



TSU assures parents of no Lab School closure



The Tarlac State University administration guaranteed that the Laboratory School (LS) would not be shut down despite the removal of the Department of Education's voucher program for the senior high school students.

The parents of currently enrolled LS students were called for an assembly and forum last January 10, 2024 at the TSU Hotel in Lucinda Campus, where Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Agnes M. Macaraeg discussed the memorandum issued by the Commission on Higher Education on the discontinuance of the SHS in state universities and colleges (SUCs) and local universities and colleges (LUCs).

TSU President Dr. Arnold E. Velasco assured the parents that the LS would continue its service even without the DepEd vouchers. The president also said LS

students are being eyed as potential topnotchers in board examinations and valued and cared for in the university.

According to CHED Memo No. 241, s. 2023, dated December 28, 2023, SUCs and LUCs with laboratory schools can still operate and accept enrollees but are no longer eligible to receive vouchers under the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private

Education (GASTPE).

CHED Chairperson Dr. J. Prospero "Popoy" De Vera III said there was a "lack of legal basis" to continue the vouchers for the SHS offering in SUCs and LUCs, especially those without laboratory schools, because the five-year transition period (2016-2021) had ended.

However, students entering grade 12 in school year 2023-2024 are still covered by

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TSU, PRC food technology professionals strengthen food tech program through monitoring. Maria Adelaida D. Calayag

The Professional Regulatory Board of Food Technology visited Tarlac State University Lucinda Campus for an onsite inspection and monitoring of the BS Food Technology program and its facilities on January 9, 2024.

PRB-FT Chairperson Dr. Anthony Sales, PRB-FT member Dr. Remedios Baclig, and PRC Region III Senior Officer Dr. Mailyn Ugali visited the laboratories and facilities of the program and the Center for Food Technology and Research. They reviewed the submitted documents and conducted interviews and cross-validation with the university's BSFT teaching workforce headed by program chairperson Ms. Mary

Katherine Apolonio and College of Science Dean Prof. Mary Jane Rigor.

Dr. Sales said they aim to discuss the possible interventions for any gaps, particularly on the university's performance in the recent Food Technologists Licensure Examination and the findings from the March 2022 blended inspection.

"We want to ensure that our HEIs offering food technology comply not only with the requirements of the issuance of the COPC (from CHED) but also with the requirements in the practice of food technology within the university," Dr. Sales said.

"You have food technology professionals working here, and, therefore, we want to ensure that the provisions [we

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Atty. Santillan to TSU graduates: 'If you focus on what you love, the focus is no longer on the struggle'

Maria Adelaida D. Calayag



Tarlac State University's first batch for the 35th Commencement Exercises recognized the lone magna cum laude graduate from the College of Education along with 296 graduates last January 26, 2024 at the TSU Gymnasium.

Shiela Esguerra, the magna cum laude from the Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education major in Industrial Arts, shared her struggles as a shifter while managing to pursue her dream and make her parents proud.

"There were nights that I contemplated before if I am still making my parents proud for the choice and decision that I have made. There were moments where I would think that my parents have been disappointed with me," Esguerra said in her valedictory address.

"These turning points will make us better; this will make us realize that something might

not be for us and that something else is in store for us according to God's plan," Esguerra further said.

Another COED graduate from BSED Social Studies is Tanya Ramos Balintay, 26, from the Aeta-Sambal tribe of Brgy. Sta. Juliana in Capas town. She is the first Aeta graduate in their family and sitio.

When the pandemic hit the country, Balintay did not stop studying despite the challenges she faced because of the sudden shift of the university to online learning. She received a second-hand but trusty laptop from Prof. Douglas Ferrer, one of her professors who supported and cheered her on to success.

Balintay said her elementary and high school teachers inspired her to pursue an education degree because she witnessed how they persevered to teach in their remote place.

"Na-inspire po kami sa

kanila; kahit na galing po sila sa malayong lugar pero nagtuturo sila. Kaunti lang po 'yung mga teachers namin doon, kaya naisip ko pong magturo din sa amin," Balintay said in an interview.

The travel distance and lack of money kept her from graduating on time. However, her parents endeavored to support her education by juggling odd

jobs like accepting laundry services so the young Aeta could hold on to her dreams of becoming a high school social studies teacher.

She plans to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) this year should a scholarship grant come by chance that could help fund her review

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TSU employees enter 2024 with oath-taking ceremony

Mary Joy B. Manalo

Tarlac State University began the new year by appointing 126 non-teaching personnel to contractual positions.

Among the 126 non-teaching personnel are 106 contract renewals, 16 new appointments, and four reemployments who attended the oath-taking ceremony on January 4, 2024 at the Alumni Center, Lucinda Campus.

