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# TSU admin zeroes in on internationalization



Continuing the disruptive innovations of previous planning sessions, Tarlac State University kept its eyes on fortifying internationalization plans and “burning of boats” during the annual university planning attended by the TSU executives and Administrative Council on March 30, 2021 at the Alumni Center of the TSU Lucinda Extension Campus.

This planning session themed “Quality, Responsiveness, and Resiliency: Keys to TSU’s Internationalization” is seen as a springboard for strengthened

internationalization in all roadmaps and undertakings of the university according to TSU President Dr. Myrna Q. Mallari noting that the purpose of planning is to “always move forward.”

“We need to look beyond what happened in 2020. While we say that it was a challenging year, let us just think of 2020 as an opportunity to do better. Let us look at it as an opportunity for us to keep on shining in terms of our services to TSU,” President Mallari said.

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## SOL dean gives back to honor father's legacy

■ Maria Adelaida D. Calayag

To honor former Court of Appeals Justice Jose Dela Rama, Sr., the Tarlac State University School of Law launched a legal aid mission and seminar for women at the DSWD Home for Women in Tarlac City in partnership with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP)-Tarlac Chapter and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) held on March 4, 2021.

Law student Carisa Marie Balilia lectured about Republic Act No. 9262 (Anti-Violence against Women and Children Act of 2004) to emphasize

women’s rights and raise awareness in the society. In her Facebook post, Balilia said the lecture was fulfilling because it caters to the women who needed it most.

“I would be lying if I will not admit that I was terrified. But to hear the victims of abuse and violence shout ‘Babae ako, hindi babae lang’ gave me the assurance that my simple way of reaching out to them was embraced,” Balilia said on her Facebook post.

The late Court of Appeals Justice, who is the father of SOL dean Atty. Jose

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# SOL dean gives back to honor father's legacy

■ Maria Adelaida D. Calayag



Photo credits: Atty. Jose dela Rama, Jr.

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Dela Rama, Jr., was the ponente in the libel case filed by former President Corazon Aquino against Philippine Star columnist Louie Beltran and his publisher Max Soliven after being described that “she hid under her bed” during the 1987 coup attempt.



Furthermore, Dean Dela Rama commissioned Sumit Sarkar, an Indian sculptor, to make a bust in honor of his father which will be placed at the Justice Jose Dela Rama Moot Court at SOL.

**Contributions to Justice Jose C. Dela Rama Sr. Foundation, Inc.**

This year, Dean Dela Rama

launched his book titled “Problem Areas in Legal Ethics” which is co-authored by Atty. David Robert C. Aquino of Don Honorio Ventura State University-College of Law in Bacolor, Pampanga. According to Dean Dela Rama, a portion of his share in the royalty of the book will go to the Justice Jose C. Dela Rama Sr. Foundation which aims to initiate legal aid to the community and give scholarships to “poor but deserving” law students of TSU.



Chief Justice Diosdado M. Peralta, who was recently conferred with an honorary doctorate by TSU, and University of Santo Tomas-Faculty of

Civil Law dean Atty. Nilo Divina wrote the foreword of the book.

“Problem Areas in Legal Ethics presents a novel take in approaching Legal Ethics. Not only does it cover essential notions and concepts on the practice of law, it also presents emerging issues in the legal field, such as cyber advertising and practice and artificial intelligence,” CJ Peralta said in his foreword.

Said book is available at Central Bookstore for 1,780 pesos.

## Mobile Registration for IPs

Last February 23, around 100 indigenous peoples in Brgy. Maruglo, Capas were registered and given certificates of live birth through the assistance of the SOL Legal Aid Clinic and collective efforts of the Philippine Statistics Authority-Tarlac and local government of Capas.

The activity is also a part of the celebration of the PSA's Civil Registration Month.

According to Atty. Marco Polo Cunanan, head of the SOL Legal Aid Clinic, they will continue holding this service to register IPs for the next two years which will be sponsored by the Justice Jose C. Dela Rama Sr. Foundation. They are targeting to help an IP community in Pampanga.



“We intend to make this an annual event. We are still coordinating with IBP Pampanga leadership, but hopefully we can do one more IP registration this year,” Atty. Cunanan said in an interview.

He was assisted by 12 law students in the conduct of this activity.

