



GradNewsLine

Official Newsletter of the Graduate School & Distance Education Programs Office,
Visayas State University, Baybay City, Leyte



What's inside

GS Dean & Secretary Participate in Southeast Asian Workshop on Quality Assurance for Micro-credentials

Page 4

GS Faculty Shape ASEAN Guidelines for Micro-credentials

Page 4

Graduate Students Shine at International Business Competition

Page 8

Recent MS Graduate Represents University at 6th AFSA Conference in Bangkok

Page 6



VSU Elevates Its Global Standing as it Participates in the 37th UC Executive Board Meeting

Visayas State University (VSU) demonstrated its commitment to international collaboration and academic excellence by participating in the 37th Executive Board Meeting of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC).

Held from September 23 to 24, 2024, the prestigious event brought together 40 delegates from 14 leading universities in the region, including VSU. The UC, celebrating its 35th anniversary, serves as a vital platform for member institutions to review past accomplishments, discuss future collaborations, and strategize for the advancement of agricultural education.

Representing VSU at the meeting were President Dr. Prose Ivy G. Yepes, and Graduate School Dean Dr. Marilyn M. Belarmino, who also serves as the chief executive officer and coordinator, respectively.

As a valued member of the UC, VSU actively participated in the deliberations, contributing to discussions on key topics such as academic program development, faculty exchange, and research collaborations. This engagement underscores the university's dedication to internationalization and its aspiration as a globally competitive institution. Through its membership in the UC, VSU gains access to a wealth of opportunities, including joint research projects, faculty and student exchange programs, and capacity-building initiatives. This exposure to international best practices will undoubtedly enhance VSU's academic programs and research capabilities.

VSU's participation in the 37th UC Executive Board Meeting is a testament to its growing stature in the global academic community. The university remains steadfast in its pursuit of excellence and looks forward to further strengthening its ties with the UC and its member institutions.

Editor's *Corner*

by Dr. Marilyn M. Belarmino

Welcome to this vibrant issue of our newsletter, where we celebrate the milestones, achievements, and collective efforts of our graduate community in advancing academic excellence and global impact. Each story within these pages is a testament to the dedication, innovation, and collaborative spirit that defines our institution and the individuals who call it home.

Our community continues to raise the bar, as evidenced by the remarkable accomplishments highlighted here. From students excelling in international competitions to faculty members shaping global education frameworks, every achievement represents a significant contribution to addressing pressing issues such as food security, sustainability, and climate change. These stories remind us that the pursuit of knowledge is not only about personal growth but also about making a meaningful difference in the world.

The recently concluded Manuscript Preparation Workshop, hosted by the Graduate School, reflects our commitment to equipping students with the skills and confidence to navigate the challenges of academic publishing. The hands-on sessions, particularly on formatting and journal submission, are invaluable for fostering a culture of scholarly excellence. Initiatives like these empower students to turn their ideas into impactful research contributions, ensuring their voices are heard in academic discussions worldwide.

Recognizing the critical importance of ethics in research, the Graduate School also hosted a forum on research integrity, emphasizing the need

for honesty and accountability in scholarly endeavors. Such events play a pivotal role in cultivating a culture of ethical research practices, ensuring that our contributions to knowledge creation are both impactful and principled.

VSU continues to strengthen its global presence, with faculty and students making their mark on international stages. From stellar performances at business competitions in Indonesia to exemplary research presentations at conferences in Bangkok and Hiroshima, our graduate students and faculty have demonstrated their capacity to excel and lead in diverse fields. These accomplishments are a testament to the caliber of talent nurtured within the Graduate School.

Moreover, our institution's active participation in shaping quality assurance frameworks for micro-credentials through ASEAN and Erasmus+ initiatives reflects our commitment to enhancing flexible learning opportunities. These efforts align with our vision of providing transformative education that is both accessible and impactful, preparing students to tackle global challenges with creativity and expertise.

