

13 PUP Students Gain New Appreciation for Biology

By Phoeun You
Graphic Designer

Prison University Project's (PUP) fall 2014 semester ended with 13 students gaining important knowledge and new appreciation for biology.

The biology course was collaborated and taught by professors Xan Chacko, Troy Lionberger, Ryan McGorty, Brock Roberts, Moe Turner, Diane Wiener, and Adam Williamson — all with different backgrounds in biology.

Throughout the course, students discussed basic biology topics that included information flow, cells, evolution, emergent properties and homeostasis.

Students were asked to form hypotheses and conduct experiments to test their theories. Students then were asked to present their independent projects in front of the class at the end of the semester.

Research topics from students included exploring multiple sclerosis (MS) on a cellular level, identifying whether left or right handedness is genetic, understanding consciousness, prisoners' emotional mindset concerning love and romance, causations of drug addiction, stress and food addiction, environmental factors that cause breast cancer, dangers of human cloning, HIV, cognitive behaviors of domesticated dogs, depression on a cellular level, and inherited genetic factors of breast cancer that explain why specific ethnic groups are at greater risk than others.

PUP also provided a hands-on laboratory that included microscopy, statistical analysis, and discovery of organ function through dissection, according to the course schedule.

"Having a goal in biology helps us get to where we're going faster. There's a purpose and an end to this"

Student Danny Nha Ho said, "I have gained a great deal of understanding about information transmission, cells, evolution and human disease among other things," he adds. "The hands-on laboratory experience observing biotic organisms under the microscope was beyond my expectations."

The lab experiments involved DNA extraction from strawberries, along with dissecting sheep brains and cow eyes, and observing how light causes leaves to float or sink under the microscope.

Microscopy experimentation also looked at how sea urchins cells divided or didn't divide during fertilization. "I saw the stage of an egg after the fertilization process forms its own ring to prevent other sperm from entering the egg," said Ho.



Photo by Kara Union

Back row: Isiah Fields, Charlie Spence, Rosario Banda, Brock Roberts, Barton Buenavista, Jerome Boone. Second row: Adam Williamson, Eddie Herena, Danny Nha Ho, Phil Senegal, Carlos Flores. Front row: Van Wilson, Phoeun You, "Zakee" Hutchinson and Alexei Ruiz

"I am more aware of how close living organisms (bacteria, plants, animals, and humans) rely on one another to continue the cycle of life," said Jerome Boone.

Eddie Herena was amazed at how much information is contained inside each cell. "A cell is big as the universe," said Herena. He added, "Having an understanding in biology deepened my interest in science and math."

Biology gave him clarity and purpose in life, Carlos Flores said. "Having a goal in biology helps us get to where we're going faster. There's a purpose and an end to this."



Photo by Kara Union

Carlos Flores looking at how cells divide under the microscope while the teacher and students observe

directors of boys and girls clubs, and Rotary Club members.

The SQUIRES program has continued since 1964. The popularity and success of the program was the central theme

and decisions. We acknowledge you for taking the principles and values of SQUIRES within the San Quentin Community and holding yourself to a high standard so as to be a humanitarian and mentor."

Death Penalty Spending Increases

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that reported the death penalty include Somalia, "where at least 34 judicial executions took place" in 2013. Iraq ordered more than 169 inmates to death.

The global figures for Sudan and Yemen show that more than 10 prisoners were executed in each country in 2013. Even though China has one of the largest populations on earth, the country classifies its death penalty as a state secret. However, the report said it is believed that "thousands of convicts" were sent to their death.

"The report also shows that at least 1,925 people were sentenced to death in 57 countries in 2013." In that same year, 23,392 inmates were on Death Row globally. "The method of execution range from beheading, hanging, lethal injection to shooting."

Amnesty International reported 98 countries have abolished capital punishment for all crimes. Most of these are in Western Europe and the Americas. Seven countries, including Brazil, Chile and Kazakhstan, have abolished it for "ordinary crimes." In "these countries, death penalty can

only be given for exceptional crimes such as crime committed under military law or under exceptional circumstances."