# TSU receives ISA certification, reaps recognitions from AACCCUP and DOE

■ Jodie Andrea G. Pangilinan



Photos from August 2019 ISA visit

The ISA is a quality assurance process that assesses the institutional sustainability of a higher education institution (HEI) in five key result areas: (1) governance and management, (2) quality of teaching and learning, (3) quality of professional exposure, research, and creative work/innovation, (4) support for students, and (5) relations with the community.

It is a government certification required by partner international HEIs.

In this three-day evaluation, document reviews and interviews with members and stakeholders of the university were conducted by representatives from CHED who were selected from different HEIs. After which, a technical working group from CHED-OIQAG reviewed and analyzed their report.

### AACCUP Awards and the 34th AACCUP Annual National Conference

The university once again received a recognition from AACCCUP for having the highest number of Level III re-accredited programs in 2020 during the awards ceremony of its 34th Annual National Conference held virtually via Zoom last March 10-12, 2021.

The said conference is held yearly to strengthen SUCs in accrediting and evaluating their programs and

In its efforts to attain quality higher education and university operations, Tarlac State University garnered certifications and awards from notable institutional accrediting authorities for the month of March.

These include the results of ISA (Institutional Sustainability Assessment) issued by the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) Office of Institutional Quality Assurance and Governance (OIQAG), a plaque of recognition for ranking 1st among 112 state universities and colleges (SUCs) with the highest number of Level III re-accredited programs from the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCCUP), Inc., and a five-star rating in the Energy Audit Initial Rating of the Department of Energy (DOE).

In a Zoom interview, Vice President for Planning and Quality

Assurance Dr. Niño B. Corpuz expressed his elation and gratitude for the awards received.

"This is the result of our cooperation, unity, [and] synergy in



the university. Ito ay accomplishment ng lahat ng members ng TSU, of course, with the leadership of Ma'am President [Dr. Myrna Q. Mallari]. Hindi naman natin magagawa 'yun without her guidance, without her wisdom. Ako, personally as the VP, ako lang yung facilitator, but lahat ay involved - lahat ng mga colleges, offices, lahat sila kasama sa achievement na ito," Dr. Corpuz said.

### ISA Certified

After almost two years, TSU received the narrative report of CHED-OIQAG on March 4, 2021 certifying that the university passed the ISA held last August 28-30, 2019 at the TSU Alumni Center of the Lucinda Extension Campus.



empowering their internationalization efforts through plenary sessions led by renowned individuals.

This year's conference themed "Paradigm Shift in Quality Assurance in Higher Education" focused on the



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challenges to the educational system brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and how SUCs adapted and persevered throughout the changes.

With seven plenary sessions and over 500 participants, the conference was also graced by highly distinguished individuals who shared and showed their support to the organization.

CHED Chairperson Hon. J. Prospero “Popoy” E. De Vera III expressed his gratitude to AACCUP for organizing the conference even with the threat of the pandemic.

“I specifically want to congratulate chairperson president Dr. Myrna Q. Mallari for conducting this annual national conference during these very challenging times. AACCUP has been a constant partner of the Commission in ensuring that SUCs remain compliant not just with minimum standards but move forward to build upon the minimum standards of accreditation,” Chair De Vera said.



He also added that the new normal in the educational system is a logical consequence of all the collective action and the *bayanihan* spirit exhibited by both public and private universities since March 2020.

Chair De Vera emphasized that flexible learning will now be a part of the HEI system where SUCs will be allowed as much flexibility as possible to mix and match the appropriate learning modalities that they will implement.

The conference also held open fora to address different concerns and issues of SUCs.

“Naka-clarify ng mga BOT (Board of Trustees) members ‘yung mga questions, queries, concerns ng mga SUCs especially with the emergence of online accreditation. Very accommodating yung mga BOT to assist and guide SUCs. Kasi, ang talagang vision and mission ng AACCUP is really to help and guide SUCs to sustain quality assurance in their programs and even the whole institution,” VP Corpuz said on the importance of open fora in the conference.

A special awards ceremony for the 2019 rankings was held on the second day where TSU received four recognitions: 1) highest number of Level IV re-accredited programs; 2) one of the 14 SUCs with Institutional Accreditation out of 112 in the country; 3) one of the five (5) SUCs with 100% accredited programs; and 4) most improved Institutional Quality Assurance Office of 2019.

