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INFLUX. Parents and students queue in line for the second semester enrollment at the Ayuntamiento de Gonzalez (AdG), following a newly-implemented QR code queue system. | Photo by **Imee Antonette Ocampo**

DLSU-D loses autonomous status after 15 years, outlines two-year recovery plan

by **Brent June Guillermo** & **Carlo Mendoza**

The De La Salle University - Dasmarinas (DLSU-D) has lost its autonomous status after 15 years, following the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) release of an updated list of autonomous Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) earlier this academic year (AY), wherein the University fell short on meeting the criterion for institutional quality and excellence, scoring only 1 out of 30 points.

In response, the University has outlined immediate plans to reclaim its autonomous status within two years, focusing on improving institutional performance.

Turning the tides

In a memorandum addressed to the DLSU-D community, University President Br. Francisco "Sockie" de la Rosa VI FSC emphasized that this setback should serve as a wake-up call for the institution to address these long-standing issues head-on and bring back the University's glory.

"As we move forward, let us unite to regain our school's old glory and create new possibilities for the future. This is our responsibility—we are all involved," de la Rosa stated. "We sink or swim together."

In relation to this, the Brother President also outlined the necessary steps for recovery within two years, focusing on addressing gaps in institutional quality and excellence.

He shared key development points including the increase of full-time faculty engagement in scholarly work and raising the number of permanent faculty members who receive national and international recognition for research.

In addition to faculty development, de la Rosa also said that the University aims to boost student achievements by securing international recognition in disciplines distinct to their fields and expanding extension programs to address local needs, explaining that strengthening both local and international collaborations and encouraging student participation in mobility programs will enhance the institution's relevance.

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REMNANTS OF THE STORM. Severe Tropical Storm Kristine left the University with visibly damaged pathways alongside fallen trees, bamboos, and debris scattered all throughout the campus grounds on October 25, 2024.

Photo by **Cedric Labajo**

CICS, COS deans discuss CSCS' separation

by **Jorenz Romer Quinto**

The College of Science and Computer Studies (CSCS) has been reintroduced as two separate college departments, namely the College of Science (COS) and the College of Information and Computer Studies (CICS), on August 1, 2024, following a decade-long recommendation by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU), a non-profit organization that assesses and accredits academic programs and institutions in the Philippines.

In an exclusive interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO, CICS Dean Marivic Mitschek and COS Dean Rubie Causaren, the former CSCS Dean, explained that it took the administration a long time to implement this change out of consideration for several factors, such as the resources and the organizational system.

"This is the time, actually, for us to have separate individuality… as well as different goals and visions for each of the [colleges]," Mitschek said.

Similarly, Causaren shared that the main reason for the separation is to comply with PAASCU's long-standing recommendation, noting that Science and Information Technology (IT) are typically housed in separate colleges in other universities, as opposed to DLSU-D, where the two fields were previously combined under CSCS.

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He revealed that some priorities in the coming semester that fall within University's strategic plan include diversifying revenue sources to support operations and enhance learning spaces, evident through projects such as new uniforms, parking spaces, and dormitories.

He discussed efforts for administrative processes aimed at making transactions, including payments and document requests, more efficient in order to provide a more client-centered experience.

Additionally, innovation remains a priority, with investments in online education, artificial intelligence (AI), and internationalization.

De la Rosa also stated that DLSU-D is committed to fostering a healthy work environment in its pursuit of a five-star rating under the ASEAN University Network-Health Promotion Network (AUN-HPN). The University plans to build a centralized academic and research building to promote synergy and optimize resources while promoting a universal and inclusive learning space for everyone.

Lastly, the Basic Education division will undergo expansion through negotiations for a separate campus, meeting the growing demand for affordable and quality Lasallian education.

"I encourage each one of you—students, parents, faculty, alumni, and staff—to come together as one community. Let us support one another, share our talents, and work collaboratively to achieve our common goals," de la Rosa concluded.

What led to the loss

In a press conference with the University Student Government (USG), President Abigail Hapal revealed that DLSU-D lost its 15-year autonomous status due to various factors discussed with the Office of the Vice Provost for Academics (OVPA), including insufficient research output, below-average board exam passing rates, subpar classroom and facility conditions, and concerns about teaching quality.

The autonomous status refers to the designation given to HEIs that are granted greater independence, allowing them to design their curricula, set policies, and award degrees without direct oversight from CHED.

Hapal emphasized that the University's loss of autonomy has resulted in significant setbacks, including the loss of exemptions from CHED evaluations, longer processing times for fourth and fifth-year students seeking international internships, and additional administrative tasks for faculty and staff.

"So, we lost the benefits that we used to have, for example, exemption *nga* from CHED monitoring and evaluation at the same time. *'Yong* priority for grants and subsidies *kasi lahat ng may* autonomous status, they get to receive those, *nasa* priority list *sila*. So *ngayon*, we are not on that priority list anymore," Hapal revealed.

Following this loss, DLSU-D will now operate under stricter supervision from CHED, requiring approval for major decisions that were once made independently.

Despite this, the USG President expressed confidence in the University's plan to regain its autonomous status within two years, emphasizing the importance of the Campus Development Plan over short-term fixes or "band-aid solutions."

"*Ang ina*-assert *namin* to the administration is to stop focusing on band-aid solutions and focus more on the long-term and actual ones. *Kaya* they really have to listen—start listening—to the inputs of the stakeholders of the University," Hapal stressed.

DLSU-D restructures administration for improved operational efficiency

by **Jafet Allen Gammag**

The De La Salle University - Dasmarinas (DLSU-D) administration, led by Brother President Francisco "Sockie" Dela Rosa VI FSC, has renamed key administrative positions as part of its efforts to streamline the organizational structure and enhance operational efficiency of the University.

Under the new structure, the positions of Chancellor, Basic Education Principal, and Vice President for Mission and Formation have been renamed **Provost, Principal,** and **Chief Lasallian Mission Officer,** respectively. Additionally, the **Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)** position has been introduced to oversee and support services across academic divisions.

Enhanced efficiency and innovation

In an interview, Dela Rosa shared that the adjustments are part of his Tri-Focus Agenda on Streamlining, which emphasizes sound operational decisions to enhance efficiency, foster innovation, and ensure adaptability in contemporary educational challenges.

He added that the agenda aims to achieve several outcomes, including clearer roles and responsibilities for administrative leaders, greater alignment between the basic and tertiary education divisions, more effective allocation of resources to support strategic priorities, and a structure that fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

Unified academic divisions

Dela Rosa further explained that the reorganization establishes two academic divisions: the Tertiary Education Division, led by the Provost, and the Basic Education Division, headed by the Principal—both designed to align educational goals and facilitate a seamless transition for students from basic to tertiary education.

The Brother President expressed optimism about the growth of the University's Basic Education Division, emphasizing its distinction as the only Lasallian institution in Cavite offering basic education at this price point, furthering its mission to serve more students.

Additionally, joint initiatives, such as the implementation of Schoolbook as a unified learning management system (LMS), demonstrate efforts to optimize and standardize practices across divisions.

Community response

The administrators also highlighted the importance of feedback in evaluating the restructuring, with Brother Sockie stating that while it is his responsibility as President to ensure improved communication, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement, it is the school community's role to assess the institutional changes.

"These changes are a step toward making DLSU-D not only future-ready but also more effective in fulfilling our mission as a Lasallian institution," he concluded, emphasizing the administration's commitment to improving the quality of education at the University.

NEWS BRIEF

Enrollees decrease by 0.73% for 1st semester of AY '24-'25

by **Aleyah Marie Pedraza**

DLSU-D recorded a 0.73 percent decrease in enrollment for the first semester of the academic year (AY) 2024–2025, according to data from the Office of the University Registrar (OUR).

The OUR confirmed a total of 10,633 enrollees for the first semester of the first AY, a decrease of 78 enrollees compared to the 10,711 enrolled in the first semester of AY 2023–2024.

Enrollment in undergraduate programs increased, rising from 9,145 to 9,362, while graduate program enrollment experienced a decrease, dropping from 1,383 to 1,101. Similarly, enrollment in Night College also decreased from 183 to 170.

Overall, the first semester of the current AY recorded a 0.73 percent decrease compared to the same period in the previous AY, with undergraduate programs experiencing a 2.37 percent increase, graduate programs with a 20.39 percent decrease, and Night College enrollment declining by 7.10 percent.



CAMPUS IN FOCUS. The University Student Government (USG) hosted its semestral Animo Town Hall meeting, attended by students from various sectors of the University and student organizations' representatives, at the Ayuntamiento de Gonzalez (AdG) on October 2, 2024.

Photo by **Hannah Daniella Salazar**

USG holds first public budget hearing

by **Maria Johnica Gatchalian** & **Jorenz Romer Quinto**

For the first time since its establishment, the University Student Government (USG) publicly held its budget hearing titled "*Pagdinig:* The USG Budget Hearing" to present the General Expenditure Program (GEP) and the rationale behind the budget allocations for the first semester of the academic year (AY) 2024–2025, as a platform to discuss its budgetary goals and justify expenditure proposals, centered on three main pillars: *Para sa Estudyante, Para sa Bayan,* and *Para sa Mabuting Pamamahala*.

About the activities

The hearing discussed the budget rationale for four pre-appropriations, 12 discretionary activities, and 11 mandatory activities and programs under the USG *Progresibo* initiative.

According to USG President Abigail Hapal, there are 9,340 undergraduate college students, based on data certified by the University Registrar, with each student paying P300 to the USG Trust Fund.

Based on the 42nd Act of Congress, the total trust fund is P2,802,000, wherein 35 percent is allocated for discretionary activities, 55 percent for mandatory activities, 6 percent for supplementary activities, and 4 percent for the Absolute Reserve Fund.

Hapal emphasized that these percentages serve as limits for the Executive Branch, with any overspending subjecting the branch to violations.

At the event, the USG discussed budget allocations for several events, including the Students' Week Grand Kick-off, *Tatak Lasalyano*, and Fresh START 2024.

Events launched

Under the *Para sa Estudyante* pillar are the Students' Week Grand Kick-off and *Tatak Lasalyano*.

The proposed Students' Week Grand Kick-off, an initiative promoting inclusivity among the Lasallian community, had a budget allocation that is significantly lesser than the previous AY. The budget went from P715,000 to this year's proposed budget of P300,000 or 33.3 percent of the budget allocation for discretionary activities.

However, in the second Joint Session, Secretary of Interior Ahlyssa Reyes explained the need for a higher budget allocation, citing plans to include the Senior High School (SHS) students in the opening ceremony.

The event was initially planned to use a ticket-selling system, with tickets priced at P300 to crowdfund the budget. However, the lack of attendance data raised concerns, leading to the decision to cancel ticket sales. The amended budget allocation of P358,000 for the Student's Week Grand Kickoff was approved by the House of Representatives (HoR) with a unanimous vote.

Meanwhile, another proposed service discussed in the budget hearing was *Tatak Lasalyano,* previously "ACCESSible: Hassle-Free Notarization for Lasallians," an initiative that aims to provide free notary services for documents such as the Memorandum of Agreement Non-Fraternity/Sorority and Organizations (MOANFSO) for freshmen and the Parental Consent Form (PCF) for Performing Arts Group (PAG) members.

The budget was projected to be amounting to P25,000 for 500 students. The number of 500 students is based on the estimated number of freshmen, which is around 2,000, but the agreement was only distributed to 1,844 students, and as of the budget hearing, only 248 freshmen have submitted their MOANFSO.

Before the presentation of the Financial Projection of the said project, Hapal called one of the stakeholders, PAG Chair Icarus Gonzales, who confirmed that each PAG organization receives one to two invitations per month, totaling external invitations of all PAGs to seven to 14, thus deeming the initiative beneficial to PAG.

Due to the number of students projected to avail the free notarization service, the budget was approved and was also doubled to accommodate 1,000 students. As of press time, *Tatak Lasalyano* is on its third run due to its high demand.

As per the *Para sa Bayan* pillar, the USG discussed budgetary proposals for community-centered activities, one of which is "Fresh START 2024: Sustainable Actions for Renewable Tomorrow," a proposed three-day event that aims to address environmental and societal challenges, focusing on community engagement.

According to USG, the event is aligned with the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and reinforces the University's commitment as the top-ranking sustainable university in the Philippines.

The event responds to pressing issues such as climate change, resource depletion, and inequality, showcasing the role of science and technology in such problems through ceremonies, SDG talks, presentations on inclusive development, tree-planting, lake restoration, as well as competitions on short films, recognition of student projects, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)-led projects, along with a "strategic pathway" towards becoming a carbon-neutral university.

USG clarified that the budget would cover the cost of National Certificate certifications, while plans for DLSU-D to become a TESDA-certified center are in the works between DOST and the University administration.

Lastly, in terms of the *Para sa Mabuting Pamamahala* pillar, the USG proposed a P25,000 allocation increase, explaining that the P25,000 budget for the second semester of AY 2023–2024 was almost fully utilized.

Hapal explained that the proposed increase was due to several external invitations and clarified that the budget would cover not only the Executive Branch but also the entire USG, including independent constitutional commissions and leadership training for its members.

It was also mentioned that Official Business would remain occasional to avoid detailed breakdowns on the allocated budget and that no Executive Order currently defines what qualifies as Official Business.

With unanimous support from the HoR, the proposed budget allocations will be included in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for the semester.

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Challenges faced

Despite facing difficulties in adjusting to the changes brought by the separation, Mitschek described the process as a "happy divorce."

When asked about the future plans for facilities and infrastructures, the CICS Dean explained that the two colleges will be sharing some of their offices in the meantime, gradually adjusting to the changes posed by the separation.

"So [the office space was] supposed to be occupied by the College of Science, but the separation of the two colleges entails that the College of Information and Computer Studies administrators also have their office spaces, so we are sharing… We have to show PAASCU that there is already an initiative to really separate the colleges," she explained.

In terms of budget, she revealed that the CICS and COS share a common budget, reiterating that the college student government (CSG) governors of both colleges have already discussed how the students' budgets would be allocated separately.

The separation of the student population has impacted how administrative duties are allocated, with the CICS managing a larger student body and the COS handling a smaller number.

."[It was] sad because last year was [also] our last year as a College of Science and Computer Studies. But we also find joy because, finally… the colleges are now separated, so we can really focus on the programs," she stated.

Smoothening the transition

With regards to adjustments, Mitschek expects no significant changes, explaining that the faculty and student populations are the same people she handled as the former Computer Studies Department's (CSD) chairperson.

"It's just that we now have a different roadmap than that of the College of Science. We now have a new vision and identity," she expressed.

Meanwhile, Causaren explained, "To smoothen things out… we have our strategic plans…. Each college has its own strategic plan, and that would be the one to guide us in order to roll out our programs, especially in relation to accreditation, in relation to student achievement[s], and others in faculty development."

