

UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM

A quarterly newsletter for the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources

UBC opens Beaty Biodiversity Centre

The University of British Columbia today officially opened the Beaty Biodiversity Centre, new home to some of the world's top biodiversity researchers and Canada's largest blue whale skeleton exhibit.

The centre houses the Biodiversity Research Centre, which has brought 25 principal investigators and their teams under one roof, and the Beaty Biodiversity Museum, with more than two million specimens, slated to open this fall.

The 11,550-sq m, four-storey building is designed to facilitate collaboration among researchers from different disciplines. The building has innovative sustainability features such as a green roof and water channel that supports aquatic plants and insects while helping reduce storm water surges. The \$50-million project is made possible with support from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), the Province of British Columbia, an \$8-million gift from UBC alumni Ross and Trisha Beaty and a \$3-million gift from the djavad mowafaghian foundation.

UBC President Stephen Toope was joined by Premier Gordon Campbell, CFI President Eliot Phillipson, Ross Beaty and Hamid Eshghi, president of the djavad mowafaghian foundation, for today's opening ceremony.

"The Beaty Biodiversity Centre exemplifies UBC's goal to engage and inspire," said Prof. Toope. "The synergy and intellectual discourse enabled by the shared research space,

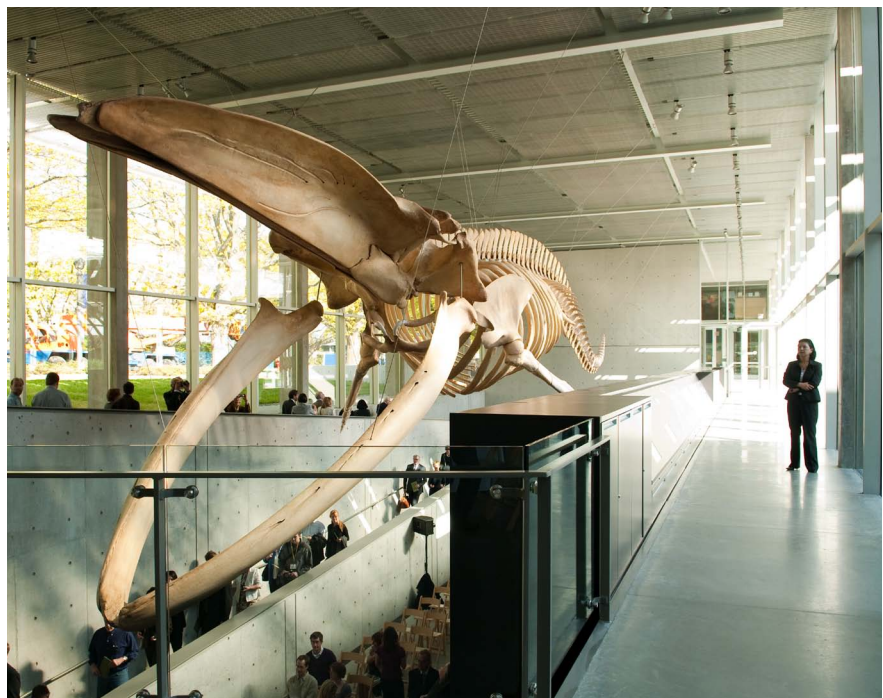
and the curiosity and reflection inspired by the museum's public programs, will have an enormous impact on our understanding of our complex and interconnected world."

"The CFI is proud to support leading-edge research by UBC scientists that will not only advance basic knowledge on the origins of life but inform critically important conservation efforts to maintain biodiversity in Canada and around the world," said Phillipson.

"By investing in cutting-edge labs and equipment, we are giving these talented researchers the tools to answer fundamental questions about how species emerge, and how to conserve those that are endangered,"

said Premier Campbell, who noted that B.C. is the most biodiverse province or territory in Canada. "In the face of climate change, we are working to find ways to sustain life in all its forms, even as we take action to protect our natural world by reducing our carbon footprint."

