



UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM

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

TUA, UC jointly offer dissertation doctoral scholarships

Scholarships for Dissertation Doctoral Degree at Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA) are jointly offered by TUA and the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) for School Year 2010/2011.

Two scholarship slots are available for a three-year Dissertation Doctorate Program for Agriculture and Natural Resources. With the end view of contributing to the enhancement of agricultural research and development in Southeast Asia, the TUA-UC scholarship is open only to all UC member universities.

To be eligible to apply for the scholarship, applicants must:

- Be a researcher with fulltime employment at the university or research institution;
- Be a holder of a master's degree in agriculture or related fields;
- Have produced at least two peer-reviewed scientific papers in scholarly journals at home or abroad and has served first author of at least one of those papers;
- Have already made a substantial progress in a research project which will deserve a doctorate degree in three years; and
- Be not more than 50 years of age at the start of the program.

Applicants must submit the accomplished application form, most recent curriculum vitae, dissertation

proposal, list of publications, and letter of agreement from the home institution to the UC Secretariat at the SEARCA on or before 15 February 2010.

Founded more than 100 years ago, TUA has been producing many fine graduates through education and research grounded in a practical science approach. Currently, the University has two graduate schools, the Graduate School of Agriculture and Graduate School of Bioindustry.

In addition the Graduate Schools of Tokyo University of Agriculture have partnerships with the National Institute for food, agriculture and environment science and technology. Under this partnership system with frontline research institutions nationwide, we engage actively in exchanging researchers, supervising doctoral dissertations, and undertaking educational and research guidance for graduate students. (LLDDomingo)

UBC to send interns to other UC members

Students pursuing the Master of Food Science (MFS) and the Master of Food and Resource Economics (MFRE) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) now have the opportunity to carry out their internship at other universities in the University Consortium. The internship is mandatory to said graduate programs.

Annually, UBC may provide scholarships to four professional master's students to enable them to undertake research-based internship at any university that is a member of the University Consortium (UC). This could involve up to four UC member universities or less, if more than one student chooses to

undertake the internship at the same university.

UBC will support MFS or MFRE students to undertake their internship under the Consortium arrangement to give them the opportunity to access the relative strengths of other UC member universities such as different expertise, laboratory facilities and equipment, and data set, which are not available at UBC. It also provides the students exposure to different cultures and experience living overseas.

A faculty supervisor will be provided by the host university to each UBC intern for the

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UQ Gatton campus opens its doors to Vet Science students

A milestone in the \$100 million plus project to relocate The University of Queensland's (UQ) School of Veterinary Science to the Gatton Campus was reached when it opened its doors to its first year students.

First year and continuing students started semester one at the Gatton Campus on 1 March 2010.

The Dean of the UQ School of Veterinary Science, Professor Jon Hill, said 550 veterinary science students were moving to the campus, 80 percent of whom are women.

"There will be an extra vitality and an economic boost to the Lockyer Valley, deriving from the

increased student population," he said.

"We see the arrival of the School at Gatton as an opportunity for greater industry collaboration, particularly with dairy and beef cattle, swine production and equine operations," Professor Hill added.

New veterinary services this year will include an equine hospital opening mid-year to provide advanced diagnostic and treatment options for racing and pleasure horses; a companion animal hospital; and diagnostic pathology services to provide faster turnaround to veterinary practices from Ipswich to the Darling Downs.

Executive Dean of the Faculty of Natural Resources, Agriculture and Veterinary Science and Campus Director Professor Roger Swift said that it was an important time for the Gatton Campus as the move would substantially boost the number of students and staff on the campus.

"The relocation of the School of Veterinary Science has been an ongoing project for many years. It is very exciting for all of the people involved to see it nearing completion," Professor Swift said.

"It is a great opportunity for the students as they will have access to world-class teaching and research

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UPM, RISDA ink agricultural expansion deal

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) formalized a collaboration with Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA), Malaysia to develop the country's agriculture sector through research, education, and professional services.

