

UC MEMBER UNIVERSITIES PLACE IN VARIOUS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

UBC and UGM enter the top 100 for the 2021 THE Impact Rankings

The Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings was announced on 21 April 2021 during the virtual forum on "THE Innovation and Impact Summit: Cultivating Resilience, Changing the World." This ranking shows the performance of universities in relation to their contributions to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is the only global performance evaluation which assesses the institutions' impact to the SDGs through research, stewardship of resources, outreach work in the local, regional, national, and international level, and teaching/instruction to equip future professionals who will work towards the development goals.

The 2021 THE Impact Rankings assessed 1,117 universities across 94 countries. Among the UC member institutions, University of British Columbia (UBC), ranked the highest at 13th place with the best scores in SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG 15, SDG 17.

Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) ranked 83rd with the best scores for SDG 1, SDG 7, SDG 14, and SDG 17. IPB University and National Taiwan University (NTU) were both at the 101-200 range. IPB's best scores are on SDG 2, SDG 1, SDG 4, and SDG 17. NTU received the highest marks for SDG 3, SDG 11, SDG 10, and SDG 17.

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Tokyo NODAI welcomes new University President



Prof. Dr. Fumio Eguchi , President of Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI)

Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI) welcomed Prof. Dr. Fumio Eguchi as the new University President. President Eguchi obtained his degree from the Department of Forest Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Tokyo NODAI in 1988. He likewise finished his PhD in Forestry at the same institution in 1993. President Eguchi previously worked as a Research Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and as an Assistant Professor at the Takasaki University of Health and Welfare. In 2012, he was appointed as a Professor at the Department of Forest Science, Faculty of Regional Environment Sciences, Tokyo NODAI. During his stay at the institution, he also served as the Director of the Food and Agriculture Museum and Head of the Department of Forest Science.

President Eguchi's expertise is on forestry chemistry and mushroom studies. He worked as a Researcher at the Academic Systems Research Center of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and also supported the Japan Pavilion at Expo Milano. President Eguchi was a recipient of the Japan Wood Research Society Award and the Kisaku Mori Award.

In his university message, President Eguchi said "I would like young people like you to try different things, fail, and learn without being afraid of getting embarrassed. Being embarrassed is not a negative thing, it is something that leads to your own growth. Tokyo NODAI has an environment where you can learn through challenges and mistakes."

Tokyo NODAI aspires to contribute to society by implementing Practical Science which emphasizes the fusion of theory and practice. To do this, the university has restructured its graduate schools early this year with the former Graduate School of Agriculture dividing into five graduate schools: Graduate School of Agriculture, Graduate School of Applied Bioscience, Graduate School of Life Sciences, Graduate School of Agro-Environmental Science, and the Graduate School of International Food and Agricultural Studies.

Tokyo NODAI, which was founded in 1891, takes pride of its continuing contribution to agricultural development in Japan as well as to Southeast Asian countries through education and research. The institution has been an Associate Member of the University Consortium (UC) since 2007. Besides sending participants for UC activities, they have also hosted the 30th Executive Board Meeting in 2017 and will be hosting the coming 3rd Faculty Forum in 2021.

Message from the President: The Leading University of "Agricultural and Life Sciences" in Japan which Scientifically Studies the "Future" of the Earth and Life.
nodai.ac.jp/english/outline/message/2021040101/

UPLB Graduate School Dean and UC Coordinator named 2021 Outstanding Young Scientist



Dr. Jomar F. Rabajante, Dean of UPLB Graduate School and UC Coordinator

The National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) – Philippines recognized Dr. Jomar F. Rabajante, Dean of UPLB Graduate School, as one of the 2021 Outstanding Young Scientists in the field of mathematics. Dr. Rabajante is also the UPLB University Consortium Coordinator, taking over Dr. Jose V. Camacho, Jr. upon the latter's appointment as University Chancellor and UC Chief Executive Officer.

Dr. Rabajante is a professor at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences and Physics of the College of Arts and Sciences. He received his MS in Applied Mathematics at UP Diliman and his Doctor of Science degree in Mathematical and Systems Engineering – Environment and Energy Systems at Shizuoka University, Japan through a Monbukagakusho scholarship from the Japanese government. Dr. Rabajante served as Visiting Professor/Scientist/Researcher at the Carleton University and Fields Institute for Research in Mathematical Sciences in Canada, and at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Biology in Germany. He is also a Junior Associate at the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Italy.