The presentation of 2019 awards during the 33rd Annual National Conference was cancelled because of COVID-19.

#### **DOE Performance Assessment**

The DOE conducted a virtual energy audit spot check at TSU on March 17, 2021 with the assistance of Vice President for Administration and Finance Dr. Marlon V. Gamido as the Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EEC) Officer and Ar. Cherry L. Fabianes as the EEC focal person.

The team, led by VP Gamido, underwent interviews regarding the programs and practices related to EEC as well as assisting the audit team during the walk-through of the TSU campuses.

From the result of the inspection, TSU garnered full marks in Office Policy and Best Practices for Fuel Conservation. While the university did not get high marks in Best Practices for Electricity Conservation, it still received a total score of 92.8 equivalent to a five-star rating and a grade of “A”.



Aside from observations and analyses made on energy consuming systems, the report also included several recommendations to save energy notably on the university’s lighting, electrical and office equipment, and air-conditioning systems.

This performance assessment is in line with the DOE’s direction for the institutionalization of the Government Energy Management Program (GEMP) to identify opportunities for energy efficiency and conservation on electrical facilities.

# Remembering a year of quarantine

## EDITORIAL

Reminiscent of the so-called Lockdown last year for the entire Luzon island is another lockdown for this year — only that it is localized. COVID-19 positive cases rose at an alarming rate in the province of Tarlac this March just as the anniversary of the enhanced community quarantine or ECQ is being remembered.

Tarlac State University is not a stranger to this situation. Towards the end of this month, the number of COVID positive cases and persons under monitoring (PUMs) doubled making each member of the TSU community at risk.

As we look back and compare

the situation last year with what is happening today, can we afford to smile? Can we finally say, “Thank you, Lord, for sparing us from this virus”?

In 2020, we were all hopeful that things will get better in a year’s time because of the scientific discoveries and breakthroughs to curb the harmful effects of the virus. But no matter how inventive and ingenious these scientists are, if people are careless and undisciplined, we will all drown into this sinkhole.

Simple actions are expected from us to prevent the virus from spreading. As simple as disinfecting of hands, wearing masks, and practicing physical

distancing can help in controlling the rising number of cases. Big gatherings and concealment of symptoms are also frowned upon nowadays. Cooperation is paramount. Without these, we cannot move forward.

It has been a year since these protocols were enforced. Haven’t we become used to these? In protecting ourselves, have we become selfish? Have we even considered the welfare of our doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers? Chances are, if we are cautious enough, we could save more lives and resources. By submitting to protocols, we become useful citizens of our country.

# TSU invites stakeholders to budget forum

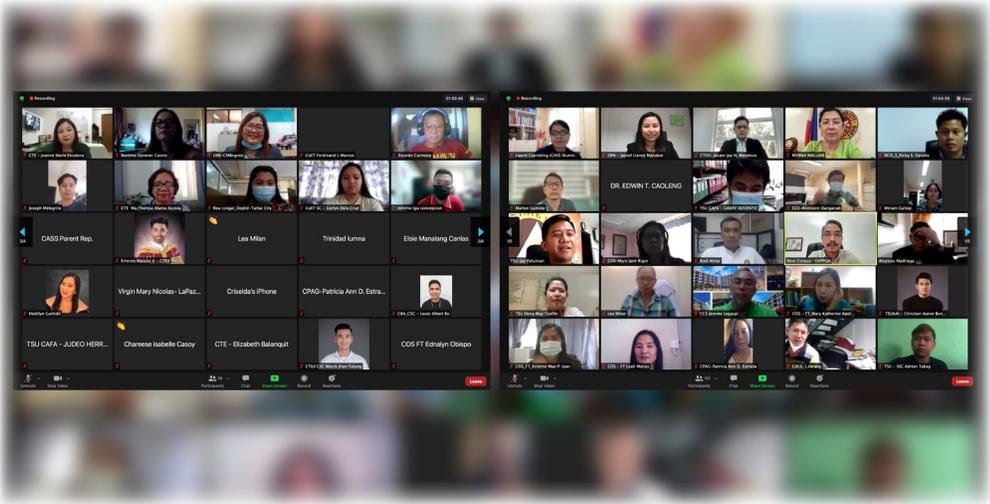
■ Jazzel Llaneli M. Manabat

Guided by the university’s core values on transparency and true commitment, the Tarlac State University administration organized a budget forum with stakeholders for fiscal year 2022 held via Zoom on March 5.

