



University of the Philippines Los Baños

# HORIZON



Official Community Newsletter of UP Los Baños

2023-04

October - December 2023

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## UPLB gets DOST-PCAARRD's Tanglaw Award for Most Outstanding Research Institution



UPLB has been recognized as the most outstanding research institution by the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic, and Natural Resources Research and Development (DOST-PCAARRD).

The Tanglaw Award for the Most Outstanding Research Institution was presented to UPLB during the Galing PCAARRD recognition program held in celebration of the Council's 51st anniversary on Nov. 10 in Los Baños, Laguna.

"Winning this award is a testament to the unwavering commitment of the tireless UPLB scientific community. Their dedication toward advancing scientific research, especially in the fields of agriculture and natural resources, is why UPLB

has won this prestigious award," Chancellor Jose V. Camacho, Jr. said in his acceptance speech.

UPLB researchers also received various awards at the Galing PCAARRD program.

Dr. Nelly S. Aggangan of the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology won the Pantas Award for the Most Outstanding Researcher/Scientist.

The paper "Nutritional properties and phenolic acid profile of selected Philippine pigmented maize with high antioxidant activity" authored by Dr. Tonette P. Laude, Julie Ann Mher A. Libron, Don Emanuel M. Cardona, John Marty C. Mateo, Ayn Kristina M. Beltran, and Arvin Paul P. Tuaño was given the Elvira O. Tan Award for the

Outstanding Published Paper in the agriculture category.

DOST-PCAARRD also presented the Academic Excellence Award to Nadine B. Coronado, Rachele L. De Torres, John Bryan C. Rolloque, Emille Joseph A. Iranista, Froilan Jay T. Menguito, and Ian Bien M. Oloc-oloc for completing the Graduate Research and Education Assistantship for Technology (GREAT) Program.

DOST-PCAARRD scholars from UPLB under the Re-entry Program Project of GREAT Alumni 2022-2023 were also given recognition, namely: Divine Krizza B. Padua-Cruz, Engr. Juan Miguel K. Parami, Anne Frances V. Buhay, Jofil A. Mati-om, Dr. Nico Jayson C. Anastacio, John Albert M. Caraan, Rachele L. De

Torres, John Bryan Rolloque, and Dr. Emil John C. Cabrera.

A team that included UPLB also won second place in the research category under The Best R&D or NSAARRD Awards, which recognizes and showcases exceptional research and development outputs in the agriculture, aquatic, and natural resources (AANR) sector.

The team was awarded for its research "Conserving Mindanao Mountain Ecosystems: Biodiversity as Frontier for Ecotourism Development and Sustainable Ecological Protection."

Galing PCAARRD aims to recognize and celebrate individuals' and institutions' outstanding achievements and contributions in AANR research and development. (Czerah Jade P. Maycacayan)



**Dr. Merdelyn T. Caasi-Lit**, entomologist at the Institute of Plant Breeding, is this year's recipient of the Eduardo A. Quisumbing Medal (Outstanding Research and Development Award for Basic Research) of the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST).

Dr. Lit has dedicated almost four decades of her life to studying insect pest management, host plant resistance, and crop improvement, among others.



**Dr. Dennis Marvin O. Santiago**, food technologist at and director of the Institute of Food Science and Technology, was named 2023 Outstanding Professional in Food Technology by the Professional Regulation Commission. Earlier this year, he also received the title UP Scientist I and was the recipient of the One UP Professorial Chair Award in Bioresources Science (Product Innovation) for Outstanding Teaching and Research in UP Los Baños from 2019 to 2024.



# The UPLB AGRC: Pioneering genomics through international collaboration

The growing global population, climate change impacts, and geopolitical conflicts have made food security and sustainable agricultural development a priority concern for every nation. In the search for solutions to this issue, the world is increasingly looking toward the emerging discipline of genomics.