In terms of curriculum revisions, Mitschek explained that while the core professional courses remain aligned with the existing Commision on Higher Education (CHED) memorandum for IT and Computer Science (CS) programs, the main difference lies in the proposed electives, which are being updated to bridge gaps in employability and keep pace with rapid technological advancements.

Both deans emphasized the importance of student engagement through the activities of the program councils (PCs) and CSGs of their respective colleges.

On new programs, long-term plans

Causaren and Mitschek shared that the separation is very timely and beneficial for them to concentrate more on their respective colleges and programs, saying that they can better serve their students and their faculty members.

Mitschek shared that they are eyeing to offer a new course, Library Science, for the CICS, to be followed by Bioinformatics two years after, which is included in their proposal. She mentioned that it is one of the reasons why the administration has approved the proposal.

Meanwhile, Causaren noted that there are no plans yet to introduce new programs under the COS but is hopeful that the Physical Sciences Department (PSD) can have its program soon.

She also reiterated, "Secondly, there is a plan for the University to have four programs assessed by the AUNQA, that's ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance. And in preparation, there were a series of meetings, and also some faculty members, some administrators were already sent to the trainings in order to really ensure the success of the program that will be assessed."

Causaren also shared that the administrators had a seminar or training on the International Students Office (ISO), which is focused more on assessment, accreditation of the program, maintenance of the levels, and the continued delivery of high-quality education to the students.

In terms of student IDs of former CSCS students, Mitschek said that there are currently no plans to change them, emphasizing the purpose of the new uniforms instead.

"*Hindi pa muna,* because it would entail cost… So *'yung mga* incoming, instead of the ID, uniforms. Each college has a different color [necktie]… So instead of having it *d'un sa* ID *na mga* old, so *ang plano ata ng* admin is for us to have *'yung iba-iba na* stripe *ng sa* uniform *ng mga bago,"* adding that the CICS and COS labels are reflected on the IDs of the first-year students.



NEWS REACT

During the first semester, the University announced the implementation of Proctor360, an artificial intelligence (AI)-based surveillance tool to monitor potential suspicious activities on the users' devices within Schoolbook, which raised privacy concerns among students. As a Lasallian, what are your thoughts on its continued implementation in the following terms and semesters?



Christopher Justin P. Maniego | MMA41

"*'Yung pag*-implement *nila ng* Proctor360, I think *mayroon siyang* both advantages and disadvantages. Since I think… students [are required] *ng dalawang* devices for recording *ng camera nila,* I think… since *hindi lahat may* capability *na magkaroon ng dalawang* devices… *'yun 'yung* more of disadvantages *sa kaniya*. And then, I think hindi *siya masyado[ng]* accurate *sa mga* AI itself, since… *base sa mga nababasa ko, na natingin lang sa kabila* 'yung students, *parang naco*-consider *siya* as cheating. And then, for advantages *naman,* since for online exams… *parang 'yun 'yung* one of the best *nilang* way[s] *para ma*-observe *nila 'yung* students while [taking the] exam."



Diana Bianca M. Cuello | BSY31

"*'Yung* Proctor360 *kasi, parang hindi siya* applicable *sa lahat* since *hindi naman lahat may* stable *na* internet or stable *na* environment. *Parang ang* Proctor360, *medyo pang-ano siya, pang-mayaman. Kasi, 'di ba, 'yung…* environment *naman ng iba* is either *sa sala lang sila nag-o*-online class or *sa kwarto nila pero maingay.* And *ang balita kasi sa* Proctor360 is *parang konting movements mo lang… masasabihan ka [nang]* cheating… *Hindi naman lahat ng* students, *may capacity na mag*-provide *ng tahimik na* environment. So, for me, *hindi siya* okay *na i*-implement."



Janeya Kennice C. Ramos | BSY31

"I don't think I agree with the implementation of it, *kasi* not all students *naman* are privileged to have that specific device *na… maganda* for that app p*ara ma*-eye *siya nang mabuti. Tapos,* I think *nagamit siya sa* several blocks, *na*-try *siya, tapos 'yung result niya* is… *maraming nag*-result *na kunwari nag*-cheat *daw 'yung* student because of the background noise… because of several factors. And I think *hindi 'yon na-consider ng* University before… implementing it. *Ayun,* I think they should consider all the factors *muna na* underlying and all the factors *na hinaing ng* students about it before… *Pag-isipan muna nila bago nila i*-implement *dito* sa University."



Stella Marie P. Morada | COM22

"*Hindi ako* agree or in favor sa Proctor360, *kasi parang mas lalong nagiging* difficult *'yung* situation for the professors, *pati na rin sa* students. *Kasi puwede mo namang i*-implement *'yung* examinations onsite *para mas matutukan mo pa 'yung* students *kaysa do'n sa* online *na may* AI *kasi baka hindi rin* accurate *'yung mangyayari kapag gan'on. Kaya* I really prefer… *na* onsite *na lang 'yung mga* examinations."



Geon Franz A. Landicho | COM22

"I'm also against the Proctor360, *kasi parang sa* part *ng mga* professors, *hindi siya maganda* since *mas mahihirapan sila sa pag*-adapt, *kasi hindi naman lahat ng* professors *[ay] nakaka*-adapt *sa ganoong* kind of technology *na mayroon tayo ngayon*. And *doon naman sa mga* students, *siguro* upon my observation, *may mga ilan akong mga kakilala na naco*-conscious *sila sa ganoong* situation, since online examination *na siya tapos may nakabantay sa* desk, *kita talaga 'yung buong paligid mo*. So, *parang mas nakaka*-conscious *siya sa* part *na 'yun*. So, *ang puwedeng* alternative *na do'n talaga* is onsite examination."



Benaiah Joab S. Akian | PSY11

"For me *naman*, actually… up until now, *medyo* skeptic *pa rin ako* about this 360 thing. *Kasi, ayun nga, bukod sa…* it somehow violates the… privacy *ng* each student, *parang ano rin, hindi siya gan'un ka*-stable and consistent for me. So… relying *sa* AI itself, *parang napakadelikado*. So… in terms of exams… *mas pipiliin ko pa 'yung mga mismong* proctor *'yung magbabantay…* instead of this AI."



THREADS OF RESISTANCE. Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP) hosted the third run of Fashion Against Fascism and Fossil Fuels (FAFFF), its annual fashion show titled "The Horror!" on September 13, 2024.

Photo by **Emmanuel II Hoylar**

After SONA Appearance

Tarra faces continued harassment, terror charge threats

by **Maria Johnica Gatchalian** & **Brent June Guillermo**

Following his participation in humanitarian missions and appearance as a guest of Kabataan Partylist (KP) Representative Raoul Manuel during President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s recent State of the Nation Address (SONA), DLSU-D student and Coalition of Concerned Lasallians (CCL) Coordinator John Paolo Tarra faced continuous harassment and threats of charges from the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).

In an interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO, Tarra recounted the details of his most recent encounter with the NTF-ELCAC last August, revealing that its members provoked his parents with abduction threats and warned of possible charges under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2022 due to his alleged affiliation with the New People's Army (NPA).

Due to the non-cooperation of Tarra's parents, the NTF-ELCAC reportedly sought assistance from his uncle, who resides in the same subdivision.

The harassment reportedly began in February 2024 when NTF-ELCAC personnel visited Tarra's family, requesting his personal information and documents, following his apprehension by the University for participating in the Democracy Walk commemorating the 38th EDSA People Power Revolution.

Concerning that, Tarra argued that the Memorandum of Agreement Non-Fraternity/Sorority and Organizations (MOANFSO) is unconstitutional, as it restricts students' rights to organize and express their views on societal issues, saying, "It is our democratic right to organize [our] freedom of speech and expression, *pero bakit niyo pinipigilan 'yung mga* students *ninyo na magkaroon ng* active stance towards societal issues?"

Furthermore, he expressed hope that DLSU-D, who identifies itself as progressive, would adopt a more proactive stance in addressing issues faced by student activists, emphasizing that his experiences with harassment and threats may indicate similar risks for others.

"*Sana makapag*-release *din tayo ng* statements, *makapag*-offer *tayo ng* legal services. *Sana 'yung imbis na tingnan niyo ako* as a disruption of peace *ay makita niyo ako* as a legitimate na student activist and human rights worker *na ang layunin lang naman talaga ay mag*-spread *ng* awareness *tungkol sa* human rights issue *sa bansa natin.* So, *'yun lang, hindi po ako kaaway,"* he concluded.

Kaliwa damned

by **Carlo Mendoza** & **Jorenz Romer Quinto** | Art by **Altheia Clarisse Rara**

The Dumagat-Remontados Indigenous Peoples (IP) expressed fierce resistance against the construction of the Kaliwa Dam, a controversial infrastructure project in the Sierra Madre mountain range worth $225 million.



Funded by a loan from China, the project intends to supply an additional 600 million liters of water daily to Metro Manila in an attempt to mitigate its growing water crisis. However, Indigenous leaders and environmental advocates warn that pursuing this infrastructure would entail irreversible damage to their communities and ecosystems.

Among the barangays affected by this project is Barangay Daraitan, home to 1,041 households, many of which will face displacement or risk of flooding. Similarly, Barangays Magsaysay and Pagsangahan, with 191 and 233 households respectively, will experience direct impacts including loss of homes and livelihoods. Additionally, the project poses a threat to IP with 284 households at risk of flooding or dam failure, potentially disrupting their ancestral lands and cultural traditions.

Peril to the communities

"Our rights were violated," said Conchita Calzado, an Indigenous elder who led a nine-day protest march of 300 tribe members to Manila. "This project endangers our livelihood, culture, and sacred lands," she added.

The dam is set to occupy 291 hectares of forests and six sacred Indigenous sites, displacing at least 15 families directly and affecting around 5,000 tribal members indirectly. Critics also warn that it may increase flooding risks for downstream communities and harm 126 species' habitats.

The Kaliwa Dam is part of the Philippine government's "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure program, initiated by former President Rodrigo Duterte. While proponents claim that the dam will address Metro Manila's water shortages, those opposing argue that the project's environmental and social costs outweigh its benefits. Experts warn the dam's reservoir will submerge 93 hectares of forestland, impacting the biodiversity of the Sierra Madre and worsening climate change effects such as droughts and extreme weather events. The dam's construction has already destroyed parts of the Kaliwa Watershed Forest Reserve, a wildlife sanctuary with endemic flora and fauna.

Under the Philippine Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, Indigenous communities must provide free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) for development on their ancestral lands. However, the Stop Kaliwa Dam campaign alleges that the FPIC process was manipulated. Reports include tribal members being locked in rooms to vote and consent documents written in languages they couldn't understand.

"These consultations are often subverted into mere formalities," said Ryan Roset, a senior legal fellow at the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), tasked with protecting Indigenous rights, has faced accusations of irregularities, including consulting only project supporters.

The situation has been exacerbated by threats and violence against activists. Human rights defenders opposing the project have faced harassment, abductions, and even killings. The Philippines is consistently ranked as one of the most dangerous countries for environmental activists.

"President Marcos' administration has now an opportunity to seriously re-evaluate the China Exim Bank-funded Kaliwa Dam Project, given the u-turn in the diplomatic relationships with China because of the tensions in the South China Sea," said Rovik Obanil of the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC), adding that the government should also consider the country's surging debt.

Environmental and Indigenous advocates propose alternative solutions, including watershed rehabilitation, repairs to aging dams, and investing in water recycling technologies. Local communities stress that these alternatives would meet Manila's water needs without endangering ecosystems or Indigenous livelihoods.

"We are willing to share the river, but not at the expense of destroying our heritage," Calzado stressed.

The "promise"

Despite the social and environmental implications caused by the Kaliwa Dam Project, according to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Summary of the New Centennial Water Source – Kaliwa Dam Project (NCWS-KDP), out of all the alternatives for a new major water source for Metro Manila and its neighboring provinces, the Kaliwa Dam Project is the most promising.

Other than ensuring water security, NCWS-KDP noted that this project also aims to expand the raw water supply to meet Metro Manila's future water and reduce dependence on the Angat Dam.

"*Kung matatayo 'yung* Kaliwa [Dam], *matutulungan ang* Angat *sa pagbibigay ng tubig sa mga residente ng* Metro Manila [and nearby provinces]," said Juan Elmer S. Caringal, Hydrologist of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

Additionally, Caringal also stated that like any other dam, the Kaliwa Dam could aid in managing and storing excess rainfall that might otherwise result in flooding in Metro Manila's flood-prone areas such as Pasig and Marikina.

It was observed that the Kaliwa Dam is more viable and manageable to immediately address the projected short-term water supply deficit of Metro Manila soon, while entailing the least habitat disruption and resettlement.

NCWS-KDP also explained that the majority of the IP not accustomed to settling in lowland residents will be considered during the resettlement plan and that aside from full compensation for lost assets, there is an assurance of livelihood opportunities for men and women at the relocation site along with educational assistance and scholarship programs for students.

Meanwhile, to address the environmental impacts of this project, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) is exploring possible co-management arrangements with the affected barangays, especially with people's organization (PO) engaged in watershed management.

What lies ahead

In an interview, Jefferson Chua, Climate Campaigner for Green Peace, urges the public to critically examine the Kaliwa Dam project, warning that it might prioritize the benefits of others at the expense of Indigenous communities.

"For us, development should be for all, and not just for all, it should be equitable," he emphasized.

The construction of the Kaliwa Dam began in 2022, and in March 2024, authorities announced that it is 30 percent complete in terms of progress. It has already caused immense peril to the local communities it will displace at that percentage. How much more will be affected if the construction progresses in the coming years?

Ever since the project's proposal, local human rights defenders and community members condemning its construction have been threatened, red-tagged, harassed, and even killed. Back in October 2019, former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte himself warned that he would consider the use of "extraordinary powers" to fast-track the Kaliwa Dam Project's completion.

The Philippines has repeatedly been ranked as one of the most dangerous countries for human rights defenders and community members, which makes such threats even more concerning. It was noted that environmental activists and youth leaders Francisco "Eco" Dangla III and Axielle "Jak" Tiong were abducted and released three days later, as a reprisal for their voicing out against destructive projects and advocating for human rights. Now, there have been 21 other cases of enforced disappearances under the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

Peril surrounds us with the Kaliwa Dam Project still undergoing construction and red-tagging still prevalent in the country.

As the Dumagat-Remontados fight for their heritage and way of life, their struggle calls for a more inclusive development in the society—one that respects the environment and values the rights of the marginalized sectors in the community.

Ultimately, the Dumagat-Remontados' resistance to the Kaliwa Dam underscores broader questions about development—who it benefits, and at what cost. As the debate continues, the fate of their ancestral lands and the Sierra Madre's fragile ecosystem hangs in the balance.

Faucet half working

by **Jorenz Romer Quinto** & **Lareine Rose Ambagan**

They say that when a cup is half-contained with water and someone sees it as half empty, they focus on the negative; when they see it as half full, they look for the positive. As for Cavite residents, it's hard to see which to answer since the cup can barely get filled with water. The true answer for our case is: the faucet is half working. Residents express growing frustration over frequent water supply interruptions in the province, with some areas experiencing outages lasting several hours to days, particularly in densely populated areas such as Bacoor, Imus, and Dasmariñas.

