

Supercourse Newsletter:
May 17, 2006

www.bibalex.org/SuperCourse/Index.htm
www.bibalex.org/english/initiatives/SupercourseArchive.htm
www.pitt.edu/~super1

Please distribute this to your colleagues, your friends, and your first degree relatives

Dear Friends:

Epidemiology of the Supercourse: 38,876 Supercourse faculty in 151 countries around the world, Asia – 5928, Africa – 529, Europe – 2107, North America – 18489, Oceania – 249, South America – 518 This is truly remarkable as we are certainly the largest academic network in health in the world. Let's reach 50,000 members by 1, Jan. 07.

Library of Alexandria (<http://www.bibalex.org/English/index.aspx>). I just returned from the Library of Alexandria, Egypt. This is my second most favorite place in the world after my house in Wexford. The ancient library of Alexandria survived 700 years. In the library were 400,000 scrolls, representing over half of the knowledge of the world. Last year the new library was unveiled, and I was fortunate to be there. The head is Ismail Serageldin, Ph.D. perhaps the most brilliant person I know. I love this place like no other, as it is a bastion of scholarship, knowledge and science. It makes no difference what race religion, gender, when you there you are a part of science and history. There is no other place that I have found where the love and passion of science permeates your very soul. The Library is in the shape of a sun God facing the Azure blue of the Mediterranean, the pools of water surrounding the place, are connected with the Mediterranean. The library is lit by the filtered sun from the Mediterranean. Looking at the library from a distance, you see what appears to be graffiti, and you wonder how anyone could deface such a stately building. However when you get close you see sayings of the world on the walls in German, Sanskrit, Hebrew, Braille, etc. The sensation of the purity of knowledge and science is overwhelming. You must go.

Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have Immortal longings in me. William Shakespeare

Lecture Immortalization: We are developing collaborations with the library, one of which is especially important. As part of the meeting there was Nobel Prize day. During this Dr. Serageldin and I hatched a plan, to immortalize the knowledge of the top scientists in the world, the Nobel Prize winners and select others with the Supercourse. We have already collected lectures from 27 of the Nobel Prize winners, and in addition 10 of top level officials such as Dr. Zerhouni the head of the NIH. We plan to put these in different formats such as video, voice, PowerPoint, and even paper, this will help assure that the lectures will survive for 7 centuries as did the ancient library. In addition, we plan to put this archive into the 170 National libraries around the world. We have had a great start as Dr. Serageldin, just talked with the director of the Library of Congress who was interested. By building in global redundancy in terms of format as well as geography, we hope to preserve the science of the best of the best of our generation for 700 if not 1000 years. Of course we plan to inject in the Supercourse into the archives. We want Ali Ardalan's lecture on Tsunamis to be seen in Moscow in 2800, Boris Ledoshchuk lecture on Chernobyl to be seen in 2900, and of course my diabetes lecture in 3000 and yours. We thus have an opportunity to keep the Supercourse alive, long, long, long after we turn to dust. Isn't that wonderful?

Man is immortal; therefore he must die endlessly. For life is a creative idea, it can only find itself in changing forms. Tagore

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A Scientific Supercourse

In their recent editorial "Doing more for Kate"(16 Dec., 2005, p. [<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/short/310/5755/1741>]1741), T. Cech and D. Kennedy describe the need to revitalize science education. They wrote, "[We need to] teach better with less struggle." In an effort to empower higher education teachers, we built a Global Health Network Supercourse library of 2500 PowerPoint lectures on public health and prevention ([1]). The Supercourse, funded by the National Institutes of Health, has a network of more than 32,000 volunteer scientists from 151 countries.

The realization of the Supercourse is evidence that scientists in one field can network together to share their best lectures. Judging by the many thousands of teachers and students we are drawing to our Web site, we have been highly successful in improving training, research, and collaboration in the field of public health and prevention.

The first step to expanding the system to all of science is to build a collection of the best lectures from the top scientists, such as Nobel Prize winners and members of the U.S. Institute of Medicine and National Academy of Sciences of the United States. The ultimate expansion will be to all scientists worldwide, with a faculty of a million and 300,000 lectures available to all. If we could achieve this goal, we would reduce the time it takes for scientific information to reach the classroom from 7 years to 7 minutes. At the same time, we could improve science training for millions, which is especially needed in developing countries. A Supercourse of Science would provide more efficient means of teaching.

Ronald E. Laporte,

Gilbert S. Omenn Chairman of AAAS Board of Directors,

Ismail Serageldin Director, Library of Alexandria, Alexandria, Egypt

Vinton G. Cerf Chief Internet Evangelist, Google/Regus 13800 Faina Linkov Graduate School of Public

1. Supercourse: Epidemiology, the Internet, and Global Health ([<http://www.pitt.edu/~super1>]www.pitt.edu/~super1).

May 29: Yes, my birthday is coming, no, but, where are your lectures for the Supercourse? Help the world

Invitation to participate in the 10th Symposium on Diabetes Epidemiology, November 30-December 3, 2006, Stellenbosch, South Africa Contact: Marian.Rewers@UCHSC.edu

Cardinals: We have a family of Cardinals, they are most glorious birds. They are of the family passerines with around 5,400 species (Wikipedia). They are twice as diverse as the largest of the mammal orders, the Rodentia. The female is waited on by Mr Cardinal. This provides time for Mrs Cardinal's most annoying habit, head banging at the LaPortes. Every minute she flies into our window. We hear clunk, clunk, of bird head on glass. Benson (our dog) goes nuts. As epidemiologists we fear Avian pugilistic dementia and are trying to prevent it as it could mutate with birds attacking man, not window (Alfred Hitchcock showed what could occur in The Birds). A friend said a stuffed hawk is the key to prevention, but they are hard to find in Pittsburgh and stink. Ideas would be most appreciated. (Please do not send us a dead hawk, only ideas).

Best of luck from Pittsburgh

Ron, Mita, Faina, Soni, Eugene, Ali, Francois, Rania, Arlene, Julia, Jiaying, Nicholas, Andrei, Rashid

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