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UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM

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

University Consortium Working Committee meets in Bangkok; develops 2012 plan of action

embers of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) met in Kasetsart University (KU) in Bangkok, Thailand on 15 December 2011 to plan, strategize, and review proposals as well as recommend to the Board the priority activities and budgetary requirements for 2012.

The following composed the UC Working Committee: Dr. Oscar B. Zamora of the University of the

IN THIS ISSUE

Call for applications for Experts II Scholarships now open KU inks accord with Sweden's KTH Royal Institute of Technology page 3 11 graduate students benefit from DAAD-SEARCA scholarship anew page 4 SEARCA Scholars showcase different flavors of Southeast Asia DPM's Veterinary Medicine Faculty Complex – Most Advanced Vet Hospital in Southeast Asia DRGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant Crops UPM Professors receive National Academic Awards DPM Professors tum Page 7 The University Consortium page 8 Importance of Climate Index and	Rex Victor Cruz is new UPLB Chancellor	page 2
Institute of Technology page 3 11 graduate students benefit from DAAD-SEARCA scholarship anew page 4 SEARCA Scholars showcase different flavors of Southeast Asia page 5 UPM's Veterinary Medicine Faculty Complex – Most Advanced Vet Hospital in Southeast Asia page 6 URGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant Crops UPM Professors receive National Academic Awards page 7 The University Consortium	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	
11 graduate students benefit from DAAD-SEARCA scholarship anew page 4 SEARCA Scholars showcase different flavors of Southeast Asia UPM's Veterinary Medicine Faculty Complex – Most Advanced Vet Hospital in Southeast Asia Page 6 URGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant Crops UPM Professors receive National Academic Awards page 7 The University Consortium	,	_
SEARCA Scholars showcase different flavors of Southeast Asia UPM's Veterinary Medicine Faculty Complex – Most Advanced Vet Hospital in Southeast Asia URGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant Crops UPM Professors receive National Academic Awards page 7 The University Consortium	5	page o
of Southeast Asia page 5 UPM's Veterinary Medicine Faculty Complex – Most Advanced Vet Hospital in Southeast Asia URGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant Crops UPM Professors receive National Academic Awards page 7 The University Consortium page 8		page 4
UPM's Veterinary Medicine Faculty Complex – Most Advanced Vet Hospital in Southeast Asia URGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant Crops UPM Professors receive National Academic Awards page 7 The University Consortium	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	
UPM's Veterinary Medicine Faculty Complex – Most Advanced Vet Hospital in Southeast Asia URGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant Crops UPM Professors receive National Academic Awards page 7 The University Consortium		page 5
URGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant Crops UPM Professors receive National Academic Awards page 7 The University Consortium	UPM's Veterinary Medicine Faculty Complex – Most Advanced Vet Hospital	
URGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant Crops UPM Professors receive National Academic Awards page 7 The University Consortium		page 6
Academic Awards page 7 The University Consortium page 8	URGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant	
The University Consortium page 8	,	
page 8		page 7
Importance of Climate Index and	The University Consortium	
Importance of Climate Index and		page 8
Farming Insurance	1 3	

International conference in Bali to tackle sustainable oil palm production



Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) who served as Chair; Dr. Somsakdi Tabthimthong of KU; Dr. Dahrul Syah of Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Indonesia; Dr. Akimi Fujimoto of Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA), Japan; and Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, of SEARCA. Officials and some faculty members of KU's Kamphangsaen campus attended the meeting as observers.

Aside from the regular components of

the UC, the Committee recommended additional sub-categories of regular programs of the UC to expand the opportunities available to the UC students and faculty such as student and faculty travel grants for various purposes, and joint projects to enhance the graduate curriculum in agriculture and natural resources of member universities in the UC network. (Dr. EC Cedicol)

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS SEARCA Master's and PhD degree Scholarships in Agriculture and related sciences (for SY 2013-2014) For details, log on to http://www.searca.org

Rex Victor Cruz is new UPLB Chancellor Call for applications for Experts II

r. Rex Victor Cruz, College of Forestry and Natural Resources (CFNR) dean, was officially proclaimed as the new and 8th Chancellor of UPLB by the UP Board of Regents on 29 September 2011.

Incoming Chancellor Cruz, who succeeds outgoing Chancellor, Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, will assume office starting 1 November 2011 until 31 October 2014.

His vision of One University, One Goal, One Destiny for UPLB, accordingly, will be guided by his five point thematic agenda which include 1) Governance for Growth and Unity;2) Innovation and Trans-disciplinary Programs for Excellence, Collaboration and Integration; 3) Resource Generation for Productivity and Sustainability; 4) Enhancing Support Systems for Empowerment and Inspiration; and 5) Extending the Reach of UPLB for Visibility, Partnership and Nation-Building.

