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Varsity to host meeting of DBT task force

Staff Reporter

Thirty-one new research proposals from across the country will be considered for financial support at a meeting of the task force on biotech product and process development of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Union Ministry of Science and Technology to be held at Thiruvalluvar University on December 17 and 18.

"This is the 11th meeting of the task force and is being hosted for the first time by Thiruvalluvar University. This will provide an exposure for the university's research students to eminent professors and scientists from across the country and also help in bringing visibility to the university in the national academic arena, Vice-Chancellor of the university P. Gunasekaran told reporters on Sunday. The task force usually met at metro cities such as Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai.

DBT has set up several task forces in different disciplines to identify projects of high quality and promote research by supporting institutions and investigators. Each task force was constituted with eminent scientists and expert members from the respective discipline and headed by a scientist, according to a release.

One of the task forces was on biotech product and process development dealing with industrial processes and development of commercially viable products through biotechnological route. K.B. Ramachandran of Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai, was the chairman of the task force.

"The task force has 15 experts. During the meeting, 31 new research proposals from professors from across the country and seven ongoing projects will be reviewed. The task force will look into the project, review and assess if it was worthy and then recommended to the DBT for funding and also quantum of money to be given," the V-C explained.

"Though the university was started 10 years ago, academic and research activities are not up to the level. We have called for applications for 16 posts of faculty in different departments. Of this, more posts are in Department of Biotechnology – three assistant professors and associate professors. Once we set up full-fledged department, there is funding agencies to provide grants for developing research activities," he added.

Ashok Pandey, co-chairman of the task force from IIIST, Thiruvananthapuram, said the relevance of this task force was high as it looked at commercialising products developed by scientists.

"DBT has set a new focus of inter-disciplinary and networking among partners. We want to pool up expertise," he added.

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