Dr. Rabajante is an advocate of "Life-driven Mathematics" and has conducted numerous research on the applications of math on health, biology, and the environment. He is also one of the proponents of the first and only PhD in Applied Mathematics degree in the Philippines. At the onset of the pandemic, Dr. Rabajante provided mathematical projections which aided both national and local government agencies in making decisions to manage the spread of the disease. He likewise worked on gene regulatory networks which led to the discovery of biomarkers of diseases.

The NAST Outstanding Young Scientist Award is given to young Filipino Scientists to recognize their significant contributions to science and technology according to the quality and number of scientific work and publication, as well as their contributions to the development of the country's economy and culture through advancing science and technology.

*University News: UPLB faculty members are 2021 Outstanding Young Scientists by Jessa Jael S. Arana - <https://uplb.edu.ph/all-news/uplb-faculty-members-are-2021-outstanding-young-scientists/>
Dr. Rabajante: Modelling the Pandemic - <https://imsp.cas.uplb.edu.ph/uncategorized/dr-jomar-f-rabajante/>*



SEARCA Scholars and UC Grantees during the 1st GSID Conversations about the Indonesian Small Holder Cocoa Farming

SEARCA successfully hosts the 1st GSID Conversations for UC grantees and SEARCA scholars

SEARCA shared the sweet story of local cacao farmers in Indonesia inside an integrated “farmer-to-bar” chocolate company during the 1st GSID Conversations on 16 April 2021. Ms. Sabrina Mustopo, Founder of Krakakoa Chocolate in Indonesia, joined the SEARCA Scholars and Grantees of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) to discuss innovative ways to promote sustainable farming and support the local cacao farming community through a social business. The event was aptly titled, “Sweet Stories: Empowering Local Cacao Farmers through Innovative Food Production Systems”. It was conducted through the SOLVE platform using Zoom and broadcasted live through FaceBook.

Sabrina shared that the cocoa sector in Indonesia is large and affects the lives of many people, specifically the smallholder farmers who produce majority of the cocoa. The smallholder farmers experience challenges such as low yields caused by diseases and lack of knowledge on good farm management techniques, poor quality of beans, and lack of value addition. These issues lead to low income, poor quality of local cocoa and chocolate, loss of economic value creation and employment.

After a successful career in a management and consulting company which spanned for six years, Sabrina pursued Krakakoa. Her background in International Agriculture and Rural Development, Minor in Food Science at Cornell University helped in translating her vision for the company. An advice that Sabrina gave the attendees is to pursue something that they love, and work with people they love spending time with, to create a good working environment.

Krakakoa provides a direct link between the farmers and consumers. As a social business, Krakakoa aims to change the impact that food production systems have on people and the planet through cocoa. They also work to improve the livelihood of the Indonesian cocoa farmers, increase environmental sustainability, and improve land use in cocoa growing areas in Indonesia, increase the profile of Indonesian cocoa and chocolate, and contribute to the economic development of Indonesia.

Through Krakakoa, the smallholder cacao farmers are given training and equipment for free. They also receive a stable price of up to three times the market price and the cocoa beans are processed into final products in a factory in Sumatra instead of just exporting raw or semi-processed goods.

Besides helping the smallholder farmers and promoting sustainable cacao farming, Krakakoa has also received numerous international awards for its range of products and design. Sabrina advised those who would like to pursue entrepreneurship to first gain experience in a small company instead of working for an established institution with all the systems in place because that is how they will learn.

The GSID Conversations serve as an avenue for SEARCA Graduate Scholarship and Institutional Development stakeholders to discuss with experts from different fields regarding complementary topics in line with agriculture and rural development. The activity will also share experience and insight on translating knowledge and skills into meaningful contributions to society. Prior to the pandemic, SEARCA planned to offer these sessions as part of the regular line-up of learning events such as the training on writing thesis/dissertation proposals, data analysis and experimental design, basic English course, student orientation, and teambuilding. Pandemic restrictions postponed the face-to-face conduct of GSID Conversations which will be held online instead.



Ms. Sabrina Mustopo, Founder of Krakakoa Chocolate together with the cacao farmers in Indonesia



DAAD-SEARCA SCHOLAR WINS BIG AT THE 3MT COMPETITION IN UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

DAAD-SEARCA scholar Nor Akhlisah Zulklipli won 1st Runner-up and People's Choice Award at the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) faculty level competition in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) on 05 April 2021. Her win qualified her for the university-level competition where she bagged 2nd Runner-up on 22 April 2021. She was also chosen to represent UPM in the 3MT National Competition for the engineering category where she won 3rd place in June 2021.

The 3MT competition was first developed by the University of Queensland and subsequently carried out in other Australian and New Zealand universities. It is a competition where Ph.D. students present their research projects to a non-specialist audience in just three minutes. In Malaysia, UPM and the University of Malaya (UM) are the first institutions to introduce 3MT to develop a vibrant community of researchers among students.

