Through the UC Faculty Exchange Program (FEP), UC member universities have been given the opportunity to expand their networks, meet counterpart professors, and have a first-hand experience on academic and research activities in their fields of expertise. This UC program have also paved the way for collaborative undertakings as well as the opportunity to network with their identified host universities.

Since its inception, the program was able to award 106 fellowship grants. For the first half of 2011, five expert academicians were given the opportunity to network with their identified host universities.

UGM’s Dr. Masyhuri visits UPLB

Dr. Masyhuri, professor of Agribusiness & Agricultural Economics & UC coordinator of the Universitas

KU confers honorary degree to His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino of Japan

Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand conferred, on 8 March 2011, the Degree of Doctor of Science (Animal Science) honoris causa to His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino of Japan for his tireless devotion and unique contribution to research in animal science. Associate Professor Vudtechai Kapilakanchana, President of KU and Dr. Khamphol Adulavidhaya, Chair of the KU Council welcomed His Imperial Highness upon his arrival at the university.

Members of the Kasetsart University Council, Council of Deans, faculty members and staff, guests and students witnessed the conferment ceremony, which took place at KU’s Sutham Areekul Auditorium.

Dr. Masyhuri, Dr. Artachinda, Dr. Prayitno, Dr. Ngersiri, Dr. Merritt
UPLB inks MOA with Cambodian University

The University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in the Philippines signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the University of South East Asia (USEA) in Cambodia on 28 February 2011 for academic collaboration. The two universities shall undertake the exchange of faculty, researchers, research and administrative staff, and students as well as conduct lectures, symposia and research projects.

The signing ceremony took place at the Office of the Chancellor of UPLB. Dr. Florinia Merca, director of the Office of Institutional Linkages, and Dr. Dina dela Cruz, USEA director for research and development and international relations, witnessed the MOA signing between UPLB Chancellor Dr. Luis Rey Velasco and USEA Vice President for Administration and Finance Dr. Rous Bunthy. Dr. dela Cruz is a former staff of the UPLB Graduate School and a SEARCA alumna.

Also present were Dr. Flordeliza Lantican, dean of the College of Economics and Management, Prof. Vladimir Mariano, director of the Institute of Computer Science, and Prof. Jerry Yapo, chair of the Department of Humanities. Prof. Yapo presented the English Language training program of UPLB, while Dean Lantican discussed CEM’s training program on biodiversity with the Tokyo University of Agriculture and other training programs that they offer.

In the meantime, Prof. Mariano discussed the possible offering of training programs on open source software as well as short courses on how to conduct research in information technology.

The two universities also plan to undertake exchange of faculty, researchers, research and administrative staff, and students; aside from conducting collaborative research projects, lectures, and symposia, and sharing and exchanging of academic information and materials.

Source: UPLB News | 14 March 2011
The country of Indonesia is well known for its diverse natural resources due to its size, close proximity to the equator and archipelagic geography. Despite occupying only 1.3 percent of the world’s total landmass, this Southeast Asian nation has a high level of biodiversity, second only to Brazil. Several species of flora and fauna are endemic to this country of 17,508 islands.

However, continued existence of Indonesia’s gift of biodiversity is constantly facing a huge threat due to human activities and global climatic changes.

In order to promote the beauty and emphasize the vulnerability of Indonesia’s terrestrial and marine biodiversity to more people especially the youth, the Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) is offering a summer course entitled “An introduction to tropical biodiversity from the forest to the sea.” The summer course is open to all interested international students who are either in their undergraduate or postgraduate studies.

The two-week course consists of lectures, practical field work, seminar sessions, and excursion activities which will take them from IPB’s Darmaga campus to the forests of Gunung Walat in Sukabumi-West Java, Gunung Gede-Pangrango National Parks and the marine ecosystem of Semak Daun Island, part of the Seribu Islands in Jakarta.

The summer course hopes to achieve the following objectives:

- introduce the participating students to the biodiversity richness of the tropical forests and marine ecosystems of Indonesia;
- promote the exchange of knowledge on nature and culture;
- and increase students’ interest in tropical biodiversity.

