

# Getting Your Foot in the Door

## Editorial

Before one can get one's foot in the door, one needs to be aware that there is actually a doorway. This is the mission of the EMWA Ambassador's Programme – to inform the world about medical writing as a career path. In other words, we set up signs that lead to the door.

In this edition of GYFD, Abe Shevack, who pioneered this initiative, provides an update on the latest ambassador activities.

In September, I was on a 2-week business trip in the Asia-Pacific region. I was able to take a short weekend trip to the Philippines to visit my family and be an EMWA Ambassador at a careers event at my alma mater. I would like to thank Michalyn and Jude, two Biology students who volunteered to write about the event.

Raquel

## Ambassador's Programme update

The EMWA Ambassador's Programme is going along at a steady pace as we are spreading the word about medical writing and EMWA at universities and career events across Europe.

On June 27, EMWA fellow John Carpenter attended a medcomms career event at the University of Westminster organised by Network-Pharma Ltd with over 80 post-docs and PhD students and representatives from 15 agencies in attendance. John also attended another career event organised by the same organisers on September 13 at the University of Manchester. At this event 14 agencies were represented. There were pre-presentations about careers in medcomms given by representatives of these agencies. John networked and answered questions from participants and provided them with information on EMWA.

On July 5, EMWA past President Abe Shevack, and Raquel Billiones held a day-long workshop on clinical trial protocols, CSRs, and clinical trial transparency at the BioM biotechnology network event in Munich. There were over 20 enthusiastic participants from biotech and clinical development in attendance. The feedback was very positive and we may be cooperating with BioM in the future.

Also on Sept. 24, Raquel Billiones was in the Philippines and represented EMWA at a careers talk at her alma mater. A write up of the event is provided below.

Finally, on October 25, Franziska Abreu, EMWA Sponsorship Officer, gave a well-received presentation about careers in medical writing and the benefits of joining EMWA at an event organised by doctoral candidates and post-

doctoral fellows at the Max Planck Institute in Marburg, Germany.

The Ambassador's group and other interested participants held a lunch table meeting at the Warsaw conference on November 8 to discuss the current status of the programme and ideas on how to proceed in the future.

The Ambassador's Programme now has a page on the EMWA site listing news and past and upcoming events (see <https://www.emwa.org/about-us/ambassadors-programme/>).

In order to keep the momentum going, we are always looking for experienced presenters who have previously volunteered as either workshop leaders or served on one of EMWA's committees.

If you are interested in serving as an Ambassador or if you have heard about any upcoming career events that EMWA might attend, please contact me or the EMWA Head Office ([info@emwa.org](mailto:info@emwa.org)).

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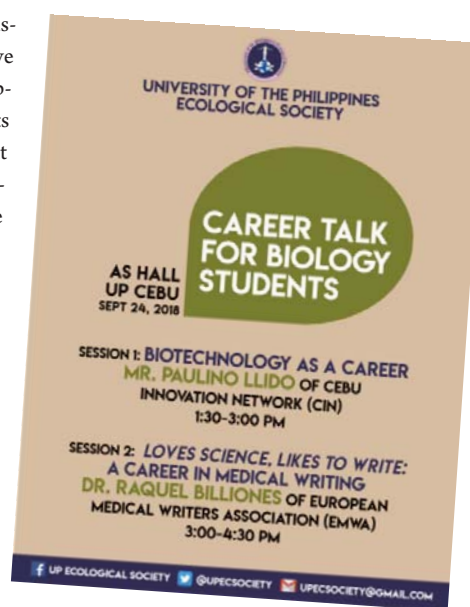


Figure 1. Event programme

## SECTION EDITOR



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## Career talk: What does the future hold after a bachelor's degree in biology?

**September 24, 2018** – Organised by the University of the Philippines Ecological Society (UPECS), a 3-hour Career Talk for Biology Students was conducted at the Arts and Sciences Hall, an event aimed to embolden biology students, seniors and freshmen alike, to think about their future (Figure 1).

Nuela Pauline Tabat, UPECS Secretary, welcomed approximately 70 students and guests to the event. She also introduced the speakers for that afternoon.

The seminar was divided into two sessions. Co-founder of Cebu Innovative Network (CIN) – a techno-hub for creative communities, Mr Paulino Llido, graced the first session. He gave an enlightening talk about biotechnology as a career for graduating students.

Dr Raquel Billiones, representing the European Medical Writers Association, had the floor during the second session in her talk *"Loves Science, Likes to Write: A Career in Medical Writing."* Raquel is currently heading the Medical & Regulatory Writing Group of Clinipace Clinical Research, a global mid-sized CRO.

She began with an introduction to the different types of medical documentations that medical writers cover. Medical writing, she added, is a promising career



gets market approval and makes a difference in people's lives.

It has been the norm that the graduates with bachelor's degrees in biology would flock to medical schools to become physicians. Some who opt out of studying medicine would become researchers or educators. That afternoon, the students were enlightened with a new set of possibilities that they can stray from the paved path of medicine and academia if they wish to. The career talk seminar established that there are other careers that can be taken into consideration when thinking about the future. It is this realisation that the students brought home and will surely ponder on (see Figure 2 for the event group photo).

The career talk seminar established that there are other careers that can be taken into consideration when thinking about the future.

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as writers can work in various settings such as pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, government agencies, research institutions, and hospitals. The writers can also be self-employed and/or home-based.

Raquel then addressed the gnawing hesitation of the students towards the career by saying that we need not be medical doctors to enter this field. She added that a background in a field of science and a good command of the English language are key to success in medical writing. Since Filipinos are proficient in English, medical writing, according to her, is well-suited for the science students who attended the discussion.

In the open forum, interested students addressed their questions to Raquel. When asked about coping with writer's block, she responded, "It is very normal to have writer's block. Just take a break. When I experience writer's block, I jog," which amused the audience. She ended the talk by showing a YouTube video that gave the audience a glimpse of the fulfilment that comes when a treatment that a medical writer supports



**Figure 2. Group photo of participants in career talk seminar**