In November 2024, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. revealed that the Philippines is facing a water crisis, with 11 million families lacking access to clean water as the dry season approaches. This crisis comes amid the privatization of water services, with the Villar family's PrimeWater Infrastructure Corp. taking over more than 100 water districts nationwide since 2021. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of such privatizations in addressing the ongoing water supply issues faced by residents in Cavite and beyond.

Local officials explained that aging infrastructure and increasing demand contribute to this issue, but have yet to release an official timeline for improvements. Water service providers, such as PrimeWater and Maynilad, have faced criticisms and complaints from the residents who are dissatisfied with the lack of communication and clear solutions.

A persisting disturbance

Maria Victoria Busine, a resident of South Garden Homes in Salitran III, expressed her concerns about how the water interruptions affect residents in the locale. "*Lalo na 'pag summer, mas* frequent *'yung* water interruptions *na [nakaaapekto] sa* daily activities… and I think *parang* recent din talaga siya, since before PrimeWater took over, *parang wala [namang] masyadong* problems in terms of water supply," reiterating that it intervenes with household chores such as washing the dishes, washing clothes, comfort room usage, and taking a bath.

When asked about how they obtain sufficient water for daily use, she revealed, "*Parang may napunta dito na* truck *ng tubig tapos… 'yung mga* household, *ilalabas 'yung mga timba, mga batsa,* and then… *kukuha ng* water *na gagamitin* for the day."

Busine also noted, "Last year *ko lang din na*-observe *'yung parang* apparent *na* water interruptions *na [nakaaapekto] ng buong* subdivision, and first time *talaga 'yung* last year, *nung* 2024… *Pansin ko lang din, parang iba't-iba din 'yung* effect *talaga.* Like, *sa bawat* street, *'pag sobrang mas malayo ka d'un sa* water source… *mas ikaw 'yung nagdudusa na wala kang tubig buong araw,* compared *sa kapag mas malapit ka. Kasi, ayun nga, parang… may* problem *d'un sa* pressure *ng* water supply." These water interruptions occur almost everyday and were said to last for half the day, spanning an estimate of 12 hours.

When it comes to water bills, Busine expressed, "I think *nag*-retain *pa rin ['yung* water bill]. *Parang kahit may* water interruptions, *pareho pa rin 'yung sinisingil sa'yo,* which doesn't make any sense *din kasi 'di mo rin laging nagagamit 'yung tubig, lalo 'pag may* water interruptions."

On the other hand, Cardinal Homes resident Ellen Rose Cruz noted, "When there is water interruption, household chores [are] also interrupted. There is no pattern or intervals in interruptions. That's why we have our ready stock of water for our daily use." She also emphasized that with the frequent announcements, she starts to think that their water supply is insufficient due to the increased population.

Back in June 2022, residents of Barangay Bucandala III in Imus, Cavite expressed concerns for enduring their water supply being irregular for six months. "*Sakripisyo po kasi kailangan po talaga namin ng tubig araw-araw para makahugas. 'Yun po ang* daily need *namin (tubig) kaya sana po maayos po ang tubig,*" resident Freddie Cortez shared.

Corazon Rabimbe has also called on Maynilad Water Services Inc. to address the ongoing water supply issues, expressing frustration over the hardships caused by the outages. "*Kung wala ka[ng] ipon dito ng tubig, saan ka iigib? Kagaya sa akin na nagmamanhid na [ang] aking kamay… maglalaba ka, maghihintay ka pa ng* 10 PM. *Gaano kahirap 'yun?*" she said.

In response, Maynilad Corporate Communications Head Jennifer Rufo apologized for the continued disruptions and acknowledged the company's failure to restore normal service, explaining that the company is working on building a third water treatment plant near Laguna Lake, which is expected to be completed by next year. She said that "this facility will draw water from Laguna Lake and provide an additional 150 million liters of water per day… Once operational, this will serve as a long-term solution, ensuring 24-hour water supply for Imus."

Actions taken

With regards to the actions taken by their community in South Garden Homes, Busine shared, "*Sa community namin… nagpatawag ng truck galing ding* PrimeWater. *Sila 'yung nagrarasyon ng tubig sa bawat* household… *may umiikot na* truck *sa bawat street sa* subdivision *namin*."

In terms of the actions taken by their local government unit (LGU), residents are uncertain whether there are any efforts in addressing their community's concerns, stating that the local government does not directly take action in alignment with the concerns of their citizens. She stressed that, "As a citizen, message *ko* to the local government is… prioritize *din 'yung water* security *ng* local residents. And I think it's a wrong move *na parang pinrivatize 'yung* water supply *talaga*, since water… it's a necessity… and it shouldn't be monopolized by a private entity. And *dapat sa lahat talaga, masu*-supply-*an ng tubig* since it is a daily need."

Meanwhile, Cruz expressed how she sees the future of their community following the frequent interruptions, saying that in the next five years, as the population increases, the supply of water might decrease.

The immense lack of innovation

Cavite officials stress the urgency of updating and integrating the province's water management plan to address pressing challenges. According to the Cavite Integrated Water Resource Management Master Plan (CIWRMMP), the region faces issues such as rapid population growth, booming economic activities, groundwater depletion, saltwater intrusion in coastal areas, river pollution, and heightened competition for water resources.

Research by Ann De Vera reveals that Cavite Province's existing water supply and distribution infrastructure is insufficient to meet current and future demands. The study also highlights a lack of a comprehensive financing framework for the water sector, which could optimize the use of limited public funds while promoting concessional operations and attracting private-sector investments. It emphasized that emerging disciplines such as climate change, natural resource economics, education, and human dimensions of decision-making are needed for water sustainability research.

De Vera's study also concluded that a fast-growing population and the depletion of natural resources can lead to a future water catastrophe, recommending that the local government should focus on community education and initiatives to raise awareness of Cavite's water supply crisis in the future.

***

PrimeWater stated that it is redoubling its efforts to expand its wastewater services through the establishment of more septage treatment plants (STPs) especially designed for safe and sustainable processing and disposal of septage last September 2023. Yet more than a year after, residents under their supply still experience trouble in the consistent usage of this necessity.

Water disruptions lead to a domino effect of problems. The call for action has always been there and several improvement plans are already laid out. All that is left is for genuine initiative; one not rooted in greed.

Before we can test if the glass is half empty or full, the faucets must first be fully functional.

***

The HERALDO FILIPINO reached out to PrimeWater Dasmariñas, but they have not responded.

KAMPUSAPUSAPAN

Isang malinaw na halimbawa ng nagbabalatkayong kapitalismo, bilang isang suliraning panlipunan, ang napakataas na presyo para sa mga *vehicle sticker* na bunsod umano ng limitadong suplay nito na kanilang ilalabas. Sa kabila ng 'di umano'y limitadong suplay, madalas na nakikita ng mga estudyante ang mga paradahan na puno ng sasakyan, na nagpapakita lamang ng 'di pagtutugma ng mga pahayag ng administrasyon sa katotohanan ng sitwasyon. Ang pagbibigay-prayoridad sa mga pang-guro at pang-administrador na espasyo sa parking, habang ang mga mag-aaral na nagbabayad ay hirap at nagtitiis sa katiting na pwesto, ay nagpapahiwatig ng pagtatangi sa pinansyal na prayoridad ng Unibersidad sa halip na tugunan ang pangangailangan ng mga estudyante.

Ang sistema ng paggagrado sa Unibersidad ay isa pang karagdagang isyung kinahaharap ng mga mag-aaral. Ang hindi organisadong pamantayan sa mga rubrik, kung saan ang mga maliliit na pagkakamali ay maaaring magdulot ng malaking kabawasan na puntos sa grado, ay nag-iiwan ng mga katanungan kung makatarungan ba talaga ang naging pagsusuri ng mga guro. Hindi lamang nakaaapekto sa moral ng mga estudyante ang sistemang ito, ngunit pinapakita ang kakulangan sa pagkilala sa kanilang pagsusumikap at dedikasyong walang humpay nilang ibinubuhos.



Para sa marami, takot at pagdududa ang dulot ng pakikipag-ugnayan umano ng Unibersidad sa *National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ECLAC)*, pati na rin ang mahihigpit na patakaran nito laban sa malayang pamamahayag—na taliwas sa pangako ng institusyong itaguyod ang angkin nitong mga pagpapahalaga. Si St. La Salle mismo, ang patron ng Unibersidad, ay isang repormador na pinahahalagahan ang bukas na pag-uusap at kritikal na pag-iisip. Gayunpaman, ang kasalukuyang estado ng institusyon ay tila ipinagkanulo na ang halaga nito. Ang pagsasawalang-bahala ng administrasyon sa boses ng mga mag-aaral ay nagpapakita ng isang awtoritaryan na pananaw na humahadlang sa mismong diwa ng reporma at kalayaan na siyang naging pundasyon ng Unibersidad.

Disclaimer: Sa panahon ng pagtanggap sa talang ito ay wala pang paglilinaw patungkol sa isyu ng ugnayan sa pagitan ng Unibersidad at NTF-ELCAC. Nais ipahayag ng Publikasyon na ayon sa miting ng University Student Government (USG) at Office of the Vice President for Global Engagement and External Relations (OVPGEER) ay mariing tinututulan ng Unibersidad ang alyansa ng COCOPEA at NTF-ELCAC.

Nagdudulot ng alalahanin ang pagbabago sa pamumuno at pamamahala sa ilalim ng kasalukuyang administrasyon na kinakatawan ni Br. Sockie. Maraming naniniwala na ang pokus ngayon ng institusyon ay higit na nakalaan sa kita imbis na sa kapakanan ng mga mag-aaral. Ang pagsasawalang-bahala sa mga pinansyal na suliranin ng mga mag-aaral, na sinamahan pa ng kawalan ng empatiya para sa kanilang mga ikinababahala, ay nagbibigay ng impresyon na sa pera lang may interes ang administrasyon at hindi sa pagkamit ng dekalidad na edukasyon para sa mga estudyante nito.

Isang matinding isyu ang kalagayang imprastraktura sa kampus, partikular na sa palibot ng Magpuri *Gate*. Ang mga sirang daanan ay hindi lamang nakaaabala, bagkus ay mapanganib din. Maliban sa isa itong malaking sagabal, maaari itong magdulot ng potensyal na pinsala sa mga taong dumaraan. Sa taas ng matrikula na kailangang bayaran ng mga mag-aaral, inaasahan din ang mataas na kalidad ng mga pangunahing pasilidad sa kampus, kabilang na ang mga ligtas na daanan. Ang kawalan ng pansin sa gayong payak ngunit napakahalagang aspeto ng kampus ay dumaragdag lamang sa humahabang listahan ng mga hinaing ng mga mag-aaral.

Hindi lamang mga nagbabagong dinamiko sa loob ng Unibersidad ang sumasalamin sa tinig ng mga estudyante, kung 'di pati na rin ang pangangailangang mahanap ang kanilang landas sa labirinto ng mga bagong patakaran. Higit sa pagiging komprehensibong gabay patungo sa iba't ibang espasyo sa kampus, ito ay patungkol sa masidhing pag-unawa sa mga pang-administratibong kalakaran na kailangang harapin ng mga estudyante sa araw-araw.

Ang Kampusapusapan ay isang puwang upang marinig ang mga boses ng mga mag-aaral, pumatnubay sa masalimuot na tanawin ng buhay Unibersidad, tutukan ang mga lugar na nangangailangan ng mas pinaigting na pagkilatis, at magbigay-daan sa landas ng pagbabagong inaasam ng karamihan. Maaaring mag-sumite ng pahayag sa susunod na semestre.

ONLINE FORMS

EDITORIAL

All for show



Behind a facade of rainbow flags and commemorative colored shirts, the University still lacks a strong foundation for true progressiveness. Students have yet to experience excellent education, determined leadership, and a sustained community climate.

The University's vision and mission declare its commitment to provide "a human and Christian Education to the young, especially the poor and the marginalized." However, multiple Tuition and Other Fee Increases (TOFI) have occurred in recent years, with some fees rising from P67,000 to P84,000 in 2023. Moreover, while the University takes pride in its status as the No. 1 Greenest University, it has failed to properly inform students of the loss of its autonomous status, in accordance with the Commission of Higher Education's (CHED) official list, after 15 years. Given its definition of excellent education as "habitually providing the best and honest services, especially in helping the poor and the community," it is evident that this standard remains unfulfilled.

One of the targets in the list of goals the University prepared to attain by 2027 is "determined leadership and governance that compel accountability." However, when student leaders play their role in taking a stand and advocating truth, they are penalized. During the Democracy March on February 26, 2024, commemorating the EDSA People Power Revolution, student-activist Paolo Tarra was sanctioned for raising a banner that wrote: "LASALLIANS OF CAVITE AGAINST CHA-CHA." Similarly, for Martial Law's 52nd commemoration, students were encouraged to wear black and participate in activities organized by the University Student Government (USG). Yet, during the slogan-making event, students were approached and intimidated by University personnel.

Surveillance during the Let a Thousand Paper Cranes Fly in DLSU-D event and attempts to photograph its participants further underscores the climate of intimidation within the University. The contradiction between the democracy shown and advocated for, versus the democracy applied within school grounds reeks of hypocrisy. Students are encouraged to take political stances yet are punished when their voices are loud and clear. Furthermore, despite being protected by Republic Act (RA) 7079 or the Campus Journalism Act (CJA), student journalists still face repression of their freedom of speech.

In striving for a sustained community climate, the University aims to "guarantee that the dignity and human rights of every member of the academic community is respected." This is symbolized by the display of rainbow flags in classrooms and gender-based marches organized by colleges like that of the College of Liberal Arts and Communications Student Government's (CLACSG) #ACCLA2023 on Pride Month. However, in the everyday setting, LGBTQIA+ continues to express feelings of neglect, disrespect, and discomfort in the school. During the State of the University Student Government Address (SUSGA) in October, a case of a transwoman student was brought up after being apprehended for entering the women's comfort room, despite the lack of palpable reason or provision that warrants the confrontation—a clear example of the discrimination-related mishaps that the University continues to project to its students.

Evidently, there lies a discrepancy between words and actions; logic and aspirations, set by the institution that commits itself to progress.

Progressivity will not stop once the show is over—if it is genuine to begin with. If the 2027 targets mean anything, then efforts to achieve these must go beyond surface-level display and seep into the audiences' minds; where the actors no longer act, as they stand by what they do deeply into their hearts. When the curtains close, the integrity and purpose of these initiatives must remain steadfast, ensuring that progressivity is not just a spectacle but a reality.



Daffodils

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Am I getting cancelled for this?

