

## UPLB concludes first wave UC summer school



**LOS BAÑOS, Philippines** – After a three-week intensive course, 16 Southeast Asian participants completed the Post Graduate Course on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Development in Southeast Asia at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

The three unit credit earning course is envisioned to move from one member of the University Consortium (UC) to another, with UPLB implementing the first full blown course.

the summer course, namely: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and the Philippines. A lecturer from the Kasetsart University also served as resource person of the post graduate course.

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“This course pushes forward UPLB’s efforts toward internationalization,” affirmed Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., Chancellor of UPLB, during the closing program of the summer school on 15 July 2015. Graduate students, faculty, and staff from even Southeast Asian countries participated in

Dr. Alfredo E. Pascual, President of the UP System complimented the collaborative effort between and among UPLB, UC, and SEARCA which made possible the said post graduate course. President Pascual delivered the inspirational message during the closing program.

“Apart from the different lectures, the various field trips were able to widen my horizon further,” said Ms. Chia Siew Lian, a graduate student of Universiti Putra Malaysia who attended the course. “I will also cherish the friendship and memorable experiences with my fellow

# University Consortium Graduate Forum wraps up



*Dr. Didier Pillot, Vice President of the European consortium Agrinatura*

**SELANGOR, Malaysia** – The Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) opened its doors to more than 40 graduate students, faculty, and officials from the five university consortium members of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) for the “1st University Consortium Graduate Forum on Life Science, Food Science, and Agriculture” (UCGF 2015) on 11-12 August 2015.



*Prof. Dato Dr. Mohd. Fauzi Hj. Ramlan, UPM Vice Chancellor and the current Chair of the SEARCA Governing Board*

“Be proud, because you are the energetic and young the strongest economic regions in the world,” exclaimed Prof. Dato Dr. Mohd. Fauzi

Hj. Ramlan, UPM Vice Chancellor and the current Chair of the SEARCA Governing Board, during the Opening Ceremonies of the two-day program.

The UCGF 2015 was held at the UPM Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, with graduate students and officials from UPM, Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) both in Indonesia, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), and Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand as participants.

Dr. Didier Pillot, Vice President of the European consortium Agrinatura, in his keynote speech discussed the current challenges and opportunities of student and faculty mobilities. According to Dr. Pillot, mobilities do not just result to the acquisition of technical skills but more importantly, they should lead to new skills and competencies that can become useful tools in the student’s professional life.

These tools include learning a

foreign language and intercultural awareness, ability to adapt to changes and new situations, capacity to work in teams and deal with complex problems, capacity to think critically and communicate effectively, and the added value in the disciplinary progress.

“To all universities, there is no escape to internationalization,” underscored Dr. Pillot. Organizing this at the regional scale is a good starting point because a number of emerging concerns occur at the regional level. He also emphasized that the organization has to come from the universities themselves as regard to mutual recognition of courses, assessment schemes, quality assurance, and other academic concerns. Harmonization, rather than standardization, may be more effective, where the differences between universities are respected, but compatibility within the system is addressed.

[See Graduate Forum, p. 6](#)



## The University Consortium adopts the umbrella program on climate change and reviews progress of the umbrella program on food and nutrition



*The University Consortium representatives with SEARCA Officials and staff, resource persons and guests during its Special Meeting to discuss the umbrella program on CChAM and umbrella program on food and nutrition security.*

**PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia** – The Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (University Consortium) champions collaborative research and development on food and nutrition security and climate change adaptation and mitigation for an inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) in the region.

The University Consortium adopted the Umbrella Program on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation for Southeast Asia (CChAM) in its special meeting on 14 August 2015 at the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia.

The Umbrella Program on CChAM is envisioned as a platform for collaborative research, knowledge management, and capacity development on climate change adaptation and resiliency in Southeast Asia. It was crafted using a combination of methods: review

of existing climate change program frameworks; survey conducted among the University Consortium and other partner universities and development institutions; consultation with SEARCA Senior Fellows; and consultation-workshop organized by SEARCA jointly with the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) of Vietnam, supported by the Food Security Center of the University of Hohenheim, and participated in by 59 participants from the academe, government agencies, international research centers, and development and donor organizations/programs.

The Umbrella Program on CChAM is anchored on the ASEAN Multi-sectoral Framework on Climate Change (AFCC) and is reflective of areas where institutions can work together, pool resources, and address gaps or move in directions

where their joint efforts in R&D provide a strategic advantage for climate resiliency in SEA. Overall, the Umbrella Program on CChAM comprises four thematic areas, 21 sub-themes, and 70 projects and activities.

The University Consortium, in the same meeting, reviewed the progress of seven collaborative projects under the Umbrella Program on Food and Nutrition Security that it adopted since August 2014. These projects are implemented by two or more members of the University Consortium and are focused on food reserves, indigenous crops, post-harvest system improvement, implications of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) on regional food and nutrition security (FNS), enhancing human resources for regional FNS, and knowledge center on FNS.

## University Consortium members move to strengthen internationalization of graduate education



**BOGOR, Indonesia** – The Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Studies in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) resolved to strengthen its members' initiatives toward the internationalization of graduate education through various student and faculty mobilities, collaborative research, and joint and dual degree offerings.

