



## PSBMB ORGANIZING COMMITTEES ON THE MOVE FOR THE 37TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

As the 37th PSBMB Convention day draws near, the Organizing Committees are in a bustling move to make the last minute preparations for the event. Hosted by the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (DBMB) of UP College of Medicine, the Convention will be held on December 2-3, 2010 at the Century Park Hotel. Dr. Gabby Romero, PSBMB President excitedly declares that, "This is the first time the Convention is held in a five-star Hotel and co-hosted by the Philippine Society of Oncology." Dr. Grace Yu, the Convention Chair agrees in saying, "This is the first of the firsts among the previous PSBMB Conventions, a bit scary and challenging, but of

course with our Lord's help, all will be in place in time!" She also added, "This Convention is special in giving recognition to the National Scientist Lourdes Cruz as First Filipina L'Oréal-Unesco Science Awardee. Moreover, the medical doctors would greatly benefit in attending this event as they will earn CME units for their attendance, the first ever for PSBMB."

The various organizing committees all gathered their constituents in an active stance to make this event come to reality. Prof. Milagros Leano is on her toes as she whisks her members  
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### REVUP GETS REVVED UP!

Written by Virginia Dia-Monje and Christina Leyson

For the past six years, the Philippine Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (PSBMB) has been conducting a workshop series called RevUP, a REVIEW and UPDATE workshop series in continuing education in Biochemistry and Molecular biology. PSBMB conducts RevUP as a response to the need to improve and update the teaching of the biosciences in the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.

The 11<sup>th</sup> leg of the RevUP workshop was held at Central Luzon State University (CLSU) last April 26, 2010. This workshop series is organized and conducted by PSBMB, CLSU, the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology - University of the Philippines Diliman (NIMBB - UPD), and the Philippine Council for Advanced Science and Technology Research and Development (PCASTRD).

The RevUP workshop offers its participants updated lectures with handouts and reference materials as well as exercises in pen-and-paper and hands-on computer formats. The participants are also furnished with a companion CD containing teaching references, cool links to websites with free bioscience materials, and numerous animation files about key

bioscience topics that the teachers may use in their classrooms. Fun quizzes are also conducted to test if the participants' grasp on important concepts. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education (DepEd) both endorse the RevUP workshop for high school and college teachers alike.

Faculty and staff of the CLSU College of Arts and Sciences and College of Fisheries, Regional Science Teaching Center (RSTC), NIMBB-UPD, UP Manila, Ateneo de Manila University participated in making this event possible.

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Participants, RevUP lecturers and Movers all pose for a group picture at the Central Luzon State University College of Science Little Auditorium



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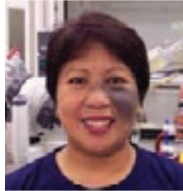
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## ABOUT PSBMB

The Philippine Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology or PSBMB is an organization committed to:

- upgrade knowledge in biochemistry by encouraging research and education and by establishing communication and exchange of professional knowledge among members as with other biochemists abroad
- establish means by which biochemistry could be utilized for the improvement of the socio-economic and health conditions of the country

Membership is open to all persons holding at least a bachelor's degree in biochemistry, chemistry, biology, pharmacy, medicine, and other related disciplines, and who are active in teaching and/or research in biochemistry and/or related fields.

Among PSBMB's activities are annual conventions, seminars, workshops on concepts/principles, advances, laboratory techniques, and aids, and applications of biochemistry and molecular biology. PSBMB is a member of the Federation of Asian and Oceanian Biochemists and Molecular Biologists (FAOBMB), and an associate member of the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB).

## Laqui garners top prize at the 2009 YSF

Written by Andrea Salvador

During the 36th annual convention of the PSBMB, a total of seven contestants competed in the Young Scientists' Forum (YSF), which is an avenue for undergraduate college students to present their outstanding research projects to a group of scholars from different scientific disciplines. Two students from the University of the Philippines – Diliman garnered the top honours. Ma. Azalea V. Laqui received the first prize for her work entitled "Cancer Photothermal Therapy Through Widefield Irradiation Using Anti-cancer Antibody Single Walled



Carbon Nanotube Conjugates." Richter H. Orpilla came in second for his project entitled "Putative Toxin Genes from a cDNA Library of *Gemmula speciosa* (Reeve, 1843) and Molecular Phylogeny of Philippine Turrid Snails Using CO1 and 12S Mitochondrial Gene Markers". All of the participants accepted generous cash prizes and tokens from Roche Philippines, Inc., one of the world leaders in diagnostics and pharmaceuticals and the official sponsor of the YSF.