The VSU Graduate School also strengthened institutional ties through joint initiatives with the University of the Philippines Los Baños and active participation in the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources. These partnerships exemplify our commitment to creating synergies that drive academic growth and innovation.

On the international stage, our faculty and students continue to make their mark. From Hiroshima to Bangkok, our representatives have showcased their dedication to global collaboration and cultural exchange, contributing to vital conversations on sustainability and education. These engagements not only broaden perspectives but also forge lasting partnerships that benefit the academic community at large.

As you read through this issue, we hope you feel as inspired as we do by the passion and determination of our graduate school family. Together, we are building a legacy of excellence, innovation, and global impact—one achievement at a time.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Let us continue to support and uplift one another as we strive toward even greater heights.





Graduate School Honors 97 New Degree Recipients at 71st Commencement

The University's 71st Commencement Exercises on August 6, 2024, marked a significant milestone for the Graduate School as it conferred degrees on a new batch of highly qualified professionals. A total of 97 students successfully completed their graduate studies, demonstrating their academic prowess and dedication to their chosen fields. The graduating class comprised a diverse group of individuals who have shown exceptional promise in various disciplines. Among the degree recipients were 59 Master of Science, 14 Master of Management, 14 Master of Education, and 8 Master of Agricultural Development graduates. The Graduate School also celebrated the achievements of two new Doctors of Philosophy.

Ms. Precilla R. Ibañez stood out among her peers by attaining the highest Grade Point Average of 1.17. Her outstanding academic performance is a testament to her intellectual capabilities and unwavering commitment to excellence. The Graduate School takes pride in its role in developing competent and ethical leaders who are equipped to address the challenges of the modern world. These newly minted graduates are expected to make substantial contributions to their chosen professions and communities. As they embark on their professional journeys, the Graduate School extends its warmest congratulations and wishes them continued success.

VSU GS Strengthens Academic Ties with UPLB Plant Biology Division

VSU Graduate School, led by the Dean Dr. Marilyn M. Belarmino, recently held a collaborative meeting with the Plant Biology Division of the Institute of Biological Sciences (PBD-IBS) at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, headed by Dr. Maria Celeste N. Banaticla-Hilario. The meeting aimed to bolster academic and research partnerships between the two institutions, focusing on key initiatives such as faculty and student exchange programs, joint theses and special projects, trainings and workshops, and internship opportunities.

This collaboration underscores the commitment of both institutions to fostering academic excellence and advancing research capabilities. By aligning their expertise and resources, VSU and PBD-IBS aim to provide transformative learning experiences for students and faculty while contributing to the development of innovative solutions to pressing scientific challenges. The partnership is expected to open doors for further interdisciplinary collaboration, reinforcing both institutions' roles as leaders in education and research in the region.



fb.com/PBDRoomC203 pbd.uplb@up.edu.ph

Left: Dr. Maria Celeste N. Banaticla-Hilario (PBD, Division Head)

Right: Dr. Marilyn M. Belarmino (Graduate School, VSU, Dean)

Photo courtesy of Dr. Inocencio E. Buot Jr.

GS Dean and Secretary Participate in Southeast Asian Workshop on Quality Assurance for Micro-Credentials

The Graduate School Dean, Dr. Marilyn M. Belarmino, and Secretary, Dr. Catherine C. Arradaza, represented the university at a regional workshop aimed at developing quality assurance (QA) frameworks for micro-credentials in food security and climate change. The event, which brought together Southeast Asian universities, sought to harmonize standards and ensure the quality of these flexible, short-term programs. Jointly organized by Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) and Maejo University (MJU), the workshop is part of the Erasmus+-funded Promoting Micro-Credentials for Food Security and Climate Change (PMC FSCC) initiative. Held at the Grand Palace Hotel, the event provided a platform for institutions such as Indonesia's Institut Pertanian Bogor, Thailand's Kasetsart University, and the University of the Philippines Los Baños to collaborate on addressing global challenges through innovative education strategies.