"The Beaty Biodiversity Centre will enrich our local society, Canadian society, and global society by carrying out research and displaying some of the species and biodiversity of our world," said Ross Beaty. "And it will teach existing and future generations – our children – the wonders and fragility of many of the species we all share the earth with." (Condensed from UBC Media Release, 13 May 2010)



The Blue Whale Exhibit at the University of British Columbia's new Beaty Biodiversity Centre is the largest in Canada and articulated in the species' signature lunge-feeding pose. (Photo courtesy of UBC)

Expert recommends mainstreaming CCA in Philippine forestry

The adverse impacts of climate change will constantly affect the environment -- how society adapts to these impacts could either reduce or amplify our susceptibility to climate change; thus underscored Dr. Diomedes A. Racelis, an expert on forest



RACELIS

resource management.

He discussed mainstreaming

climate change adaptation (CCA) in the Philippine forestry and natural resources sector during his SEARCA professorial chair lecture presented at the SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS) on 11 May 2010.

Mainstreaming, said Dr. Racelis, is “the integration of policies and measures that address climate change into development planning and sectoral decision-making”. He emphasized that tapping and collaborating with institutions on addressing climate change impacts will be helpful in attaining sustainable development.

He explained that although the Philippines is not a major emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs) -- accounting for only 0.27% of the total GHG emissions -- it is a major victim of climate

change impacts. The forestry and natural resources sectors -- which underpin the country’s ecosystem stability, food security, and economic development -- are among the most vulnerable to climate change. This necessitates the need to mainstream CCA in these sectors.

He presented the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change, which envisions “a climate risk-resilient Philippines with healthy, safe, prosperous, and self-reliant communities, and thriving and productive ecosystems.” The Philippine Climate Change Commission, headed by Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, drafted the framework.

The framework includes both adaptation and mitigation strategies. Mitigation of climate process drivers (i.e., energy, transport, land use changes and forestry, and waste) can be achieved through energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy, environmentally sustainable transport, sustainable infrastructure, the National REDO+ Strategy, and waste management.

On the other hand, adaptation covers both mechanisms for the environment and society. These include enhanced vulnerability and adaptation assessments, integrated ecosystem-based management, climate-responsive agriculture and health sectors, good water governance, and disaster risk reduction and management.

Some adaptation strategies designed for the forestry sector include silviculture treatments

See Expert recommends, p. 5

KU holds Annual Seminar 2010

Focus on student-centered teaching

The core mission of Kasetsart University (KU) are promoting excellence in teaching and learning, offering targeted research activities, providing academic service, and enhancing art and cultural endeavors. In addition, KU has an important role in connecting its qualified graduate with the needs of society.

Over the past few years, KU has focused on student-centered activities ranging from seminars, workshops to faculty training and

KU faculty members took this opportunity to share their experiences and present their works during the exhibition.

Each faculty arranged its activities and shared its good practice on student-centered pedagogy. Some interesting seminar topics were “Moral Compass and Wisdom Help Getting through Obstruction,” “Strategies and Action Plans of Kasetsart University for Academic Development and Teaching,” “Best Practice on Student-Centered



Faculty members of Kasetsart University attend the KU Annual Seminar 2010, which tackles student-centered teaching. (Photo courtesy of KU)

classroom research. KU’s Board of Committee for implementing student-centered teaching has thus been established and applied to other faculties and departments to conform to the National Education Act. It is along this line that KU organized an annual seminar via teleconference and the university website on 30 April 2010. The conduct of the seminar was spearheaded by the Education Service Division, Office of Computer Service, Office of the Registrar, Office of Quality Assurance, and Office of Extension and Training.

Pedagogy,” and “Awarded Works of Quality.”

The annual seminar aimed to enhance the potential of faculty members, increase efficiency of teaching and classroom research, and to gain insights on the importance of knowledge transfer and student-centered learning.

