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Media Relations

February 25, 2016

Cheers! UNH Responds to Needs of State's Growing Beer Industry with Programs, Testing Lab and On-Site Pilot Plant



DURHAM, N.H. – In response to the growing beer industry in the Granite State the University of New Hampshire will provide a number of new opportunities to meet the needs of brewers and students, to include opening an analytical testing lab, a professional development certificate program and a brewing minor with pilot brewery to help meet workforce demands.

“Beer producers are growing every day in New Hampshire,” said P.T. Vasudevan, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs. “We are starting this new minor in the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (COLSA) with the expectation that it will bring more internships and job opportunities for our graduates, giving our students a skill set that is already in high demand. We plan to make quality control testing available to brewers and distillers in the state and envision creating continuing education courses through Cooperative Extension.”

In New Hampshire alone there are more than 50 breweries, more than existed in the entire United States 40 years ago. Currently there are only a handful of laboratories around the country that provide analytical testing services to the beer industry and none in New England.

“The beer industry is not only a strong economic force in the state, but an emerging cultural and creative force as well,” said Marc Sedam, managing director of UNHInnovation. “This effort supports the beer industry in the near and long-term and connects the industry to the intellectual and business resources and facilities at UNH.”

In the early 1990s a microbiology class at the university provided limited beer testing to Frank Jones Brewery as it worked to reopen. With a fermentation lab in Durham, UNH can better serve this growing industry by offering faster results while providing students with an opportunity for hands-on experience. UNH would join a number of public universities already serving this audience including Colorado State University and Appalachian State University.

UNH will also be unique in offering a pilot brewing system with equipment purchased from a small

local brewery that recently expanded. The brewing system, operated by COLSA, will serve as a core of the college's planned brewing minor to help introduce and prepare students for the many opportunities associated with the growing industry. It will allow the brewing of beer on a large enough scale that students can gain real-world experiences, as well as allow the local brewing industry to rent it for testing and experimentation. The lab and pilot plant are expected to open in early 2017.

"At Throwback Brewery, we are all about keeping it local, so we would be thrilled to leverage the analytical services UNH intends to provide," said Nicole Carrier, co-founder and president of the North Hampton brewery. "Further, as a growing brewery, we look forward to being able to hire graduating students with not just the required classroom knowledge, but with the much needed hands-on brewing and lab experience."

UNH Professional Development and Training, a sub-unit of Cooperative Extension, will take the first step by offering a five-day non-credit course called "Craft Brewery Startup Workshop: The Business of Beer," a step-by-step workshop for how to start a craft brewery. More information will be available and registration will begin after March 30. Future plans include the possibility of developing a brewing science certificate program and additional workshops. Both COLSA and Cooperative Extension will also explore opportunities to support the brewing industry by growing varieties of winter wheat, oats, rye and other crops that are suited to the state's growing conditions.

"As the beer industry in New Hampshire continues to develop, there will be an increased focus on overall quality and professional expansion as we compete with neighboring states," said Scott Schaier, executive director of the Beer Distributors of NH and vice president of BREW NH (nhbeer.org). "The university's offerings will not only fill a need for skilled employees, but also assist the entire industry and continue to drive New Hampshire beer tourism and the state's larger economy."

Breweries in the region can contact Ellen Christo at (603) 862-5446 or ellen.christo@unh.edu.

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