This year, UPM organized the competition at the faculty/institute level and the university level. Due to pandemic restrictions, UPM and the other universities decided to conduct the competition virtually through video submissions. Nor Akhlisah competed in the Faculty of Engineering and presented her research on "Levulinic Acid: A Treasure from the Waste." Levulinic acid is a high-performance chemical and identified by the United States Department of Energy as one of the top-12 platform chemicals. It can be produced from biomass waste such as those generated in oil palms. By doing so, this can help prevent the practice of burning waste which contributes to air pollution.

Nor Akhlisah shared that she decided to join the competition three years ago when she saw the poster of 3MT in UPM. At that time, she was still taking her Master's degree and will not qualify as a participant so she just watched the competition. She said "It was great to see how efficiently and passionately they talked about their research. This year, when the competition was announced, I decided to join, and I really didn't want to miss this chance!"

Now an ongoing Ph.D. student, there was no stopping Nor Akhlisah from joining 3MT this year. She started preparing her presentation by listing the main points of her study with the assistance of her supervisor and friends. "They helped me a lot", Nor Akhlisah shared. She did not expect to win the 1st Runner-up and People's Choice Award at the faculty-level competition which then qualified her for the University Heats Competition.



Nor Akhlisah during the UPM Faculty of Engineering 2021 Virtual 3MT Competition

"My faculty arranged a series of training for me conducted by previous 3MT winners. I was then selected among 10 students to join the university level 3MT competition and I was also surprised when they announced my name as 2nd Runner-up. I was also awarded RM 600 and a certificate."

On her experience competing, Nor Akhlisah said that she learned so much from the 3MT competition. "It has been one of the best experiences I've had during my Ph.D. and it has opened more opportunities for me too. I also had the chance to meet new people. I've come out feeling more confident about disseminating my work and engaging with others about my research. More than this, the competition has been a significant reminder for me of why I started my Ph.D. journey in the first place."

Nor Akhlisah was granted a DAAD In-Country/In-Region Scholarship in 2019 to pursue her Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering in UPM. This scholarship program aims to develop professionals who will usher in strong and internationally oriented higher education systems with the capacity to contribute to sustainable development. DAAD has been SEARCA's longstanding partner in providing graduate scholarships since school year 1975-1976.

Alumnus of the UPM-SEARCA Joint Scholarship shares award winning research



Engr. Philip Donald C. Sanchez, UPM-SEARCA Joint Scholarship alumnus, presented his research on "Application of laser-based imaging technique in the quality evaluation of Malaysia sweet potato varieties during postharvest storage".

Engr. Philip Donald C. Sanchez shared his Master's thesis titled "Application of laser-based imaging technique in the quality evaluation of Malaysia sweet potato varieties during postharvest storage" during the Special Graduate Seminar on 05 March 2021 hosted under the SOLVE platform.

Engr. Sanchez received his Master of Science in Agricultural Process Engineering (MSAPE) at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) through the UPM-SEARCA Joint Scholarship Program. Currently, he works at Caraga State University in Agusan Del Norte, Philippines as Chairperson of the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, College of Engineering and Geosciences.

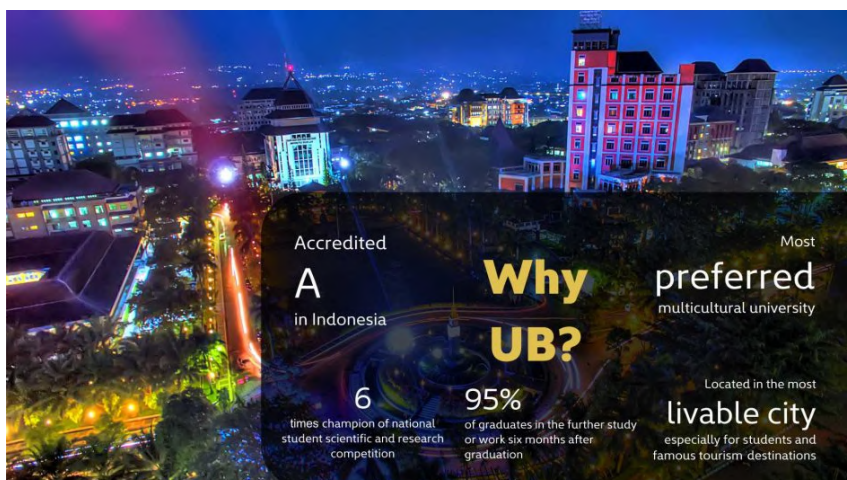
Engr. Sanchez' research presented a viable way of post-harvest monitoring, handling, processing, and storage of agriculture crops that prevents damage and wastage. He went in-depth with the issues encountered in conventional quality evaluation of sweet potatoes such as its destructive, costly, tedious, and time-consuming method. His research proposed for the use of laser light backscattering imaging (LLBI) technique on sweet potatoes as a quality monitoring method. Engr. Sanchez evaluated the quality of three different varieties of sweet potatoes during storage and under three different temperatures using the LLBI technique. Results showed that the LLBI technique is a non-destructive and feasible method to evaluate the quality of sweet potatoes during storage. Its implication in the agriculture sector is the possible use of LLBI for online optical quality grading of other agricultural crops towards a non-destructive, automated, and improved production.