To meet the government policy and other issues related to education development, KU has to take immediate action in educational quality development of its students as well as other students of Thailand. (Source: NonSee, Vol. 16, No. 6, June 2010)

UPM awarded Self Accreditation Status

UPM was awarded Self Accreditation Status by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) in a Certificate Presentation Ceremony which was officiated by YB Dato’ Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia.

This certification is significant for UPM as a leading research university as it impacts the quality of courses offered.

Apart from UPM, three other public universities (IPTAs) University of Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia were also awarded Self Accreditation Status. In addition, four private institutions, Monash University Sunway Campus, University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus, Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak and Curtin University of Technology Sarawak were also awarded Self Accreditation Status by the MQA.

The Ministry of Higher Education awarded UPM the Self Accreditation Status based on its academic performance audit status (APA) which was guided by the Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA) and the submission of a Self-Review Portfolio (SRP).

The Self Accreditation Status empowers institutions of Higher Learning to certify their own courses without having to obtain approval from the MQA and the Ministry of Higher Education. Institutions of higher learning only need to notify MQA and MOHE, subject to ongoing monitoring and institutional audits by the MQA. (Source: UPM website)

19 Southeast Asians get SEARCA graduate scholarships



SEARCA has awarded graduate scholarships to 19 Southeast Asian nationals, 17 of whom started their graduate programs in School Year 2010/2011, while the two will begin their studies in School Year 2011/2012. The scholarships are for 10 master's and nine PhD programs.

Of the 19 new scholars, 18 will pursue their graduate programs at University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and one will pursue his MS program at UP Diliman.

The new scholars are from Lao PDR (4), Myanmar (5), the Philippines (3), Thailand (2), and Vietnamese (5).

Of the 19 new SEARCA scholars, five are supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), while the rest are funded by SEARCA.

The scholars who began their studies at UPLB in the first semester of SY 2010/2011, their nationalities, and degree programs are:

- Mr. Anongsack Chanthavong, Laotian, MS in Community Development;
- Mr. Sonphet Ounthala, Laotian, MS in Community Development;
- Mr. Bouakham Tia Sisongkham, Laotian, MS in Environmental Science;
- Mr. Khampong Pong Vongphachan, Laotian, MS in Environmental Science;
- Mr. Win Htein, Myanmar, MS in Environmental Science;
- Ms. San Hla Htwe, Myanmar, PhD in Soil Science;
- Ms. Zin Mar Lwin, Myanmar, PhD in Environmental Science;

•Ms. Khin Thanda Oo, Myanmar, PhD in Horticulture;

•Ms. Bathsheda P. Aparilla, Filipino, MS in Soil Science;

•Ms. Hannie T. Martin, Filipino, MS in Forest Resources Management

•Mr. Quyen Dinh Ha, Vietnamese, PhD in Community Development;

•Mr. Nguyen Van Huong, Vietnamese, PhD in Agricultural Economics;

•Mr. Vu Hoang Lan, Vietnamese, PhD in Animal Science; and

•Ms. Le Thi Thanh Loan, Vietnamese, MS in Agricultural Economics.

On the other hand, Mr. Rey B. Lara, Filipino, has started his MS in Urban and Regional Planning at UP Diliman.

Mr. Cherdpong Kheerajit, Thai, will begin his PhD in Development Communication at UPLB in the second semester of SY 2010/2011.

The scholarship awarded to Ms. Pok Wudtisawad, Thai, to pursue her PhD in Agricultural Economics has been deferred for one year from SY 2010/2011 and will commence June 2011.

The scholarships granted to Ms. May Yee Kay Khine Seine, Myanmar, PhD in Agricultural Economics, and Ms. Do Thanh Thu, Vietnamese, MS in Agriculture Economics, will take effect in April 2011 when they begin attending the Summer Program in Economics as a prerequisite to their respective graduate programs.