Boycotting, defined in the Cambridge dictionary as refusing to buy a product/s or take part in activities to express strong disapproval, is a form of protest that sounds familiar now more than ever. Several companies have fallen under the "boycott list" due to their sociopolitical and economic impact. While it is true that this practice is effective to a certain extent, I don't think there is a need to crucify those who don't participate.

Whether boycotting is effective or not is debatable. It can hurt businesses like McDonald's, whose CEO Chris Kempczinski stated in a letter posted on LinkedIn is "experiencing a meaningful business impact due to the war and associated misinformation," following its alleged support for Israeli military personnel. While I say it does work, I don't mean revenue-wise; rather, at least in increasing awareness towards social issues. On the other hand, it is difficult to sustain as consumers rely heavily on accessible products like Nestlé which is accused of contributing to the suffering and death of infants by advertising baby formula as reputedly superior to breastfeeding. It may be easy not to use their brand of all-purpose cream this Christmas, but they also produce Koko Krunch, Nescafé, Magic *Sarap*, and much more.

This brings me to the actual point of my article. We should stop canceling—defined in the Merriam-Webster as removing support in response to objectionable behavior or opinions—other people for not participating in boycotts, because, as it turns out, boycotting is a privilege that not everyone can afford. As mentioned by Ramon P. De Gennaro in the American Institute for Economic Research, certain corporations have few choices of alternatives that can compete in time, money, and quality. In fact, monopolies have no competitors by definition. It's hard to blame someone for buying Milo (also a Nestlé product) when their nearest *sari-sari* store does not sell other options.

Moreover, Northeastern Global News Cody Mello-Klein noted how easy it is to post on social media to boycott something versus how hard it is to reduce dependency. Coca-Cola for example, written as profiting from the Israeli occupation of Palestine, has become a staple in many people's fridges. Before you say there are a lot of other beverages to choose from, some of these are still under the brand such as Royal, Sprite, Minute Maid, and Wilkins. I can't really blame others for not knowing all this because honestly, if journalism wasn't part of my interests, I wouldn't even know how to get all this information.

Judgement doesn't solve ignorance.

Though I do think we should hold people accountable for not joining these movements, individuals aren't the enemy. I've met some who have been joining #BoycottMcDonald's but have no clue why it's being boycotted in the first place. I've also met some who have been vocal about their stances but lack accessible alternatives to fast food in their places. The fear of getting canceled outweighs having actual substantial information about the problem. If our first instinct is shaming and ridiculing others, then we're aiming at the wrong target.

At the core, we need to remember that we're mad at abusive, insensible, and discriminatory capitalists. We shouldn't be too condemnatory towards others. Judgment doesn't solve ignorance. The goal is to explain why it's happening, suggest alternatives, and pass the knowledge on. If they're privileged enough and know about the problem but still choose not to participate, then we can cancel them. Jk?



Strobellezá

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Above two-inch dignity

Gracing through a wide variety of bright apparel each morning and choosing which pair of clothing best represents me today has got to be the most stimulating yet equally satisfying part of day-to-day life. Fashion is a medium of expression; there is no doubt about that. But it sparks a different kind of conversation when this form of expression is stifled, creating a subjective standard that warrants respect—and disrespect thereof.

Midriffs, see-through clothes without "proper" undergarments, "overly tight" clothing, and plunging necklines are quite the fashion pieces we aren't permitted to flaunt at U-Lane. Despite their vague descriptions, it's clear that it all is simply because there is an established set of acceptability pertaining to how "decent-looking students" must present themselves—rooted, of course, in the Student Handbook provisions.

Once, I wore a dress comfortable and entirely to my liking. Standing before a mirror, I felt great about myself until a thought crept in. I lifted a thumb to measure the skin reaching two inches above my knees, my dress barely pulling itself down to make do with the dress code prohibitions. Then, I wondered: Did that make me less dignified?

Judgment through clothing is highly subjective. It invites discrimination and leaves space for injustice. As far as decency is concerned, dignity can neither be measured by a few inches of fabric nor by a sheer lack of sleeves. Dignity is not scaled, just as pride is not earned—it is a fundamental right.

Recently, a case involving a transwoman student facing apprehension from the University's security personnel for "cross-dressing" garnered strong reactions from the Lasallian community, raising the question of how progressive our institution truly is. It is a recurring point of discussion how nearly all other La Salle schools continue to uphold their academic integrity while embracing greater freedom of expression, granting students the right to be themselves without interference. Here, however, we continue to battle setbacks that hinder personal identity and creativity.

Dignity is not scaled, just as pride is not earned—it is a fundamental right.

Our dress code policy tramples on more than just the desire to show a little bit more skin; it undermines the fundamental need for self-expression, particularly for those in minority groups—such as the LGBTQIA+ community and women—who suffer from a long history of discrimination.

Thus, this issue transcends all shapes, forms, and colors. It's a widespread affliction in desperate need of attention and mending. While this pertains to fashion, the dress code innuendo extends far beyond mere setbacks in the fashion realm grandeur, but to a larger underlying systemic issue. A piece of all stifled means of expression, be it of identity, creativity, or matters that go even to the sociopolitical extent, encompasses all the voices repressed and continues to be repressed with no law to protect them because the law itself oppresses them.

We deserve a community where we feel safe the moment we step into it. We deserve a space that makes us feel less anxious and more dignified. We, unfortunately needfully, demand an environment where wearing clothes that challenge traditional standards does not warrant sanctions and does not make us feel out of place. Self-expression has no place to be treated like a transgression. Where, whether you wear a few more inches of linen—or the lack of it—you are met with equal amounts of respect.

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Digital Publications

Implementation of wearing the brand new school uniforms

Extension of library opening hours from until 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM on weekdays

Dress code policy revisions in the revised Student Handbook



An[nah]Themis

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Distinction's worth

Honor, praise, distinction. Three words placed on a pedestal when one attains a degree, especially with the addition of this one word—*laude*.

My high school self would say that Latin honors would be a reward for my parents and an extra flavor to my resume. Entering university felt like registering for a game I was familiar with; a childhood game but with bigger stakes, a wider scale, and at a higher level in an unfamiliar system. The students, the players; the course subjects, the levels, and; the professors, the judges. The admins are the gamemasters you bow and scrape to.

Mechanics: Players should have earned 75 percent of total credits at the institution; no player should have a grade lower than 2.50 or its equivalent throughout the game; dropping a subject that is prescribed on the curriculum is prohibited; they must not have been found guilty of having committed a major offense with a corrective action of suspension, and; one must attain at least a 3.26 cumulative grade point average (GPA).

I already overcame about 15 levels when a certain subject struck and disqualified me from the game. As I opened the portal, I saw it—2.25—a grade that isn't low, but apparently not enough. I was drowning in possible disappointment from my parents who worked hard for this privilege, and that of the child who always strived to be above average, at least academically.

How could a difference of 0.25 in a singular level dismiss everything I've worked on? I guess university really isn't a *game*. I started to navigate a way for a second chance. *"Ano pong p'wedeng pavaan?"* But the words of some frustrated Latin honor-hopefuls I met never weighed so much as now. *"Ganiyan talaga. Ako nga, sa P.E. sumablay."* It dawned on me: Second chances are impossible in a traditionalist practice deeply rooted in the system.

In another La Salle school, there is a fixed minimum reach of cumulative GPA throughout their program. Their policies do not disqualify students for underperforming solely on one subject, yet remain among the top universities in the country. The University has a clear standard of what they want their students to be, but fails to reach the students' standards of a university with their impending delays on facilities, inconsistent quality of laboratories, and lack of transparency.

The University has a clear standard of what they want their students to be, but fails to reach the students' standards of a university

This system for Latin honors has been around for too long. If it continually steers clear of its flaws, or deafens the cry to reevaluate whether the requirement still caters in current times, it would be destructive as students question the worth of their efforts. My story is just the tip of the iceberg, a crack rooted and branched out to a whole system that is begging for progress.

The same frustrations of chances being taken away from working students, fourth-years, shiftees, and transferees can be heard.

For those who are still surviving the game and upping their levels, I celebrate your perseverance and pray for much more. As for me, I made peace with my disappointments. Honor, praise, and distinction may not be something I could get on my diploma this college, but neither would it hinder me from accumulating knowledge, pursuing challenges, and conquering difficulties. At the end of the day, John C. Maxwell states "Fail early, fail often, but always fail forward."

But I can't deny, though, that it's still at the back of my mind—that singular 2.25.



Lumen

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Bingi at bulag

Bilang isang estudyante na patapos na sa kursong Sikolohiya, nauunawaan kong maraming rason sa likod ng mga *Die-hard* Duterte *Supporters* (DDS) at Bongbong Marcos (BBM) *supporters*. Sabi nga ng aking propesor, ang sikolohikal na paliwanag sa likod ng ating pagkahumaling sa mga lider tulad nina Duterte at Marcos Jr. ay kadalasang umiikot sa isang malalim na pagkahalina sa kapangyarihan at kontrol. Dahil ako ay isa ring estudyanteng-mamamahayag, napapatanong din ako sa sarili kung bakit hanggang ngayon ay may mga taong nasisikmura pa ring humanga sa kanila, sa kabila ng utang nilang pagkakasala sa sambayanan. May mga taong naturingang maka-Diyos, pero sumusuporta sa mamamatay-tao; konserbatibo, pero humahanga sa misogonista.

Likas sa tao ang humanga sa mga indibidwal na may kakayahang manguna, kahit pa ang mga lider na ito ay may kaugnayan sa mapanirang pwersa. Ginamit nina Duterte at Marcos Jr. ang isang taktikang madalas maiuugnay sa awtoritaryang rehimen—ang paglikha ng isang talimuwang na krisis o *instability* upang ilahad ang kanilang sarili bilang natatanging solusyon. Napansin ko rin na ang mga taong may sinasamba ay kadalasang nakatutok lamang sa kanilang idolo, tumitingala sa bawat kilos at salita nito—sumasamba nang walang tanong at pagdududa. Ika nga ng *die-hard fans,* "Kapag *idol* mo, tanggap mo." Ngunit sa sobrang paghanga sa kanilang idolo, kadalasan ay inilalagay nila ito sa napakataas na *pedestal*, na para bang sila ay walang kakayahang magkamali. Naaalala ko ang *"war on drugs"* ni Duterte, kung saan ipinangako niya na sa loob ng anim na buwan ay mawawala na ang lahat ng adik. Dagdag pa rito, sa ilalim ng administrasyon ni Marcos Jr., ipinasasabatas ang modernisasyon ng mga *jeepney*, kung saan pinalalabas ng gobyerno na ang hakbang na ito ay para mapabuti ang pampublikong transportasyon ng bansa. Dahil dito, nagmumukha silang mga *messiah* na siyang nakahihikayat ng suporta mula sa mamamayang dismayado sa kasalukuyang sistema.

May mga taong naturingang maka-Diyos, pero sumusuporta sa mamamatay-tao; konserbatibo, pero humahanga sa misogonista.

Imbes na maging solusyon ang *war on drugs*, nagdulot pa ito ng ekstrahudisyal na pamamaslang at mga paglabag sa karapatang pantao. Sa halip na makatulong ang *jeepney phaseout*, nagdulot lang ito ng dagdag pasanin sa mga komyuter, drayber, at *operator*. Pero ang *hero-worship* sa ganitong konteksto ay hindi tungkol sa pagsang-ayon sa bawat hakbang nila, kundi sa kaakit-akit na impluwensya ng kanilang kapangyarihan. Ang paghanga ay nakabatay sa kanilang kakayahang hubugin ang opinyon ng nakararami, mangibabaw sa publiko, at mag-iwan ng isang legasiya—mabuti man o masama.

Sa huli, ang pagiging *die-hard fan* ay hindi lang isang simpleng pagkahumaling, kundi isang masalimuot na kombinasyon ng kapangyarihan at sikolohiya. Ang paghanga sa mga nasa tuktok at ang kagustuhang manalig sa isang tagapagtanggol ay mga pangunahing dahilan kung bakit patuloy na may sumusuporta sa mga taong perwisyo sa lipunan. Ngunit, bilang mga indibidwal na may kakayahang mag-isip nang kritikal, mahalagang matutuhan nating timbangin ang ating paghanga at prinsipyo. Ang paglalagay ng sinuman sa *pedestal* nang walang pagsusuri ay kadalasang humahantong sa pagkalimot sa sariling integridad—isang bagay na hindi dapat isakripisyo para sa anumang uri ng idolatriya. Ang mga may sinasambang idolo ay bingi sa katwiran. Ika nga sa pelikula ni Jerrold Tarog na Angelito, "Ang idolo, kailangan ng bulag na mananamba para mabuhay."



Chippler

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Pressed freedom

The Campus Journalism Act (CJA) of 1991 was crafted to uphold press freedom. However, its many loopholes, such as financial starvation, editorial interference, and even disbandment, have enabled administrators to control student publications. Amid increasing reports of suppression across universities, passing the Campus Press Freedom (CPF) Bill grows more urgent with each passing day.

Student journalists often face relentless pressure from administrators desperate to preserve their institution's reputation. This obsession for validation leads to censorship of journalistic works addressing sensitive issues such as tuition hikes, faculty misconduct, or poor campus facilities. Administrators and faculty members sometimes bypass protocols, pressuring advisers to influence editorial decisions—even though publications are designed to be independently run by students.

This fear of negative publicity leads to silencing criticisms rather than addressing legitimate concerns. In contrast, the role of student publications aim to amplify student voices, offering administrators insights into campus problems. Rather than seeing such reporting as rebellion, administrators should view it as constructive feedback that drives institutional improvement.

But this attack isn't one-dimensional. It affects even the financial aspect of campus journalism. Funding for student publications usually comes from subscription fees collected during enrollment. While the CJA permits administrators to facilitate this process, it does not mandate it, leaving room for abuse. Administrators can withhold funds to exert control or suppress critical publications. As a result, some student publications resort to self-collection or are forced to close, silencing vital platforms for discourse.

The fear of negative publicity leads to silencing criticisms rather than addressing legitimate concerns.

Beyond institutional challenges, student journalists also face external threats such as red-tagging, wherein journalists are falsely associated with insurgent groups, subjecting them to surveillance and potential harm. Moreover, campus publications are subject to online trolls that escalate harassment through smear campaigns and disinformation. Unfortunately, these challenges remain unaddressed by the CJA as it doesn't cover the digital side of journalism.

Off-campus coverage further exposes student journalists to risks, including profiling and harassment by law enforcement. Ironically, military forces, tasked with ensuring citizens' safety, often intimidate student journalists. Many have reported instances of authorities demanding personal and institutional details that foster intimidation, unwarranted profiling, and the risk of surveillance—leaving student journalists vulnerable to harassment.

First proposed in 2011, the CPF Bill's vitality remains as it seeks to close these gaps by guaranteeing editorial independence and operational autonomy for campus publications. Key provisions include the mandatory establishment of at least one publication per institution, reopening previously closed publications, and ensuring subscription fee collection. The bill empowers student journalists to report without fear of censorship or interference by eliminating financial suppression.

