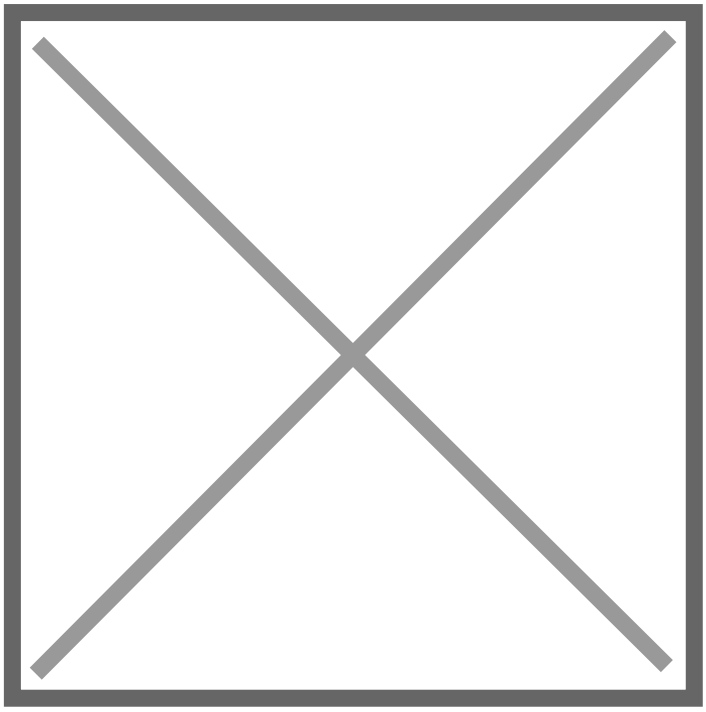
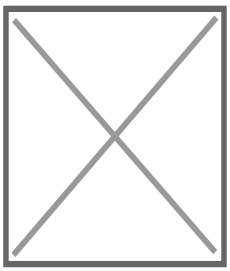
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"Biozeen can be considered as a polytechnic of industrial biotech."

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Dr Anil Paul Kariath, president, training and consulting, founder director, Biozeen

Bangalore-based Biozeen was started by people from industry with the mission to bridge the gap between the industry and academia. The founder director of Biozeen, Dr AP Kariath was the head of Sartorius India. As president, training and consulting, Dr Kariath wants to build Biozeen as an institute that will create a base of professionals that will be useful to the industry. Dr Kariath elaborates on Biozeen's activities and courses.

Why was Biozeen started?

There is a shortage of professionals in the industry, despite the fact that a lot of students, almost 300-400 per college, pass out every year. The problem is that the industry does not find them to be useful to it. The industry is confronted with the issue of availability of suitable candidates. You will notice that the attrition rate as well as the price to acquire the right candidate is very high in this sector. Consequently, several companies had to either abandon their research projects or go slow as many of the people heading such activities have been changing jobs. The best way to handle this situation is by building a loyalty factor. I believe freshers have the right attitude and energy and they can be molded. However, they do not get the break and, if they get, they are to be trained by coworkers. So an institute, which can train people in an environment close to that in the actual manufacturing set-up and provide hands-on training of the usage of the facilities, will help the industry. And that is what we are attempting. Biozeen was started to bridge this gap between the industry requirement and the supply.

Why have you decided to focus on biotech education?

Most engineering companies have their own training sessions to mould fresh students into their own line of activities. But the biotech sector being small, spread out, and tight on budgets, cannot have their own programs at this point of time. Biozeen

can be considered as a polytechnic of industrial biotech. Eventually, there should be similar polytechnics in every cluster.

What are your offerings?

At the moment we will offer hands-on training, consultancy services, and later look at incubation too. In terms of training, we will provide a modular course. This will be modular in nature and candidates (students and even industry personnel) can join any module. All modules will be run every month. We will also offer a fulltime 12-month (12 modules) course.

The courses will start in April 2006. Our training would be in the area of biopharmaceutical production. We have set up a full-fledged mammalian cell culture and microbial fermentation plant with both upstream and down stream facilities. It has a seed production lab, media production facility, bioreactor, fermentor, purification, and glassware preparation units. The facility is closer to CGMP-complaint design plant. In the second phase, we will expand the facility to allow pilot scale production too. We are also setting up a 100-room hostel inside the campus.

What is the size of your faculty, the course fee, and the selection criteria?

We have 32 faculty members and we will have a strong industry interface. We will take 50 students per batch for the full time course. There will be two batches per year. The course is designed in such a way that the first batch spends the first six months in the classroom and the next six months in the labs.

The full time course (all the 12 modules) would cost around Rs 3-3.5 lakh. The fee of a single module will be between Rs 25,000 and Rs 1 lakh depending on the subject. The selection for the full time course will be through an entrance test, which will be announced in January. We do not guarantee the students a job. But our company it self will absorb the first eight batches for our consulting business. And we are confident the industry will be able to absorb our students.

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