



University of Wisconsin-River Falls reaches worldwide

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MADISON – The University of Wisconsin-River Falls has been engaged internationally for decades, but in recent years, there is a new level of excitement and growth. Dr. Dale Gallenberg, Dean of the UW-River Falls College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, believes there are many unique opportunities for faculty and students to be involved.

“There is great potential for students and faculty through partnerships with universities, government agencies and private industries,” said Gallenberg. “Like so many things domestically, the growth of our international work is built around relationships. By investing time and energy, we have been able to accomplish a lot through face-to-face discussions and use of technology.”

Carolyn Brady is the school's International Partnerships Coordinator. As part of the University's five year plan, there was an emphasis on global connections. Brady has had the ability to travel to China, Brazil, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia and more to build these relationships by participating in the DATCP's international activities.

“UW-River Falls prides itself on enhancing academic opportunities. By doing good work, we believe additional doors will continue to open,” added Gallenberg. “We are able to make strategic choices and offer programming that will be sustaining in the future.”

UW-River Falls is second only to the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the number of students who study abroad. For thirty years, there has been an active partnership with Zhejiang International Studies University in Hangzhou, China, encouraging an exchange of faculty and students. A partnership with the Brazil Scientific Mobility Program also provides great benefits at UW-River Falls by welcome visiting students.

"The Brazil program allows their students to come here to enrich our campus and share with us their international perspective," explained Brady. "Exchanges are a win-win. Wisconsin's most valuable ambassadors are our visiting students and faculty to other countries."

Brady first reached out to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) in 2011 to learn more about additional opportunities that may exist at World Dairy Expo. The International Trade Team's Lisa Stout provided her contacts at the show and with visitors from other countries. The partnership between UW-River Falls and DATCP has grown from that first phone call.

"UW-River Falls enrolls more dairy science students than any other university in Wisconsin and is recognized nationwide for its top-notch department," said Brady. "The World Dairy Expo was a natural fit for us to share with international visitors about what our campus could offer to students and companies."

Brady has focused her work on increasing UW-River Falls' presence outside the country to attract international students and create opportunities. UW-River Falls and DATCP have traveled together to China, Mexico and Brazil to promote Wisconsin's dairy industry. UW-River Falls has signed Memorandums of Understanding with China Agriculture University and provided trainings. Recently Brady traveled to Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia with DATCP's Jennifer Lu on a fact-finding mission.

"When traveling with DATCP, we are able to meet with government representatives and tour agricultural businesses to better understand how UW-River Falls can become engaged," added Brady. "In Inner Mongolia of China, I was able to explain to companies that UW-River Falls can assist with technical training and offer agricultural expertise."

UW-River Falls faculty have taught at China Agricultural University. Dr. Sylvia Kehoe, an Associate Professor of Dairy Science at UW-River Falls, has traveled to China twice to share her perspectives and knowledge. She taught a two week course there in dairy nutrition and management.

“Many of the Chinese students completed a full day of classes and research, and then came to participate in a three hour course with me in the evening,” explained Kehoe. “I had a different teaching style than they were used to, asking questions and encouraging participation, and the students seemed to enjoy it and were very interested in the content.”

These students will go out and work in the dairy industry in the future. With China's rapidly growing dairy industry, there are many opportunities for America's Dairyland and UW-River Falls students to work in the global business of agriculture.

“China has the purchased equipment, genetics and the feed, but what they need is the technical knowledge on how to use the equipment, the genetics and feed as well as manage the farm,” added Kehoe. “We continue to develop the next steps for our partnership with the China Agricultural University, including hosting faculty and students this fall at UW-River Falls and the World Dairy Expo.”

When planning for the future, Brady notes it is important to grow the international programming carefully to meet the University objectives and needs of the students while strengthening academic programs.

"The collaboration between UW-River Falls and DATCP has been very productive," said Brady. "We have been able to accomplish significant things and find more ways to work together. I am excited for what more we can do."

"Our goal is to grow Wisconsin's agricultural presence globally. Through our work abroad, we are able to help campuses connect to international opportunities and gain knowledge and understanding of global agricultural issues," concluded Jennifer Lu, Economic Development Consultant at DATCP. "By sharing our network and making initial contacts, we hope more campuses will take advantage of these opportunities and boost the success of Wisconsin's agricultural industry."

For more information about services available from DATCP's International Trade Team, contact 1-800-462-5237 or international@wisconsin.gov.

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