Besides his research, Engr. Sanchez also shared his journey as a graduate student. Not only did he finish his studies ahead of the standard two-year scholarship duration, but he was also able to publish five journal articles, four of which are in Q1 Journals, or journals belonging to the top 25% in terms of impact factor.

Engr. Sanchez also received the Best Poster award at the International Innovation Expo (INTEX) 2019 in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UniMAS), Kuching City, Malaysia; Best Oral Presenter & Best Manuscript at the Malaysian Society of Agricultural and Food Engineers (MSAE) Annual International Convention 2020 hosted by the MSAE and Ministry of Agriculture, Malaysia; and Best Paper Award during the 5th International Conference in Agricultural & Food Engineering Joint Conference with the 13th International FRUTIC Symposium hosted by the Universiti Putra Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia & FRUTIC Germany. He has attended other international conferences through the SEARCA Travel Grant.



UB appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia to manage the KNB Scholarship



Universitas Brawijaya (UB) was appointed by the Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia to manage the Beasiswa Kemitraan Negara Berkembang or KNB Scholarship. This scholarship has been offered since 2008 by the government of the Republic of Indonesia to selected applicants originating from developing countries. To date, it has awarded 1,290 scholarship grants to students from 94 countries.

The KNB Scholarship at Universitas Brawijaya provides for both Master's and Doctoral Degree programs. Scholarship benefits allocated for the grantees include living allowance, tuition, research and book allowance, health insurance, return flight tickets, settlement allowance, and article publication allowance.

Scholarship Website: <https://io.ub.ac.id/knb-scholarship/>

5 NTU-SEARCA scholars set to join the growing number of international students at NTU for AY 2021-2022



University News: NTU Receives an Unprecedented Number of International Applications - <http://ntuhighlights.ntu.edu.tw/enews/83/#08>

This AY 2021-2022, five more NTU-SEARCA scholars shall pursue the Master Program in Global Agriculture Technology and Genomic Science (Global ATGS) as part of the collaboration between SEARCA and National Taiwan University (NTU) which started in 2020. The first batch of NTU-SEARCA scholars began their studies in AY 2020-2021 and are now on their 2nd and final year.

The Global ATGS is offered by the International College of NTU for students to gain deeper understanding on smart farming technology, genome science research, and breeding science and technology. The NTU-SEARCA Joint Scholarship Program for Global ATGS aims to cultivate agricultural professional talents, encourage academic excellence, and promote the research and development of agriculture within Southeast Asia. The program also provides an opportunity for internship and field visits in line with NTU's efforts to connect with industries and promote hands-on training. The program's curriculum is interdisciplinary to develop global bio-agricultural talents that are responsive to the needs of the agriculture sector and with advanced knowledge and practical skills on contemporary agriculture.

The five incoming and two ongoing NTU-SEARCA scholars are among the growing number of international students at NTU. This year, the university received 4,072 applications which marked a 200% increase from the previous year. NTU Office of International Affairs (OIA) also launched the "NTU Open Day for International Students" which is an online event held for four days to help increase the institution's visibility and help the students with various challenges brought by the pandemic. The activity included five sessions of virtual dialogues between international students and the university. The themes of these sessions include "NTU at a Glance," "College Tour," and "Programs Taught in English." The activity was likewise opened to the public through Youtube and Facebook to pique the interest of future students and disseminate information about the application process and academic resources of NTU. The online event garnered 3,000 views in two weeks. NTU now plans to conduct similar events online to accommodate international students and future students despite the ongoing pandemic.

KU's SMART Greenhouse



Kasetsart University (KU)'s Faculty of Agriculture showcased its Smart Greenhouse which is used to provide courses and training, technology transfer, and dissemination of agricultural innovation. The greenhouse uses a planting calendar which takes market demands into consideration as well as the crops that are not in season. Its harvest is also made available to the public.

