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UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM

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

IPB hosts 20th University Consortium meeting

Bogor, Indonesia - Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) played host to the 20th University Consortium Executive Officers and Coordinators Meeting on 5-7 November 2007. Hosting of the annual meeting of the Executive Board of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) is rotated among its member institutions.

The meeting focused on the need to generate funds for the UC and enhance resource mobilization efforts. The expert services of a consultant on fund generation were tapped to assist the UC in this aspect. Ms. Marianne G. Quebral, Executive Director of Venture for Fund Raising based in the Philippines, was invited to present some fund raising strategies and recommendations for the UC to consider. In her presentation, Ms. Quebral pointed out the following communication needs of the UC: 1) the need to communicate the niche of the UC and its successes; and 2) the need for more visibility and to raise funds. To address these needs, the following strategies were recommended: 1) emphasize the long-term existence and track record of the UC; 2) emphasize the impact of UC activities on individuals, institutions, countries, and the region as well as the prestige of being a grantee of the UC; 3) put across a message to the grantees to improve the value of their credentials by helping improve on the reputation of the UC; and 4) market the UC experts. She then presented some fund raising strategies and challenged the UC to decide and focus on any of the following: 1) endowment; 2) earned income; 3) donations from individuals; 4) grants; and 5) membership fees.

Opening Ceremony of the 20th UC Executive Officers and Coordinators Meeting, Bogor, Indonesia. Seated from left are: Dr. Asep Saifuddin, Head of the IPB Department of Statistics; Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director; Dr. H. Ahmad Ansori Mattjik, IPB Rector, and Dr. Khairil Anwar Notodiputro, Dean of IPB Graduate School.

In order for the UC to move to the direction it wants to take, the UC Executive Board decided to set up a UC Steering Committee to make decisions on the activities that the UC must undertake and implement in the future. The Committee is composed of a representative each of the immediate past host, the present host, and the future host of the UC meetings, and the UC Secretariat. The Committee shall communicate to all UC members/ associate members the line-up of activities that shall be pursued in the succeeding years.

The University of Queensland will be the host of the 21st UC meeting.

Participants of the meeting were Dr. H. Ahmad Ansori Mattjik, Rector, Dr. Khairil Anwar Notodiputro, Dean of Graduate School, Dr. Drajat Martianto, Vice Dean, Graduate School, and Dr. Ma'mun Sarma, Director for International Programs, all from Institut Pertanian Bogor, Indonesia; Dr. Masyhuri,

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New UPM officials appointed

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) has two new deputy vice chancellors and registrar.

YBhg. Prof. Datin Paduka Dr. Khatijah binti Mohd Yusoff has been appointed as the new Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and International Affairs), UPM. The appointment is effective from 1 March 2007 to 28 February 2010. Dr. Khatijah is Professor of Microbiology at the Faculty of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Science, UPM.

Meanwhile, YBhg. Prof. Dr. Tai Shzee Yew has been appointed as the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Community and Industry Relations), UPM effective from 1 September 2007 to 31 August 2010. Dr. Tai Shzee Yew is Professor of Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Management, UPM.

KHATIJAH binti MOHD YUSOFF

TAI SHZEE YEW

Encik Wan Azman bin Wan Omar has been appointed as the UPM Registrar effective 1 June 2007. (LLDDomingo, with report from UPM News at www.upm.edu.my)

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Chairman, Master of Agribusiness Management Program, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia; Dr. Aini Ideris, Dean of Graduate School, Dr. Hasanah Mohd. Ghazali, Deputy Dean, School of Graduate Studies, both from Universiti Putra Malaysia; Dr. Sornprach Thanisawanyankura, Vice President for International Affairs, and Ms. Phacharavadee Paerattakul, Director of International Affairs Office, both from Kasetsart University, Thailand; Dr. Mahesh Upadhyaya, Associate Dean, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences Graduate Studies, University of British Columbia, Canada; Dr. Richard Williams, Professor and Coordinator, Faculty International Programs, Faculty of Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Veterinary Science, University of Queensland, Australia; Dr. Akimi Fujimoto, Director of International Programs, and Dr. Michito Mihara, Deputy Director of International Programs, both from the Tokyo University of Agriculture, Japan; Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, Chancellor, Dr. Oscar B. Zamora, Dean of Graduate School, and Dr. Cristeta N. Cuaresma, Secretary of Graduate School, all from the University of the Philippines Los Baños; Ms. Marianne G. Quebral, Executive Director of Venture for Fund Raising; Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, Director; and Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Manager of Graduate Scholarship Department, both of the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA).