The said university-level budget forum is intended to inform and update stakeholders on the budget utilization of TSU and its priority projects for 2021 and 2022 to ensure the equitable use of government fund.

TSU President Dr. Myrna Q. Mallari said that the forum provides a venue for all stakeholders to gather, affirm, and provide inputs to the university’s budget plan and priorities noting that holding such activity is not a first for TSU.

“This undertaking is [done] not only now but have been done in the past, in the college level, where we ask respective deans to invite stakeholders [and] present the priority projects of the university and what inputs the stakeholders have on the priority projects to be funded by the government,” President Mallari added.



Vice President for Administration and Finance Dr. Marlon Gamido and Budget Officer Ms. Elena May Teofilo presented the university’s comparative three-year budget and budget plan, and budget proposal for fiscal year 2022 including the list of priority programs and projects.

In his closing remarks, Vice President for Planning and Quality Assurance Dr. Niño Corpuz shared that proper disclosure and interpretation of the university’s budget eliminates biases and establishes a sense of

accountability which manifests the university’s commitment to its core values.

Around 120 stakeholders were present in the virtual event such as TSU faculty members, officers of the university and college student councils, parents, and industry partners along with the TSU officials and members of the Administrative Council led by President Mallari.

The Office of Planning, Performance Monitoring, and Evaluation led by Dr. Jay Pabustan spearheaded by the budget forum.

# TSU admin zeroes in on internationalization

■ Jazzel Llanelli M. Manabat

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Furthermore, President Mallari urged the Administrative Council to journey together to attain the university's vision and observe a paradigm shift in generating new knowledge (research), imparting generated knowledge (instruction), and sharing generated knowledge to the community (extension) to produce 21st century learners and become a society-centric academic institution.

“Let us journey for a strengthened internationalization which is not just about inking a MOA [memorandum of agreement]. It is about generating knowledge together through these [international] exchanges,” President Mallari added.

Along with the TSU administration, Mr. Christian Aaron Bondoc attended the university planning as a representative of the TSU alumni association. Bondoc was the student regent from 2016 to 2017.

## ***Burning and Building of Boats***

During the presentation of plans, Vice President for Administration and Finance Dr. Marlon V. Gamido shared a quote on “burning of boats” alluding to leaving old habits and moving forward for development.

“When you burn the boat, don't return to old ways. We must look into what we have now, and we must look forward to IZN [internationalization] to direct all our efforts in research, extension, and instruction,” Dr. Gamido said in reference to the achievements of TSU during the seven-year presidency of Dr. Mallari.

Meanwhile, Vice President



for Academic Affairs, who presented Roadmap B, responded to the said quote that the academic group aims to build bigger boats which will take TSU “around the world” or towards internationalization.

Continuing the trend, Vice President for Research and Extension Services Dr. Armee N. Rosel mentioned that they have already “burned their boats” and moved forward with the appointment and designation of promising directors along with the creation of a new roadmap, Roadmap C, solely dedicated for research



and community services.

On the other hand, Vice President for Planning and Quality Assurance Dr. Niño B. Corpuz emphasized that they do not need to build boats because they continually teach people to be relevant and self-reliant through Roadmap D.

For Roadmap E, Management Information Systems Office director

Dr. Heidilyn V. Gamido stated that TSU has leaped from traditional classrooms to flexible learning with the help of information systems.

## ***Improved Roadmaps***

TSU has been using roadmaps since 2014 to assess the university's accomplishments and guide its future strategic actions with the leadership of President Mallari. Such roadmaps were reviewed and improved through the Office of Planning, Performance Monitoring, and Evaluation (then Institutional Planning and Development Office).

From four roadmaps in 2014 focusing on infrastructure and equipment development; faculty, personnel, and executive development; quality management system; and information systems, the university's path has been streamlined and new roadmaps were added and refined for inclusive development.