KU's smart greenhouse is equipped with modern technology to address issues in crop production. It has an environmental monitoring system that measures temperature, humidity, and light intensity. It also has a nutrient monitoring system to manage water quality such as electrical conductivity, PH levels, water temperature, and dissolved oxygen in water.

The greenhouse has a control spraying system to manage temperature and humidity and shield partition to control natural lighting. Other smart tools in the greenhouse include an automated fertilizer mixer which generates the nutrient solution quality data. If the amount of nutrients in the tank is insufficient, the fertilizer mixer will automatically re-adjust the nutrient concentration. Through a smartphone application, weather and water recording data can be accessed in real-time graphs. Various systems in the greenhouse can also be controlled through the application.

Video of the Smart Greenhouse: <https://youtu.be/vuYUrbYmv2I>
Photos: https://www.facebook.com/FOA-Smart-Greenhouse-104571637558775/about?ref=page_internal





UBC and NTU lead the QS World University Rankings 2022

The latest World University Rankings (WUR) by London-based company Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) released its list for 2022. This latest ranking is also the largest list to be generated by QS with 1,300 universities evaluated. The ranking was based on Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, Faculty/Student Ratio, Citations per faculty, International Faculty Ratio, and International Student Ratio.

University of British Columbia (UBC) ranked the highest among UC members at the 46th spot. National Taiwan University (NTU) also entered the top 100 placing 68th. Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) ranked 143rd, Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) ranked 254th, University of the Philippines ranked 399th, IPB University placed in the 511-520 range, Kasetsart University (KU) placed in the 801-1000 range, and Universitas Brawijaya in the 1001-1200 range.

The onset of the pandemic provided challenges for the universities which affected indicators such as international faculty and students because of travel restrictions.

Ranking: <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2022>



UBC and UGM enter the top 100 for the 2021 THE Impact Rankings

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Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) ranked within the 201-300 range and received the best marks for SDG 9, SDG 4, SDG 11, and SDG 17. Kasetsart University (KU), Universitas Brawijaya (UB), and Maejo University (MJU) all placed within the 301-400 range. KU got the best scores for SDG 2, SDG 14, SDG 13, and SDG 17. UB received high scores for SDG 15, SDG 8, SDG 2, and SDG 17. MJU was given high scores for SDG 2, SDG 12, SDG 15, and SDG 17. Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI) ranked in the 401-600 range with high scores in SDG 2, SDG 15, SDG 14, and SDG 17.

Among the SDGs, the UC members all received good scores for SDG 17, Partnership for the Goals, which SEARCA also puts greater emphasis in its 11th Five Year Plan together with contributing towards the achievement of SDG 2, SDG 4, SDG 9, SDG 13 and tangentially touching on SDG 1, SDG 5, and SDG 12.

Ranking: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/impactrankings#!/page/0/length/-1/locations/DE/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/undefined

NTU, UPM, and UPLB secure top 100 spot for the 2021 THE Emerging Economies University Rankings

Three UC member universities recorded an impressive feat in the current Times Higher Education (THE) Emerging Economies University Rankings 2021. The THE Emerging Economies Rankings started in 2014 and evaluates higher education institutions in 48 countries classified by the London Stock Exchange's FTSE Group as developing or emerging countries. In the consortium, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Thailand are classified as advanced emerging while Indonesia and the Philippines are from the secondary emerging classification. The latest ranking evaluated 606 universities which was an increase from last year. The evaluation used five main criteria such as Teaching (30%), Research (30%), Citations (20%), International Outlook (10%) and Industry Income (10%).

National Taiwan University (NTU) ranked 8th place with the highest score on Industry Income at 69.5. University Putra Malaysia (UPM) ranked 78th receiving the highest score in International Outlook at 73.3. University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) placed at the 83rd spot receiving the highest score for citations at 86.7.



Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) placed within the 301-350 range and has the highest score for Industry Income at 56.7. IPB University placed within the 351-400 range with the highest score for Industry Income at 58.1. Kasetsart University (KU) placed within the 401-500 range with the highest score for Industry Income at 49.3. Universitas Brawijaya (UB) placed in the 501+ range with its highest score at 36.3 for Industry Income.

Majority of the UC members scored high in Industry Income which refers to the institution's ability to help the industry through knowledge transfer and innovations. It also reflects an institutions' ability to attract funding from the industry for its research.

Two more criteria which the UC member institutions did well was International Outlook or the capacity of an institution to attract students from different countries and Citation which measures the research influence of a university and their capacity to disseminate new knowledge through citations of the university's publication.

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University Consortium is the official newsletter of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC).

It can be downloaded from the UC website at <https://uc.searca.org/>

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