, associate director of CALS International Programs, and Syed Rizvi, Cornell professor of food science and current Jefferson Science Fellow, will be the contacts for the dual degree program at Cornell. R. Chandra Babu, dean of postgraduate studies, will be the primary contact at TNAU.

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