TSU President Dr. Arnold E. Velasco presided over the ceremony and delivered an inspirational message to the employees.

"Nagsimula rin po kami (administrators) sa mababa pero nanatili po kaming nangarap at nagtrabaho higit pa sa kung

ano ang dapat naming gawin. Let's make it a motivation. Huwag kayong makuntento sa kung anong meron kayo ngayon, mangarap po tayo. Ang imposibleng bagay pwedeng mangyari because we have our very generous and loving God," Pres. Velasco said.

"Work beyond the expectations of your boss. Gawin lang po natin kung ano ang tama at dapat, may nakakakita man o wala," he added.

Pres. Velasco also advised the deans and directors to be role models for their subordinates.

Furthermore, on January 3, Ms. Christine A.

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To further promote international academic cooperation, Tarlac State University inked a memorandum of understanding with the Osaka University of Economics through a virtual ceremonial signing via Zoom on January 11, 2024.

TSU is the first Philippine university to partner with OUE, where the two institutions will develop academic and cultural interchange through the English Language Proficiency Program (ELPP) of the TSU Office of International Affairs and Linkages (OIAL).

Starting February 26, ten Japanese students from OUE will study and stay at TSU for ten days under the ELPP, a special flagship program of OIAL designed to enhance the English language skills of foreign and local students.

TSU President Dr. Arnold E. Velasco highlighted the importance of the MOU to both institutions in fostering academic collaborations and knowledge exchange.

“This MOU will enrich our respective communities’ educational experiences, and we are excited and looking forward to this new chapter in our academic undertakings and the possibilities it will bring,” Pres. Velasco said.

OUE President Dr. Shunichiro Yamamoto also thanked TSU for this partnership.

“I am very glad to hold this ceremony and conjugate our academic relationships. We sincerely hope both universities will continue to cooperate and support each other, as well as the other developing arrangements [for] this mutual benefit. I wish your university to grow and prosper for many years to come,” Dr. Yamamoto said.

Moreover, OIAL Director Dr. Maria Vanesa P. Arador assured that the university, through the OIAL, is dedicated to creating a “seamless and enriching experience” for the students throughout their stay at TSU.

“We are committed to



providing them with top-notch learning experiences [so] that they are happy and safe during their time with us. TSU OIAL is fully aligned with OUE’s goals and actively supports the advancement of this academic partnership,” Dr. Arador said.

She also added that they are currently revamping their learning modules to align with the ten-day study plan for OUE students, focusing on enhancing the enjoyment and productivity of activities. They are also ensuring meticulous preparations for the students’ arrival at the TSU Hotel.

Apart from ELPP, both parties also agreed to undertake activities involving faculty and student exchange; laboratory/research facilities sharing; collaborative education, cultural experiences, and credit-transfer programs; student field

experience, internship, and on-the-job training; scholarships for undergraduate students, master’s, and doctoral degrees; and joint seminars, conferences, and meetings for education.

Other OUE delegates present were Vice President Dr. Utae Mori and Director of Division of International Affairs Mr. Kotaro Fujiwara.

The ceremonial signing was also witnessed by TSU representatives, namely Vice President for Administration Dr. Grace N. Rosete, Presidential Assistant Dr. Brigido B. Corpuz, and OIAL Unit Head for Special Programs and Services Dr. Ninez Tulo.

Last August 29, 2023, Dr. Azusa Ono, an associate professor of OUE, visited the university in preparation for the ELPP.

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are practicing] are compliant with the professional, technical, ethical, statutory, and regulatory requirements for the practice of the profession,” he added.

Dr. Baclig and Dr. Sales, both professional food technologists, suggested to Ms. Apolonio and CFTR Director Dr. Leah Matias to consider room temperatures, proper tables, extra refrigerators, appropriate metal tables, and other laboratory equipment.

In the exit conference, the food technology experts also raised several points to TSU President Dr. Arnold E. Velasco and Office of Quality Assurance Director Dr. Niño B. Corpuz that need administrative action.

“We will make sure that the thorough assessment that will be given to us will give us insightful information about how we operate and will surely help with our continued efforts to uphold high standards and compliance,” Pres. Velasco said during the opening program.

“Moreover, the findings and recommendations will serve as an essential guide to address any identified deficiencies or areas for

improvement pursuant to the Professional Regulatory Board of Food Technology,” he added.

Among the recommendations that require the administration’s support is the fulfillment of permanent plantilla for full-time faculty members with the required qualifications.

The PRB-FT is scheduled to visit the university in January 2025 for another monitoring or re-inspection.

Last March 30, 2022, TSU received its certificate of compliance for the BSFT program from the Professional Regulation Commission after a hybrid inspection and monitoring.