The report identified 35 countries as abolitionist in practice. However, they "retain the death penalty for ordinary crimes, but there have been no executions in the past 10 years."

Worldwide studies show in most cases, that persons sentenced to death are generally from an economically and socially backward section of society, Amnesty International wrote.

Opponents say, "It is possible for innocent people to get executed because of unfair and discriminatory application of the death penalty," the report adds. In many cases, poor defendants don't have resources to hire good attorneys to represent them, the report said.

"Many studies have suggested that there is no evidence to show that capital punishment has any effect on murder rates," the report noted. There are critics who believe an execution is a denial of human rights and it "sends the wrong message, that killing is acceptable under certain circumstances."

standing ovation as he accepted the 2014 Ritchie Earle Man of the Year Award.

In an interview with Miles, he promised to take up the challenge of expanding the SQUIRES program by designing a website and webpage to attract support on the internet.

SQUIRES' sponsors and facilitators want to reach a broader group of supporters and organizations whose mission relates to things that affect the development of today's youth.

Miles said he believes, when possible, parents and adult family members of the youth are encouraged to attend and participate in the workshops. In

out parents and kids to participate in the SQUIRES program. "Continue to spread the love of SQUIRES. These are a group of amazing men at San Quentin. You exhibit the principles and a work ethic that is needed to reach children today."

Kevin Porter a youth agency counselor said, "I'm amazed at the impact this program has had on my kids."

Larenda Brooks-Williams, a case manager, shared a story about a young son who was disrespecting his father in a parking lot. She walked over to the father with a SQUIRES questionnaire and told him to check the program out.

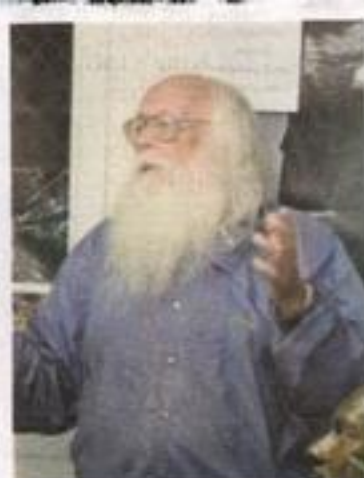


Photo by Stephanie Canale

**SQUIRES staff
Jack Jacqua**

Pastor Finds New Spiritual Calling

**By Girard Rooks
Contributing Writer**

Why me? Why this? Who hasn't asked this at times?

Two men serving time in San Quentin asked me to talk about how and why I send sermons to California prisoners. I can answer in two ways. One, my experience of how it happened, and the other is through God's view, as I read it in the Bible.

My experience comes from the fact that I have a brother who used to teach a Bible class in a county jail in California. He connected with some men who went on to state prison. For them he made copies of sermons preached by the minister at his church. Over time he was mailing these to 60 or 70 men, and family members of some.

For years I've preached about 10 times a year at Mel Trotter Mission in Grand Rapids, Mich. However, once I retired I had time to type my sermons. My brother read one, and thought



Photo provided by Girard Rooks

J.F. Girard Rooks

they'd make a good mailer, so I began sending them to him.

A few years ago something changed and he stopped mailing sermons. When I learned of this, I asked for his mailing list and I started mailing my messages myself. Then, I contacted some prison chaplains and a few of them agreed to accept, copy and make my messages available to men in their

facilities. Over time, we have reached more and more men (and now women too) in prison, and members of their families. For several years I have also mailed Spanish translations of the messages.

Now, God's view on this:

- Psalm 139, verse 16: All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

- Ephesians 2: 10: We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Why me? Why this? Because God planned it and then worked things in my life to make it happen.

If you're on Death Row, in jail or prison, or have a family member who would like to receive these mailings, write me at: J.F. Girard Rooks, c/o Hanley Christian Reformed Church, O-372 Jackson St., Grandville, MI 49418.