This pioneering field of science is concerned with the study, understanding, and application of an organism’s genetic material, or genome. Enabled by cutting-edge technologies and breakthroughs in gene mapping and sequencing, genomics holds significant potential in areas such as medicine and healthcare, biodiversity conservation, and agricultural production.

Recognizing the potential of genomics, the University of the Philippines has entered into a collaborative initiative with the Republic of South Korea via the Korea International Cooperation Agency

(KOICA) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

Entitled “Capacity-Building for Higher Education and the Establishment of the Agricultural Genomics Research Center (AGRC) at the University of the Philippines Los Baños,” this transformative project intends to raise Philippine agricultural competitiveness, foster scientific and technological adaptation, and strengthen the relationship between the Philippines and South Korea.

Scheduled to run until 2026, the project has five main components, namely, 1) the establishment of the UPLB Agricultural Genomics Research Center, 2) procurement for R&D and office equipment, 3) development of UPLB-AGRC Mid-Term Operational Plan, 4) R&D capability enhancement activities, and 5) academic partnership strengthening activities.

Last July 14, a signing ceremony was held in UP Diliman and attended by UP

President Angelo Jimenez, KOICA country director Eunsub Kim, UPLB Chancellor Jose Camacho Jr., UPLB Vice Chancellor for Research and Extension Nathaniel Bantayan, alongside representatives from IRRI and the Philippine Genome Center. The document signed during the ceremony outlined the respective responsibilities and commitments of the collaborating parties in order to bring the AGRC project to fruition.

As part of the project’s components, several UPLB faculty members and researchers are currently being hosted at Korean universities, undertaking training on genomics and bioinformatics involving several agricultural crops. This is under the KOICA PhD scholarship program, which caters to researchers from UPLB and partner state universities and colleges and cultivates advanced research skills, fostering critical thinking and improvement

of analytical abilities on omics technologies towards promoting innovation and creativity.

The project’s latest landmark, a groundbreaking ceremony at the proposed site of the AGRC in UPLB, was held last December 6. UP and UPLB officials led by UP President Jimenez and UPLB Chancellor Camacho, alongside South Korean Ambassador to the Philippines Lee Sang-Hwa, attended the ceremony and buried a time capsule at the location.

Once the UPLB Agricultural Genomics Research Center is established, it is expected to provide state-of-the-art facilities for genome-based research and other omics technologies that will strengthen UPLB’s agricultural research and extension efforts. *(Albert Geoffred B. Peralta)*



## HE over tea: A week of international activities in the UK

To stay on top of global trends and standards, UPLB has been actively mooring on its international partnerships. On November 18-26, Asst. Prof. Anna Fimalino, director of the UPLB Office of International Linkages, engaged with various academic and research institutions in Europe to further UPLB’s internationalization initiatives.

She spoke as a panelist at the Going Global Conference hosted by the British Council in Edinburgh, Scotland where she discussed UPLB’s experience in developing dual degree programs with its international partners, namely the University of Reading and the University of Liverpool in Britain and Curtin University in Australia. Afterwards, she met with the British Council Philippines and the University of Liverpool regarding the expansion of the TAPHEP (Transformative Academic Practice for Higher Education in the Philippines) Project, a CHED-funded project led by UPLB in collaboration with the University of Liverpool, UP Open University, and 18 other Philippine higher education institutions. She also met with the Universities UK International, a body of about a hundred UK-based higher

education institutions, and later with British charity Advance HE.

A few weeks before the UK trip, UPLB had formally sealed its partnership with the University of Montpellier in France for a dual PhD program specializing in crop science, an agreement that the UPLB Institute of Crop Science helped come to fruition. UP’s joint academic venture with the Korea International Cooperation Agency has also led to the establishment of the Agricultural Genomics Research Center at UPLB, with a groundbreaking ceremony held on Dec. 6. With these on-going collaborations and more, UPLB is on a roll in building bridges across the sea with fellow academic organizations, prioritizing those with clear objectives that will lead to increased capacities for national development and tapping areas where both organizations have the most synergy.