Meanwhile, BSFT attached faculty members Dr. Lea Milan, Dr. Leah Matias, and Prof. Aljon Lusong were granted the PFT license last month without taking the boards per section 20 of Republic Act 11052 or the Philippine Food Technology Act, where qualified applicants with bachelor’s degrees in food technology or other allied programs and have been practicing the profession for at least five years will be given such privilege.



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expenses.

Atty. Lindley D.C. Santillan, the commencement speaker, focused his speech on two points – making choices and striking a balance.

"Now, once you make these choices, you put yourself in motion just like what I said earlier (striking a balance). If you put yourself into motion, this is where you will be able to strike a balance in your life because, this time around, you know what is black and what is white and perhaps even gray in between," Atty. Santillan said.

"Because if you focus on what you love, the focus is no longer on the struggle; the focus is on the goal itself that will keep you going on what you love to do," Atty. Santillan added.

Atty. Santillan is a member of the TSU Board of Regents, representing Sen. Chiz Escudero, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Higher, Technical, and Vocational Education

Meanwhile, the graduates attended the

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baccalaureate services last January 25, also at the TSU Gymnasium, with a holy mass presided by Rev. Fr. Jason Aguilar, Our Lady of Peace College Seminary Rector, followed by an ecumenical prayer.

Dr. Danilo N. Oficiar, Vice President for Student Affairs and Services at Tarlac Agricultural University, was the guest speaker during the second part of the baccalaureate services.

"May the Lord continue to be with you as you forget the past and move forward to what is right," Dr. Oficiar said in his message to the graduates.

The 297 graduates of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs are from the College of Criminal Justice Education (67), College of Education (75), College of Public Administration and Governance (27), College of Business and Accountancy (52), College of Computer Studies (25), College of Science (14), College of Architecture and Fine Arts (4), College of Engineering and Technology (33).



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Cenizal secured reemployment as Administrative Officer III, while Engr. Cid L. Lapuz from the College of Engineering was promoted from temporary to permanent Instructor I.

Meanwhile, Ms. Nancy E. Villegas of the Cashiering Unit was promoted to Administrative Officer V on December 21, 2023.

Also added to the university's roster was Atty. Mariemeir M. Rivera, the new legal counsel, who took her oath as Attorney IV on December 27, 2023.

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the voucher to assist them in finishing their education.

During the assembly, the parents agreed to pay tuition fees pending a resolution from the parents' council formed on the same day.

VP Macaraeg also stated that the university can still find solutions to lessen the tuition fees by soliciting support from the provincial and city governments and assessing the university's income.

Moreover, TSU Board of Regents member Hon. Dennis Norman T. Go, who also worked

behind the reinstatement of LS, suggested lobbying vouchers, financial assistance, or subsidies in the local government units and other university income.

The university will collect fees starting school year 2024-2025.

In 2021, the LS operated again following BOR Resolution No. 51, s. 2021 after its closure in 2015 due to funding concerns. Its operation under the supervision of the College of Education is supported by the new TSU charter or Republic Act 11695.

Also, in 2021, COED

Dean Dr. Jasper Jay Mendoza said all teacher education institutions should maintain a laboratory school to provide avenues for pre-service teachers to undertake experiential learning courses per CHED Memo Order No. 74, s. 2017.

Laboratory schools are essential to the functions of teacher education institutions. It can support the COED in equipping future educators with theory and practice and strengthen the research and extension centers in the university.

EDITORIAL

Lab School legacy – always for closure?



With the release of a memorandum from the Commission on Higher Education last December 2023 regarding the "discontinuance of the senior high school" in all state and local universities and colleges, students who are currently enrolled or planning to enter laboratory schools of SUCs and LUCs, along with their parents, worried and panicked, especially with the widespread reportage of national media outlets.

Tarlac State University's Laboratory School students and parents were not exempt from the state of shock and confusion. The TSU LS could not afford to undergo the much-feared closure for the second time. In response, the TSU-LS Supreme Student Government was quick on its feet as it issued an official statement on the SHS discontinuance issue in the same month when the

news broke. The Facebook post earned the sympathy of some members of the TSU community, particularly the LS students, citing the group's strong disapproval of the decision while urging CHED "to reconsider and uphold the principle that education is a right." The group also called for a dialogue to address the student body's concerns.

