



University of Florida Wins National Distance Education Award

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — The American Distance Education Consortium has named the University of Florida Global Forensic Science program the winner of its 2006 national Award of Excellence in Distance Education.

The online program, which offers master's degrees and graduate certificates in four areas of forensic science, was selected for the honor by a panel of 16 peer universities affiliated with the consortium.

Bill Riffée, Ph.D., associate provost of distance, continuing and executive education, and Forensic Science Program Director Ian Tebbett, Ph.D., will receive the award along with a \$5,000 stipend May 2 at the annual ADEC meeting in Washington, D.C. UF joins the ranks of Ohio State, Michigan State and Cornell universities — some of the most recent award winners.

“Our forensic distance education master's programs have earned a well-respected international reputation in the past six years through our growing student enrollments and through partnering and assisting universities and governments in South America, Europe and Asia in education, workshops and training,” Tebbett said.

Only one week before the award recognition, Tebbett joined forces with the Canberra Institute of Technology at the Government Security Expo & Conference, or GOVSEC, in Washington to sign an official agreement for educational exchange between the two institutions. The agreement is the first step for the U.S. and Australian institutions to promote exchange between their faculty and students as well as the exchange of academic and research information.

Signing the agreement with the Australian educational organization comes at a time of need in the post-9/11 era; education and training are needed in countries around the world seeking to strengthen resources in the fight against terrorism, Riffée said.

“The agreements with CIT will extend UF's mission of global collaboration through important contributions to the forensic sciences made by institutions of higher education,” Riffée said.

The U.S. and Australian institutions, through their combined resources, plan to provide a broad range of expertise in many different applications of the forensic sciences to further the Global Forensic Education initiative and provide education and training for homeland security in both countries.

The UF online forensic science program offers master's programs in forensic DNA and serology, drug chemistry, toxicology, and a new program beginning this fall in general forensic science. The programs also offer graduate certificate options. This spring, a new certificate program in forensic death investigation is being offered.

The Centre for Forensic Science at the Canberra Institute of Technology is the largest provider of forensic investigation training in Australia with more than 450 students. CIT provides training for forensic personnel from all police jurisdictions and several government departments and offers a diploma of forensic document examination, a graduate diploma in forensic science (field sciences) and an advanced diploma of computer forensics.

ADEC, developed in partnership with the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, works to advance distance and online learning. Its membership largely consists of 65 state universities and land-grant colleges. The nonprofit organization also works with government agencies and other organizations to advance science, engineering and technology research, and education.

For more information contact: Linda Homewood, (352) 665-3665, e-mail: Homewood@ufl.edu