Expect this year's YSF to be as exciting as five students that represent an array of scientific fields – from structural biology to molecular diagnostics – will try their luck and compete for the top prize. The finalists include Abraham C. Hermoso and Mandeep Kaur E. Parmar from the University of Santo Tomas; Vladimir Lennin A. Roque from the University of the Philippines – Manila; and Patricia Denise B. Tiburcio and Kristine M. Cangas from the University of the Philippines – Diliman. Apolinario V. Yambot, Ph.D. will chair this year's competition and Roche Philippines, Inc. will continue to sponsor the event.



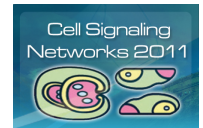
Left to right: Dr. Cynthia Saloma, Roche Representative and the seven participants of 2009 YSF

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## REVUP GETS REVVED UP!

The College of Science and Arts Little Theater was packed with 21 researchers, 121 teachers and 16 students who attended this season's RevUP. The participants came from various regions in the Philippines including Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources - National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (BFAR-NFRDI), Department of Education (DepEd), Kalinga Apayao State College (KASC-Kalinga), Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University - North La Union Campus (DMMMSU - NLUC), Cagayan State University (CSU) - Aparri, PACC, CLSU, various national high schools in Region 1, 2 & 3, and National Capital Region (NCR).

**13th IUBMB Conference and 3rd National Meeting of the Signal Transduction Branch of the Sociedad Mexicana de Bioquímica:**



**"Cell Signaling Networks"**  
October 22-27, 2010  
Merida, Yucatan (Mexico)

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## PSBMB Organizing Committees On the Move for the 37th Annual Convention

in the Secretariat and Registration Committee to their respective assignments (i.e., the graduate students: Jay, Ursel, CJ, Sharon, Eunice, Candida, Letlet and DBMB staff: Lito, Reby, Emma). Dr. Frank Heralde finished up the printing arrangements for the Souvenir Program from the final drafts drawn out by Ice from the papers and messages edited by Dr. Nevado and Dr. Chung as well as those submitted by Dr. Yambot for the Young Scientist Forum and ads from the exhibitors and advertiser's consolidated by Prof. Leslie Dalmacio. Prof. Estacio, the Local Organizing Committee chair and in-charge of the Finance Committee, busies herself with the receipt issuance for the registration and sponsorship fees that come. On-line information updates are made available through Dr. Nina Rojas, Jay and Frank via the PSBMB and DBMB websites. Membership infos are facilitated by Dr. John Donnie Ramos, Peter Torres and Prof. Leano and staff. The Socials and tributes are coordinated by Dr. Yu, Dr. Giselle Concepcion and Dr. Gie Monje in

collaboration with Prof. Leano's group, and Lita Reyes. The physical arrangements and accommodations are planned by Dr. Nevado with his constituents Allan, Julie, Marco, Rey, Nonoy, Lito and Eunice. Dr. Mudjee in coordination with Dr. Yu and Dr. Heralde arranges the Resorts World tours for the participants. Working closely with the PSBMB President Dr. Gabby Romero, the organizing committees nudge in concert towards completion of their individual targets.

This Convention expects not only an interesting showcase of technical presentations and exhibits with 5 YSF and 59 poster papers but a massive turnout of no less than 200 participants. The YSF will be competitive with three awardees sponsored by Roche while the posters will have five awardees sponsored by Mayor Lim.



Organizing committee members busy working for 37th Annual PSBMB Convention

## Biodiversity and Food Sustainability at the Forefront of the 36th Annual PSBMB Convention

Written by Karen Manalastas

The 36th Annual Convention of the Philippine Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (PSBMB), hosted by Central Mindanao University (CMU) in Musuan, Bukidnon, once again served as a locus for the congregation of scientists, students and tradesmen in the biosciences last December 3-4, 2010. With the theme "Biodiversity and Biotechnology for Food Sustainability", the convention featured plenary topics in fields such as rice and plant biotechnology, immunology and aquatic biotechnology, and molecular biology in health, biodiversity, marine biotechnology and food safety. The convention culminated in an agri-ecotour that showcased the biodiversity in the region and highlighted sustainable agricultural practices.