In 2018, the academic performance roadmap was added to include academic targets and performance. While in 2020, the roadmaps were revamped with the merging of infrastructure and human resources and the creation of a research and community service development roadmap.

In crafting the TSU roadmaps, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations were considered and incorporated.



# TSU traverses global path with international partners

■ Maria Adelaida D. Calayag



**INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP EXPANSION, MENTORING AND TRAINING SESSION FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION**

**#ReSpACE** The Redesign of Specialized Access to Connectivity and Engagement  
A Globalized Delivery of Internationalization Programs and Partnerships

**24-26 MARCH 2021**  
TARLAC CITY, TARLAC, PHILIPPINES

<b>PROF. DAVID VISENTIN</b> Director, Department of Fine Arts, Camosun College Victoria, British Columbia, CANADA	<b>DR. DONALD L. JARUIT</b> Assistant Dean, Faculty of Education, Concordia University Montreal, QUEBEC, CANADA	<b>DR. YOSHINA YAMTA</b> Coordinator, Cultural Studies Center, University of Indonesia JAYAPURA, INDONESIA	<b>RITHIKA SUSAN THOMAS</b> Professor, Nanyang Technological University SINGAPORE	<b>ASSEL PROF. DR. LETTY NURULHADIYATI</b> Business Administration Chair, Mahkota International College Sinar Harapan, CILIK, THAILAND	<b>DR. LILY NURLAILI</b> Former Chair and Graduate Advisor, Entomology of Indonesia, The Philippines University of Pangasinan, PANGASINAN
<b>PROF. DR. JEFFREY M. BARRACON</b> Director, Office for International Affairs, Tarlac State University	<b>DR. NAKAO NOMURA</b> TSD Programme Manager, Aomori University of Education, Tsukuba City, Ibaraki Prefecture, JAPAN	<b>DR. JOCHIMU MARELS CHA</b> Professor, Chemistry Education, Chungnam National University, DAEJEON, SOUTH KOREA	<b>MUHAMMAD WAHYU ISLAMI PRATAMA</b> Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, ITS (Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember) Surabaya, EAST JAVA, INDONESIA	<b>DR. MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA</b> Assistant Professor, School of Education, University of Tsukuba, Utsunomiya City, GUNMA, JAPAN	

Filipino student innovators along with a sharing of their Project SHEA. These jumpstarted the sharing on strategic directions implemented by mentioned schools.

Tarlaqueño speakers also graced the first day of the activity. Prof. Marcelino P. Balanquit of TSU introduced the Tarlac cultural branding through the international exposure of the award-winning TSU Performing Arts Dance Troupe and the TSU Chorale, while Dr. Christine N. Ferrer of Tarlac Agricultural University tackled the strengthening of international visibility and reputation.

Last March 24 to 26, Tarlac State University organized a mentoring session on strategic partnership expansion and training on internationalization in partnership with the Commission on Higher Education - International Affairs Staff (CHED-IAS) and the IZN Global Collective held via Zoom.

The event themed “#ReSpACE – Redesign of Specialized Access to Connectivity and Engagement” is a bold move of the university in starting and reinventing its internationalization and flexible learning efforts.

Speakers from Canada, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Pakistan shared insights, practices, and resources which opened doors for a fresh perspective on internationalization and flexible delivery of teaching and learning amid the global health crisis.

According to Prof. Myrel M. Santiago, a unit head of TSU Office of International Affairs, the three-day event is aimed towards realizing the vision of TSU to become a premier university.

“During the exchanges of policies, programs, and practices, we saw and felt that there was a heart in what our [prospective] partners have been doing. Thus, we at OIA think that after the event, our commitment towards IZN will commence as everyone is excited to start a project or a program with our respective speakers not just for status symbol but to improve the learning and experiences of our students [and to provide a] better branding and marketing of TSU in the IZN arena,” Prof. Santiago said.

In an opening message, TSU president Dr. Myrna Q. Mallari shared the internationalization efforts of TSU which started in 2004 with an agreement inked with Lifelong College in Hong Kong. Since then, the university has started admitting foreign students to programs approved by the Board

of Regents where TSU professors travel abroad to render academic services.