“We do internationalization so that we can have an idea of whether we’re at par with global standards,” said Asst. Prof. Fimalino.

She laid out the University’s straightforward strategy to ensure the productivity of its partnerships:



ensuring active partnerships, by having a clear timeline and objective; deepening the partnerships UPLB has; and being a hub for wider collaborations between UPLB’s international partners and other Philippine HEIs.

As a premier university, UPLB has the capacity to pursue international partnerships and share the gains with local HEIs, an endeavor that Asst. Prof. Fimalino considers part of the University’s public service. *(Jessa Jael S. Arana)*





## Students role-play WW II

Students glimpsed life as prisoners of war in World War II in a live role-playing game (RPG) held as part of an inter-general education (GE) activity on Nov. 29.

The student participants acted as prisoners of war and interacted with actors portraying Japanese soldiers who would adamantly give orders. With clay pots and charcoal stoves provided, the prisoners were to prepare food immediately to avoid the wrath of the soldiers. National Artist Kidlat Tahimik participated in the roleplay and greatly recognized the idea of participatory theater while reliving and acknowledging his feelings as a prisoner of the war.

When the ‘guerrilleros’ were free from the Japanese, the play introduced Maria Ilagan Orosa, a Filipina scientist, cook, and inventor who fought by innovating nutritious recipes that would enable her fellow citizens to eat healthily amidst scarcity. *(Maybelle P. Holanda)*



## Layeta Bucoy’s “Science Drama” launches at IPB

UPLB professor and UP Artist Layeta Pinzon Bucoy launched her book "Science Drama" at the Institute of Plant Breeding last November 29, featuring plays on biotechnology and nanotechnology. The event, attended by key personalities in the field of Philippine biotechnology and nanotechnology, highlighted Bucoy's belief in the unity of arts and sciences. A dramatic reading of play excerpts was performed during the launch by THEA 151 acting class.

# UPLB degree programs undergo EQA assessment



Eighteen UPLB degree programs have completed the External Quality Assurance (EQA) process since September.

The EQA is conducted under the UP Quality Assurance (QA) System, which aims to ensure that UP programs and delivery units consistently meet the standards of academic excellence amid the evolving landscape of local, national, regional, and global developments. EQA is renewable every five years, or as stipulated by the accreditors or assessors.

The EQA process has been completed for the following degree programs: BS Biology, BS Electrical Engineering, and BS Industrial Engineering on Sept. 12-15; BS Nutrition, BS Agricultural Chemistry, and BS

Chemistry on Sept. 18-29; BA Communication Arts and BA Philosophy on Oct 3-6; BS Applied Math, BS Math, BS Math and Science Teaching, Master in Public Affairs, and Master of Science in Extension Education on Oct 16-19.

BS Development Communication and BS Applied Physics underwent assessment on Oct. 16-18 and Oct. 23-27, respectively. BS Computer Science, BS Agricultural and Applied Economics, BS Agribusiness Management and Entrepreneurship, and BA Sociology were assessed from Nov 15 to 22.

The EQA process for BS Forestry and BS Statistics will be held on Dec 4-6 and Dec 5-7, respectively, and BS Human Ecology in January 2024. *(Czerah Jade P. Maycacayan)*



## At the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Integrated Natural Resources and Environment Management

### UPLB-INREM launched as UP Resilience Institute affiliate hub



The UPLB Interdisciplinary Studies Center on Integrated Natural Resources and Environment Management (UPLB-INREM) was officially launched as an affiliate resilience hub of the UP Resilience Institute (UPRI) at the 4th International Conference on Integrated Natural Resources and Environment Management (INREM 2023) on Nov. 21-23, 2023 at the Century Park Hotel Manila.

UPLB-INREM was made a partner hub of the UPRI by the UP Board of Regents at their 1379th meeting on April 3, 2023. UPLB-INREM is the second to join UPRI as an affiliate hub following the Mindanao Center for Disease Watch and Analytics (UP DiWA) in UP Mindanao.