Interested parties should accomplish an application form and submit it together with their resume (or curriculum vitae), an official letter from their home institution authorizing their participation and a health certificate.

A fee of US$1700 covers instruction, course materials, lodging, food and local transportation. Roundtrip airfare, pre-departure expenses (including visas), health and travel insurance and personal expenses are not included. The application deadline is four weeks prior to the field course date. For international students who will file their application as a group, they may choose their preferred dates. For more information on application procedures, you may contact the following persons:

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The visit of Dr. Masyhuri was highlighted by his being the guest speaker at the UPLB Graduate School (UPLB-GS) Hooding Ceremonies held on 25 April 2011 upon the invitation of Dr. Oscar B. Zamora, Dean of UPLB-GS.

During the 10-day visit, Dr. Masyhuri met with the following officials: Dean Zamora and Dr. Cristeta Cuaresma, Secretary of the UPLB GS; Dr. Flordeliza Lantican, Dean of the College of Economics and Management (CEM) and former co-adviser; Dr. Jose Camacho, CEM Associate Dean; Dr. Prudenciano Gordoncillo, Chair, Department of Agricultural Economics; Dr. Amelia L. Bello, Chair of the Department of Economics; Dr. Reynaldo Tan, Chair of the Department of Agribusiness Management; and Dr. Isabelita Pabuayon, director of the Institute of Cooperatives and Bio-Enterprise Development (ICOPED).

Dr. Masyhuri also met with the following officials to discuss possible areas for collaboration: Dr. Francisco F. Peñalba, Deputy Director for Administration; Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, Knowledge Management Department Manager; and Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Project Development and Management Manager of SEARCA; Ms. Corinta Q. Guerta, Head, Office of External Relations and Donor Relations and Projects Coordination Office and Dr. Thelma Paris, Deputy Division Head of IRRI; Dr. Primo Garcia of the UP Open University; Dr. Patricio S. Faylon, Director of PCARRD and Dr. Ernesto Brown from the Socio-Economics Research Division, PCARRD; and Dr. Agustina Musa of the Asian Development B.

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Dr. Masyhuri also conducted study visits as part of the faculty exchange program. Dr. Masyhuri visited Joshua’s Meat Products in Nagcarlan, Laguna, a successful agribusiness enterprise and the New Batong Malaki Public Market Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Los Banos, Laguna. He also presented a paper on Food Security in Indonesia in a special Agriculture and Development Seminar Series session at SEARCA.

**KU’s Dr. Artachinda visits IPB**

Dr. Orachos Napasintuwong Artachinda of the Faculty of Economics, Kasetsart University (KU), Thailand visited the Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Indonesia to explore opportunities for possible collaboration between KU and IPB.

Prof. Artachinda met with the Head of International Programs, the Dean of the Faculty of Economics, and the Head of Postgraduate
Programs in Economics to discuss matters regarding the University Consortium.

Areas for possible collaboration between the two universities include the organization of seminar visits from the students and staff of the IPB to the Faculty of Economics in KU and continuation of graduate programs of IPB students in the international graduate programs at KU.

Both institutions will look into tapping funds from scholarship donor agencies and in improving research collaboration and student exchange program via existing programs such as European Academic Mobility Network with Asia and M-I-T Student Mobility Program between Malaysian, Indonesian and Thai institutions.

In fulfillment of the requirements of the faculty exchange program, Prof. Artachinda conducted a lecture on “The economics of agricultural biotechnology in developing countries,” and a special lecture on “Induced innovation theory and technological change.”

Aside from these lectures, she visited the University Farm and the Surfactant and Bioenergy Research Center of IPB.

UGM’s Dr. Prayitno visits TUA

Dr. Tibertius A. Prayitno, professor of Wood Science and Technology at the Faculty of Forestry of UGM, Indonesia visited the Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA) in Japan from 20 February - 1 March 2011.

Dr. Prayitno’s program of visit included meetings with the academic staff of the host university, a visit to Shizuoka University, the Tokyo Board Industries plant and Hakone to see the giant Japanese Sugi trees, the conduct of a seminar on Indonesian Bamboo Technology and exploring opportunities for possible collaboration between UGM and the identified TUA institutes.