He has also stated in his campaign that the essence of UPLB



as a national university is being and will be defined by individual commitment to be of service to the country and the willingness to work together as one university pursuing one goal towards a common destiny as a genuine public service university, a relevant research university, and a growing graduate university.

Source: UPLB News | 03 October2011

Scholarships now open

The Exchange by Promoting Quality Education, Research and Training in South and South-East Asia (EXPERTS) is now accepting applications for its EXPERTS II Scholarship in 2012. This scholarship offers a unique opportunity for full-financed mobility for individuals from partner countries in the South and Southeast Asian (SSEA) region to study at EXPERTS Consortium host universities in Europe.

The call for applications is open until 10 February 2012. Grantees nominated for the EXPERTS II scholarship in 2012 have to begin their scholarship by 31 December 2012.

Interested parties may choose from seven host universities in Europe namely: Georg-August-Universität Göttingen- Germany, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven-Belgium, Masaryk University-Czech Republic, Politecnico di Torino- Italy, Universidad Santiago de Compostela- Spain, University of Turku-Finland and Uppsala University- Sweden. Details about their course offerings should be found in their respective websites.

SEARCA is one of the six Associate Partners of the EXPERTS Consortium. Details about the scholarship and related articles about the Project can be accessed here and in the EXPERTS website at http://www.expertsasia.eu.

KU inks accord with Sweden's KTH Royal Institute of Technology



On 20 September 2011, Mr. Preungboon Chakkaphak, vice president for International Affairs, together with members from the Faculty of Engineering, headed by its Dean Dr. Thanya Kiatiwat warmly welcomed the delegates of the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden which included Professor Anders Hult, Miss Maria Rothzen, and Mr. Peter Bjork, executive director of the Thai Swedish Chamber of Commerce.

On this occasion, a Memorandum of Agreement between Kasetsart University and Royal Institute of Technology was signed for the future cooperation of the two parties.

Source: KU News | 20 October 2011

11 graduate students benefit from DAAD-SEARCA scholarship anew

"Let him who would move the world, first move himself."

Quoting the famous philosopher Socrates, Ms. Natalie Lange of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) encouraged the recipients of this year's DAAD-SEARCA Scholarship grant that with their decision to enhance their knowledge and skills, they have the ability to make the change for their country and the world. This was just one of the highlights of the DAAD-SEARCA scholarship grants handover ceremony held on 22 November 2011 at SEARCA in Los Baños, Laguna.

Ms. Lange expounded that the scholars' affiliation with SEARCA also enables them to access a wide network of expertise that can help in their future endeavors. "By reaching out to each other and establishing ties, and overcoming boundaries, we can strive for a progress that all of us will benefit from," she furthered.

SEARCA, in the realization of its mission and mandate, forges linkages with organizations like DAAD, which has been The Center's formidable partner for more than 36 years now. This was recognized and highlighted by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. SEARCA Director in his welcome remarks.

According to Dr. Saguiguit, DAAD helps SEARCA in supporting graduate students from transition countries such as Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Timor Leste complete development-oriented courses in economics, natural sciences, and agriculture.

"We expect that our DAAD-SEARCA scholars will help address current and emerging issues in agriculture and improve livelihoods in their home countries through learnings from their academic programs," Dr. Saguiguit stated.

Meanwhile, these words of inspiration were likewise upheld by graduate scholar Ergilio F. Vicente (MS in Community Development) who affirmed that the scholarship from DAAD and SEARCA can play a key role, particularly in his country – Timor Leste – which has experienced a rebirth after decades of political turmoil.

Along with Mr. Vicente, other graduate scholarship grant awardees present in the ceremony were Myint Myint Soe (PhD in Entomology), Ana Jeannie R. Araujo (MS in Community Development), Mario Jose Morais (Ms in Animal Science), Natalino B. Martins (MS in Animal Science), Le Thi Thanh Loan (MS in Agricultural Economics), Khin Thanda Oo (PhD in Horticulture), Quyen Din Ha (PhD in Community Development) all based in UP Los Baños; while Rey B. Lara (MA in Urban and Regional Planning) was the lone recipient from UP Diliman.

Queenie Ann L. Curayag (PhD in Food Science and Technology, UPLB) and Daud Samsudewa (PhD in Animal Science, UPLB) could not join their fellow scholars for the handover ceremony.

To close the hand-over ceremony, Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, manager of SEARCA's Graduate Scholarship Department challenged the DAAD-SEARCA scholars, who have been chosen through a very rigorous screening process to do their best and "obtain their degrees and make us proud."

Since 1969, SEARCA has helped produce high-calibre professionals in Southeast Asia through its graduate scholarship program. At present, the DAAD-SEARCA scholarship program has awarded a total of 332 graduate scholarships, and a number of its graduate alumni are now occupying leadership positions in various government and international institutions.