The discussions centered on designing a unified QA framework tailored to micro-credentials, ensuring these programs meet international benchmarks while addressing local educational needs. Participants worked on adapting global standards to Southeast Asian contexts, reviewing draft guidelines, and forming implementation plans to guarantee academic rigor and credibility across partner institutions.

Beyond technical sessions, the workshop included cultural immersion activities, allowing participants to experience Bali's rich heritage through visits to the Ubud Art Market, a traditional Kecak dance performance, and local cuisine.

The PMC FSCC project, which runs from 2023 to 2026, aligns with the Erasmus+ goals of enhancing higher education through transnational cooperation. By promoting standardized quality assurance for micro-credentials, the initiative aims to make specialized, flexible learning more accessible and impactful across the region and beyond.



GS Faculty Shape ASEAN Guidelines for Micro-Credentials

Two of our esteemed graduate faculty members, Dr. Luz G. Asio, Head of the Department of Agronomy, and Asst. Prof. Sheena Mae P. Lubrio, Head of the Distance Education Programs Office (DEPO), recently represented the university at a landmark ASEAN workshop in Chon Buri, Thailand, held from October 14–15, 2024. The event, titled "Developing Guidelines for the Moni-



Continue to page 5

VSU Graduate Faculty Shape ASEAN..

toring, Review, and Evaluation of Micro-Credentials,” focused on crafting a comprehensive framework to enhance the quality and impact of micro-credential programs in food security and climate change. This workshop was part of the Postgraduate Micro-Credentials in Food Security and Climate Change (PMC FSCC) project, a collaborative initiative led by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS). Supported by the European Commission, the project is designed to equip students with the critical knowledge and skills needed to tackle urgent challenges in food security and climate change through flexible, online learning modules. Dr. Asio and Asst. Prof. Lubrio played active roles in shaping the guidelines, contributing valuable insights during discussions. These guidelines will provide a robust framework for monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating micro-credential programs, ensuring they meet high academic standards and address regional needs. VSU’s participation in this international initiative underscores its commitment to global collaboration and leadership in sustainable development. By contributing to the development of these groundbreaking guidelines, VSU reinforces its role as a key player in advancing higher education and addressing pressing global issues across South-east Asia.

Recent MS Graduate Represents University at 6th AFSA Conference in Bangkok

Ms. Rigil Catherine Diao Rodriguez, a recent Master of Science graduate, proudly represented the university at the 6th Asian Food Safety and Security Association (AFSA) Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand. Her research presentation, titled “Enhancing Eggplant (*Solanum melongena* L.) Productivity and Quality through Alternative Nutrient Sources,” highlighted innovative strategies for advancing sustainable agriculture. Ms. Rodriguez’s study explored alternative nutrient solutions to improve eggplant yield and quality, contributing to ongoing efforts to address food security challenges through sustainable practices. Her

Continue to page 6

GS Faculty Achieves International Recognition

Dr. Manuel D. Gacutan, Jr., a respected faculty member in the Department of Animal Science (DAS), has brought honor to the institution by winning the Session Best Presenter award at the 11th International Conference on Agriculture 2024. Dr. Gacutan’s groundbreaking research and captivating presentation skills impressed the international scientific community. This prestigious recognition underscores the university’s commitment to fostering academic excellence and producing world-class researchers. The Graduate School recognizes Dr. Gacutan’s on this remarkable achievement and for his continued support for an innovative work in the field of agriculture.



VSU Graduate School Faculty and Students Represent University at 16th International Summer School in Hiroshima