Journalism remains one of the world's most dangerous professions, requiring individuals to confront conflict and deliver the truth. While the CPF Bill offers protection on paper, its passages alone are insufficient. Effective implementation and monitoring are critical in ensuring press freedom becomes a reality in the Philippines.

The state of universities is always a microcosm of society. If we want a freer state of the national press, then we must lobby for it to start campus-wide. Now is the time to act. Pass the Campus Press Freedom Bill and safeguard the voices of youth-driven journalism.

WITBREAD

Future's gonna be okay

by **Ma. Sofia H. Saputil (BSE21)**

I'm sitting on a bed of roses and thorns because dozing off would mean losing in life. As a four-year-old kid sitting in front of an old television while Cinderella tells me that a dream is a wish my heart makes, I'm sent to many possibilities for the future. I spent days wearing my favorite dresses and telling my parents that I would live in a castle far away from the unknown. When I had my preparatory graduation, I stood in front of the microphone and said loud and clear, "When I grow up, I want to be a nurse," just because my friends, who came up first, said they wanted to be nurses.

A shift in tides occurred when I was in elementary school, because this time, I held on to it for years—the dream of becoming a teacher. As an only child, praised for the number of medals hanging around my neck with every recognition, it felt more like a solace than a burden to carry, no matter how heavy and suffocating it seemed. To be a teacher in the future captivated my hunger for knowledge and understanding of the world, as I deemed my growing attachment to learning unstoppable.

Fast forward to the year 2023, when the talk of the town about college and scholarship applications replaced the laughs and gossip in our school's corridors. Financial burdens crept into the ceilings of my dimmed bedroom as I wrote a silent prayer to a distant star. Several entrance exams and commutes felt like endless steps filled with gnawing anxiety, making tomorrow seem impossible to reach. I don't know if the world was against my dreams or if I was just less capable of dreaming because of my circumstances, but it felt like while other people were riding in limousines, I was walking on a tightrope between my dreams and reality. It dawned on me that the four-year-old kid sitting in front of the television had more luxury of dreaming than the eighteen-year-old me. It would be a total lie if I said that it didn't kill my dreams inside.

I continued searching for my path as I fought for every opportunity, gathering requirements for the schools I planned to attend. But, like every romantic turn of a story, an invisible string invited me to look beyond the opportunities I wanted for the moment I needed—a scholarship. My parents, determined to pave the way for the dreamer inside of me, inspired me to reach for the dream that my younger self would be proud of most: to be a Lasallian educator. Being given the chance to study at this prestigious institution as a Student Financial Aid Grantee was one of the most unexpected turns in my life. Yes, I had recurring dreams of being here, admiring the landscape as I flipped through the pages of my handwritten notes. Still, because I didn't have the financial capacity to study, the dreams became a faraway place that I could only visit somewhere in the next life.

Being a Lasallian scholar means a lot to who I am today as a second-year student majoring in Secondary Education - English. To be a scholar at DLSU-D means getting to know a lot of students, professors, and staff, especially during my duty hours in the library. To be a scholar at DLSU-D is to have a guaranteed experience for the future, guided by wise and seasoned people who have passion in their eyes for whatever they do. Lastly, being a DLSU-D scholar is learning that you are not here for the title of being a scholar, but a humble moment to learn your goals and pay kindness forward to people, especially in my future role as an educator who will always live by the action of aspiring to inspire the hope of tomorrow.

To all aspiring scholars, I hope you will be able to seek the opportunity that is yours. As I said, to be labeled a scholar is not a title to brag about to your family and friends because to be one is to be dedicated and passionate towards your profession, no matter how bumpy the road may seem.

To all the current scholars, I hope that we will continue to reach for our dreams with our hearts humbled and feet on the ground. Maintaining a grade while maintaining to seek who you are is not an easy feat in college. These days, I try to hold on to and sit on a bed of roses and thorns because even dozing on it would be better, there are still more days to fulfill. There is still a tomorrow that I need to live.

Mabuhay, mga iskolars! Malayo ka na, pero may ilalayo ka pa.

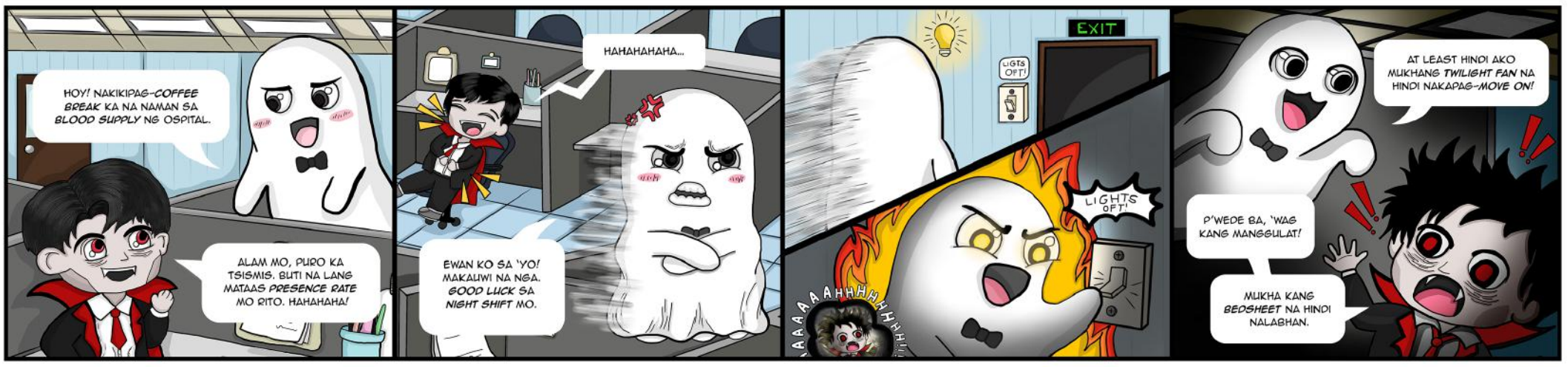
Quality and service of University food square concessionaires

Study hubs in Ayuntamiento de Gonzalez and Hotel Rafael

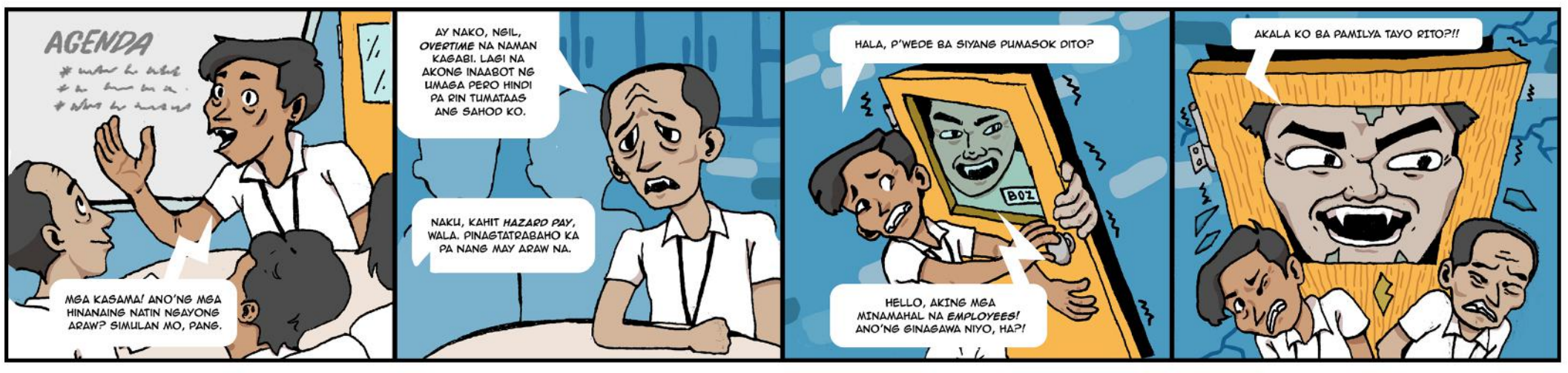
Hike of vehicle entry sticker prices

HERALDOODLES

LIGHTS OFF! BY AUDE



THE VAMPIRE DAYA-RIES BY HIRAYA



HALF-DAY BY SEVERUS



HEAVEN IS A DEPARTMENT STORE BY KAPEKO



OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND BY UNO



Access to the Exposure video documentary

EXPOSURE

Photos by Imee Antonette Ocampo, Emmanuel II Hoylar, and Angel Lorraine Bulda

Creative Direction by Imee Antonette Ocampo









Hapdi ng Alon, Ani ng Talaba

Sa baybayin ng Barangay Talaba II, Bacoor, kalakip ng bawat hampas ng alon ay mga dampi ng samot-saring naratibo—mga kuwentong buhay ng bawat indibidwal na bumubuo sa espasyong ito. Dito, ipinagmamalaki ang yamang dagat na bumubuhay sa mga residente ng barangay, kabilang na ang mga isda, tahong, at talaba. Subalit kung anong ikinapayapa at ikinasagana ng karagatan ay siya ring ikinabalisa at ikinatuyot ng kabuhayan ng mga mangingisdang pumapalaot dito. Bawat bukas ay may baong pangamba dahil sa walang katiyakang hinaharap—sa ibayo man ng lupa o sa kailaliman ng dagat. Sa kuwento ng mga mangingisdang ito, kapwa Pilipino pa ang bangungot sa pangarap na disenteng kabuhayan.

Mabigat ang pasang dinadala ng mga residente ng Talaba II bunsod ng multi-sektoral na isyung pangkapaligiran, pang-industriya, pampolitika, at pang-ekonomiya. Maliban sa inaalay na pisikal na tiyaga't pasensya ng pandaragat, iniinda rin nila ang epekto ng iba't ibang salik na, madalas, ay opisyales ang nagdudulot—silang may pangunahing tungkuling magbigay-suporta.

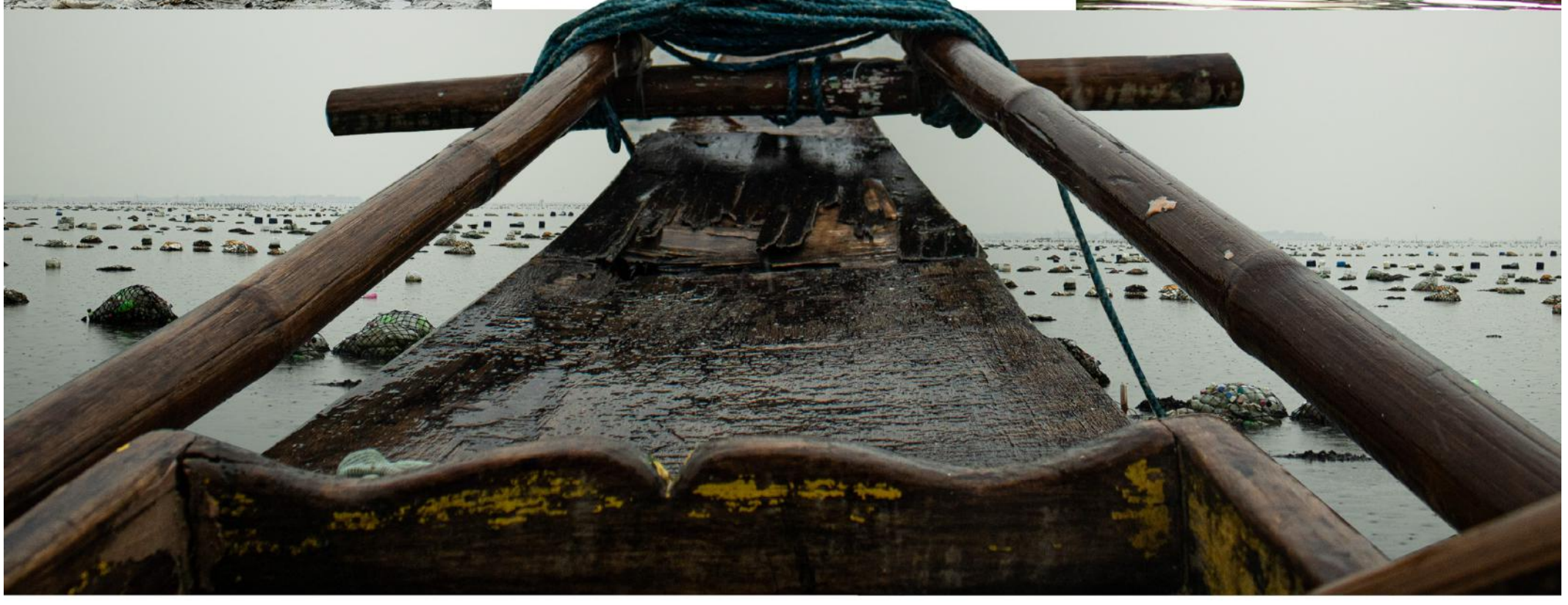
"Lahat ng mandaragat dito [ay] nagrereklamo tungkol sa panghuhuli nila. Wala nang nahuli, kami pa 'yung mahuhuli," ani Ricardo Bagonggong, isang mag-uuma at miyembro ng Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA - Cavite).

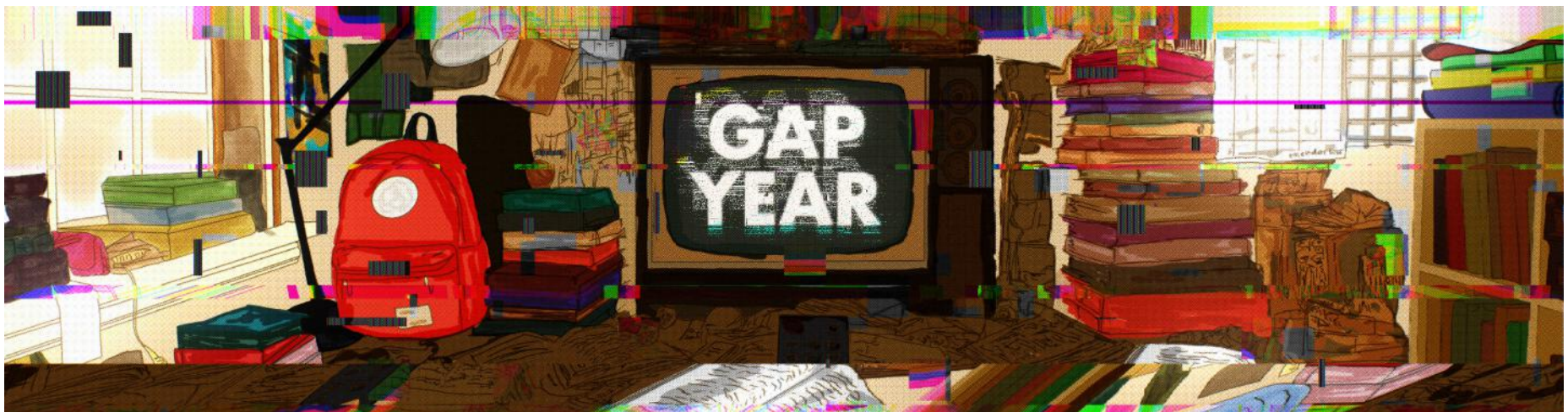
Higit pa sa pagkakakilanlan ng Bacoor bilang isa sa mga nangungunang lokal sa produksyon ng tahong, nararapat ding pangatawanan ang timbang ng responsibilidad na kaakibat nito—kabilang na ang aktibong pagprotekta sa kalikasan at ang pagtataguyod ng karapatang pantao, lalo na ng mga pumapalaot nating modernong bayani.