The launch was followed by a ceremonial signing between UPLB and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The University also signed agreements with Palawan State University, Western Philippines University, and Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University for holding INREM-related projects and activities.

With the theme “Future-proofing Sustainable Ridge-to-Reef Transformations through INREM,” the conference convened more than 200 local and international participants from diverse regions including the Philippines,

Indonesia, Vietnam, Japan, India, Ghana, Ethiopia, Germany, Netherlands, United Kingdom, and the United States.

The conference highlighted the presentations of 14 early career researchers in parallel sessions for undergraduate and graduate researchers to encourage the youth to understand, appreciate, and champion the INREM approach.

DENR Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga spoke at the conference’s program where she emphasized the need to be each other’s and the environment’s “katiwala” or steward to be able to do the transdisciplinary work needed to integrate natural resources and environment management efforts.

INREM 2023 was also graced by Immanuel Gebhardt, country director for German Agency for International Cooperation Philippines and the Pacific Island Countries; Dr. Reynaldo V. Ebor, executive director of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic, and Natural Resources Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology; and UPLB Chancellor Jose V. Camacho, Jr..

The International Conference on INREM is conducted every two years as an initiative of UPLB-INREM. It was co-organized with UPLB, the College of Forestry and Natural Resources (CFNR), and the UPRI. *(Christian Ray C. Buendia, Farah Sevilla)*



# LIWANAG *ng* BAYAN

#PaskongUPLB2023

The UPLB tradition of celebrating the Christmas season lives on as UPLB prepares to light up the campus and gladden the hearts of UPLB constituents and townspeople of Los Baños with the Christmas lighting program themed, "Liwanag ng Bayan." It will be held at **6 pm on December 6** at the **UPLB Freedom Park** in the area in front of the DL Umali Hall. The program features a free open-air concert featuring performers from the UPLB Talent Pool, UPLB Filipiniana Dance Troupe, Harmony: The String Ensemble of UPLB, the UPLB Choral Ensemble, and Umalohokan, Inc.



## Playing for healing: BARKada at CATropa re-launches at UPLB

The UPLB BARKada at CATropa Program was relaunched on Nov. 20 through an activity entitled, "TAILS OF HEALING: The Relaunch of the UPLB BARKada at CATropa Animal-Assisted Intervention Program."

The BARKada at CATropa Program is an animal-assisted intervention (AAI) program initially launched in November 2021 as part of UPLB's initiatives to address mental health concerns among students and personnel.

The relaunching event featured sessions on mental health and the indicators of mental health problems, the mutual benefits of the human-animal bond, and the effects of animal-assisted education.

Aside from having lectures, the event also held small group discussions on overcoming mental health challenges and how pets can help relieve stress. The Learning Resource Center's Fur Staff – Sylvie and Bobbi, two Pembroke Welsh Corgis – delighted the participants with a brief appearance.

UPLB AAI Corner was also launched at the LRC Learning Hub, Student Union Building

during the event. This is in line with providing a pet-friendly workspace on campus. The presence of animals in the AAI corner hopes to create a nurturing environment to reduce stress, enhance productivity, and foster positive and supportive social relationships in the university. The AAI Corner shall also be the designated area for future AAI activities.

At the end of the launching event, participants were encouraged to join different volunteer opportunities in the AAI program and serve as PAWtrollers (Animal-Welfare Team), PAWcilitators (PEER Mental Health Support), PAWtners (Human-animal team), or PAWlunteers who can assist in the implementation of AAI activities. A volunteer orientation is scheduled to be conducted in December 2023 for aspiring students, faculty, and staff who are interested in joining the UPLB AAI team.

The relaunching event was conducted in partnership with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, NSTP Office, and DEVC 126 (Participatory Development Journalism) classes of the College of Development Communication. (Joshua Michael G. Jonas)



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