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- ▶ CONTACT US
- ▶ ADVERTISING
- ▶ BACK ISSUES
- ▶ SITE SEARCH

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#### THIS ISSUE

- ▶ NEWS/FEATURES
- ▶ DISCOVERIES
- ▶ IN INK
- ▶ RECOGNITIONS
- ▶ MEMOS
- ▶ CALENDAR

#### OSU LINKS

- ▶ OSU FACULTY/STAFF
- ▶ NEWS & INFORMATION
- ▶ OSU HOME

#### onCAMPUS HOME

## Two faculty awarded NSF career awards

### Gopalan and Peng awards total \$1.1 million

The National Science Foundation has awarded Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) awards to two more Ohio State faculty members: Venkant Gopalan and Mike Peng. The 2003 CAREER awards, which recognize young researchers' dual commitment to scholarship and education, will total about \$1.1 million in CAREER funding for the two researchers over the next five years.

Gopalan, an assistant professor of biochemistry, will receive nearly \$750,000 to develop a method for figuring out the role each gene plays in a plant genome. He will use the funds to study an enzyme - RNase P -- which can block, or turn off, the expression of individual genes. Turning a gene off in a growing plant might provide vital information on the specific characteristics that the gene controls. Doing so will help build a roadmap for the genome, one that tells researchers which genes are essential to the survival and development of an organism. Using RNase P as a tool to uncover gene function can help researchers figure out which processes control a plant's susceptibility to stresses such as drought and pathogens. With this information in hand, Gopalan's work may make it possible to increase the amount of land on which crops are grown by creating transgenic plants that can withstand certain environmental stressors.

Peng, assistant professor of management and international business at the Fisher College of Business, will receive \$422,890 to explore how organizations in countries undergoing tremendous institutional transitions make strategic choices. He said little is known about how organizations make strategic choices when confronting large-scale fundamental institutional transitions, such as those taking place throughout numerous emerging economies. Peng will be conducting three large-scale, multi-year studies involving organizations in China in the first two years and extending to Thailand and Russia for the remaining years. His research will explain, predict and document how businesses move from a network-based strategy to one based on competitive capabilities as the country advances through market-supporting institutional transitions.

Gopalan and Peng are the third and fourth NSF CAREER award winners from Ohio State announced this year. Announced earlier were awards to James Davis, assistant professor of computer and information science, and Philip Schniter, assistant professor of electrical engineering.

As NSF announces CAREER awards throughout the year, news of