Vice Chancellor of UPM, Prof. Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah said the collaboration would allow students and the faculties the opportunity to share knowledge in agriculture with RISDA to assist the smallholders sector.

As a University whose forte is agriculture, this collaboration will assist RISDA in developing socioeconomic status of the smallholders, transforming rubber fields into strategic plantation, Dr. Nik Mustapha said during the MoU signing ceremony between RISDA and UPM.

He added that "with the MoU signing, we hope that the students

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Vice Chancellor Prof. Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah (left) exchanges document with Director of Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA) Dato' Mohammad Izat Hassan while RISDA Chairman Tan Sri Rahim Tamby Chik (center) looks on. (Photo courtesy of UPM)



will be able to carry out their practical training effectively, thus improving the sector as well as entrepreneurship."

Meanwhile, Tab Sri Rahim Tambi Chik, Chairman of RISDA, also mentioned that through

RISDA College, RISDA has signed an MoU with UPM for a twinning programme that involves Diploma in Agriculture, Diploma in Business Administration, and Diploma in Computer Science. (Source: UPM website)

UPM has new UC Coordinator



BUJANG

Prof. Dr. Bujang Kim Huat, Deputy Dean, School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), is the new University Consortium Coordinator at UPM.

Dr. Bujang is Professor at the Department of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, UPM.

He obtained his MSc in Soils Mechanics from Imperial College, London in 1986, and his PhD from the University of Manchester, UK in 1991.

His special area of interest is in the field of geotechnical and geological engineering, and slope engineering.

He has authored and co-authored 18 books, edited 10 conference proceedings, and published more than 100 journal and conference proceedings papers in field of soil mechanics and foundation engineering.

SEARCA awards professorial chair to 7 UPLB faculty

Seven faculty of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) Diliman were awarded the SEARCA Professorial Chair for Academic Year 2009/2010.

The awardees, their affiliation, and the titles of their seminars are:

- Dr. Aurora M. Baltazar, Professor 4, Crop Protection Cluster, College of Agriculture, "Understanding and Learning from 'Superweeds' and 'Millennial' Weeds – the Key to Innovate Weed Management Approaches and Crop Productivity in the 21st Century;"

- Dr. Angel L. Lambio, Professor 12, Animal and Dairy Sciences Cluster, College of Agriculture, "Trends and Opportunities in Organic Poultry Production;"

- Dr. Jose R. Medina, Professor 7, College of Agriculture, "Developing an Integrated Approach to Farm Community Development for Food Security in the Philippines;"

- Dr. Ernesto P. Militante, Associate Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, College of Forestry and Natural Resources, "Diversity

of Fungi in the Makiling Forest Reserve: Indicators of Productivity and Climate Change;"

- Dr. Marina P. Natural, Professor 7, Crop Protection Cluster, College of Agriculture, "Sustainable Management of Moko and Bugtok Diseases of Banana;"

- Dr. Cesar B. Quicoy, Chair and Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, College of Economics and Management, "Technical Efficiency of Eggplant Production in the Philippines: A Stochastic Production Function Approach;" and

- Dr. Diomedes A. Racelis, Associate Professor, Institute of Renewable Natural Resources, College of Forestry and Natural Resources, UPLB, "Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation in the Philippine Forestry and Natural Resources Sector."

The seven new awards bring to 243 the total number of SEARCA professorial chairs awarded to the different autonomous campuses of the UP System. (LLDDomingo)

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facilities, along with access to the animal production units including beef and dairy cattle, horses, sheep, pigs and poultry as well as the Centre for Advanced Animal Science."

"The arrival of the Veterinary Science students to Gatton will increase student numbers which is very positive for both the campus and the community. We are looking forward to welcoming them to their new campus and brand new facilities."