Ms. Marianne G. Quebral, Executive Director of Venture for Fund Raising, presents fund raising strategies and recommendations at the 20th UC Executive Officers and Coordinators Meeting on 5 November 2007 in Bogor, Indonesia.

The UC was established in September 1989 at SEARCA, College, Laguna, Philippines and its founding members are Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) and Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Indonesia; Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM); Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand; and University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). Its associate members are University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada; University of Queensland (UQ) in Australia; the Georg-August University of Göttingen in Germany, and Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA) in Japan. SEARCA initiated the establishment of the UC and is the seat of the UC Secretariat. (Contributed by ECCedicol)

UPLB Prof tackles Philippine prospects in Jathropa biofuel production

The use of crude oil from *Jathropa curcas*, an inedible tropical plant, as substitute for bunker fuel shows great potential for the Philippines.

This was foremost of the research findings of Engr. Rex B. Demafelis, Chairman and Assistant Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, College of Engineering and Agro-Industrial Technology, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and SEARCA Professorial Chairholder, who recently concluded his study titled "Potential of Biodiesel Production from Jathropa curcas in the Philippines."

Jathropa curcas, an erstwhile insignificant tropical plant that thrives in marginal soil unsuitable for food crops, has captured the world's attention as one of the best sources of biofuel. Jathropa is unique in that oil from its seed can be used as biodiesel for any diesel engine without modification.

Jathropa fruits *(Photo courtesy of DOST, Philippines)*

Crude Oil Substitute for Bunker Fuel

Engr. Demafelis revealed that the physical and chemical characteristics of the crude Jathropa oil are comparable with that of bunker fuel. Hence, its use on power-generating units and slow-moving vehicles may be more economically viable than the transesterified crude Jathropa oil. This is supported by research commissioned by the Philippine Forest Corporation (PFC), a government firm tasked to use Jathropa in agroforestation and countryside development programs.

However, in the recently passed Biofuels Act of 2006 or Republic Act. 9367, a Philippine law that mandates the use of biofuels, only esterified oils are allowed for commercial use. Therefore, for economic benefits to be realized, Engr. Demafelis recommends that an appropriate legislative support or enabling law must be passed for the use of crude oil.

Refinement of Proposed National Standards

Engr. Demafelis likewise asserts that it is imperative to remove the methyl laurate parameter criteria of the proposed Philippine National Standards for generic biodiesel because this will exclude Jathropa biodiesel and will deprive Filipino consumers of price benefits. He pointed out that among the potential feedstock for biodiesel production, only coconut oil contains lauric acid, a source of methyl laurate.

"Methyl laurate is not even included in the American, European, or any other biodiesel standards in the world," said Engr. Demafelis.

Economic Benefits from Jathropa Biodiesel By-products

As in other feedstock used to produce biodiesel, Jathropa

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New IPB Rector elected

SUHARDIYANTO

Dr. Herry Suhardiyanto assumed office as the new Rector of Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) in Indonesia on 18 December 2007. His term of office is from 2007 to 2012. He succeeded Prof. Dr. Ahmad Ansori Mattjik.

Dr. Suhardiyanto was elected by the "Majelis Wali Amanat" (MWA) at a plenary session held on 3 December 2007 where the Indonesian Education Minister, Prof. Dr. Bambang Sudibyo was present.

Prior to his election as Rector of IPB, Dr. Suhardiyanto was a Deputy Rector handling student affairs.

In a press conference held after his election, Dr. Suhardiyanto said he will focus and prioritize on improved education, communities' research and development, strengthening of the management systems and welfare improvement. (LLDDomingo, with report from International Pepper Community)

Climate change will kill reefs – UQ Prof

Renowned coral scientists have reported in a paper published in the *Science* magazine that coral reefs will be wiped out within decades if carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere continue to rise.

Lead author of the paper is University of Queensland (UQ) Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg. All authors are members of the Coral Reef Targeted Research and Capacity Building for Management Program (CRTR).

The CRTR, based at UQ, is a leading international coral reef research initiative that provides a coordinated approach to credible and scientifically-proven knowledge for improved coral reef management.

CRTR works in partnership withthe Global Environment Facility, the World Bank, University of Queensland, the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and approximately 40 research institutes and other third-parties around the world.

While pollution, global warming, and destructive fishing practices are key threats to reefs, tourism is also an increasing cause of damage to corals.

Risks to Coral Reefs

At present, the carbon dioxide concentration in the earth's atmosphere is 380 parts per million (ppm) but the authors say that if future emissions exceed 450ppm, there is a risk of losing reefs.