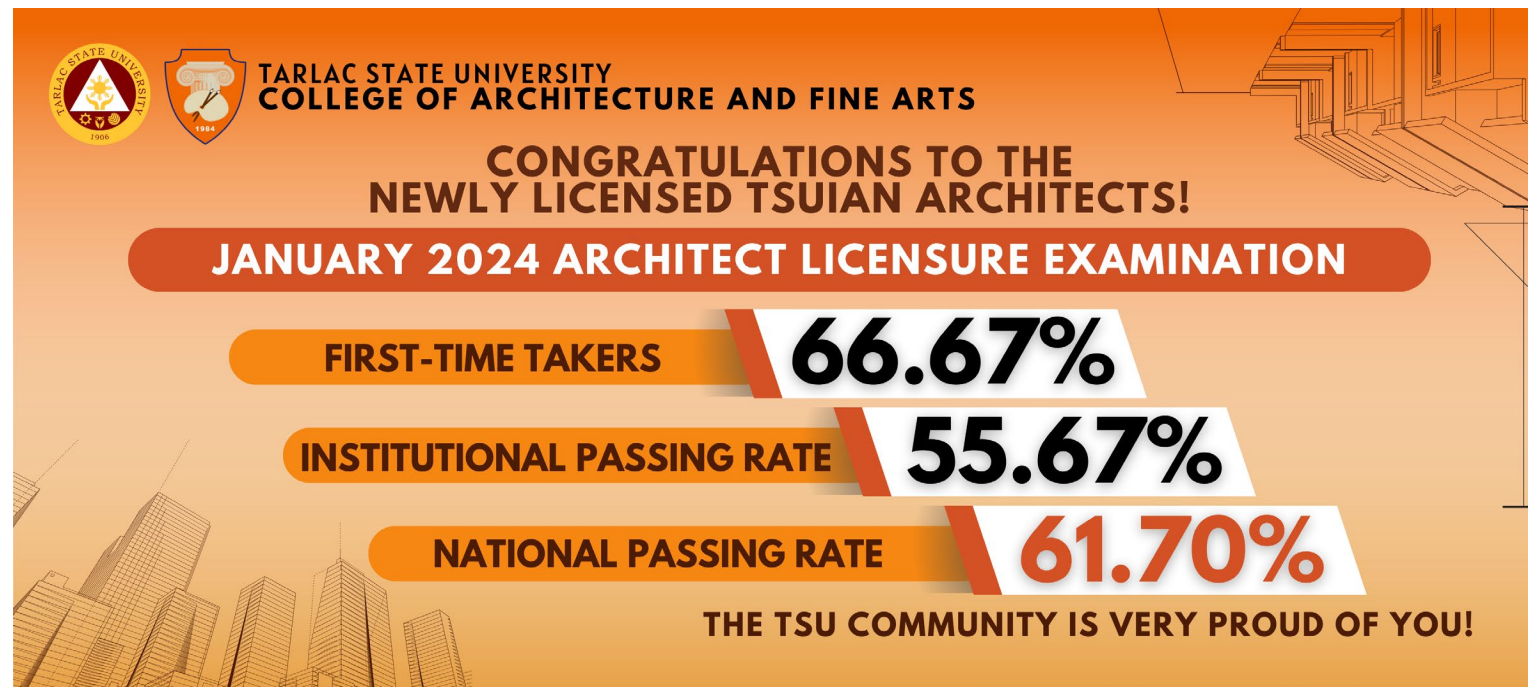
The TSU administration acted on this CHED issuance accordingly since the Commission was already hounding the SUCs and LUCs on their stand regarding the pressing matter. From budget considerations to initial informal discussions, finally elevating the issue to a special Administrative Council meeting and a parents' assembly and forum in January 2024, a resolution was formed noting that the TSU LS can still operate and offer the SHS



because the university has an established laboratory school under the College of Education supported by the new university charter (RA 11695). Yet, the secondary school is bound to follow the latter provision of the CHED memo on the removal of vouchers from the Department of Education. One issue was put to rest, while another arose, adding a burden to be explored further.

It is worth reiterating that the TSU LS could no longer bear the weight of another closure. The premier laboratory school in the province closed its doors in 2016 for the same reason – that CHED could no longer fund the secondary school because the Commission only caters to tertiary and advanced education. However, it appears that only a few SUCs and LUCs followed such a directive since Tarlac Agricultural

University's own Laboratory School continued its operations after 2016. This time, parents, current students, and prospective enrollees should not fret anymore, as the TSU LS is bound to stay and continue its legacy of producing top-caliber high school students in the province with a certain fee to pay.

A deeper understanding of the CHED memo, notably the latter paragraphs, establishes that there is nothing to be worried about. The SHS will not be abolished; the TSU LS will strengthen its presence as a go-to secondary school in Tarlac. There will still be adjustments along the way, especially in terms of finances. Still, with the collective efforts of the administration, the council of LS parents, and the local officials of the city and province, the Eagles will continue soaring high for quality high school education.



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