The Graduate School proudly announces the successful participation of a distinguished group of scholars in the 16th International Summer School hosted by Hiroshima University, Japan, from September 9 to 13, 2024. The delegation included an MS Animal Science student, a faculty member from the same program, along with two Veterinary Medicine students and their academic supervisor. This prestigious program, established in 2008, has consistently provided a unique platform for students and educators from Asia and South America to engage in collaborative learning, knowledge exchange, and global network building. A hallmark of this year's summer school was the emphasis on fostering future research collaborations. By inviting both students and their academic supervisors, the program facilitated the development of strong international partnerships. The International Symposium on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), held on September 12, further enriched the experience by encouraging participants to align their research endeavors with global sustainability objectives. The program offered a diverse range of activities designed to enhance participants' academic and cultural horizons. Laboratory visits to state-of-the-art research facilities provided firsthand exposure to cutting-edge scientific techniques. Tailored science program work allowed participants to delve deeper into their specific fields of interest, while collaborative sessions with Hiroshima University faculty and students fostered interdisciplinary learning and cross-cultural exchange. Beyond the academic pursuits, the summer school provided opportunities for cultural immersion. A historical tour of Hiroshima allowed participants to gain a deeper understanding of the city's rich history, resilience, and commitment to peace. Their participation in this prestigious international event emphasizes the university's unwavering dedication to fostering global part-

Continue to page 7

Recent MS Graduate Represents University ..

presentation garnered interest from researchers and industry experts, emphasizing the significance of her work in promoting agricultural innovation. The AFSA, established in 2010 as a non-profit organization, plays a vital role in advancing food safety and security across Asia. By fostering collaboration among member countries, facilitating the dissemination of groundbreaking research, and supporting educational initiatives, AFSA addresses critical issues in the global food system. The university congratulates Ms. Rodriguez on her achievement, which not only highlights her academic excellence but also reflects the institution's commitment to contributing to solutions for global food security.



VSU Graduate Faculty and Students ..

nerships, providing world-class academic experiences, and nurturing a community of scholars committed to excellence and innovation.



VSU Graduate Students Achieve Distinction at Taiwan's 2024 Summer School

Two of our PhD students, Ms. Jina May B. Morales (PhD in Horticulture) and Ms. Nova Grace D. Puod (PhD in Animal Science), proudly represented the VSU Graduate School at the prestigious 2024 University Consortium Summer School (UCSS). Hosted by the College of Bioresources and Agriculture at National Taiwan University from August 5 to 18, 2024, the program served as a dynamic platform for aspiring agricultural scientists to advance their expertise.

Highlighting VSU's success at the event, Ms. Puod's team received the Best Project Award, a testament to their innovative research and collaborative efforts. The UCSS featured a comprehensive curriculum designed to expose participants to cutting-edge advancements in agriculture and computing. Renowned faculty members guided the students through interdisciplinary learning experiences, equipping them with both technical skills and a deeper understanding of global agricultural challenges. Beyond academics, the program fostered cultural exchange and international collaboration, bringing together participants from various countries to share knowledge and build lasting networks. The participation of Ms. Morales and Ms. Puod underscores their dedication to agricultural research and development. Their achievements at UCSS not only reflect personal excellence but also contribute to VSU's mission of driving innovation and sustainable growth in agriculture.

VSU takes pride in their accomplishments and looks forward to seeing their experiences in Taiwan enrich their ongoing research and inspire advancements in agriculture within the Philippines and beyond.



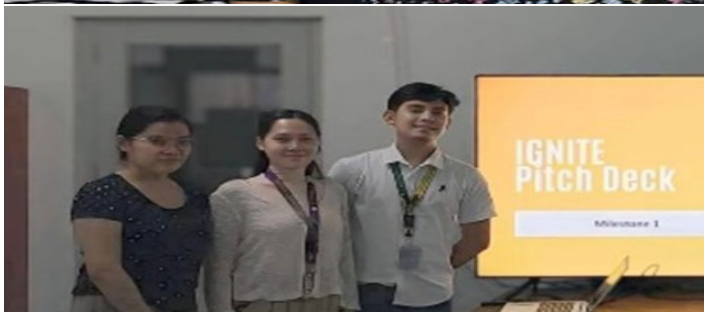
Graduate Student Shine at International Business Competition

Graduate School students showcased their exceptional talent and innovation at the recently concluded International Business Competition hosted by the University of Brawijaya in Indonesia. Competing against teams from across the globe, the students brought honor to the institution with remarkable achievements in two key categories.