The first day of the event saw high caliber speakers who gave a macro-level perspective on international affairs. Atty. Lily Freida M. Milla of the CHED-IAS highlighted the importance of Philippine internationalization sustainability and institutional sustainability in this time of pandemic. She also urged TSU to maintain continuity of services as a higher education institution (HEI), exercise creativity in coming up with new programs and innovative approaches to education, and ensure connectivity and technological readiness to connect locally and globally. Furthermore, Atty. Milla dubbed TSU as “The Sustainable University.”

Prof. David Visentin of Camosun College in Canada shared an inspirational message on internationalization which he paralleled with music. Being a performer, conductor, pedagogue, arts administrator, and expert in music, Prof. Visentin, the Chair of Music at Camosun College and Director of Victoria Conservatory of Music, said that music is the universal platform for mutual understanding which can bring the world together.

Meanwhile, Dr. Lili Nurlaili of the University of Pamulang in Indonesia tackled the national perspective and initiatives of Indonesia towards internationalization and showed a comprehensive diagram on diversity, equity, and inclusion; data-driven decision making; and agility and transformation.

On internationalization amid pandemic and e-programs, Prof. Muhammad Wahyu Islami Pratama of ITS Surabaya of Indonesia imparted their strategies and initiatives which could be adopted by TSU, while Prof. Rithika Susan Thomas of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore discussed the project-based learning for

“[Internationalization] cannot happen in a few internal connections. It must be felt in heart of every constituent. We also need to consider the quality of our partnering institutions,” Dr. Ferrer said in her presentation.

On the second day, the focus was shifted to the blending of internationalization efforts into instruction, research, and extension with an emphasis on being an educator with a heart.

Two speakers highlighted the importance of humanity in teaching especially in this new normal context. Dr. Muhammad Mustafa of Forman Christian College (a Chartered University in Pakistan) talked about his experience in the global leadership on science instruction remote learning where he also emphasized the QS rankings for excellence. He shared practical applications and necessary skills for teachers in the classroom while looking into the heart of the students. Dr. Daniel Cha of Daegu University in South Korea presented a short but entertaining video on coping mechanism of their students and the blessings brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic – an experience similar to Dr. Mustafa’s but in the Korean university context.

Br. Manuel Pajarillo, Vice Chancellor for Research of De La Salle in Lipa City, Batangas, noted that reworking the university research agenda, establishing internal and external networks, and aiming to be part of a global academic community are key considerations in internationalization. Meanwhile, Dr. Nakao Nomura of the University of Tsukuba in Japan strengthened Br. Pajarillo’s points. He discussed their university’s experience in the resilient response to national issues backed up by technology and innovation.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Nuntana Udomkit

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of Mahidol University in Thailand talked about business entrepreneurship in today's pandemic and presented data that could influence program design in this changing environment, while Dr. Donludee Donnie Jaisut of Kasetsart University in Thailand shared the wide influence of HEIs in their country and its internationalization model. He said that educational institutions must contribute to their respective countries.

In pushing internationalization efforts, Ms. Jenni Montero, Regional Manager of Camosun College in Canada imparted her extensive experience in setting up and running internationalization programs and connecting Philippine universities to the rest of the world which is beneficial to TSU's journey towards the global path. She also shared Camosun College – five decades of milestones as they honor their beautiful past and continue to inspire the future.

The last day of the webinar highlighted collaborations and communications. Dr.

Yazrina Yahya, Deputy Director of the Center for Leadership Sustainability Higher Education Leadership Academy in Malaysia shared how they developed a leadership ecosystem through internationalization innovative collaboration. Dr. Yahya also pointed out the benefits of internationalization through research and training, brand recognition, academic quality, and diversifying the campus experience.

Lastly, on the communications field, Mr. Hector J. Gloria, Jr. of University of St. La Salle in Bacolod, Philippines presented the importance looking within the institution to strengthen internationalization branding of an institution and the essence of being a global educator amid this pandemic.

Most of the speakers stressed the importance of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations with Atty. Milla providing a statement of continuous support from CHED as TSU continues to thrive globally.

As a response to the speakers'

presentations, Dr. Jasper Jay N. Mendoza, the newly designated director of the TSU Office of International Affairs expressed his delight and excitement to pursue further the internationalization efforts of the university.

Dr. Mendoza conveyed the strategic direction of TSU on internationalization saying, "We want to expand global awareness and appreciation of international learning opportunities in the university. We are also aiming to have short-term international programs and projects for English Language proficiency."