Pause now, adult later

by **Frances Nicole Umbao |** Graphic Art by **Angienette Laurza**

A gap year isn't merely a pause in the race toward adulthood—it's a breath, a deliberate break to recalibrate, to step away from the conveyor belt of expectations, and ask yourself what you truly want from life. In a world that moves with urgency, where success is measured by how quickly we reach the next milestone, the idea of deviating from that standard timeline can sound almost rebellious. Yet, for some, this is precisely where the magic lies—in the quiet between steps, in the space between breaths, and in the world around us and our place in it.

In our culture of efficiency, where life's path is mapped out in clean, linear steps, the idea of taking a year off from school can feel like a risky detour. The sequence seems so straightforward: finish a degree, land a job, and build a life that checks all the right boxes. Yet, the allure of a gap year lies in its defiance of this narrative. It beckons you to explore, to step off the paved road and wander through uncertainty, guided only by curiosity. More and more, young people are feeling that pull. They're choosing to step away from the rush—from the scripts written for them—to experience life unfiltered by the lens of predetermined structure.

Becoming the plot twist

Gap year. These two words can set off alarm bells in any conversation between young people and their well-meaning families. For a close friend of mine, when I asked her about the moment she shared her decision to take a gap year, she was met with a flurry of anxious questions in no time: "Are you sure it's a good idea? Won't you fall behind? How will you afford it?" These concerns, though spoken with love, reflected a deeper societal fear: the unknown. It was as if veering off the orthodox path from high school to university could somehow unravel everything she'd worked for.

"I had everything planned," she admitted. Top grades, a scholarship that looked stellar on paper—her path was supposed to be seamless. However, there was a nagging voice in the back of her mind, one that whispered doubts. "Why waste a year?" she asked herself, echoing the fears of many who excel academically but feel tethered to a system that leaves no room for detours.

Amidst the noise of skepticism, there was a singular voice that spoke to something deeper. "*Andito lang kami, anak*. Go for it," her mother had said with quiet certainty. It wasn't flashy advice, but it was a powerful reminder that sometimes, stepping away from the script is how we find out what we truly want.

The long route of a short life

There is a strange kind of clarity that comes when you strip away the familiar—the daily routines, the expectations that once felt so permanent. For many who take a gap year, the experience isn't just about seeing the world; it's about discovering themselves in a new light. The noise quiets, the rush slows, and what's left is the echo of your own thoughts. In those moments, growth isn't a task to be checked off a list—it's a process of becoming, of asking questions that don't always come with immediate answers.

My friend then recounted the time she found herself sitting alone in her room during the early months of her gap year, staring at her reflection in the mirror. "I'd look at myself and ask, 'What makes you happy?" It was a question that high school—with its constant push toward achievement—had never given her the space to explore. Without the pressure of exams and deadlines, she was finally forced to confront what really mattered to her and, more importantly, discover who she was beyond the roles of student and achiever.

These quiet moments of introspection, often sparked by unfamiliar environments or new faces, become catalysts for self-discovery. It's in the unpredictability of the gap year—the unexpected conversations, the unplanned detours—that we confront ourselves in ways we hadn't before. In doing so, we begin to unearth not just what we're capable of, but also what we value, what we seek, and what truly makes us feel alive.

After pressing pause

What starts as a leap into the unknown often becomes a journey with no clear end. As the year winds down and the familiar structure of academic life begins to loom once more, the questions arise: How have I changed? What have I discovered about myself? And what does that mean for the life I'll return to?

"I didn't plan on taking a gap year," continued my friend, "but when the pandemic hit, I didn't have a choice." What she initially saw as a lost year became the most defining one of her life. "I learned that curiosity, not obligation, should drive you forward… Learning isn't about fulfilling expectations—it's about seeking out the things that make you look forward to waking up the next morning." The shift in her perspective was profound. She came back with a hunger not just for knowledge, but for understanding—of herself, of others, and of the world.

That intrinsic motivation didn't go unnoticed. When she returned to university, she was no longer driven by external expectations but by an internal compass. This shift extended beyond the classroom. Casual introductions turned into impactful conversations about her gap year, where her stories of challenges and growth captivated strangers in ways her academic achievements never could. "They didn't care about my grades as much as they did about my experiences," she laughed. "I had stories to tell. Real ones."

In a world that often values achievement over authenticity, it's those unscripted moments—when life doesn't go according to plan—that stand out. The gap year, in all its unpredictability, offers young people a chance not just to grow, but to grow into themselves.

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For those who dare take the leap, the gap year becomes a journey of self-discovery, marked by both challenges and triumphs. It's a time of saying "yes" to the unknown, stepping outside comfort zones, and learning to trust that the detours we take are often the most valuable parts of the journey. When it's over, what remains isn't just a set of new skills or experiences but a deeper, more authentic understanding of who you are and what you want from life. For those who embrace it, the gap year isn't just a break from life's race; it's a chance to discover a new way of running it.

(((THE HF RADAR)))

by **Robert Niño Marcelino |** Graphic Art by **Altheia Clarisse Rara**

THE POWER OF INVISIBLE SPACES

SONG

Fight Song by Rachel Platten (2015)



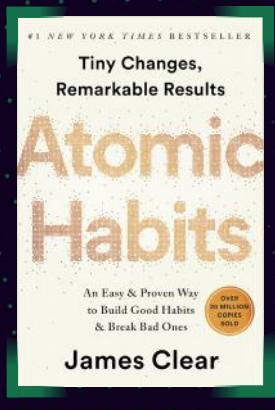
"Can you hear my voice this time? This is my fight song. Prove I'm alright song."

These are some of the most quotable lines from Rachel Platten's *Fight Song*. Through well-woven melodies and verses, the track delivers the message of one's yearning to persevere in life despite continuous encounters with disappointments and losses.

The song conveys the classic timeless lesson of hope and growth to its listeners: even the best of the best in their leagues consciously chose to pursue their journey shedding blood, sweat, and tears along the way. It may consume a lot of work and sacrifices—sometimes even at the cost of oneself—but witnessing yourself thrive along the process shall prepare you to succeed. Big waves of life will try to drown you. However, your support system and leadership in steering through challenges serve as both a break and a boost of confidence. After all, there is an island at the end of the tunnel that will serve as a resting place to satisfy you after enduring the journey. Then, the tide of challenges will become a part of your cherished memories.

BOOK

Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones by James Clear (2018)



James Clear writes books that highly emphasize an individual's habits, decision-making, and growth over time. According to reviews from *Atomic Habits: Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results*, his book touches the lives of many in building their system—breaking bad habits and starting good ones. This leads to developing an identity of believing in yourself, designing the environment you deem beneficial for self-improvement, and then putting those takeaways into real-life application.

This is a type of book that encourages readers to engage in following a lifestyle that empowers a person's path. It's a companion reading guide that reflects through its pages how we, as individuals, have the liberty to work on the betterment of ourselves without being burdened by the society's standards of progress and improvement.

TV SERIES

Arrow (2012 - 2020)



What would you do after being stranded, imprisoned, presumed dead on an island, with no news about your city for five years? This is the dilemma of Oliver Queen (Stephen Amell), who returns to Starling City with newfound abilities after surviving a sunken yacht at Lian Yu island. There he met Yao Fei (Byron Man), who trained him to use archery as a primary weapon. Armed with skills in healing, hand-to-hand combat, and martial arts, Oliver takes on the identity of a vigilante named Green Arrow who is determined to stop the corruption and crimes in his town.

Despite the dark moments in his life, Oliver chooses to face the realities of Starling City and spark change. During his stay on the island, the Green Arrow loses track of time, but through his struggles, he grows into a man determined to cleanse the opposing and crooked system in his city. Arrow narrates the story of how a difficult period can transform a person and change their perception, pushing them to grow and take responsibility in unconventional ways.

FILM

The Perks of Being a Wallflower (2012)



When Charlie Kelmecki (Logan Lerman) is discharged from a mental health institution and enters high school, he finds it very challenging to socialize with his peers. His life changes when he meets two seniors, Patrick (Ezra Miller) and his step-sister Samantha (Emma Watson), introducing the start of a new chapter in his life filled with his self-discovery, exploration, and challenges of adolescence in the early 90s. Puberty turned his life around and he grappled through this phase carrying the baggage of his previous trauma.

A new environment can spark change that either makes or breaks an individual. Through Charlie's experiences, he developed a wider range of understanding of what life he has been missing after once being in a restricted space. As he familiarizes himself with his emotions and broadens his perspectives, he begins to confront his past traumas. His time in the institution, though hindering, becomes a catalyst for growth. With the support of his newfound friends, Charlie learns how the past made him tougher in facing adversities. It is a story of self-nurturing after being deprived of a normal life.

The past we carry, the future we shape

by **Marcela Nadine Perlas**

Carrying the weight of history, we face a world grappling with climate crises and staggering inequality. Yet, amid these challenges, there lies a flicker of hope—an opportunity to reshape our future with the lessons of the past. In this gray space, we hold the power to create change, and through unity, innovation, and courage, we can build a brighter tomorrow.

Navigating a world of challenges and opportunities

To be young today is to stand at the crossroads of history, where the ghosts of yesterday and the dreams of tomorrow collide. We, Filipinos, are heirs to an extraordinary legacy—one heavy with burdens but brimming with possibilities. It is a legacy shaped by the triumphs and tragedies of those who came before us: the cracks they left in earth, the bridges they built, and the stars they reached for.

But as we step into the gray area, caught between the black-and-white of progress and failure, one question lingers: *What will we do with this inheritance?*

The lingering shadows

Every generation inherits a world fraught with its trials, but ours feels particularly unique, doesn't it? We walk beneath the weight of a sky that seems darker with each passing year. The flash of an agonizing atmosphere entered the windows of our souls as soon as we found ourselves standing below what seemed to be a weeping heaven. The air is thick with the fumes of a warming planet, a quiet yet deafening reminder of how we have betrayed the only home we have.

The numbers don't lie. Rising seas threaten entire nations as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reports how human activities, particularly in developed countries, have greatly contributed to the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases, which in turn have enhanced the natural greenhouse effect. This phenomenon will result in additional warming of the Earth's surface, adversely impacting ecosystems and communities worldwide. Storms grow harder and catastrophes hit mankind faster.

Coastal hurricanes, once slow-growing forces of nature, have gained terrifying strength in recent decades. An insight from a recent study published on PreventionWeb shows that from 1979 to 2000, these storms intensified at a rate of 0.37 knots every six hours. But from 2000 to 2020, that pace surged to 1.15 knots—more than tripling in speed. As the ocean warms and wind patterns shift, we face a future of storms that strike with greater intensity, threatening 40% of the global population living along vulnerable coastlines.

Forests fall silent as their guardians cut down in the name of "progress." These towering sentinels, which absorb a third of the world's greenhouse gases and shelter 80% of our land-based creatures, are being stripped away bit by bit. Their loss reverberates through the lives of 1.6 billion people who rely on them for survival. As global deforestation continues unchecked, we face a future where we—without swift action—will plunge into the perilous depths of climate catastrophe.

The goals are clear, yet the world's progress is heartbreakingly slow. The earth cries out, but its desperate pleas are drowned beneath the relentless noise of industry and overconsumption. As we recklessly devour resources, the planet suffers in silence, its ecosystems collapsing under the weight of our endless demand while the hum of machinery drowns out any hope of reprieve. The destruction is not just environmental. It is the stripping away of life itself, as the beauty and balance of nature are compromised in the pursuit of more.

And then, there's the ever-widening canyon of economic inequality, a chasm separating those who feast from those who starve. In a world with enough for everyone, why does it seem like survival is more a privilege than a right? The richest 1% now hold more wealth than the rest of the planet combined, a staggering testament to how the scales of power and wealth have tilted. These are shadows we did not cast but must learn to confront. Sometimes, our fate seems to be ours not by choice, but by birth.

The light we hold

Yet, even in this darkness, there is light. It is easy to dwell on the cracks, but look closer, and you will find gold seeping in between. Poverty, though indeed persistent, is not the giant it once was. Millions have climbed out of the unknown interspace's grasp, aided by human ingenuity and resilience.

Technology, the very force that sometimes alienates us, has also connected us in ways our ancestors couldn't imagine. A voice all the way in the Philippines can spark a movement as far away as America; a singular dream in Africa can inspire multitudes of action in Asia. We have tools they could only dream of; connectivity that blurs borders and bridges cultures.

It is a paradox to live in a time where isolation feels like a plague while connection is just a click away; to inherit a world both fractured and whole, brimming with despair yet bursting with potential.

Living in the gray

We are the generation of the gray area, the in-between. We are neither saviors nor villains, neither entirely burdened nor wholly privileged. We exist in the delicate balance of a black-and-white, four-cornered room, a liminal space where certainty is a myth.

However, there is beauty in the gray. It is where creativity thrives, where innovation is born. It is where we can rewrite the rules and carve out futures unbound by mistakes of the past. Maybe it is time we stop looking for answers in absolutes. Maybe it is in this space of ambiguity that we will find our power.

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To inherit the past is not just to bear its weight—it is to sift through its depths, uncovering treasures worth preserving and casting aside what no longer serves our journey forward. It is to honor the sacrifices etched into history while daring to dream of something greater, something brighter.

And here we are, standing on the cusp of change, with the gray stretching before us. Let us not shy away from its uncertainty. Instead, let us embrace it, for it is within the gray that transformation is born. It is here that the seeds of tomorrow take root, waiting for us to help them grow.

Perhaps—just perhaps—the gray is not a void to fear but a bridge to the light; a place where hope whispers and new beginnings shine.



Your degree isn't your destiny

by **Sophia Morena Tauxe** | Graphic Art by **Ashly Maquirang**

If life was a chalkboard with each tally mark representing an achievement, how full would yours be—and how many would you need to be successful?

For Mrs. Bea Bagac-Lataza, an alumna of DLSU-D's College of Tourism and Hospitality Management (CTHM), and now the CEO and co-founder of the Dubai-based tech startup GoMommy.AE, the marks seem endless. Sitting back in her contemporary, Mediterranean-inspired office with her co-founder and husband Kharl Lataza, she reflected on her experiences. From her beginnings as a Tourism and Hospitality major to becoming the founder of a service tech company poised to expand into the Philippines and the United Kingdom (UK), she shares fascinating insights into her entrepreneurial approach to life, taking risks in her career, and her fiery determination to tackle challenges head-on.

