

The U of I Product Development Team Does Disney

In **Spring 2010**, for four Food Science and Human Nutrition students, the classroom met real-life applicable challenges. Each fall at the University of Illinois, Food Science and Food Industry and Business students are required to take a course called *Food Product Development*. Over the course of 9 weeks working in the test kitchen, students work in groups to design their own unique food product. When the product is finalized, a short proposal is written to enter the IFT Disney Product Development Competition.

One ambitious group who called themselves *Ubergoods*: Mike Just, Lydia Anderson, Jenna McFarland, and Jessica DeMarke entered the competition. The challenge: to create a healthy and nutritious food item that contains a full serving of fruit or vegetables. Their product: *Snow White's Apple Puffs*, a gluten-free, sweet and crunchy extruded snack which contains a full serving of apples. The University of Illinois made the entire campus proud when their apple puffs made the final four of the competition.

In the final competition that took place at the annual **IFT Annual Meeting and Food Expo**, the team faced challenging questions from the judges. According to Aaron Rasmussen, teaching assistant for the class, "the judges asked about all different aspects of processing, marketing, market appeal, taste, challenges in making it, quality control. It was fairly intensive, but they did a really good job fielding the questions."

In the end, the team represented Illinois' FSHN department extremely well and finished as highly respectable runners up.