Through this event, TSU is targeting to build more international opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. The university will also develop strategic networking and collaborations with other institutions which will expand global awareness of international learning at TSU. With these objectives, a harmonization of craft, aligned processes and procedures, and policies and regulations to CHED Memoranda will be materialized.

## TSU virtually celebrates National Women's Month

■ Jodie Andrea G. Pangilinan



recognized through the Office of Public Affairs Facebook page.

### **National Women's Month kick-off program of TSU**

Through the GAD office, TSU held the kick-off program for its National Women's Month celebration on March 16, 2021 during the flag raising ceremony at the Main Campus.

In the short program, TSU president Dr. Myrna Q. Mallari shared an inspirational message addressed to both men and women in the audience on recognizing the role of women.

"We must recognize the role of women in our lives; recognize the hardship, love, affection that women give not only to their children but to all," Pres. Mallari said.

Series of webinars for faculty and personnel were also held on March 19 and 30 regarding mental and spiritual health.



Tarlac State University welcomed the month of March with an outpour of purple in support of advocating the advancement on women's rights and gender equality, and the ending of violence and discrimination against women recognizing their significant contributions in nation-building.

This year's National Women's Month Celebration is themed, "Juana Laban sa Pandemya: Kaya!" which highlights women's participation in

battling the COVID-19 and the gender issues exacerbated by it.

The Gender and Development Office, under the leadership of Dr. Rita Pulmano, has organized online activities to keep the TSU community engaged even during this time of pandemic.

Some of these include posting inspirational stories online, webinars, and competitions for spoken poetry, digital poster and video advocacy making. Winners of the online contests were

# FEATURE

## Stories: The FTRC & the TSU Lagoon

■ Jodie Andrea G. Pangilinan

Tarlac State University continuously strives to attain its vision of becoming a premier university in the Asia Pacific Region. Included in this endeavor is the development of infrastructure and open spaces that will provide the ideal environment for learning, research, and recreational activities.

For this year, two major projects have come into fruition through the collaborative effort and determination of the TSU community and partner government agencies. These are the Food Technology and Research Center (FTRC) and the TSU Climate Change Resilient and Ecological System Conservation Park, fondly called “TSU Lagoon,” which are both located at the TSU Lucinda Extension Campus.

The development and improvement of the FTRC and the Lagoon is also in line with the university’s compliance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations which include Zero Hunger (SDG 2); Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3);



Quality Education (SDG 4); Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG 9); Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11); Climate Action (SDG 13); and Life on Land (SDG 15).

### FTRC

The Food Technology and Research Center is a two-storey building located northeast of the

campus. With a total area of 1,200 square meters, it houses state-of-the-art laboratories and equipment, and lecture rooms dedicated for instruction, research, and application of advancements in the food industry.

There are four main services that the center plans to cater: research and development, food quality assurance, shared facility services (SFS), and production and marketing.

With this, the FTRC hopes to make strides in food research; ensure the quality, safety, and standardization of food products; provide an avenue for collaboration with other institutions; and provide an opportunity to display the newly developed and innovated products of the university.

Funded by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) through the leadership of TSU president Dr. Myrna Q. Mallari, this building was first conceptualized in 2015 with a mission to be a well-equipped resource center in the field of science and technology. It shall serve as a research hub for students and faculty aiming



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towards national food security, food safety, food business sustainability, and building a healthier society.

The building has three production areas intended for different processing operations with receiving areas and a supply room. The first processing room is for beverage production, sugar preserved processing, drying, and fermentation using fruits and vegetables. The second one is for meat, fish, and poultry equipped for meat processing like sausages as well as canning and bottling operation. The last processing area is for the production of bread, cakes, and native delicacies which has separate areas for preparation, cooking, baking, and packing. It also has a viewing area for visitors and students for observation.

Aside from these areas, the FTRC also has a visitor's lounge, director's office, three (3) lecture rooms for instruction and training, and a display area for showcasing the various products of the center.

Meanwhile, the second floor houses the University Research Office and testing laboratories such as the Physical Chemical Laboratory with a chemical storage, the Sensory Lab with a tank room, and a Microbiological Laboratory with sections for conducting microbiological analysis of food samples.

