

Recollections By
Dr. William J. Hoover

Department Head April 1966 – September 1976

Upon the retirement of Dr. John Shellenberger, I was recruited from the Corn Industries Research Foundation in Washington, D.C., and appointed as Head of the Milling Department and Director of the newly created Food and Feed Grains Institute. The Institute was designed like a wheel with this Department as its hub and to involve the entire University as well as selected faculty from other departments as spokes representing a team approach to integrated research projects and programs.

My first assignment was to develop a new name for the department as it had grown beyond milling and now included feed and bakery technologies, both academic and research activities. Names were submitted for review by both industry and faculty input. The final selection was "Department of Grain Science and Industry".

Research

Extramural support for research was at low ebb, with only one major project on wheat quality sponsored by USDA, in its final year. Thus, a major thrust was made to secure outside funding.

We were fortunate to acquire two major grants to the Food and Feed Grain Institute sponsored by the Agency for International Development. The first was a six-year study working on protein-calorie nutritional improvement in the developing countries. The approach was to improve the quality and quantity of protein in the grain based foods in the form that they are normally consumed in various diets around the world. The results led to many publications and practically speaking to the inclusion of soy fortified wheat flour in the P.L. 480 food distribution program.

The second major project involved "Improving the grain and oilseed marketing, storage, and handling for developing countries". This project turned out to be the longest program supported by AID in its history, lasting some 25 years.

In these two projects, faculty from Economics, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Entomology, Foods and Nutrition, and Foreign Languages were involved. At one time, there were 55 soft-money positions funded by these programs.

Additional faculty members were also added to the department staffing during my ten year stint as Department Head:

Dr. David Lineback
Dr. Paul Seib
Dr. Carl Hosenev

Dr. Cho Tsen
Dr. Jack Pedersen
Mr. Joseph Ponte
Dr. Dale Eustace

These faculty members, plus the existing faculty, proved to be aggressive in obtaining other research support and the resultant publications, growing the reputation of the department and the institute.

Also, we became active in obtaining patents. Dr. Deyoe and Earl Barkley on "Starea", Dr. Seib on his first of a series on ascorbic acid, and Drs. Tsen and Hoover for use of soy flour and other protein sources in foods (5 patents).

Academics

In the meantime, much effort was given to strengthening the academics and course offerings by involving committees from the three industries we served. The result was a sharpening of the curriculum.

Student acquisition has always been a problem at the undergraduate level. We involved the industries again and each responded with scholarship funds and with part-time paid recruiters. The results were that the enrollment grew to record levels.

Extension

The Department continued to have an active extension program to the feed industry with Dr. Bob Schoeff, Dr. Bob Wilcox, and Jim Balding providing programs and individual support.