SEARCA Scholars showcase different flavors of Southeast Asia

SEARCA scholars based in UP Los Baños treated their advisers, SEARCA staff, and guests to a gastronomic adventure through a Southeast Asian food festival at the SEARCA Auditorium lobby on 22 November 2011. Dubbed as "The Flavors of Southeast Asia," the event was held in conjunction with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) SEARCA scholarships handover ceremony, which were both part of SEARCA's week-long celebration of its 45th foundation day.

For the food festival, eight Southeast Asian countries featured different traditional

dishes prepared mainly by the SEARCA scholars. The Thai contingent prepared Miang Pla, a tasty healthy appetizer with origins from Northern Thailand. The Myanmar scholars served their version of the chicken noodle salad or Kyet Thar Nan Pyar Thote. The Vietnamese group came prepared their famous Vietnamese crispy spring rolls Cha Gio, which came in shrimp and pork variants. Cambodian scholars whipped up a traditional chicken dish seasoned with traditional herbs, dry and fresh chilli, oyster sauce, and coconut milk. Another chicken dish called Larb Gai was prepared by the Laotian group using ground chicken, mint leaves, spring onions, chilli, and khao koor or roasted rice powder. The Timorese came with a three-combination dish of bife (beef), samtun (fish), and salada (vegetable salad).

Meanwhile, the Indonesian dish – Sate Ayam (Chicken Satay) and the Filipino favourites – Pancit Bihon, Puto Alsa, and Turron de Saba were also served.



University Consortium Newsletter

UPM's Veterinary Medicine Faculty Complex – Most Advanced Vet Hospital in Southeast Asia

SERDANG – The Veterinary Medicine Faculty Complex, which boasted UPM's University Veterinary Hospital (UVH) as the most advanced veterinary hospital in Southeast Asia, was launched in November 2011. Minister of Higher Education, Dato' Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin was invited as guest of honor in the said launching.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Prof. Ir. Dr. Mohd. Saleh Jaafar, said that it is the first veterinary teaching hospital in Malaysia equipped with facilities that fulfill international standards.

Assoc. Prof. Datuk Dr. Bashir Ahmad Fateh Mohamed, dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine said that the complex includes an Academic Block which consists of 4 teaching laboratories, 13 tutorial rooms, 5 lecture halls, an anatomy museum, an auditorium, a computer laboratory, a seminar room and a library which can accommodate 1,000 students including staff. The hospital also includes a Large Animal Unit, a Small Animal Unit, a Surgery Unit, 12 diagnostic laboratories, 7 operation theatres, a mobile clinic, a pharmacy unit and also a radiologist and imaging unit.

Both small and large animal wards can accommodate up to 40 and 80 animals, respectively and can handle at most 50 cases per day. While the wards are open to public from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm every day, there is a mobile clinic that operates 24 hours a day.

"There are 50 consultants, 22 veterinary officers and 60 support staff from various categories working in this hospital which has started operating since January this year,' Dr. Jaafar explained.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, through the University Veterinary



Hospital, has the potential to holistically lead the needs of the country in overcoming infectious diseases which would harm human beings besides providing specific services in veterinary medicine, surgery and diagnostic laboratories.

"The employability of Veterinary Medicine graduates is very high. For example, the Veterinary Services Department in Malaysia is still in need of 120 veterinarians to fulfil the long vacant positions," Dr. Jaafar said.

In the near future, Dr. Jaafar also proposed that the curriculum of the Malaysian veterinary programme be accredited internationally to ensure that their graduates will be recognized worldwide.

The Veterinary Medicine Faculty, which was built in 1973, has produced

many experts and doctors in veterinary medicine for Malaysia and played an important role in the country's knowledge transformation in the veterinary area. This faculty is the first higher education institution to obtain an accreditation in teaching, research and professional services through MS ISO 9001 in 2000 and MS ISO/IEC 17025 in 2008.

During the launching ceremony, two memorandum of understanding (MoUs) were signed between the faculty and Malaysian Veterinary Services Department (JPV), and with World Wide Fund for Nature Malaysia (WWF Malaysia). These MoUs focussed on teaching, research and professional services activities that could benefit both parties.

Condensed from: UPM News | 1 Nov 2011

URGENT: Biotechnology Research on Drought and Climate Change Resistant Crops

D iotechnology research on genetic Bengineering of food crops is needed to increase world food production in order to combat world poverty and hunger by year 2050. Therefore, the development of biotech crops is expected to increase yield and global farm income, and reduce carbon emissions and the use of pesticides.