The new Vet School facilities include the Veterinary Medical Centre, Veterinary Teaching

Laboratories, Clinical Studies Centre and the Veterinary Science Building. In addition, a number of other facilities on the Gatton campus including the library, laboratories and lecture halls have been upgraded.

The Veterinary Medical Centre is still under construction and due for completion mid-year. It will be the last building to be handed over to UQ and comprises a Small Animal and Equine Clinic which will be open to the public.

The official opening of the School of Veterinary Science is expected to occur in June, 2010. (Source: UQ News Online)

TUA-SEARCA strengthen ties through joint scholarships

Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA) and SEARCA signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) on 23 February 2010 to collaborate in providing graduate scholarships to Southeast Asians.

The collaborative undertaking, called “TUA-SEARCA Scholarship for Dissertation Doctorate Program,” allows a Southeast Asian scholar to be conferred a doctorate from TUA upon satisfying the academic requirements for doctorate dissertation work. Initially, the program will have one scholar for its first three years (2010-2013) of implementation.

Signatories of the MOA were Dr. Kanju Ohsawa, TUA President, and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director. The signing was witnessed by Dr. Akimi Fujimoto, Director for International Programs, TUA, and Dr. Francisco F. Peñalba, Deputy Director for Administration, SEARCA.

In the brief signing ceremony,



Dr. Kanju Ohsawa (left), TUA President, and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, shake hands after the MOA signing held on 23 February 2010 at SEARCA, Los Banos, Laguna

Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Manager of SEARCA’s Graduate Scholarship Department, said that TUA and SEARCA’s partnership goes as far back as 1973 when SEARCA launched a Food Fermentation Project with UPLB. That project had several visiting professors from TUA coming to SEARCA and UPLB from 1973 to 1979. In 2000, the two institutions signed a memorandum of understanding to cooperate in similar fields of interest.

“The relationship of SEARCA and TUA was further strengthened in 2006 with TUA becoming an associate member of the University Consortium, a network that SEARCA initiated in 1989 and continues to coordinate up to the present,” Dr. Cedicol said.

“This (the MOA) is part of our efforts to build capacities in agriculture and related fields among Southeast Asian nationals. Being the center for agriculture in this part of the world, we see this as an integral part of our role and mandate in bringing about agricultural and rural development. SEARCA cannot do it alone and has to reach out and forge partnerships with other centers of excellence that share the same concern,” Dr. Saguiguit noted.

Dr. Ohsawa capped the ceremony with some words of thanks. He said, “We at TUA are very honored and grateful for this partnership with SEARCA. I hope that this collaboration will lead to other joint initiatives in the future,” he said.

TUA is an academic institution founded in 1891 in Japan. It offers agricultural education in the core areas of agronomy, life science, environmental science, and bio-industry science to advance agriculture and to support agriculture’s related industries. (MAFABad)

See UBC project, p. 5

UBC project to generate clean energy and new knowledge

A first-of-its-kind bioenergy project at the University of British Columbia (UBC) will generate enough clean electricity to power 1,500 homes, reduce the university’s natural gas consumption by up to 12 percent and eliminate up to 4,500 tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year—the equivalent of taking 1,100 cars off the road.

Announced on 15 February 2010 by Premier Gordon Campbell and UBC President Prof. Stephen Toope, the UBC Bioenergy Research and Demonstration Project is a partnership with Vancouver-based Nexterra Systems Corp. and GE Water & Power. It will be the first North American demonstration of a biomass-fueled heat-and-power

generation system.

“British Columbia has enormous clean energy potential and together with industry, we are putting it to work for our economy, generating new jobs and new wealth for B.C. communities, while lowering greenhouse gas emissions within and beyond our borders,” said Premier Campbell at the announcement today kicking off Clean Energy Day.

“This project demonstrates UBC’s leadership in sustainability and our concept of the campus as a living laboratory,” said Prof. Toope. “This groundbreaking partnership is helping UBC achieve its sustainability goals

UPM, UQ to reinforce research

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) inked a collaboration with the University of Queensland (UQ) to strengthen the field of research in bioscience and biotechnology.

