

FSHN Report – September, 2009

Although the Department is spending countless hours determining best practices to sustain its budget outside of relying on state funding, FSHN has started off the semester with its own moments of excitement. Our biggest moment of excitement so far this school year has been the discovery that our efforts to grow our Food Science major to 100 students strong are starting to actualize. Over the past year, the department supported numerous efforts to introduce more prospective students to Food Science as a major, such as: creating another non-majors section of FSHN 101 (Introduction to Food Science and Human Nutrition) that meets in the fall, inviting advising personnel and current students to present during the non-majors sections of FSHN 101, creating an Introduction to Chocolate Appreciation course that educated students about the aspects of Food Science while focusing on chocolate, and launching a summer internship program for high school students that also focused on introducing students to Food Science through chocolate (funding for the internship was made possible by a grant from the USDA). At the start of the 2009-2010 academic year, FSHN enrollment numbers jumped 25% to 91 students. Many of the efforts initiated are slated to continue through this academic year.

In other exciting news, FSHN has decided to reinvest in our off-campus masters program. The program, traditionally offered through our satellite campus in Oak Brook, IL is shifting to a synchronous on-line delivery model for all of its lecture based courses. Students will still be required to participate in our two food processing courses down at the urbana campus, but all other courses will be delivered using Elluminate technology. The change in delivery allows students to participate in the program regardless of their geographical location – an important benefit considering that the food industry is a global industry and many of our students travel all over the world any day of the week. The department is also hoping that the change in delivery will result in program growth since, again, geographical location will no longer be a limiting factor for the majority of the courses. The enhanced program is scheduled to be announced at the 2010 Institute of Food Technologists' Annual Meeting.

Lastly, on September 23 – 25, the department is sponsoring an “International Forum on Emerging Processing Technologies.” According to the website (http://fshn.illinois.edu/food_processing_forum/), the goals and objectives of the symposium are:

Goals and Objectives

1. To strengthen international collaboration, awareness, and understanding of the wide spread worldwide food borne pathogen problem, emphasizing the technologies under development to ameliorate the problem.
2. To bring leading key researchers from Europe, North and South America together for a conference thus expanding cross-cultural collaborative ties among leading scholars in this area of world importance.
3. To describe and discuss the most promising technologies available so that scientists and food industry leaders are aware of these technologies to improve food safety and technology.
4. To document results of the conference with published proceedings and website resources and to foster research planning to benefit consumers worldwide.

Members of the organizing committee, all from the Department of FSHN, are Elvira de Mejia, Susan Brewer, Graciela Padua, Hao Feng, Brad Beam, Youngsoo Lee, Scott Morris and Bill Artz .