In the Circular Economy category, the team of Mr. Annamor M. Ajoc, Mary Joy M. Pesodas and March Mellin E. Casarino earned the prestigious 1st Runner-Up position, impressing judges with their innovative ideas and thorough research. Meanwhile, our Master of Management major in Business Management students, Mr. Eric Andrade, Ms. Cielo May Bobier, and Ms. Kristine Jen Arbel excelled in the Eco-Friendly category, securing the Runner-Up spot for their forward-thinking solutions aimed at promoting sustainability.

The competition celebrated creativity, business acumen, and a commitment to addressing global challenges through innovative strategies. These accomplishments reflect the students' dedication, collaborative spirit, and deep understanding of sustainable business practices.

The Graduate School extends its heartfelt congratulations to the winners, whose success stands as a testament to their hard work and the institution's commitment to academic excellence.



Empowering Researchers: Graduate School Hosts Manuscript Preparation Workshop

In a bid to bolster the research prowess of its graduate students, the Graduate School, in collaboration with the Graduate Students Society, hosted an intensive two-day workshop on manuscript preparation for publication. The event, held on November 14-15, 2024, at the 2nd floor of the CCE Building, was designed to equip participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the often-challenging landscape of academic publishing.

The workshop focused on key aspects of scholarly writing, offering a comprehensive introduction to the principles of effective manuscript preparation. Topics ranged from crafting engaging introductions to mastering statistical analysis, ensuring participants were well-prepared to present their findings with clarity and credibility. Emphasis was also placed on the significance of writing for peer-reviewed journals, encouraging students to contribute to the growing body of academic literature in their respective fields.

A significant highlight of the event was the hands-on session on formatting manuscripts, which aligned closely with the Graduate School's own formatting guidelines. This segment not only helped demystify the technicalities of manuscript preparation but also underscored the importance of presenting research in a polished and professional manner.

The workshop was structured into thematic dis-

Continue to page 9



Empowering Researchers: Graduate School ..

ussions and tutorials which includes the the importance of publication for graduate students, writing the introduction, statistical analysis, why write for peer-reviewed journals and graduate school formatting tutorial.

The Graduate School aims to make this workshop a recurring event, underscoring its commitment to fostering a culture of academic excellence. By empowering students with the tools and confidence to share their research, the school continues to contribute to the development of a vibrant and innovative scholarly community.



VSU GS and GSS Host Renowned Expert to Discuss Research Ethics and Integrity

VSU Graduate School, in partnership with the VSU Graduate Student's Society (VSU GSS), hosted a significant forum on Research Ethics and Integrity. The event, held on August 20, 2024, at the VSU Break-out Room, featured renowned expert Dr. Lawrence M. Liao as the keynote speaker.

Dr. Liao, a distinguished academic and researcher,

VSU GS and GSS Host Renowned Expert ..

provided invaluable insights into the critical importance of ethical conduct in research. His presentation delved into various aspects of research ethics, including plagiarism, data fabrication, and research misconduct. He emphasized the need for researchers to adhere to the highest standards of integrity and to uphold the principles of honesty, transparency, and accountability.

The forum was well-attended by graduate students, faculty members, and researchers from VSU. Participants had the opportunity to engage with Dr. Liao and ask questions about specific ethical dilemmas and challenges they may encounter in their research endeavors.

Through this event, the Graduate School and the VSU Graduate Student's Society aim to foster a culture of ethical research at VSU. By promoting awareness and understanding of research ethics, the university seeks to ensure the quality and integrity of its research output.



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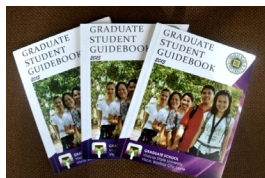
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VISION:
A globally competitive university for science, technology, and environmental conservation.

MISSION:
Development of a highly competitive human resource, cutting-edge scientific knowledge and innovative technologies for sustainable communities and environment.