The mirage of success

As the conversation with Mrs. Bagac-Lataza unfolded, it became clear that there is no one way to categorically measure success. Even the generally prescribed cultural views society deems fit to bestow upon its inhabitants at any given moment are gossamer thin, ever-shifting with the ebb and tide of tradition, politics, and evolving discourse. The idea of success, and who is deemed capable of attaining it, has transformed much like the battles for civil liberties that have come and gone with it. In the same vein, the qualities that define success have shifted over time, and to this day, no definitive answer exists. There are only the broadly accepted parameters: the perception of a fulfilling home life, general disposition, and financial stability.

Further telling of a society that has developed smudged yet present socioeconomic lines, education is the great equalizer, often regarded as the key to a better life. In 2025, a degree is more than just paper, it's a way to rise above one's status, often associated with a can-do attitude in order to seize life by the reigns and take control.

No blank slates in fate

A true entrepreneur, Mrs. Bagac-Lataza was steadfast in her idea of building upon existing skills and truly capitalizing on market niches. She explained her inspiration, saying, "I was inspired by the story of Canva. The owner was a woman, and she wanted to have a DIY poster and banner marketing. As a woman as well with a small business in the Philippines—non-tech *ako*—" she shared, her eyes glinting with the passion of a storyteller, "—I wanted to have something *na madadalian ako*. I don't know how to build a website. So the vision started: How can we empower people like me *na* non-tech to create a website that would be easier for them?" Even in the website's name alone, there are elements of good-humoured yet strategic thinking to compete with similar services. But for her, their customer-centered approach remains a core company value, their true edge in the market.

"The number one skill that's necessary to becoming an entrepreneur is to become very adaptable. *Maraming tao kasi*, they think of a business as easy as 1, 2, 3. They think if they have the capital—that's it! It does not mean that if you have capital, you can succeed. If you are not adaptable enough, and don't have the endurance to endure pain, don't waste your money in making a business. Develop your personality first before you divulge yourself to a higher commitment level. Business is a different level of commitment," Mr. Lataza explains.

"*Kaming dalawang mag-asawa*, we've had multiple ventures in the past and even now, but just like Mark Zuckerberg says, you have to fail more than you succeed. It will only take one or two ventures that will give you a break, but before that's going to happen, you have to fail a lot of times. Why? That's self-growth," he adds.

Mrs. Bagac-Lataza's story is a reminder that success is rarely linear. There are often periods where one feels they've taken one step forward and two steps back, and for many, the path from education to career takes unexpected turns. Add the pressure of aging and responsibility, and it's easy to be overwhelmed. At just the age of 20, you are already past a quarter of your life expectancy. Cognitively, you've spent a good chunk of it without the agency to truly make your mark upon the theoretical board. Meanwhile, time is an ever-present and marching tone in our lives, and the pressure to succeed is ever looming.

Embrace risk, escape regret

For those who do not quite have that same fiery entrepreneurial spirit that Mrs. Bagac-Lataza and Mister Lataza do, taking risks is understandably difficult. It is both a great burden and a great privilege to be able to direct your own destiny, but paths cannot be carved through sheer will alone. It would be remiss not to point out the probabilities of failure, in whatever capacity that may mean for the person taking the risk in the first place. Ultimately, this is what makes the idea of unstable careers feel so bone-achingly petrifying—the acrid sort of burn of failure.

"I'm the first one to overthink. *Dapat may plano, dapat may* contingency—I also learned that from our marketing subject in La Salle." Mrs. Bagac-Lataza speaks on the topic of the anxiety associated with shifting life trajectories so dramatically with good humour, "But my husband (Mr. Lataza) taught me that you don't really need to have a concrete plan—you just need to be calm and think about how you'll figure it out. Find the right solution. After that, we move forward." She further cites one of her favourite professors, Center for Innovative Learning Programs (CILP) Director Paul Anthony Notorio, as a factor that encouraged her to think beyond the box and pursue creative strategies when tackling issues. "Entrepreneurship, it's being a risk taker. Life is gambling." Though intimidating, this affirms the idea that those who take the risk and step outside the conventional life paths often find themselves carving out their own version of success.

Embrace risk, escape regret

In an interview with Advancement and Alumni Relations Office (AARO) Director Dr. Jefferson Buenviaje, he emphasized the vital role of community in post-graduation success and the University's commitment to supporting students and networking long after they leave. "We want our students to know that even after graduation, DLSU-D is here to provide guidance and support to their career paths. *Hindi siya natatapos lang* after graduation." He highlighted AARO's latest initiative to partner with SeeMeSolutions (SeeMeSOL), designed to connect Lasallians with employers by integrating their curriculum vitae directly into their profiles. In addition, the AARO organizes bridging programs, upskilling seminars, and certification courses for current and former students, which are promoted through official social media channels and regular email blast updates to alumni.

The significance of developing a support system is not lost on alumni like Mrs. Bea Bagac-Lataza, who knows the value of perseverance and community. When asked what advice she would give students preparing for long-term careers, she responded passionately: "As young as you are, give it a try. Don't be afraid." She tells students to seize the day, take calculated risks, and think beyond the syllabus.

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It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that choosing the "wrong" degree means wiping the board clean—a tabula rasa haunted by the ghosts of what could have been and the hastily buried whispers of regret. But as Mrs. Bagac-Lataza reminds us, in a world obsessed with linear success, growth can be found everywhere. The tallies on the chalkboard remain, no matter how imperfect or painful they may be to revisit. Our worth isn't solely defined by our goals or the ease with which we achieve them; it's also shaped by the courage to fail, reassess, and try again.



One None Clever=Ten-Two Slaughter

by **Lois Illeana Marie Lu**

One: Echoing laughter, clinking flutes and goblets—
The ambiance to which my soul gravitates.
Two: Creaking gates, clicking heels on marble—
The advent of company under searing light;
Three: A palm outstretched, a kind offer of water,
Reciprocity—my hand to receive.
Four: Liquid flowing down this lady's throat—
The genesis of the spiraling staircase.
Five: Kirsten tosses her head all the way back,
Bun-straying hair strands pervading drinks;
A pang in her chest, stirring in her gut.
Six: A server's nose ingests her hairspray;
His hands shake, his legs shiver still—
Piercing poison prickling veins—to me, an epiphany.
Seven: Apologies spill past lips
As her victimized server hacks and wheezes—
Blood from his nose drip—dripping its way to the floor.
Eight: Crooked, frantic nods of contrition,
Pristine white suit, returning to his hollering guests—
Rose-stained dye from Mother's withered glade.
Nine: Sighs of relief, fingers through frazzled hair
Past pungent champagne scents, a merry crowd—
Upon a clock's ticking, a chortle to a screech.
Ten: The first garble from deep in the gut,
Two thuds of dropping bodies and blood-curdling screams.
Ten-One: Ringing and pinging in her ears
As she meets stagnated eyes—that of the server.
Ten-*Two*:*Two-Two*—Ten-Ten:*Two*-Ten: Me, "Ten,"
The culprit of the Gala Slaughter.

no return(?)

by **Julian Alfonzo Bansil**

here lies the hope of a bleeding nation
where blood, sweat, and tears are spent to stay alive.
power sits on golden thrones seeping with grandiose delusion,
poverty-stricken citizens given just enough to survive.

and where blood, sweat, and tears are spent to stay alive,
in high places dishonor lies among the thieving.
poverty-stricken citizens are given just enough to survive,
while *unity* subsists on greed and devours the ones left living.

in high places dishonor lies among the thieving—
deadbeat idols who spit deceit and lies like jokes;
their *unity* subsisting on greed and devouring the ones left living,
their promises remain nothing but perversions of hope.

despite deadbeat idols who spit deceit and lies like jokes,
there remain three hundred and sixty-five days for a revolution.
our promises are rooted in remembrance of hope,
and taking one push to stand against oppression's gravitation.

still—there remain three hundred and sixty-five days for a revolution,
and one sliver of light may spark the population's ambition—
one push to stand against oppression's gravitation.
here lies the hope for our bleeding nation.

Memento Mori

by **Raphael Luis Macabantad**

I lie beneath the weight of my own decay;
Each breath a thief, stealing moments from the grave.
The wooden ceiling stares back—blank and unspeaking—
A mirror to the void that swells inside of me.

I carved my name into the lives of others,
Not with love, but with blades of selfish desire,
Each scar I left blooms now in vivid detail,
A gallery of agony I cannot erase.

Faces haunt the edges of my mind—
A mother's hollowed cheeks, a child's quiet tears.
Their silence, more jarring than forgiveness;
Their absence, colder than this dying room.

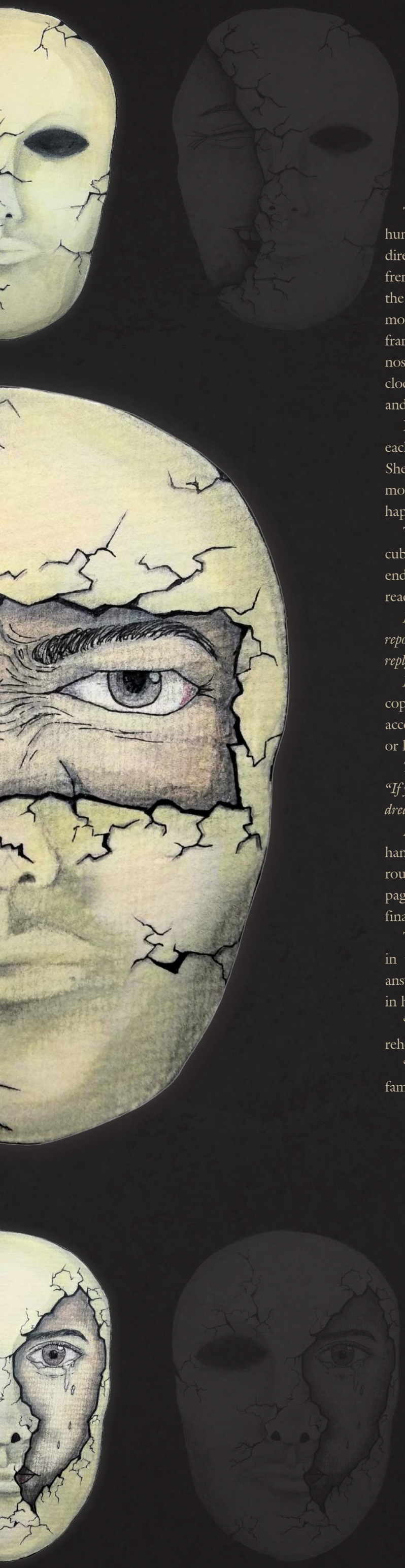
I wonder if the world will flinch at my passing,
Or if I'll slip into oblivion like smoke:
No mourners to curse my name, no prayers to pardon me,
Just a yawning chasm where a man once stood.

Regret is but a vulture, circling my hollow chest,
Feeding on the remnants of what I could have been.
Each memory tastes of ash and bile,
Each thought, a stone dragging me deeper.

If there is a reckoning beyond this frail breath,
Will it find me worthy of its flames?
Or am I condemned to linger in my sins—
A ghost of grief chained to an endless dusk?

The air grows thin; shadows press against my sight.
I reach for the hands I once pushed away,
But they are gone, and I am forlorn
—the darkness takes me, and I deserve its numbing embrace.





Art by **Natasha Audrey Ordinario** | Layout by **Angienette Laurza**

Money is Honey

by **Roxanne Emmanuelle Asogue**

The stage is set: a monotonous drone of CPUs humming in a monochromatic office, a single light directly illuminating a monomaniacal Aia typing in a frenzy; the clicking and clacking blending in sync with the rest of her co-workers like a massive, synchronized monolith encompassing the entire floor. Papers scattered frantically on her desk, she hunches over while nose-to-nose with her monitor—the continuous ticking of the clock faintly motivating her to push through the fatigue and irritation.

Each morning is the ritualistic thud of her alarm, and each night ends with the hiss of her half-hearted sigh. She exists, not with purpose, but for survival. Still, she moves—not for fulfillment, but for fear of what will happen if she just stops.

The cold fluorescent light in their office reveals sterile cubicles stretching endlessly, like a hive maze with no end in sight. Aia looks up at the calendar on the wall that reads "December".

BIR Deadline at five. Meeting at two. I need to pass that report on Friday. Did I check my email yet? I should check and reply—she abruptly stops typing, rubbing her temples.

It's funny, isn't it? she mutters to herself, an acquired coping mechanism for as long as she has been an accounting clerk, where everybody is too busy to care or listen.

The things we do to survive: work, consume, obey. They say, "If you hate it so much, just quit." But then what? Follow my dreams? Ha! Dreams don't pay rent.

As if searching for ghosts, she pauses to look at her hands, staring at the spot on her fingers where thick, round calluses once formed from writing castles in pages. Now, she only gets the occasional paper cuts from financial statements. Progress, they call it.

The telephone on her desk rings, a jarring sound in the thick silence. She flinches momentarily before answering with the corporate professionalism embedded in her being.

"Yes, this is Aia," she answers, her tone laced with a rehearsed indifference.

"Did you receive the report from last quarter?" the familiar dismissive voice asks. Her AR Manager knows better than to fake pleasantries with someone they have worked side by side with three years ago.

"I'm working on it."

"You're late." A sting on Aia's chest. She breathes as steadily as she can.

"I know."

"Then you know we *cannot* afford late. Make sure to pass that today."

The line goes dead, almost at the same time Aia feels her heart drop dead to her guts. She stares at the landline, as if waiting for it to ruin her again, then laughs a little too loudly for her liking.

Of course, it's late. Everything is.

In an attempt to regain her composure, Aia stands paying no mind to the screeching echo of her chair against the floor. She walks to the window in the break room—a small, dirty corner left unattended—but sunlight leaks through stubbornly. She places her hand against the glass, hesitating, testing the warmth from outside she has not felt in some time.

She twists her head to the left, looking toward a nonexistent audience, imagining herself as the main stage's laughingstock. A cruel, dissonant mockery vibrates against her temples. She stiffens, even though she knows the images are not real, but oh, the feeling is very much real for her. While Aia feels like a washed-up robot, she knows she is just a microspeck, forced to grind and turn to make the big, fat corporate machine work into motion. She is but a tool—gears grinding against her spirit, day after day. The same motions, the same exhaustion.

Aia feels her ribcage sink into her dried-out heart, as if the remaining life force in her has been sucked out of it. She breathes—or so she tries. In and out. Deep and long. A faux sense of control amongst the things she couldn't—a needle in a haystack. Her phone rings, pulling her out of her descent into hell, reminding her of the personal one she is already living in.

Like the worker bee she is, Aia glues herself back to her monitor, feeling the weight of her family's credit burden on her shoulders. She must work; her honey is money, and her hive is a corporate cage.

