

Nagoya University Philippine satellite campus welcomes three new Filipino transnational doctoral students at its 10th Entrance Ceremony

The Nagoya University Asian Satellite Campus in the Philippines (NU ASC-PH) successfully hosted its 10th Entrance Ceremony for the NU Transnational Doctoral Programs for Leading Professionals in Asian Countries on November 26, 2024. This event marked the admission of three Filipino doctoral students into the NU Graduate School of Biagricultural Sciences (GSBS), the Graduate School of Environmental Studies (GSES), and the Graduate School of International Development (GSID). The ceremony took place at the Drilon Hall of the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), located at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines. This marks a significant step in their academic and professional journeys, contributing to the region's development and fostering collaboration across various fields of study.

Dr. Norimi Mizutani, Professor and Vice President of Nagoya University (NU), congratulated and warmly welcomed the three new doctoral students. He highlighted important key words to remember and essential to the NU academic journey: free, vibrant, and courageous intellectuals. He further emphasized the university's commitment to nurturing individuals who will persevere in the face of adversity and embrace the challenges presented by society. Dr. Mizutani expressed his gratitude to Dr. Jose V. Camacho Jr., Chancellor of UPLB, and former Chancellor Dr. Fernando Sanchez for their unwavering support and for hosting the satellite campus. He also acknowledged the partner agencies for their generous contributions in providing scholarships for NU-ASCI students. He assured the students that Nagoya University is fully committed to supporting them as they navigate their academic journeys.

Dr. Jose V. Camacho Jr., Professor and Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), extended his congratulations to the new students and warmly welcomed the delegation from Nagoya University, alongside guests from UPLB, Embassy of Japan, South East Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), Department of Science and Technology Science Education Institute (DOST-SEI), NU alumni and students. He expressed pride in UPLB's role in hosting the Philippine satellite campus of the Nagoya University Asian Satellite Campuses Institute (NU-ASCI) and highlighted the achievements of this partnership. Dr. Camacho stated that by far, he considers this academic collaboration to be the most successful internationalization program undertaken by UPLB. He conveyed his gratitude to NU for their significant investment in “human resource development and education diplomacy”. He encouraged the new students to fully take advantage of this academic opportunity, engage actively with their professors, and explore NU's world-class laboratories to gain innovative insights that will enrich their educational experience.

Mr. Shigehiro Matsuda, Director of the Japan Information and Culture Center, also welcomed the new batch of scholars of the Transnational Doctoral Program of NU ASCI. He expressed gratitude to NU and UPLB for their commitment to international collaboration in key fields like biogericultural sciences, environmental studies, and international development. He noted that their partnership through this program will prepare students to tackle pressing global challenges and commended the faculty and staff of both universities for fostering an environment of academic excellence. He encouraged students to embrace this opportunity for engaging in innovative research and diverse perspectives.



Dr. Norimi MIZUTANI



Dr. Jose V. CAMACHO Jr.



Mr. Shigehiro MATSUDA

In her inspirational message, **Assoc. Prof. Ts. Dr. Nur Azura Binti Adam**, Deputy Director for Programs at SEARCA, extended her congratulations to the new students joining the Transnational Doctoral Programs of NU ASCI. She urged the students to not only concentrate on their specific fields of study but also take the opportunity to learn new things and embrace the culture. This experience will help them grow into better individuals and future leaders. Additionally, she reaffirmed that SEARCA will continue to support this collaboration, as the areas of study align with SEARCA's 12th five-year plan, which emphasizes environmental issues and the advancement of the Asian region.

Mr. Peter Gerry P. Gavina, Division Chief of the Scholarships Division at the Science Education Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-SEI), shared an inspiring message from Dr. Jayeel Cornelio, the Director of DOST-SEI. He warmly congratulated the incoming PhD students of the Transnational Doctoral Programs at NU ASCI and expressed appreciation for their commitment to advancing their education. He emphasized that this opportunity was granted to them because NU and their home institutions recognized their exceptional potential to drive positive change in our nation. In the future, the students are poised to become vital contributors to Filipino-centered development, driving progress and transformation.

Dr. Neil H. Tan Gana, President of the Nagoya University Alumni Association Philippine Branch (NUAL-PH), Associate Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, and also the current President of the Philippine Association of Japanese Government Scholars (PHILAJAMES), congratulated the incoming PhD students and celebrated the beginning of their transformative academic journey. He encouraged everyone to reflect on Nagoya University's profound motto of “courageous intellectuals,” which embodies what it means to be part of the NU academic community. He emphasized that the world needs “minds that are unafraid to seek the truth and hearts that are committed to making a difference.” Dr. Tan Gana assured the students that, despite the challenges they may face, they are not alone. The alumni and the entire academic community of Nagoya University and the University of the Philippines will always be there to support them.



