

with West Germany through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and with Great Britain through the British Council. Establishment of such scientific linkages with other countries are continuously being explored.

Fellowships were initially limited to faculty members from Consortium universities, but have since been extended to non-Consortium members in the hope that more Philippine institutions will have highly trained faculty.

The selection of doctoral Fellows is carefully done. Both the faculty member's intellectual capabilities and his usefulness to his home institution and chosen field are important. He should be a faculty or staff member of the institution and should have official sponsorship. To be considered for admission to the Ph.D. program in chemistry, the candidate should have a Master's degree in chemistry.

The home institution is expected to grant the appropriate leave of absence for the duration of the program; the student is expected to devote full time to his studies.

The presence of doctoral students in the Consortium universities enable these institutions not only to attract research-oriented faculty members but also be compelled to do more research. As the Consortium

gradually extends fellowship slots even to non-Consortium schools, the effects of the program will thus find its way into more and more institutions of the land. The local training of Ph.D.'s augmented by the dimension of research work done abroad enables the students to be exposed to research problems both locally and internationally. The students, enriched with international exposure, get involved in areas more relevant to our country and needs. Problems of readjustment and emigration are minimized.

Though the initial number of graduates of the chemistry doctoral program is small, this is an important step in the development of chemistry and the progress of its research programs in the country. Each graduate has a multiplier effect on the improvement of scientific capability by way of the research he generates and the instruction he updates. Though initially geared for teaching needs of universities and colleges, these graduates would not only affect their academic milieu but also that of industry; they can be available for consultancy work.

With continued support of the government through the DOST and all other sectors, these cooperative efforts through the consortium are expected to grow and expand towards furthering national development. ❧

The Mendiola Consortium

Natural Science Subcommittee

In August, 1975, four institutions along Mendiola Street, Manila, signed an agreement to pool their manpower and physical resources together in order to enhance their capability to provide quality education and public service.

These institutions were: Centro Escolar University, College of the Holy Spirit, La Consolacion College, and San Beda College. The respective heads, together with three other members, make up the Mendiola Consortium's Board of Trustees.

The Consortium scheme includes educational programs, faculty exchange, personnel development and the use of libraries and other physical facilities. Four standing committees have been set up to take charge of the Consortium's activities: the Committee on Academic Affairs, Committee on Non-Academic Activities, Committee on Finance, and the Committee on Physical Activities.

Since 1978, the Mendiola Consortium has been funded by the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE) in its major activities. They have awarded

thesis-writing grants to qualified faculty members of the member schools. In 1981, three students of the MS in Chemistry and MS in Pharmacy programs were awarded these grants.

Sub-committees on English, the social sciences, mathematics and the natural sciences, which are all under the Academic Affairs Committee, look for ways to improve the quality of instruction in their respective fields.

In 1986, the Sub-Committee on Natural Sciences established links with Fu Jen University. A group of educators representing the Consortium observed, from October 18 to 29 of that year, the educational system, scientific research programs, instrumenta-

The Natural Science Subcommittee is presently composed of: Segundina Santos, La Consolacion College; Magtanggol Bulnes, San Beda College; Sr. Ricarde Roa, College of the Holy Spirit; and Betty M. Lontoc, Centro Escolar University.

tion, and curricular programming in some of China's leading universities. The observations, ideas, and knowledge which this group gathered were evaluated and passed on to the faculty of the Consortium's member schools.

The Consortium has been conducting workshops and seminars to improve teaching skills. The participants are taught how to improvise and prepare teaching aids like tapes, film slides, transparencies, and three-dimensional models.

Lectures have also been sponsored by the Consortium to provide science teachers with current information on various fields. Some of the topics that have

been taken up are: Statistical Research and Design in Science, Cellular and Molecular Biology, and Photosynthetic and Metabolic Pathways. The most recent (October 1987) was a lecture-forum on the "Critical View of the Human Environment".

The Consortium, through its working committees, is still exploring ways to upgrade and enrich the science programs of the member institutions. It is the hope of the Consortium that its activities will lead towards the growth of science and its dissemination and, ultimately, contribute towards national economic development. ❀

On the MBB Program

Virginia D. Monje

Dear Cely,

Hi! Thanks for your letter.

So you're planning to get a Ph.D. degree in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (MBB). You'll surely need the full support and cooperation of your family. Your spouse will have to get used to going to bed alone while you stay up preparing for an exam. That's about 16 exams in 4 months, not counting the term papers, experiments, reports, and problem sets.

In any new venture, the toughest but most exciting part is getting started. The MBB program is understandably suffering from birth pains (lack of lab facilities and lab materials). The MBB committee is still trying to get its act together. But plans are afoot for an MBB building. Major equipment like a DNA sequencer and synthesizer is coming.

The courses we're taking now are really undergraduate prerequisites to the Ph.D.-level coursework. Our long years of teaching have kept us apart from the onward rush of science, so we have to do a fast-reverse before we can go fast-forward. We're into the second semester of MBB—Miren Santos, Lety Ver, and myself, all aging mother hens scratching hard together; and Rayda Edding and Cristina Aquino (not THE Kris), sprightly chicks fresh from college. With us, too, are Aida Aguilar-Casido and Malou Nicolas, who carry full loads teaching at UP Manila while tackling MBB.

So far, we've had Nucleic Acids under Dr. Clara Y. Lim-Syllianco, Cell Culture (*in vitro*) under Dr. Gloria Enriquez, Protoplast and Anther Culture under Dr. Francisco Zapata (a Peruvian plant breeding expert at IRRI), and DNA Analysis under Dr. Apolinario Nazarea.

Dr. Nazarea gave us individual one-semester projects on DNA and RNA probes using specially designed software. My problem was that my knowledge of computers had not gone beyond Poker Game and Frogger. It was a comfort to know that Miren and Lety knew just as little. This semester Dr. Debbie Co exposes us to the marvels of gene manipulation.

This sudden transition to full-time student, after teaching and mothering for ages, feels like jumping into a pressure cooker; being at the receiving end of the blows of academe again is surely a different experience. My son Boggle, seeing my sore mood after a tough exam at one time, commented, "Nanay, dose of your own medicine!"

Your biochemistry background is a big asset. And remember the memory tips you gave me in college? They still work now. Do join us. Experience with us the excitement of this new field of study.

Write again, and call me when you're in Manila.

Fondly,
GIE

P.S. MBB brochure attached. ❀

The author, a biochemistry teacher at U.P. Diliman, is now a full-time student in the Ph.D. in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology program of the University of the Philippines at Diliman. This article is her reply to a friend asking about her first semester in the program.

The following is an excerpt from the MBB brochure.