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)

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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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 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)

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 student group.

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 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 facilities, along with access to the animal production units including beef and dairy cattle, horses, sheep 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 buildings.”

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 Clinical Unit 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)
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. Kanji Ohsawa, TUA President, and Dr. Gil C. Saguiquit, Jr., SEARCA Director. The signing was witnessed by Dr. Akimi Fujimoto, Director for Administration, SEARCA.

In the brief signing ceremony, 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.

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., 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,” said 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.

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

UBC project, from p. 4

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, FPInnovations 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)

UBC 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.

“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)

New biotech, from p. 8

knowledge on biotech crops and would help serve as basis for development, deployment, and adoption of the featured biotech crops in the near future,” he said.

ABSPPI is a consortium of public and private sector institutions led by Cornell University and supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It focuses on the safe and effective development and commercialization of bio-engineered crops as a complement to traditional and organic agricultural approaches in developing countries. The project helps boost food security, economic growth, nutrition, and environmental quality in East and West Africa, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. (PHD)
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 wood 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.

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) in Mt. Makiling, the first time this species (Acda) in Mt. Makiling, the first time Schedorhinotermes makilingensis after he completed his PhD led to a 6 January-March 2010

in 1997 at OSU.

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 vast volume of 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 Award.

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)

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

“T 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