The new scholarship grants bring to 1,271 the total number of regular graduate scholarships that SEARCA has awarded to nationals of the 11 SEAMEO member countries. As of 30 June 2010, SEARCA has 76 scholars whose graduate programs are ongoing, including the new scholars. (LLDDomingo)

New SEARCA book, from p. 8

of reduction and loss. On the other hand, biodiversity can be used to enhance the mitigation and adaptation of people and environments to climate change," Dr. Sajise, the book's lead editor, pointed out.

He further explained that several countries in Southeast Asia are considered both megadiversity centers and biodiversity hotspots. As such, pressures on resource use can worsen the negative impacts of climate change. Likewise, coastal zones and small islands in archipelagic countries are more vulnerable.

Dr. Sajise is a Senior Fellow at SEARCA and an Honorary Research Fellow at Bioversity International. His co-editors Dr. Ticsay was BRP project leader and Dr. Saguiguit is SEARCA Director.

The book was formally launched on 4 May 2010 at the Asian Institute of Management Conference Center in Makati City. (RMMDedicatoria)

Farmers most disadvantaged by global climate change

Farmers currently represent the largest group getting negatively impacted by global climate change. In addition to economic losses and welfare, climate change is feared to also increase poverty rate and malnutrition in the villages.

"Climate change will reduce the productivity of the farmers, therefore, directly increase the poverty level and malnutrition cases in rural areas," said the Governor of Yogyakarta, Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, in his speech which was read by Secretary of the Provincial Government, Ir. Tri Herjun Ismadji, M.Sc., in the opening of Agrometeorology and Sustainable Development Workshop at Universitas Gadjha Mada (UGM) on 19 April 2010.

The climate change phenomenon was supposed to get serious attention of all parties, particularly from research institutions and universities, to provide comprehensive information to the farmers.

"Our farmers don't know how to deal with the climate and climate change. However, research institutions and universities have not fully provided this information to farmers," he said.

The impacts of climate change on the productivity of farmers

need to be taken seriously to avoid social problems in the future. Sri Sultan also expects universities to prepare full knowledge and qualified human resources to handle this problem.

Prof. Dr. Kasumbogo Untung, M.Sc., Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, UGM, said the majority of farmers do not know how to deal with extreme climatic and seasonal changes in crop cultivation and farming. Meanwhile, several

weather and climate information services provided by government agencies, research institutes, and universities are still beyond the farmers' capacity to utilize that information.

By empowering the farmers through the universities, farmers are expected to be able to deal with climate change of the typical location, adjusting their attitudes, behaviors and skills to the new climatic conditions so that they are not at disadvantage.

"Changes in cropping pattern, cultivation, and water efficiency

Expert recommends, from p. 2

to enhance the yield of forest crops, monitoring and preventing the propagation of bio-invasive species, use of shallow tube wells, and habitat management. Dr. Racelis concluded his lecture by stressing the need to take action against climate change. He said that climate change is now undeniable and can no longer be ignored.

Dr. Racelis is currently Associate Dean and Associate Professor at the College of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of the Philippines Los Baños. One of 274 recipients of the SEARCA professorial chair grants, he is also a SEARCA graduate alumnus having obtained his doctorate in forestry from UPLB in 1999 through a SEA. (LDPadilla and VELLA, with report from AMMiñas)



The impacts of climate change on the productivity of farmers need to be taken seriously to avoid social problems in the future. (Photo courtesy of USC of Canada)

particularly in areas with low precipitation, are expected so that the impacts of climate change will not be too influential," he explained.

Prof. Dr. Ir. Triwibowo Yuwono, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, UGM, said the institute is now transferring knowledge to empower farmers in agrometeorology services to face the climate change.

Ir. Anie Anjal Asmara, M.Si, a member of the UGM agricultural expert team, said knowledge transfer has been done to the Wareng Village farmer groups in Wonosari district, Gunung Kidul Regency in the past two years.

