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New UNH Business Degree Will Highlight Technology-Business Mix

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DURHAM, N.H. -- A.R. Venkatachalam, associate professor of information systems at the University of New Hampshire, has been named the Hamel Professor of Innovation and Technology at UNH's Whittemore School of Business and Economics.

One of three UNH faculty named to Hamel professorships this year, Venkatachalam will focus on teaching and researching the management of technology as part of a multi-disciplinary team at the Hamel Center for the Management of Technology and Innovation. The other two Hamel professors are Ihab Farag, professor of chemical engineering, and Will Gilbert, associate professor of biochemistry and molecular biology.

Whittemore School Dean Steve Bolander is excited about Venkatachalam's strong background in both business and technology -- experience which embodies the Hamel Center's mission. "In this competitive environment, one of our strengths is going to be our outstanding people," the dean noted. "Professor Venkatachalam brings solid experience in real-world situations where scientists and business managers have to communicate effectively. His skill in many disciplines will be invaluable. He is a very positive addition to the Hamel Center team."

Among Venkatachalam's first projects in the new post is helping to design a new Master of Science degree for the Management of Technology. The advanced degree will prepare business leaders who understand and can manage technology, and who are able to integrate technology-based ideas and products effectively into

new and existing companies.

It will require students to take foundation courses in information technology, business fundamentals and science and engineering, along with core courses and electives in the management of technology, all incorporating case studies and simulations, says Venkatachalam. New courses could be introduced as early as September 2002, he adds, and planners hope the first M.S. in Management of Technology graduates will launch new careers from UNH in about 2004. The Hamel Center will not only create and manage the new interdisciplinary graduate degree program, but will partner with New Hampshire businesses to provide educational and technical assistance for managing technological change and commercializing emerging technologies.

Although other schools offer similar degrees, the Whittemore School's Hamel Center is determined that UNH's offering will be distinguished for its high quality. The new degree should appeal to those who seek the skills for managing or commercializing any of the three main technology types -- biotechnology, information technology and nanotechnology. "Our task is to offer a solid product with significant value, and to distinguish ourselves in all these areas so that we have a program that is internationally attractive. We definitely have the resources at UNH," Venkatachalam adds, "and our multidisciplinary approach is very strong. I look forward to great results."

Venkatachalam is a natural for the Hamel professorship at the business school, since he is fluent in both languages spoken there -- business and technology. He began his career as a mechanical engineer and strategic planner for a high-pressure valve manufacturing firm in his native India, later earning a Ph.D. in information systems at the University of Alabama.

The computer whiz came to UNH in 1992, where he has helped to develop high-tech solutions to business problems for programs supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), for example. He works closely with the university's world-famous interoperability laboratory and was a principal investigator for UNH's intellectual property protection

project, undertaken in cooperation with Franklin Pierce Law School and funded by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Venkatachalam is delighted to see UNH launch an educational program for the new economy, with the Hamel Center "at the heart of it." He points out, "With the quality of life in New Hampshire and at UNH, and with the benefit of this area's high-tech work force, our timing is perfect. We are in the right place at the right time to make it work beautifully, and we are fortunate to have the Hamel endowment to support it."

UNH established the Hamel Center for the Management of Technology and Innovation earlier this year with a \$7 million gift from Dana A. and Kathryn P. Hamel of Wolfeboro. Its mission is to establish UNH as a leader in providing integrated interdisciplinary management and technology programs for students and professionals.

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