To date, the paper is said to be "the most compelling scientific case to show that unimpeded global warming will be catastrophic for coral reefs and the 100 million people and one million species that depend on them."

The authors stressed that to save the corals, it is not enough to only reduce carbon dioxide emissions; reef risks such as overfishing, pollution, and unsustainable development of coastal areas must also be mitigated.

Stress on coral reefs may be lessened by increasing protection of river catchment and coastal areas; forming co-management arrangements between governments and local communities; improving catchment, water quality and environmental flow measures; fishing regulation enforcement; restoring reefs and coastal vegetation; and implementing sustainable tourism.

The study found that even small increases in CO2 have serious repercussions on coral reefs.

"The warmer and more acidic oceans caused by the rise of CO2 from the burning of fossil fuels threaten to destroy coral dominated reef ecosystems, exposing people to flooding, coastal erosion and the loss of food and income from reef-based fisheries and tourism," Prof. Hoegh-Guldberg said.

He added that "increased CO2 not only warms the climate but also dissolves in sea water making it more acidic." This decreases the ability of corals to produce calcium carbonate which is what coral reefs are primarily made of.

The study used information built up over the past decade to project how reefs will look if emissions are or are not controlled.

The paper reported that "emission pathways that include higher CO2 (600 to 1000ppm) and global temperatures of 3°to 6°C defy consideration as credible alternatives."

UQ Forum on Sustaining Coral Reefs

An international forum that convened next-generation reef scientists and managers was held at UQ with the end view of develop ing policies to sustain the world's coral reefs.

"These future leaders in coral reef science have honed their leadership skills and discovered how to grow their influence among those networks which manage and set policy for coral reefs worldwide," UQ Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and paper co-author Professor Paul Greenfield said.

The forum was attended by more than 50 postgraduate and postdoctoral students from 20 countries. (Condensed from report of Professor Hoegh-Guldberg at UQ News Online)

New SEARCA graduate scholars study at 5 UC members

SEARCA has awarded graduate scholarships for School Year 2007/2008 to 44 nationals of Cambodia (5), Indonesia (6), Lao PDR (5), Malaysian (1), Myanmar (5), the Philippines (8), Thailand (3), Timor-Leste (5), and Vietnam (6).

Of the total number of new SEARCA scholars, 35 will pursue their graduate studies at University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), while four will study at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Indonesia. On the other hand, the University of the Philippines Diliman (UPD), University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV), Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand, Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) in Indonesia, and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) will each host one new SEARCA scholar.

Of the 44 new scholars, nine are initially supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), while the rest are funded by SEARCA.

The new scholarship grants bring to 1,196 the total number of graduate scholarships that SEARCA has awarded to nationals of the 11 SEAMEO member countries, including Timor-Leste. To date, SEARCA has 112 scholars whose graduate programs are ongoing. (LLDDomingo)

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generates water and by-products such as Jathropa cake and crude glycerol, which contain impurities. Hence, these have to be further processed to realize higher market value.

Since about 8-9% glycerine is generated per liter of biodiesel produced, Engr. Demafelis reckons that conversion of glycerol into high-value raw material and creating subsequent market will help the viability of the Jathropa biodiesel industry in the Philippines. He therefore recommends that a national market for the use of Jathropa cake as organic fertilizer be established.

In addition, wastewater from washing steps of batch village-scale biodiesel production is highly organic and may be used for biogas production or land application similar to distillery slops. To increase the economic viability of Jathropa biodiesel, especially village-scale production systems, Engr. Demafelis suggests that scientific guidelines on land application on the reuse of wastewater as liquid fertilizer be established.

Engr. Demafelis said the presence of more oxygen and absence of minimal sulfur content in biodiesel against petrodiesel explains the environmental benefits of biodiesel use.

It is envisioned that the Jathropa biodiesel production, from processing to transportation, will create new jobs across the country. The Philippine National Oil Company-Alternative Fuel Corporation (PNOC-AFC) is the focal agency for the Philippine government's biofuel program, while the PFC spearheads the country's agroforestation and countryside development programs, including the use of Jathropa. (LLDDomingo)

CeTSAF program offerings

The Centre for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry (CeTSAF) is a joint institution of the faculties of Agriculture and Forest Ecology Sciences at the Georg-August University of Göttingen in Germany.

CeTSAF coordinates and organizes various inter-disciplinary, international study programs as well as cooperative research worldwide. As such, CeTSAF provides a forum for the exchange of research experience and best practice models between students and professionals in research and practice worldwide.