On 21 February 2011, Dr. Prayitno made a courtesy call to TUA President, Prof. Dr. Kanju Ohsawa. He also met with Prof. Akimi Fujimoto, TUA representative to the University Consortium and Consortium Coordinator, and Dr. Hiroya Ohbayashi, Associate Professor from the Laboratory of Wood Science and Technology.

At Hakone, Prof. Jun Kobayashi, head of the TUA Laboratory of Wood Science and Technology talked about the distribution of forests in Japan, from the lowlands of Tokyo to the highlands of Hakone. Prof. Kobayashi also discussed the conservation efforts they have undertaken to preserve the giant Japanese Sugi trees.

Dr. Prayitno noted that despite these trees growing in close proximity to commercial areas like Hakone, the Japanese people were able protect their existence, some of which are already over 300 years old.

During the visit to the Tokyo Board Industries, a particleboard plant in Tokyo, officials from the Tokyo Board discussed how they processed wood waste from Tokyo. Particleboards are wood products made of small chips of timber, lumber and wood. Dr. Prayitno was most interested in the plant’s wood waste processing and was inspired by the plant’s efforts to reuse wood waste. He also shared that in Yogyakarta, the collected wood waste is just thrown away or burnt for energy.

At Shizuoka University, Dr. Prayitno met with Dr. Suzuki and some university graduate students, where he was given an orientation of the university’s latest technologies in forestry research and recent forest product innovations.

To cap his visit, Dr. Prayitno delivered a seminar on Indonesian Bamboo Technology, attended by Prof. Kobayashi, Dr. Ohbayashi, junior faculty and graduate students from the Forestry Science.
UGM students’ innovative coconut fiber pillow wins national competition

Three Industrial Engineering students of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) won first place at the Make and Sell competition held at Ten November Surabaya Institute of Technology on 25-27 February 2011.

The students’ winning idea, a pillow made from discarded coconut fiber pillow bested 83 other equally good entries from dozens of universities. The competition emphasizes creativity in creating product innovations that are environmentally friendly.

Ismiati, Annisa Dewi Akbari and Irfan Anshori came up with the idea after Irfan observed that much of the coconut fiber waste generated by industries are just sold cheaply, burned or simply thrown away. Realizing the potential of turning the waste into a useful and environment-friendly product, the three students put their heads together and came up with the design and the procedure of making the cocopillow, their entry for the competition.

Although the pillows are not yet mass produced, they are now available for IDR 39 thousand apiece. According to Ismiati, the cocopillow compared with the typical pillow is more durable and comfortable because of its design that adapts to the spinal curves. “The pillow has indentation in the middle, making it very comfortable to sleep on,” she furthers.

Source: UGM News | 21 March 2011

KU’s Dr. Ngernsiri visits UQ

On 17-26 April 2011, Dr. Lertluk Ngernsiri, an associate professor from the Department of Genetics, Faculty of Science at the Kasetsart University (KU) returned the University of Queensland (UQ), where she obtained her doctoral degree in Zoology and Entomology a few years back. In UQ she had the opportunity to train on the injection techniques to stain insect nerve fibers with fluorescent dyes. These two are techniques that, according to Dr. Ngernsiri, are beneficial for her current studies, and can be echoed to her colleagues in KU, as well.

Apart from her training, she met with Dr. David J. Merritt, to discuss common research interests, which can be the subject of future collaborations between the two universities.

To conclude her fellowship grant, Dr. Ngernsiri presented before a UQ audience her research on giant water bug, creeping water bug and lac insect. There, she had the opportunity to meet Dr. Lyn C. Cook, an expert on scale insects who she was able to share and exchange knowledge particularly on lac insects.

UQ’s Dr. Merritt visits KU

Dr. David J. Merritt, an Associate Professor of the School of Biological Science, University of Queensland (UQ) travelled to the Kasetsart University in June 2011 for a one week visit under the same UC fellowship grant. Dr. Merritt leads the Entomology Curriculum Australia (ECA), a project funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council which aims to provide a set of subjects in entomology through distance education. Through the fellowship grant, Dr. Merritt was able to meet with the Australian Education Center in KU to explore the possibility of expanding this distance learning module in the current curricula of KU and other universities in Thailand.