FTRC director Dr. Lea B. Milan said in a video presentation that their team hopes to make significant contribution to the national agenda on food security and safety and on building a healthy society especially in dealing with unforeseen challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The FTRC was inaugurated last January 29, 2021.

### **TSU Lagoon**

To provide an outdoor



recreational space for students, faculty, personnel and even tourists, TSU has developed the Climate Change Resilient and Ecological System Conservation Park or TSU Lagoon, also funded CHED, which is situated on the north side of the Lucinda Extension Campus.



The Lagoon covers almost 13% of the total open space/setback of the campus with around 10,494 square meters. It was designed to be a natural catch basin for stormwater or water that originates from the rain during typhoons.

### **How it started**

In an interview with Ar. Ferdinand Valencia, Director of the Facilities Development and Management Office, he said that the northernmost area of the campus was like a wasteland. The land's level was too deep, and its unstable soil

compaction makes it inadequate for infrastructure building which explains why it was unused for a long while.

However, in 2018, there were already talks of developing the said area into an eco-park for the TSU community. It would be a place ideal for a campus ecological development for recreation, studying, team building, camping, outdoor classes, exercises, and other activities.

Coincidentally, in 2019, CHED called for the submission of project proposals for their annual institutional grant. The university applied for the



grant with Ar. Valencia as the project leader; Prof. Redemptor Toledano, then director of the Planning and Development Office, as the co-leader; Dr. Glenard Madriaga, then vice president for Administration and Finance, as the project coordinator,



with the support of President Mallari. After a successful presentation, CHED approved the proposal in June 2019. With the 4.8M funding and TSU's own financial resources, the project was ready to be developed.

#### **Development story**

The development of the eco-park during the latter half of 2019 met design changes and hurdles with construction.

The initial square design of the water body was changed into a kidney-shape to make it more natural. Afterwards, the first challenge



to present itself was the layouting problem.

“Mababa ‘yung area na ‘yan. May mga impenetrable areas dito dahil malalim yung tubig lalo na ‘pag umuulan. Natutubigan siya and maraming mga tumubo na wild

bushes. Kinailangan pang mag-balsa ng mga tao para malagay yung mga grid points,” Ar. Valencia shared.

Grid points are used for construction, especially for large projects, to serve as a framework of reference to which the major structural components of the plan are fixed.



Therefore, he was grateful for the hard work exhibited by the teams of Mr. Ronnie Vitug, head of the Facilities Maintenance Unit, for installing the grid points; Mr. Jimmy Vasquez, head of the Janitorial and Grounds Services Unit, for the clearing operations; and Engr. Ryan Layug, head of the Planning and Monitoring Unit, for the engineering design details.

The land softens whenever it rains which became a problem during the development phase. It was then difficult for heavy equipment, such as bulldozers, to operate.

#### **Future Actions**

As of this writing, the Lagoon's development phase is already complete. However, there are still rooms for improvement to make it more aesthetic and ecologically efficient.

A project with the TSU Alumni Association Inc. has been completed recently where they beautified the islet found in the middle of the waters. The islet or the “Alumni Park” now has several shrubs, benches, and an improved bridge that connects it to the mainland.

Birds, such as the Little Egret and Collared Kingfisher, have already paid a visit to the Lagoon. TSU is currently developing the project into a bird sanctuary which is consistent with its purpose on ecological conservation.

The university now plans to increase the flora of the area by re-grading its shorelines with gentler slopes and adding more indigenous plant species to provide shelter and food sources for migratory and urban birds.

This project was proposed by Prof. Bertrand Aldous Santillan and his team supported by the College of Science.

When asked about other developments, Ar. Valencia says they are still planning to build a gazebo, a water treatment facility, and a drainage line towards the Masalasa Creek for water overflow.

“Ang concept namin nina Sir Ted [Prof. Toledano], we'd like the Lagoon – the eco-park to be as natural as it can be. We want to have a nature or sanctuary in Lucinda – to have a place to relax, to hold physical activities like walking, jogging, or possibly fishing,” said Ar. Valencia.

“The project materialized with the hard work of those who were involved — with the leadership of Dr. Myrna Mallari, the leadership of Sir Glenard, the proposal of Sir Ted, and the execution of our office,” he added.


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