Prof. Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah, UPM Vice Chancellor, said the collaboration will benefit both institutions as UQ has the expertise in bioscience research that has the potential to generate enormous revenue.

“The research culture in UQ may foster positive reputation for UPM, especially in their bid towards internationalization,” he said during the memorandum of understanding signing ceremony wherein UQ was represented Prof. Paul Greenfield, UQ Vice Chancellor.

The collaboration is also expected to excite exchange activities among



Prof. Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah, Vice Chancellor of UPM (second from left) exchanging the memorandum of understanding with Prof. Paul Greenfield, Vice Chancellor, University of Queensland (third from left). (Photo courtesy of UPM)

staff, students, researchers and information, particularly in the research fields agreed.

In addition, Prof. Greenfield said UQ acquires the biggest research

clusters in Australia and this shall allow great opportunities of research exploration for students and researchers from UPM. (Source: UPM website)

UBC project, from p. 4

through the convergence of research, operations and industry in the bioenergy sphere.”

The \$26-million project will install a biomass gasification system at UBC’s Vancouver campus that will operate in co-generation mode for electric power production and thermal mode to produce steam. It will also provide research and learning opportunities for faculty and students, yield valuable new knowledge in the clean energy sector and inform new global standards for bioenergy system performance.

Funding support for the project comes from the BC Bioenergy

Network, Natural Resources Canada’s Clean Energy Fund, Sustainable Development Technology Canada, FPIInnovations and UBC.

UBC is one of the most sustainable post-secondary campuses in the world, earning top grade in the Sustainable Endowments Institute’s College Sustainability Report Card. The UBC Bioenergy Research and Demonstration project will further advance UBC’s excellence in academic and operational sustainability by generating new knowledge for the sustainable energy sector. (Condensed from UBC Media Release, 15 February 2010)

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duration of the internship. The supervisor’s expertise is either in food science or agricultural/food/resource economics, depending on the degree program of the UBC intern. The UBC students are expected to finance their internship projects.

Depending on the UBC intern’s project, the period of internship will be three months or less, from early May until mid-August. (Source: UC Consortium Report of the University of British Columbia)

Portrait of a professor as an inventor

Dr. Menandro N. Acda

2010 Outstanding UPLB Researcher

He is professor of wood science and technology at the College of Forestry and Natural Resources (CFNR), University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and is best known for his out-of-the-box inventions. Dr. Menandro N. Acda obtained his BS in forest products engineering from UPLB in 1987; and his MS in wood science and technology and his PhD in wood preservation and biodeterioration from Oregon State University (OSU) in 1992 and 1995, respectively. He also completed his postdoctoral fellowship in forest products and chemical engineering in 1997 at OSU.



UPLB Professor Menandro N. Acda displays processed chicken feathers on left and a board composed of a mixture of feathers and cement at his laboratory in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines on 30 July 2008. (Photo source: Getty Images)

His foray into termite research after he completed his PhD led to his discovery and description of a new species of subterranean termites (*Schedorhinotermes makilingensis* Acda) in Mt. Makiling, the first time after 75 years when a new species was last reported in the Philippines. Acda also developed a new method

of trapping and collecting large quantities of termites for research using bamboo culms. The method has reportedly been adopted by other scientists in the country and in Malaysia and China. Another highlight of his work on termites is the publication of his book "Handbook on Philippine Termites."

Dr. Acda discovered LaharGard that uses lahar as a barrier against destructive termites. By doing so, he found important use for lahar that volcanic eruptions have deposited in rivers.

Proof of LaharGard's effectiveness is a small one-story house with

wooden walls at the CFNR that was built to showcase LaharGard. Years since it was constructed, the house remains termite-free.

Another innovation of Dr. Acda that has huge commercialization potential is Featherboard, a building material from a blend of cement and waste chicken feather.