"We teach the farmers to study adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation is done by preparing seed stocks. To minimize the impact, we invite them to build embung as a way to harvest water in the rainy season," explained Anjal. (Source: UGM Daily News, 20 April 2010)

UPM develops agri technology for farmers

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) could be entrusted with a big role in developing agriculture technology for farmers in the country, Datuk Seri Noh Omar, Minister of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, Malaysia.

He added that UPM's strengths rely on the field of agriculture

that focuses on innovation biotechnology which would be able to educate farmers in transforming the system through modern agricultural technology.

"This will increase the standard of living by providing ease for the framers in adapting technology hence leading the agricultural

sector for the country's economic growth," he said during the Juara Rakyat Kementerian Bersama Pakar Pertanian UPM program.

The program was organized by Centre of Extension, Entrepreneurship and Professional Advancement (APEEC) UPM in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry. It gathered a pool of expertise from UPM to offer free consultation with the locals and to identify potential problems of the Tanjong Karang's community.

Prof. Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah, UPM Vice Chancellor, said the program held in Tanjong Karang was the fifth run after the success of similar programs held in Temerloh, Pahang; Jeli, Kelantan; Batu Pahat; Johor and Pekan, Pahang.

He said the program is part of the University's corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts which incorporates agricultural development to get closer to the community, especially the farmers, breeders, and local entrepreneurs.

He added that the program provides opportunities for UPM to showcase products of its research and technology for the benefit of farmers and entrepreneurs so that they can fully grasp the concept of agricultural development.

One of the agriculture experts at UPM, Assoc.Prof. Dr. Maheran Abd Aziz of the Department of Technology, Faculty of Agriculture, said most farmers were keen on tissue culture technology as the modern technique is able to expedite the growth process of conventional plants such as banana. (Source: UPM website)



Datuk Seri Noh Omar, Agriculture and Agro-Based Minister (left) presenting a memento to Prof. Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah, UPM Vice Chancellor. (Photo courtesy of UPM)

UPM introduced, from p. 8

"The system is a pilot project which involves botanical gardens, among the many interesting places in the country that attract local and foreign visitors all year round" he said during his visit at the Institute of Bioscience (IBS). He also stressed that the tagline UPM "A World Leader in New Tropical Agriculture" will require constant dedication to sustain as it reflects the innovation effort that the university applies in agriculture to a higher level.

"This is in line with the government's aspiration to incorporate technology in agriculture and as a form of support in research planning and implementation," he said.

The Agriculture Conservatory Park was established in 2006

with 500 species of herbal plants available for biological science research.

In addition, director of IBS, Prof. Dr. Fatimah Md. Yusoff informed the media that IBS is soon to be equipped with Biohazard Safety Level (BSL-3) machineries in order to fulfill requirements from the European Standard EN12128 and World Health Organization (WHO) Guidelines (2004) commencing August 2010 once it is approved.

"The laboratory construction is for research conducted on the handling of third class pathogen virus such as the Nipah virus, SARS Coronavirus, Yellow Fever Virus, Mycobacterium Tuberculosis dan Bacillus Anthracis" she said. (Source: UPM website)

The University Consortium

The Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources is a program launched on 19 September 1989 by SEARCA.

The idea of having such a program was formed in August 1988 when SEARCA, with convened a meeting of deans of five leading agricultural graduate schools in the region. The deans noted a rising demand for graduate education across all agricultural disciplines and related fields, strong agricultural and demographic pressures, and tremendous growth in education, and agreed to the idea of establishing a University Consortium.

The objectives of the Consortium are:

1. To provide highly trained personnel in agriculture and natural resources for national development of Southeast Asian countries.
2. To promote mutually beneficial cooperation among agricultural universities in the region.
3. To utilize more fully and efficiently the scarce resources and expertise available in each country in the region for top-quality graduate education and research.
4. To stimulate freer sharing and exchange of information, facilities, and expertise among agricultural universities in the region.