This was firmed up during the 28th UC Executive Board meeting on 20–21 November 2015 attended by 21 participants from the 7

member organizations. Bogor Agricultural University played host to the annual meeting held at the IPB Convention Center at IPB Baranangsiang Campus.

In line with this, the consortium also inked an accord with AGRINATURA, a European consortium of research institutions and universities. The agreement is anticipated to pave the way for future collaborative activities, particularly on joint and dual/double degrees, summer schools, and other mobilities.

"In this era, the consortium can help strengthen the move of higher education towards internationalization," said Prof. Dr. Anas Miftah Fauzi, IPB's Vice Rector for Research and Collaboration, during the opening ceremonies of the executive board meeting.

Dr. Anas also stressed that the ASEAN Economic Community is a good venue to even further cooperation among higher education institutions in the region.





# SEARCA joins Erasmus mundus project Ask Asia workshop

As many higher education institutions (HEI) intensify their efforts towards internationalization, competition to get the best and the brightest become stronger. However, apart from providing quality global education, HEIs need to make sure that the graduates become employable after completion of their study program.

This was the essence of the Agriculture, Skills and Knowledge (ASK) Asia, a research project supported by the Erasmus Mundus Action (EMA) 3, which aimed to evaluate the competitiveness of Erasmus Mundus alumni in the field of agriculture and related life sciences through their experiences and the expectations of their employers in six Asian countries (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Thailand, and Vietnam).

From 21 to 23 September 2015, the Czech University of Life Sciences played host to more than 70 participants from Asia and Europe, including the incoming mobility students of another EMA supported project ALFABET for the Ask Asia Workshop on "Employability of



Erasmus Mundus alumni and new approaches of Erasmus +."

SEARCA through the Graduate Education and Institutional Development Department (GEIDD) was invited as one of the stakeholders to share learnings and experiences in the management of capacity building activities, including strategies for alumni relations.

With more than 40 years in scholarship management and administration, SEARCA shared the perceived benefits of the

scholarship and the graduate study according to its scholarship alumni, as well as their organizations. These included horizontal and soft skills such as flexibility and resourcefulness, networking and intercultural communication. Expectedly, these gains were also echoed by the other stakeholders present in the workshop. Another common tie that binds the participants was the challenge to intensify marketing and dissemination

[See Erasmus mundus, p. 6](#)

## University Consortium GRANTS

For guidelines, application procedures and requirements, please visit

<http://www.uc.searca.org>



### FACULTY GRANTS

#### Faculty Travel Grant for Research

Conduct research in another participating UC member.

#### Faculty Travel Grant for Conference/Seminar

Participate and present a paper in a conference/seminar organized by another participating UC member.

#### Visiting Professor Program for Teaching Purposes

Teach a graduate course in his/her field of discipline at another participating UC member.

### STUDENT GRANTS

#### Thesis Grant

Assists the UC graduate student to develop and finish his/her thesis.

#### Student Travel Grant for Research

Travel for a semester in another participating UC university to conduct his/her research or a portion of it.

#### Student Travel Grant for Credit Program

Spend a semester in another participating UC university to take courses for credit to his/her program.



## Graduate forum from p. 2

He said that in the end, students remember more not what is taught in the universities, but rather the learning environment that the university was able to provide.

Apart from the plenary sessions, a total of 34 graduate students presented their respective research papers on the parallel sessions on life science, food science and agriculture.

The UCGF aims to provide an opportunity for graduate students

from UC members to share new knowledge, research ideas, and experiences in an open platform; offer academic training and develop the next generations of scholars; encourage trans-disciplinary studies and promote greater integration of research through strategic partnership among the UC members; and strengthen the relationship between and among the UC members.

After the forum, a UC special

meeting is staged on 13-14 August 2015, to discuss the status and details of the UC activities on the Dual Degree Program, explore collaborative activities with Agrinatura, as well as discuss updates on the researches under the Umbrella Program on Food and Nutrition Security and present the draft Umbrella Program on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation for Southeast Asia.

## Erasmus mundus from p. 5

of their programs to Asians, who usually prefer to have their graduate education in America, Australia, and Japan. As such, aside from websites, institutions feel that face-to-face interaction with the target beneficiaries through roadshows and fairs are inevitable, as well as leveraging on the alumni as the brand ambassadors.

The global village creates a borderless community no longer characterized by distance and cultural differences. As such, collaboration and partnership are keys towards more efficient and effective achievement of



common goals and objectives. Through the Ask Asia workshops, various stakeholders, including SEARCA were able to establish new networks, strengthen existing

partnerships, and identify future collaborative projects and activities in a global scale, but with national impact.

**ICT-ASIA 2015**

25-26 May 2015  
SEARCA, College, Los Baños Laguna, Philippines

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## The University Consortium

The Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources is a network of higher education institutions launched on 19 September 1989 by SEARCA.

The idea of having such a network was formed in August 1988 when SEARCA 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. Two affiliate members joined the network, namely: University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada and Georg-August University of Göttingen (GAUG) in Germany. The Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA) in Japan joined as an associate member.

The vision of the University Consortium is 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.

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

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