This was highlighted by Dr. Julian Adams, the Asia Coordinator of Biosafety Program and Biological Sciences and a faculty member of the University of Michigan, United States, in a public lecture entitled, Genetic Engineering of Crops, held at the Graduate School of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) on 6 December 2011. Dr. Adams said that in the future, genetic engineering of crops is needed to increase food production amid the threat of drought due to climate change and global warming. "Due to drought, the average annual loss in crop yields in tropical regions is 17%," he said.

Crop varieties that have resistance to heat and transgenic

varieties with tolerance to changes in ozone (O3) and high CO2 levels are needed in the future. From the research, it is known that rice yields are now influenced by global warming. For instance, a 10 C increase in the night temperature can already cause a of 105 in yield.

to conduct genetic engineering in sugar cane, corn, wheat, rice, cotton, and other



crops which are drought, salt, and flood tolerant. He said these plants are needed by all countries in the world.

Moreover, with global warming comes the threat of polar ice melting that can cause a rise in sea level, which in turn could threaten the existence of 4000 islands in Indonesia, aside from the increase in Dr. Adams mentioned that it is urgent salinity in coastal areas, added Dr. Adams.

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Source: UGM News report | 12 Dec 2011

UPM Professors receive National Academic Awards



Five professors from the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) made history as they all received the National Academic Awards 2010 given by Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muyiddin Yassin at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC).

The annual award organized by the Ministry of Higher Education recognizes the contribution of outstanding academicians in the fields of instruction. research, community and nation.

Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Omar Abdul Rahman, former first Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science was bestowed the National Academic Personality Award in recognition of his significant achievements and contributions in the academic community.

Other category winners were Dr. Mohamad Pauzi Zakaria from the Faculty of Environmental Studies (Journal Paper Publication Award); Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic and International and Dr. Aini Ideris (Award for Product Innovation and Commercialization); Dr. Mohamed Shariff Mohamed Din of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (Health Sciences Group); and Dr. Mohammad Shatar Sabran from the Faculty of Human Ecology (Arts and Social Sciences Group).

In an effort to preserve he country's academic performance, UPM through the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic and International will host a conference for academic development at the tertiary level in November 2012 where efforts to improve the quality and academic performance of institutions within the Malaysian Agro Exposition Park Serdang (MAEPS), Mardi will be discussed.

Source: UPM News | 10 October 2011

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 (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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Importance of Climate Index and Farming Insurance

The government should take side with the farmers as farmers now are always the victims, be it a victim of the price game, climate or weather and pest attacks.

This was stressed by Dr. Rini Hidayati, Head of Department of Geophysics and Meteorology, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) during the Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) Dialogue on 4 October 2011.

According to Dr. Hidayati, in recent years one of the main reasons farmers' fail to harvest is the uncertain or extreme climate;which includes severe droughts and heavy flood. Farmers who are unaware of the climate variability become powerless.

Moreover, information provided by the Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) on climate is only general in nature or global, and do not touch on specific aspects relevant to the farmers.

Dr. Hidayati said that the government's active participation in agriculture is necessary, now more than ever.

With agricultural insurance, farmers need not take the burden of the loss brought about by failure to harvest due to extreme weather conditions. She believes that with the government's support in the form of information and knowledge of climate index as well as agricultural insurance, farmers will regain confidence in growing crops without the fear of crop loss.

Source: IPB News | 10 October 2011

International conference in Bali to tackle sustainable oil palm production

The 3rd International Conference on Oil Palm and the Environment (ICOPE) will be held on 22-24 February 2012 at Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia. The international event, organized by PT. Smart Tbk. Indonesia, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Indonesia, and Centre International de Reseaux Agriculture and Development (CIRAD) France aims to bring together key players in both palm oil production and environmental conservation including oil palm planters, traders, research organizations and universities, as well as government and non-governmental organizations to share best practices and solutions towards a more sustainable palm oil industry.

The prospects of the palm oil industry have been gaining momentum; but along with the industry's promising future lie challenges such as biodiversity management and conservation, high carbon stock forests, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. With smallholders owning more than 60% of the oil palm area in the world, they have a vital role to play in upholding the industry's green agenda.

The success of the 1st and 2nd ICOPE was directly translated to several key initiatives benefiting palm oil stakeholders in the private, government, as well as the international arena. On its third year, ICOPE hopes to include the



palm oil industry as a green component of agriculture.

The three-day international conference will have a mix of lectures, technical sessions, and poster presentation sessions so that sharing and exchange of ideas are widely encouraged. Aside from these, stakeholders can also participate in the palm oil exhibition within the venue.

For more information about conference you may contact the ICOPE 2012 Secretariat at:

Plaza BII, Second Tower, 34th Fl Jl MH Thamrin Kav 22 Jakarta 10350, Indonesia http://www.icope-series.com Email: secretariat@icope-series.com; Tel: +62-21 3181 212