CeTSAF promotes a broad understanding of ecosystemic and socio-economic problems related to natural, renewable, and human resource management. It draws on advanced theoretical and application-oriented knowledge from such diverse fields as agriculture, development economics, ecology, forestry, geography, nature conservation, and relevant social sciences.

A central aim of CeTSAF is the continued curricular development of such inter-disciplinary teaching projects and training programs including internships abroad.

To achieve its objectives, CeTSAF coordinates English speaking post-graduate courses which are offered at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Faculty of Forestry and Forest Ecology.

An important function of CeTSAF is to give advice and assistance to both foreign and German students, especially in

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UGM listed among top 100 universities in survey

It was a wonderful and unforgettable day on 26 October 2006 for Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia when a eminent British daily newspaper, The Times, announced the results of a survey of universities all over the world wherein UGM ranked in the Top 100 for three categories, namely: social sciences (47th), biomedicine sciences (73rd), and arts and humanities (70th).

The survey used six criteria, as follows: 1) peer review, 2) recruiter review; 3) international faculty, 4) international students, 5) ratio of lecturers and staff to students, and 6) lecturer's citation index as the basic of arrangement.

The world-class university lists are in the following categories: 1) World's top 200 universities, 2) World's top 100 science universities, 3) World's top 100 technology universities, 4) World's top 100 biomedicine universities, 5) World's top 100 social sciences universities, and 6) World's top 100 arts and humanities universities.

In 2005, UGM was included in the list for the first time and it was the only Indonesian university to make it to any of the lists. UGM ranked 56 out of 100 best universities in the world in the arts and humanities category.

In the 2006, the quality of UGM is regarded as the one and only Indonesian university recognized at the international level. Furthermore, UGM succeeded in improving the quality of its programs as this time, it ranked as a world-class university in three categories.

On one hand, UGM owes this recognition to the academics who endeavor to hasten the improvement of the quality academic and research programs, management, and cooperation. On the other hand, this acknowledgment is a challenge to achieve more in the future, particularly in the area of science and technology so that UGM can be part of general category of world's class university. (Source: www.ugm.ac.id.)

UPLB updates BS Forestry curriculum

The College of Forestry and Natural Resources (CFNR) has of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) has revised its BS Forestry curriculum upon the approval of the UP President on 12 June 2007.

In this recent revision, the CFNR went back to the general curriculum that would require students to take 12 units of specialization courses in any of three areas, namely: environmental forestry, industrial and production forestry, and agroforestry and social forestry. Environmental forestry centers on the services that forests provide. Industrial and production forestry focuses on the tangible benefits. Agroforestry and social forestry focus on community- and people-oriented forestry and the forest as a tool for increasing the availability of food.

The revised curriculum introduces a required course on entrepreneurship to better equip forestry graduates as generators of employment. Courses on emerging technologies, ncluding Geographic Information System (GIS) and watershed management, have been also been included as core courses. The new curriculum likewise reflects a shift towards utilization of non-timber forest products like bamboo, resin, and rattan.

The Mount Makiling Forest Reserve is under the stewardship of UPLB and is used by its College of Forestry and Natural Resources for its research and as a training laboratory.

According to Dr. Ramon A. Razal, Dean, CFNR, his college is internationally recognized for its strength in forest policy. "The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recognizes CFNR as one of the leading institutions in forest policy education and so we are highlighting this strength in the revised curriculum." (Condensed from report of Aladdin P. Dominguita, *UPLB Horizon*, October 2007 issue)

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areas relating to research conducted overseas.

Graduate programs currently offered at CeTSAF include:

- MSc Sustainable Forest and Nature Management (EU Erasmus mundus programme)
- M.Sc. in Tropical and International Forestry (TIF)
- M.Sc. in Tropical and International Agriculture
- M.Sc. in International Agribusiness
- International Ph.D. Program in Agricultural Sciences in Goettingen (IPAG)
- Ph.D. Program "Wood Biology and Technology."

(LLDDomingo, with report from CeTSAF)

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 in Germany, and Tokyo University of Agriculture 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: faculty visits, research fellowships, professorial chairs, and thesis grants.

