

SEED TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS MASTERS PROGRAM IN FULL SWING

Twenty-two students enrolled in “Introduction to the Seed Industry,” the first course offered in the Iowa State University Masters of Science in Seed Technology and Business (STB) program that began in July of 2007.

The interdisciplinary degree is a cooperative effort between the colleges of Business and Agriculture and Life Sciences at Iowa State. Approved by the State of Iowa Board of Regents in March 2006, the degree combines seed science and technology with essential courses in business management into a single graduate program that is not offered anywhere else in the world.

The objective of the program is to educate managers who can better address the challenges of uncertainty in delivering value to seed users. It is specifically designed to prepare students for management roles and emphasizes the development of problem-solving and analytic skills. Two graduate certificates, one in seed science and technology and one in seed business management, are offered as part of the program.

To date, students from five continents and nine countries have participated in the program. “The majority of the students taking advantage of the program so far have been from the United States,” said Paul Christensen, manager of the program. “Although some countries only have a single representative, we are definitely using the Internet to break down the distance barrier,” he said. Most of the content of the courses is delivered on CDs and online. Lessons are designed to include interactivity between students and instructors.

Christensen says that the level of interest and participation in the new program has been positive. He encourages students with an interest in the program to contact him regarding enrollment. “We are looking for students for a new group that will start next summer,” said Christensen. “Specifically those interested in broadening their understanding of the science and technologies involved in the seed industry as well as increasing their management skills.”

Applicants for the program should have experience in agriculture, business, or in seed-related areas of biology. The degree is designed for professionals working in industry and government and for those who have a desire to manage and lead organizations.

During fall 2007 courses in “Quantitative Methods” and “Crop Improvement” were offered by the program. This spring, Seed Science Endowed Chair Gary Munkvold is teaching a class in “Seed Health Management.” A seed physiology course is slated to follow in fall 2008. The program is designed so that students enroll in only one or two courses per semester and work together for a little more than two and a half years. This allows them to balance professional commitments. Students are encouraged to share their work experience with other members of the group.

“Our STB management training emphasizes the traditional topics of management training: accounting, finance, management information science, organizational behavior, marketing, and supply chain management,” said Christensen. “Our goal is to educate students to become better managers. We want to prepare them to effectively address future challenges within the seed industry. We are doing that.”

For more information visit www.seeds.iastate.edu/class or contact Christensen at 515-294-8745 or intlcorn@iastate.edu.



Above: Business College Associate Dean Mike Crum and Seed Technology and Business Program Manager Paul Christensen collaborate on curriculum for the interdisciplinary degree.