

International degree to be introduced at UP

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The Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria (UP) is preparing to introduce an exciting, first-of-its-kind international collaborative master's programme in tropical health in January 2016. With this objective in mind the Faculty's Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases (DVTD) has been collaborating with the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp, Belgium since 2002. Over the years, collaborative efforts have led to exceptional research and training, as well as capacity building. Based in part on a shared vision, the two institutions established a sound relationship and decided to capitalise on each other's academic expertise by sharing teaching and training resources in the presentation of this master's degree.

The DVTD's research skills and teaching expertise in tropical diseases and the ITM's recognised expertise in tropical health, parasitology and vectors will result in a master's programme of an exceptionally high standard. With both institutions' increasing focus on the One Health approach, the overall objective of the degree is to concentrate on the relationship between infectious and parasitic diseases in animals and humans (zoonoses), and diseases and health of the ecosystem in order to improve disease control strategies, the sustainability of ecosystems, food security and rural development.

This exciting programme is geared to attracting international interest and supporting a variety of career paths. It will accommodate several academic backgrounds – from veterinary, biological, medical and agricultural to the social sciences. Furthermore, the programme will optimise the utilisation of current technology by combining e-learning, face-to-face teaching and collaborative field workshops. Compulsory modules will be presented by either UP or ITM

staff and skills training electives will be taught at either institute, giving students international opportunity and exposure.

The collaborative master's degree programme in tropical animal health has both partners' full co-operation and commitment, and will benefit from their combined strengths. It is encouraging to see the establishment of programmes that are geared not only towards a multi-disciplinary approach, but also towards collaboration with international specialist institutions so as to ensure that students are exposed to learning of the highest standard.

- Author Louise de Bruin



Prof Cheryl de la Rey Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria and Prof Bruno Gryseels, Director of the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, Belgium after the signing of the MOU