SEARCA has served as the Consortium's Secretariat since 1989. Its founding members are Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) and Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), both in Indonesia; Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in Malaysia; University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in the Philippines; and Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand. Four associate members have been admitted, namely: University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada, University of Queensland (UQ) in Australia, Georg-August University of Göttingen in Germany, and Tokyo University of Agriculture in Japan.

"To be a leader in implementing collaborative strategies for excellent graduate education and cutting-edge research in agriculture, environment, and natural resources for the benefit of Southeast Asia" - this is the vision of the revitalized University Consortium.

The Consortium has five components, namely: faculty visits, research fellowships, professorial chairs, and thesis grants.

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UPM introduced digital system for agri modernization

As part of the initiatives to modernize high-impact agriculture, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) has introduced a digital system for medicinal herbs available at the Conservatory Park.

Prof. Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah, UPM Vice Chancellor, said the system has been developed to improve the information access on the plants available at the Agricultural Conservatory Park and as point of reference for the community and the industry as part of the effort to generate new technology and to apply an innovation towards agriculture.



Prof. Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah, Vice Chancellor, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) (left), listens to a briefing given by a researcher from the UPM Institute of Bioscience. (Photo courtesy of UPM)

See UPM introduced, p. 6

New SEARCA book zeroes in on climate change, biodiversity link

SEARCA and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) have co-published *Moving Forward Southeast Asian Perspectives on Climate Change and Biodiversity*, a new book that

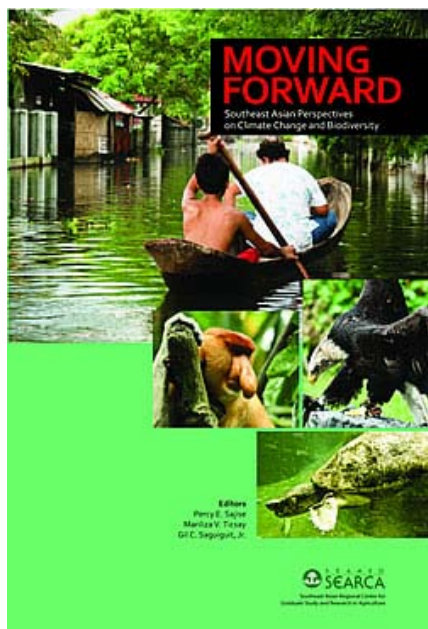
discusses the general phenomenon of climate change, the importance of biodiversity, and how these two are linked and related. ISEAS is a regional centre dedicated to the study of socio-political, security, and economic trends and developments in Southeast Asia and its whole geostrategic and economic development.

Edited by Percy E. Sajise, Mariliza V. Ticsay and Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. with 18 authors from all over Southeast Asia, the book draws its major findings from regional perspectives and country papers presented during the 2008 International Conference on Biodiversity and Climate Change organized by SEARCA, in partnership with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, World Agroforestry Centre, Bioversity International, and Silliman University. This conference aimed to establish the link between climate change and biodiversity in the context of agriculture and food security.

One chapter is also dedicated to a specific research on biodiversity, the five-year project on Biodiversity for Research (BRP) Programme in Mt. Malindang, Mindanao, Philippines. BRP was implemented by SEARCA and funded by the government of the Netherlands, through its Ministry of Development Cooperation (DGIS). The last chapter synthesizes lessons learned and research gaps which can serve as inputs in determining national and regional priorities for future biodiversity research.

The book provides an in-depth analysis of the relationships among poverty, economic growth, and access and benefit-sharing regimes of valuable biodiversity as well as policy and institutional environments to promote synergy needed toward enhancing climate change mitigation and adaptation.

“Climate change will have great impacts on biodiversity in terms



The new book discusses the general phenomenon of climate change, the importance of biodiversity, and how these two are linked and related.

See New SEARCA book, p. 4