

University of Ghana and GO-FAU Program

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How the courses UG offers and contents relate to CGIAR centres mandates and mission

The Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness of the College of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences (CACCS) at the University of Ghana, Legon, runs an a bachelors degree and MAA and MPhil courses in agricultural economics and agribusiness. There is also a Ph.D. program in Agricultural Economics. The agribusiness program was established in 2004.

The graduate courses consist of an MPhil in Agricultural Economics, MPhil in Agribusiness, and MPhil in Agricultural Administration and a Masters in Agricultural Administration (MAA). The MPhil programs are of two-year duration the first year of which is a taught program (course work). The second year is devoted to research and thesis preparation. The MAA program is a 12-month course work and students submit a long-essay/dissertation. The Ph.D. Agricultural Economics program is a 3-year thesis work that involves a qualifying examination at the end of the first year of enrolment.

The areas of specialization in agricultural economics include Marketing, Farm Management and Production Economics, Economic Development and the Environment.

The contents of these specializations are built around courses in macro and micro economic theory (taken at the Department of Economics), advanced mathematical methods, environmental economics, resource economics, econometrics, farm business management, production economics, research methodology and statistics, agriculture and economic development (policy and planning) and seminar presentations

The agribusiness course contents, besides the programs in the agricultural economics that are either an elective or core for this program, include project analysis and management, domestic/international agro-industrial management, agricultural law, (at the Faculty of Law), agricultural finance and agricultural trade.

The agricultural administration programs are tailored more to middle level administrators in agriculture related institutions and the course content include human resource management (at the Business School), economics (with Business School) and the courses in the agricultural economics and agribusiness.

Underpinning all these programs is a semester course in computer applications.

Given that the CGIAR's mission is to contribute to food security and poverty eradication in developing countries through research, partnership, capacity building and policy support as well as promoting sustainable agricultural development based on environmentally sound management of natural resources, the College's agricultural economics and agribusiness trains the country's needed manpower, builds capacity and provides policy support to various agricultural and related ministries, organisations and institutions that can contribute to the attainment of the CGIAR missions and mandates.

How GO-FAU program could contribute to content development and capacity strengthening in your institution

Strengthening the MPhil programs in agricultural economics and particularly the newly established agribusiness course contents, and the development of new courses that reflects current agribusiness practices are germane. GO-FAU's open distance learning and capacity-strengthening activities could contribute immensely to the College's agricultural economics and agribusiness programs' focus.

What other related initiatives (international and national) that your institution is involved with or are aware of in your country

The College's agribusiness program in particular is collaborating with the University of Guelph and IDRC through CIDA support in two projects.

The first is the establishment of a National Agribusiness Development Program (NADEP) that seeks to enhance the training of the personnel of MDAs and other research institutions in agribusiness to build their capacity and management capabilities. The program also provides information on agribusiness enterprises, both formal and informal, for policy analysis. The program is housed at the College (Dept of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness) but coordinated from the University of Guelph's Department of Agricultural Economics and Business.

The second, with IDRC, covers international seminar in Agricultural and Rural Development presentations that link the University of Guelph, University of Ghana and the Sokoine University in Tanzania via teleconferencing. This was initiated in 2006. Currently, for lack of a high-speed internet facility, real time teleconferencing is limited to recorded presentations and shared, for now, with University of Guelph.

These collaborations have brought in needed equipment that is enhancing the teaching and learning activities at the Department

The College has also recently set up the West African Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI) to produce plant breeders with expertise to improve the indigenous crops that feed the people of the West African sub-region. The WACCI plant breeding program will produce skilled, knowledgeable and properly resourced breeders to breed locally important crops to meet local need and preferences. Students would be trained at the PhD level and would follow a local curriculum supplemented by Cornell University lectures, faculty, and communication support and library resources. The training also

supports and encourages Cornell PhD students to travel and visit partner institutions in Africa. Likewise, it encourages and supports African students and faculty to visit Cornell. The goals and objectives of WACCI are stated thus:

- 1 To Significantly improve the quality of PhD level training in plant breeding offered to students in West and Central Africa
- 2 To create opportunities to develop improved local varieties of the staples grown by smallholders in the sub-region, using the advances in plant breeding science and molecular biology, and informed by farmers' stated preferences
- 3 To provide the necessary skill to direct and manage local plant breeding programs to meet local needs, and to respond to indigenous demands
- 4 To develop breeding techniques appropriate to address some of the unique breeding/crop improvement objectives for the sub-region
- 5 To create a *de facto* network of functioning plant breeders and their local supervisors from the sub-regions.

Funding for the program is being provided from Agricultural Green Revolution for Africa (AGRA) program for African Seeds Systems (PASS), a joint venture between the Rockefeller and the Bill-Melinda Gates Foundations. There will be five cohorts of 8 students each for five year PhD program.

The WACCI program could benefit from the contents and faculty training that could be given through GO-FAU program.