Chicken feathers are a serious environmental hazard because they are not degradable.

Dr. Acda said that with the volume of waste chicken feathers reaching in billions of kilograms each year, sourcing raw materials for large-scale production of Featherboard would not be a problem. The invention itself has been praised in mass media as an exciting development because of its ecological relevance.

Dr. Acda noted that the material is lightweight but with a strength that is better than building materials available in the market. It is also termite resistant. Its size and thickness could be varied depending on the user. One of its other better features is that it requires simple machinery and equipment that are locally available or can easily be fabricated.

Dr. Acda has received awards and honors from international and local organizations, including Ford Conservation and Environment Grant, UNESCO Fellowship, International Tropical Timber Organization Fellowship, and International Foundation for Science Research Grant. At the local front, some of his awards include the UP International Publication Award, UP Scientific Productivity Award, and UP Creative Work and Research Grant.

But the 2010 UPLB Outstanding Researcher Award appears to be a source of so much joy for Dr. Acda. "I've received a lot of awards in the college and outside of the university and this is first award from UPLB," he said. (APDominguita in UPLB Horizon, Vol. 12, No. 1, January-March 2010)

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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UPLB offers new specialization in pollution engineering

UPLB is now offering pollution engineering as a new specialization under the MS Chemical Engineering program.

The program aims to enhance the knowledge of students in the design of processes and equipment involved in the treatment of harmful by-products and wastes, such as solid waste, wastewater, and gaseous emissions.

This program addresses the need for graduates who are strong in both disciplines of chemical engineering and pollution engineering. Graduates of this program will

be in the best position to do process intervention, one of the components of green engineering. As chemical engineers who have a good understanding of chemical processes, graduates can very well design treatment systems for waste minimization in addition to end-of-pipe treatment.

The new specialization was proposed and approved ten years after the University first offered MS Chemical Engineering. Dr. Jovita L. Movillon, Department Chair, led the graduate faculty, composed of Dr. Casiano S.

Abrigo Jr., Dr. Catalino G. Alfara, Dr. Manolito E. Bambase, Prof. Myra G. Borines, and Prof. Rex B. Demafelis in crafting the program which has a total of 37 units, distributed as follows: 12 units of core courses, 18 units of specialization courses in pollution engineering, 1 unit of graduate seminar, and six units of thesis. The CEAT faculty and some affiliates/adjunct professors from other units will be part of the guidance and advisory committee of the graduate students. (CEAT Release in UPLB Horizon, January-March 2010)

New biotech book assesses costs, benefits and environmental impacts

Biotech engineering of high value fruit and vegetable crops can increase incomes of farmers in developing countries.

This was the main theme of the book, *Projected Impacts of Agricultural Biotechnologies for Fruits and Vegetables in the Philippines and Indonesia*, published by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA). It presents the results of a series of studies that assessed the potential economic impacts of bio-engineered eggplant, papaya, and tomato in the Philippines; and potato and tomato in Indonesia.

The book summarizes the projected level and distribution of costs and benefits associated with these biotech crops, including the value of environmental impacts. The importance of moving products to commercialization stage as rapidly as

possible is also highlighted.

The book is edited by Mr. George W. Norton from the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; and Ms. Desiree M. Hautea from the Institute of Plant Breeding, Crop Science Cluster, College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines Los Baños.

Divided into 12 chapters, it features research and development (R&D) activities on biotech crops which have been undertaken since 2003 under the auspices of the Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSPII) for the purpose of commercializing products that solve major pest problems in the target commodities and countries.

Dr. Emil Q. Javier, President of the National Academy of Science and Technology Philippines, commends the efforts of ISAAA and SEARCA in producing this knowledge product.



“I congratulate ISAAA and SEARCA for their initiative in publishing the results of these studies... it is hoped that the additional valuable information contained in this book would contribute to the stock of

See New biotech, p. 5