Dr. Nur Azura Binti Adam



Mr. Peter Gerry P. Gavina



Dr. Neil H. Tan Gana

Dr. Akira Yamauchi, Professor and Director of the NU Asian Satellite Campuses Institute (NU ASCI), provided an update on the students and alumni of the NU Transnational Doctoral Programs. He reported that there are currently eleven alumni between 2019 and 2024, as well as eleven ongoing students enrolled from 2016 to 2023. Additionally, three new doctoral students have been admitted in October 2024 across three Graduate Schools: one each from GSBS, GSID, and GSES. Dr. Yamauchi expressed gratitude to the partner agencies for their invaluable support in offering scholarships to ASCI students. He also extended his congratulations to the new doctoral students.

Two alumni from NU ASCI, **Dr. Hadji C. Jalotjot**, University Researcher and Director of the Center for Strategic Planning and Policy Studies at the College of Public Affairs and Development (CPAf) at UPLB, and **Dr. Joy B. Banayo**, University Researcher at the Institute of Animal Science at the College of Agriculture and Food Science (CAFS), shared their reflections on their time as PhD students. They highlighted the various opportunities and responsibilities that emerged following

the completion of their degrees. Both alumni underscored the crucial support they received from NU and their respective home institutions and families as significant factors in successfully finishing their degrees on time.



Dr. Akira YAMAUCHI



Dr. Hadji C. JALOTJOT



Dr. Joy B. BANAYO

Dr. Hiroki Tanikawa, Professor, Vice Dean, and Dean-elect of the Graduate School of Environmental Studies (GSES), introduced Engr. Kenneth Jae Elevado, Assistant Professorial Lecturer at De La Salle University College of Engineering, as the newest member of the GSES community. He is also the first student admitted to the GSES from the Philippines under the Transnational Doctoral Program. As Engr. Elevado's advisor, Dr. Tanikawa expressed his enthusiasm in guiding him throughout his academic journey and warmly welcomed him to their laboratory.

Dr. Mikio Nakazono, Professor and Dean of the Graduate School of Bioagricultural Sciences (GSBS), introduced their new PhD student, Ms. Liezl Grifalda, Assistant Professor at the College of Forestry and Natural Resources, UPLB, along with her adviser, Dr. Kazuhiro Harada. He offered a piece of advice, noting that obtaining a degree is a challenging task, but that these difficulties present valuable opportunities for learning. He emphasized the importance of learning from mistakes as a crucial part of the research process. Dr. Nakazono assured her of GSBS' unwavering support every step of the way.

Dr. Yuzuru Shimada, Professor and Dean of the Graduate School of International Development (GSID), also introduced the program's new PhD student, Mr. Paul Joseph Ramirez, who serves as an Assistant Professor at the College of Economics and Management at UPLB, along with his advisor, Dr. Christian Otchia. Dr. Shimada expressed his hopes that through his education and research, Mr. Ramirez will make significant contributions to addressing the challenges facing the international community.



Dr. Hiroki TANIKAWA



Dr. Mikio NAKAZONO



Dr. Yuzuru SHIMADA

The three incoming PhD students—**Engr. Elevado, Ms. Grefalda, and Mr. Ramirez**—expressed their sincere gratitude to Nagoya University and their respective institutions for the opportunity to pursue advanced education through the transnational doctoral programs of NU ASCI. They conveyed particular appreciation to their advisers for accepting this important responsibility. The students also shared their commitments to complete their doctoral studies within the timeframe specified in their scholarships.



Engr. Kenneth Jae T. ELEVADO



Ms. Liezl B. GREFALDA



Mr. Paul Joseph B. RAMIREZ



Dr. Satoshi OHKURA

In closing, Dr. Satoshi Ohkura extended his congratulations to the new students and expressed his sincere gratitude for their decision to pursue advanced degrees at NU. He reaffirmed the university's dedication to delivering the highest quality of education. Dr. Ohkura hopes that during their time in Japan, the students will be able to cultivate a deep appreciation for NU, making their academic journey both enjoyable and rewarding.

The UPLB Sandayaw Cultural Group showcased two captivating dance performances. The first, titled “Kalapati,” symbolizes peace and is depicted through movements that imitate a graceful dove. The second dance, “Binasuan,” is a traditional Filipino folk dance in which the dancers perform balancing tricks with half-filled glasses on their heads and in their hands.



“Binasuan” folk dance



UPLB Sandayaw Cultural Group



Guests and participants of the 2024 Nagoya University Asian Satellite Campus-Philippines Entrance Ceremony (*November 26, 2024*).

The NUASC-PH is one of six satellite campuses established in Asia, alongside those located in Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. These campuses offer hybrid, research-based doctoral programs tailored for professionals in government roles who cannot take extended leaves from their positions. The programs are offered in partnership with the Graduate Schools of International Development, Law, Medicine, Bioagricultural Sciences, Engineering, Environmental Studies, and Education and Human Development. Each year, NU hosts an entrance ceremony to formally welcome the new students admitted to the graduate program.

(Article contributed by M.G.Bulatao; Photos courtesy of UPLB)