### *Biodiversity and Food Security through Biotechnology Applications*

Biodiversity and food security may seem like two entirely unrelated topics at first blush, but the plenary talks provided an interesting look into how the changing environment and climate has had profound impact on both, and how biotechnology can be used to study and ameliorate problems in both fields.

Rice, a staple food in the Philippines, was given primary importance in the first plenary session on rice biotechnology. Scientists Dr. Sigrid Heuer, Dr. Kenneth McNally and Dr. Glenn Gregorio, all from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), each discussed their research on molecular characterization of rice through quantitative trait loci (QTLs), discovery of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) in the rice genome, and design of climate change-ready strains, respectively.

The immunology and aquatic biotechnology plenary session was in turn presided over by speakers Dr. Libertado Cruz from the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), Dr. Apolinario Yambot from the College of Fisheries in Central Luzon State University (CLSU), and Dr. Mudjekeewis Santos from the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI). Dr. Cruz discussed biotechnology applications in carabao breeding, while fish experts Dr. Yambot and Dr. Santos discussed molecular typing of

fish and fish pathogens, and the interleukin 6-cytokine subfamily of genes in teleost fish, respectively.

The third plenary session, about molecular biology in health, biodiversity, marine biotechnology and food safety, was the most diverse of the sessions. Dr. Windell Rivera, from the Natural Sciences Research Institute in the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman, discussed current research in *Trichomonas vaginalis* diagnostics. Noted pteridologist Dr. Vic Amoroso of CMU discussed biodiversity research and conservation efforts in Mindanao. Dr. Evelyn Grace de Jesus-Ayson of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) spoke of the applications of biotechnology in increasing yield in aquaculture through recombinant growth hormones and the discovery of natural pathogen resistance genes. Capping off the session was Dr. Ma. Concepcion C. Lizada from UP-Los Baños who discussed how food safety standards are applied to products which contain genetically-modified organisms.

A plenary session on plant biotechnology rounded out this year's sessions, led by Pio Morito of Monsanto, Dr. Wilbert Monotilla of UP Diliman, and Dr. Antonio Laurena of UP-Los Baños. Mr. Morito spoke of Monsanto's goal of sustainability in agriculture. Meanwhile, Dr. Monotilla discussed microalgae as a food source and as fodder for biotechnology applications, and Dr. Laurena discussed his research on cassava genetic engineering.

Young and promising soon-to-be scientists also had the chance to present their undergraduate theses in the Young Scientists Forum. From a group of eight finalists, Ma. Azalea Laqui from the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology in UP Diliman won top honors for her work entitled Cancer Photothermal Therapy through Widefield Irradiation Using Anti-Cancer Antibody Single Walled Carbon Nanotube Conjugates (See page 3).

The formal proceedings culminated in the induction of new members to the PSBMB and the announcement of a new set of officers,



Central Luzon University is the host for the 36th Annual PSBMB Convention

both expected to infuse new energy into the society. The following members were elected into office: Dr. Gabriel O. Romero as President; Dr. Gracia Fe B. Yu as Vice-President; Dr. John Donnie A. Ramosas Secretary; Dr. Windell L. Rivera as Treasurer; Dr. Mudjekeewis D. Santos as Auditor; Dr. Apolinario V. Yambot as Public Relations Officer. The duly elected Board of Directors are Dr. Gisela P. Concepcion; Dr. Virginia Dia-Monje; Dr. Nina Rosario L. Rojas; Dr. Ameurфина D. Santos; Peter C. Torres, MSc; and Dr. Cynthia Palmes-Saloma.

### *Agri-ecotour: Recreational and Inspirational*

After the convention, participants were treated to an agri-ecotour through selected locations in Bukidnon. Highlights of the tour include a visit to the Zubiri Deer Park and Wildlife Foundation Center, the Mt. Musuan Ecological Park, and the fern gardens of Dr. Amoroso at CMU to appreciate the region's lush biodiversity. The participants were also toured through the Philippine Carabao Center and CMU's rubber plantation and processing plants. Both were prime examples of revenue-generating ventures through the application of sustainable agricultural practices, proving that entrepreneurship need not come at the cost of damaging the environment.



### THE UPSTREAM PROMOTER

Maoi Arroyo's blog "The Upstream Promoter" tackles the latest science news in the Philippines and abroad, gives productivity tips and teaching aids, and shares musings about biochemistry and molecular biology.



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