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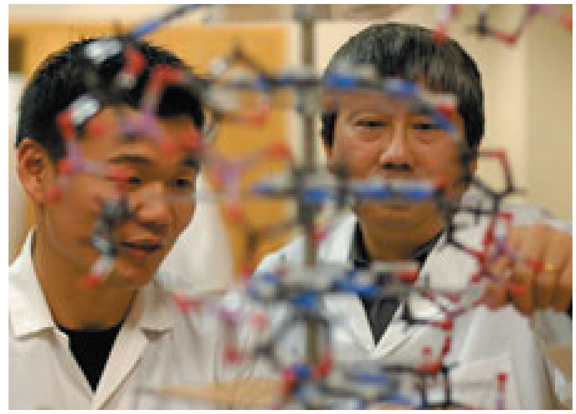
New study options at UBC

Land and Food Systems: Master of Food Science



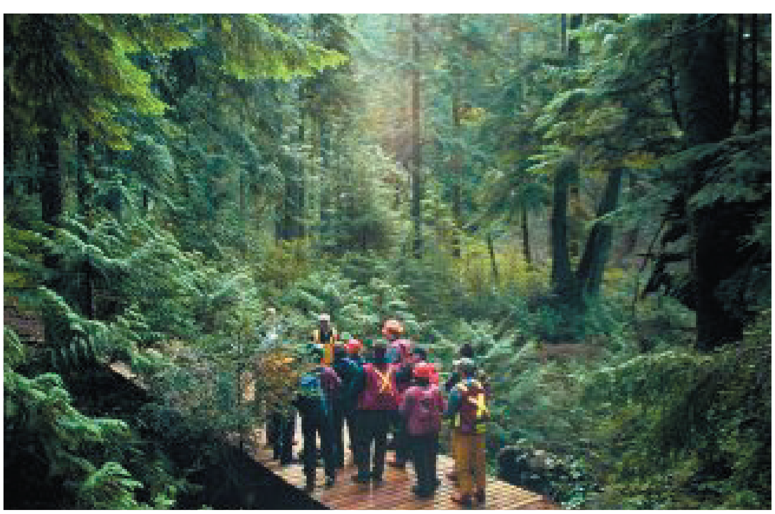
Graduate student Shin Hun Kim and Professor Kim Cheng *(Photo by Martin Dee, courtesy of UBC)*

The Faculty of Land and Food Systems' new Master of Food Science (MFS) program will shine a new light on the increasing demand for expertise in the food industry. The concern for quality control over food imports has been escalating due to recent crises such as the reported 4,000 cases of pet deaths in U.S. related to pet food imports from China, as well as human sickness and death linked to E. coli-contaminated spinach from California. With a new public focus on regulatory compliance and application of the latest technologies, there is a growing need for experts to help regulate and support the food industry.The MFS program, a professional degree that can be completed within a 12-month period, aims to make a contribution to secure distribution of top-quality products. "The foremost objectives are to equip students with first-hand scientific knowledge of food safety as it is practiced in Canada, to provide experience in international food systems, and a global perspective on the food industry that will be invaluable to individuals wishing to pursue a career in this increasingly international industry," says program director, UBC Prof. Tim Durance.

The MFS is a course-based, non-thesis degree designed for those wanting careers in government or industry. It is also appropriate for professionals already working in government, industry or private practices who want to upgrade their skills and knowledge.In addition to food safety and quality control, students will also develop competencies related to the regulatory requirements for the production, processing and distribution of food.The program will launch this September with 26 students, half of whom are international students from China and other countries. (Han Nah Kim, *UBC Reports*, Vol. 53, No. 8, 9 August 2007)

Forestry: Global Perspectives Major

Taking time to go abroad won't be a problem for UBC Forestry students who choose the new Global Perspectives major in the Natural Resources Conservation (NRC) program -- in fact, it's mandatory. The undergraduate major, to be launched this fall, focuses on the conservation and management of renewable and non-renewable resources, policy formation and planning in the global context. Students are required to conduct international field work, co-op or internship, volunteer or study abroad at one of the Faculty of Forestry's 25 partner universities in 18 countries. International case studies are incorporated into a new fourth-year capstone course to give students hands-on experience in integrating various stakeholder considerations when it comes to resource sustainability. "The Science and Management major in the NRC, which focuses a great deal on regional case studies, is the largest and fastest growing program in the faculty, yet many NRC students were telling us how much they wanted more international experience" says NRC program director Prof. Scott Hinch. "Resource management programs around the continent which incorporate international studies are thriving while those that don't are facing low enrollments or worse. There is a clear market for students to work abroad or for global interests in Canada. We developed this new major based on what students, and the market work place, want." (Brian Lin, *UBC Reports*, Vol. 53, No. 8, 9 August 2007)



UBC forestry students *(Photo courtesy of UBC)*