Dr. Merritt met with fellow FEP grantee Dr. Lertluk Ngernsiri, whom he considers a long-time colleague owing to their mutual interest in insect genetics, development and physiology.

To conclude his week-long visit, Dr. Merritt presented a public scientific lecture on “Bioluminiscent insects and their circadian rhythms in caves,” based on the work he has done in Australia and New Zealand.

(AVLAlcala with reports from Dr. Masyuri, Prof. Artachinda, Dr. Prayitno, Dr. Ngernsiri and Dr. Merritt)
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; 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 (GAUG) in Germany, and Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA) 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: student exchanges, faculty visits, research fellowships, professorial chairs, and thesis grants.

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April-June 2011
SEARCA scholars conferred awards at UPLB graduation rites

Two SEARCA scholars, both Filipinos, were recipients of the Academic Excellence Award conferred by the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) during the recognition ceremonies held on 25 April 2011. The 39th UPLB Commencement Exercises was held on 26 April 2011 at the D.L. Umali Freedom Park on the UPLB campus in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines.

Ms. Aisa O. Manlosa, MS in environmental science, and Ms. Michelle Grace V. Paraso, PhD in environmental science, garnered the highest general weighted average for their respective degree programs.

Ms. Manlosa and Dr. Paraso were joined by 22 other SEARCA scholars in the roster of UPLB graduates in this year’s commencement exercises, namely:

Mr. Nguon Samnang, Cambodian, MS in food science;
Mr. Venn Vutey, Cambodian, MS in veterinary medicine;
Ms. RR Devita Anggraeni, Indonesian, PhD in animal science;
Mr. Panji Deoranto, Indonesian, PhD in agricultural economics;
Ms. Bhakti Etza Setiani, Indonesian, MS in food science;
Ms. Raquel M. Balanay, Filipino, PhD in agricultural economics;
Mr. Violeto N. Coronacion, Filipino, PhD in agricultural education;
Ms. Gay Therese M. Bucol, Filipino, MS in horticulture;
Mr. Kenneth A. Laruan, Filipino, PhD in forestry;
Mr. Stephen Rey P. Ligasan, Filipino, PhD in community development;
Ms. Lucille T. Minguez, Filipino, MS in plant pathology;
Mr. Joselito I. Rosario, Filipino, PhD in forest resources management;
Mr. Andres M. Tuates, Jr., Filipino, MS in agricultural engineering;
Ms. Aye Aye Myint, Myanmar, PhD in entomology;
Ms. Khin San New, Myanmar, PhD in agronomy;
Mr. Myo Kyaw Thu, Myanmar, PhD in agronomy;
Ms. Nyo Mar Hwè, Myanmar, PhD in plant breeding;
Ms. Yi Yi Soe, Myanmar, PhD in horticulture;
Ms. Wilaiwun Intarachaimas, Thai, PhD in agricultural education;
Mr. Afonso Alves DJ Candido, Timorese, Master of Public Affairs (Local Governance and Development);
Ms. Ngo Thi Thanh Truc, Vietnamese, PhD in environmental science; and
Mr. Tran Duc Tri, Vietnamese, MS in agricultural economics.

All the above-mentioned scholars completed their programs under the regular SEARCA scholarship, except for Mr. Ligasan and Mr. Rosario, who were PhD research scholars.

Of the total number of scholars who graduated from UPLB, four were supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). (LLDDomingo)

UBC researchers awarded $2 million by NSERC programs

University of British Columbia researchers have received a total of $2 million from two grant programs of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC). More than 140 UBC students also received NSERC scholarships, fellowships and awards.

Twelve projects received a total of $1.44 million over three years from the Discovery Accelerator Supplements (DAS) program, which recognizes outstanding researchers and boost their studies to produce groundbreaking advances. The grants were part of an investment of $14.7 million for 123 grants announced today by Gary Goodyear, Minister of State (Science and Technology) at Brock University.

Meanwhile, more than 140 UBC students received the Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarships and NSERC Postgraduate Scholarships and Postdoctoral Fellowships Programs – ranging from $17,300 to $105,000.

Source: UBC Media Release | 17 Jun 2011