Luksong Pag-asa

by **Yuna Rinoa Cruz**

Tanda ko pa noong babahagya pa ang mga kilos ni Luke sa harap ng klase. Palaging balisa. Aligaga.

"*Ma'am*, lagi po siyang ganiyan!"

"'Di po namin makausap 'yan; *weirdo* po kasi."

Subalit makalipas ang 'di mabilang na paglubog at pagsikat ng araw, marami na ring nagbago; tila maaliwalas na ang mumunting silid.

Simula nang ipakilala ko si Luke sa klase ay siya na ang nangunguna sa luksong baka.

Saka ko natantong nagsisimula sa isa ang kolektibong pagbabago—ang huhubog sa bagong henerasyon na magiging pag-asa ng kinabukasan. Unti-unting uusbong mula sa dilim, magniningning na tila milyon-milyong bituing kukumot sa humihikbing kalawakan.

Pa-break *naman sa baba*

by **Robert Niño Marcelino** & **Patricia Nicole Odulio**

Billiards was introduced in the Philippines before World War II, but ultimately marked its popularity among Filipinos in 1999 after the legendary Filipino player Efren "Bata" Reyes defeated Taiwan's Chang Hao-Ping at the World Pool Association (WPA) Nine-Ball Championships. At the time, this newfound trend became so popular that money started to get involved—sponsors came in, and even the government started investing in facilities and players.

Do the lyrics *"Kuya Dok, oras na para gumawang reseta panuldok sa mga* haters *ko na puro mema"* sound familiar? Well, renaissance, as they would call it. Players from different brackets, beginners and casual players alike, start to fill the billiard halls once more 24 years later. I witnessed how *"Baba"*—the alley right across our University where students frequently hang out—became a billiard hotspot with new halls popping up one by one to cater to its growing demand. My peers blame this on Tiktok after *Binangonan Hustla's* Cerrero Hollywood became a megahit, the trend featuring game highlights of different content creators playing billiards.

Outside of the professional league, pool was often associated with students skipping classes, indulging in nicotine or alcohol cravings (maybe both), and our local *tatays* and *titos* hitting a stick of Marlboro *Pula* as they hold the cue stick with ease. With this, billiards stands in limbo between being a sport and a vice.

Stripes *iyo*! *'Uy*, good ball

For Kelsey Valencia, owner of billiard hall Badshot located in *Baba*, the sport offers students a way to relieve stress.

"90 percent *ng naglalaro dito, mga estudyante. Dumadagsa [ang] mga 'yan.* Peak hours *ng* 12 [noon] *hanggang* five [o'clock]," she explained, probably with a better sense of understanding of her customers having once been in their shoes—a student resorting to pool as a quick timeout from academic demands. And boy, money really does change the game. Just like any other existing hobby, interest turns into a gamble when the stakes are higher and a couple of peso bills sit at the other end of the table. Kelsey shares, *"Kung… parang hindi ka mabubuhay nang hindi pumupusta, bisyo na 'yon. Pero kapag ganito naman,* sports *lang.* Personally, *sports lang din ito."*

Solid *ka*! *Ayun*, bad shot

While Kelsey's billiard hall defied the deemed norm with no products involving nicotine and alcohol up for purchase, the other end of *Baba* oozes with nicotine-infused smoke and flavored gin along with the sound every shot the cue stick makes. Vices, as defined by the Cambridge Dictionary,oare moral faults or weaknesses often accompanied by immoral activities. For Ryan Atacador, a Lasallian who frequently plays billiards, the impression of being "cool" is what piqued his interest, saying, *"Nakikita ko sila Kuya Rodel, kung kilala niyo 'yun. Wala, ang* cool *lang kapag nakakahulog ka [ng bola], parang [may]* satisfaction."

According to him, pool either remains a sport or upgrades into a vice depending on the person. In his case, it's both.

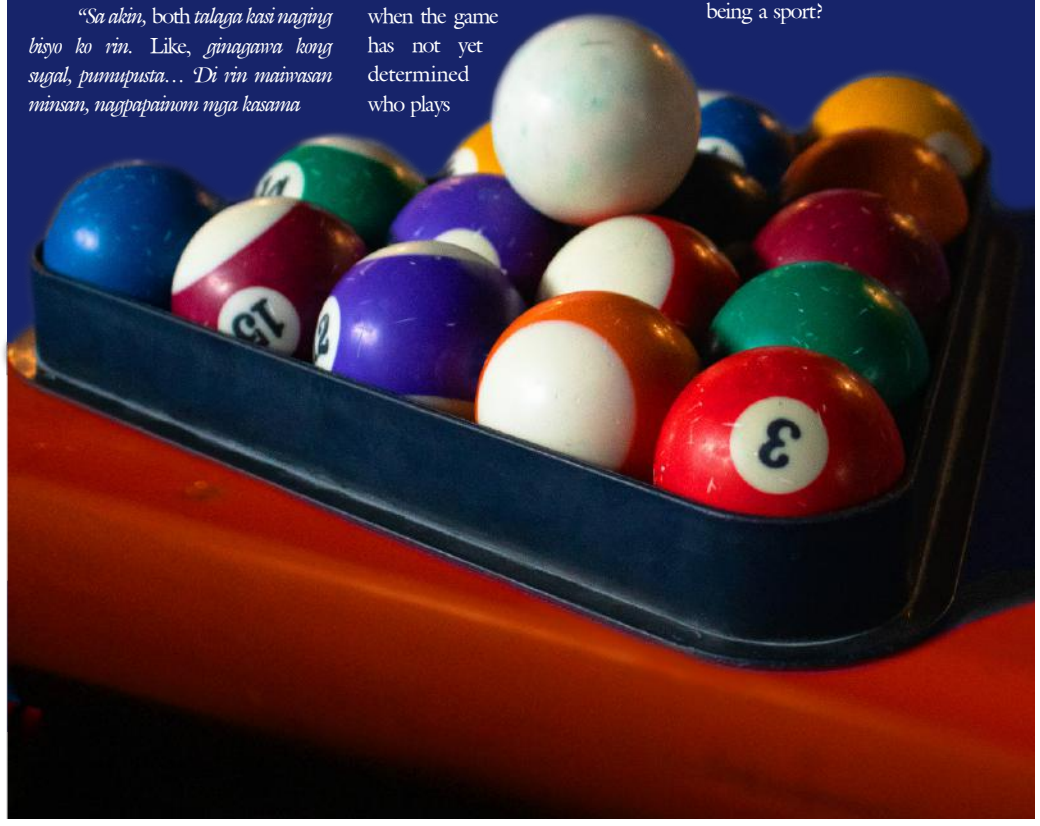
"Sa akin, both *talaga kasi naging bisyo ko rin.* Like, *ginagawa kong sugal, pumupusta… 'Di rin maiwasan minsan, naggpapainom mga kasama sa Baba, dagdag bisyo. At* sports *siya kasi…* may participants. *Ganoon naman 'yung* sports, *'di ba?"* he shared. And if one were to ask Ryan what his memorable experiences are as a player, the nail on the coffin would be him winning a grand amount of P15,000 in one night, with just three matches. Go big or go home, they say. Luckily (?) for him, it just so happened he went home with a band of blue-colored peso bills in his pocket thanks to billiards.

Open table *dito* oh

In billiards, when the game has not yet determined who plays solids or stripes, players call the shot until it is decided. The outcome of the game dictates its purpose; applying this rule outside of its literal context, players get to decide whether billiards is just another activity they can wholesomely spend time in or a new notch in their belt of vices. At the end of the day, a table only becomes what we make of it.

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So, for you, when does pocketing solid or striped-colored balls start being a vice and stop being a sport?



SPORTS REACT

What are your thoughts with the current treatment you receive from the University as a student-athlete? (fundings, facilities, attitude, overall)



Popoy Alabin | Volleyball | HRD21

"We're very grateful *sa mga nare*-receive *naming* benefits, like scholarship, dorm, food, and money allowance. *Wala naman na kaming hinihingi pang iba kasi lahat naman binibigay ng* La Salle."



Valerie Coronado| Volleyball | BSY22

"Very considerate *naman sila* when it comes *sa mga* excuses, especially when it comes *sa mga* prof *namin*. Very considerate *sila kapag* every time *na* we will have a game or training, *parang* they'll give us an alternative (*class* or *activity*) *para makahabol lang sa mga na*-miss out *namin… May nakalaan kasi kaming* financial for athletes, so they make sure *naman din na naaalagaan kami* and *napo*-provide *kami ng mga* needs namin, like *'yung mga* equipment *namin*, and *may mga* helpers *din para tulungan kami mag*-set *ng* court *namin*."

Icesel Quintana | Volleyball | BHM22



"For now *po*, good *naman po ang* treatment *sa 'min*, like *sa mga* prof, *sa mga* guard, *sa* all staff *ng* La Salle. *Parang* very *ano naman sila*, accommodating… *Sa* attitude *ng mga* staff, *wala po akong masasabi; sobrang* friendly *po nila. Talagang wine*-welcome *po kami pagdating sa mga* players. *At sa* prof *po, wala silang pinipili; talagang pantay-pantay po ang pagtrato nila sa amin*."

Chin Sumague | Volleyball | BSHM22



"As a student-athlete at DLSU-D, I appreciate the support and opportunities the university provides, but there are areas where improvements could be made. The funding and resources allocated for training and competitions are helpful, yet there are times when they feel insufficient to fully meet the demands of being a competitive athlete. The facilities, while functional, could benefit from upgrades to match the standards necessary for optimal performance. On the positive side, the attitude of coaches and staff is generally encouraging, and they understand the challenges of balancing academics and athletics. However, greater flexibility in academic requirements and additional wellness programs would enhance the overall experience. While I feel valued for my contributions, more consistent recognition and investment in student-athletes would help us reach our full potential and continue to bring pride to the University."

Hapal on MoA signing with Patriot athletes: Needs-based assistance, for accountability

by **Jorene Louise Tubesa**

To address unseen student-athlete concerns—ranging from clogged sinks and hazardous training grounds, down to the lack of training spaces—the University Student Government (USG) initiated a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) last September with the key people of the Patriots and the Performing Arts Group (PAG).

"*Kahit* before MoA *pa*, before *pa magkaroon nito*, same *lang din naman 'yung mga* sentiments *namin*, at least *sa* sport *po namin… Ang kaibahan lang po ngayong may* MoA is *nare*-raise namin *'yung mga* concerns *namin nang ayos.* Although *hindi pa naman po talaga* fully *namin*—on our end—*nare*-receive *'yung* support, at least *man lang naire*-raise n*amin 'yung mga gusto namin sabihin, 'yung mga* concerns," said Patriot tanker captain Francesca Rae Musni in an exclusive interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO.

Meanwhile, remarking on the importance of the MoA, USG President Abigail Hapal mentioned in an interview that their initiative goes beyond financial boundaries—typically USG's primary means of assisting athletes—as the MoA covers the Patriots' needs in the matter of delivering equipment and addressing other systemic concerns.

"It's also for accountability *ng* USG *kasi* for the longest time, *ang nangyayari lang* is that *magbibigay lang ng* finances *si* USG, *magta*-transfer *lang siya ng* funds... That's why, what's different now is that we have a MoA—*si* USG *na mismo 'yung magpo*-process *ng mga* specific *na kinakailangan* so that *diretso sa kanila* [athletes] *'yung suporta*... What's different now is [it's] needs-based assistance," Hapal stated.

Following the joint agreement, the USG noted that they have been in contact with the Patriots to provide their needs, whether material or financial. As per the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for the first semester of the academic year (AY) 2024–2025, the slated budget of P100,000 for the Sports Development Act (SDA) served as a stepping stone to pursue the MoA.

Despite the existing 11th Act of Congress aimed at supporting athletes, Hapal claims that there are still disparities not covered by the act, particularly when it comes to sports prioritization, hence the creation of the agreement to further support athletes.

Interim Secretary for Sports and Recreation Felix Audije also noted their first step in assisting student-athletes. Last November, a consultation took place between the two parties, during which issues from different teams were raised, such as the frequent disturbance of woolly caterpillars or "*higad*" and mosquitoes during training in the Mariano Trias Hall (MTH) court; faulty faucets and lockers in the Ugnayang La Salle (ULS); and the shortage of support whenever they are pushed to train outside of the University.

"For now *po kasi, 'yung mga* reports *na sinabi po nila [ay naka]*-prepare *na po [sa]* letter *ko*. [They] only need to be checked and to be signed *na lang po*, which I [then] need to send to the admins *para i*-report," said Audije.

Felix also added that the report has been present since 2022, and he hopes to submit it to the University administrators by the first two months of 2025.

The request letter was penned by the student-athletes, and the USG's Department of Sports and Recreation is currently in charge of managing the necessary signatories and coordinating with the involved offices.

Regarding the sustainability of the project, Hapal noted two steps they can take: the current administration can task Congress with amending the 11th Act of Congress or establish an executive order for future terms. However, she emphasized the discretion of the next administration while also lobbying for the initiative in the years to come.

Lady Patriots reign as basketball champions; Patriots secure bronze in DCCAA men's

by **Romella Jayne Perlas**

Lady Patriots reign as basketball champions

Dominating on both ends of the court, the DLSU-D Lady Patriots enthroned the Dasmariñas City Collegiate Athletic Association (DCCAA) Basketball 2024 crown with a 69-40 victory over Philippine Christian University - Dasmariñas (PCU-D) Dolphins. Meanwhile, the men's team secured the bronze with a commanding 112-66 win over the Asian Institute of Science and Technology (AISAT) Titans last November 28, Thursday, at the Ugnayang La Salle (ULS).

The Lady Patriots dominated early in the match by outscoring Dolphins 14-5 in the first quarter, placing the opposing team under visible pressure as they continuously struggled to break through DLSU-D's well-executed defensive schemes, setting the tone for the rest of the match.

In the second quarter, the Lady Patriots extended their lead to 29-17, with Jonalyn Bongalos emerging as the standout player by scoring the most points and showcasing her offensive prowess against the opposing team.

Eula Atienza prevailed in the third quarter, leading DLSU-D's offensive surge, while tensions escalated with a technical foul on PCU-D's end which allowed the former Lady Patriots to capitalize on the momentum and further extend their lead.

The Lady Patriots reigned the match 69-40, driven by an exceptional all-around performance from Finals MVP and Mythical Five player Eula Atienza, who solidified her role as the catalyst for DLSU-D's championship run. Manicel Solomon was also awarded as part of the league's 2024 Mythical Five.

Beyond emphasizing their supremacy on the court, the Lady Patriots' triumph underscores their growth and success as a formidable team in the competition.

Patriots secure bronze in DCCAA men's

Completing the University's basketball winning streak, the DLSU-D Patriots also delivered an assertive performance at the ULS, overpowering AISAT Titans by 112-66, with a display of offensive and defensive firepower to secure the bronze medal in the DCCAA Men's Basketball 2024.

Both teams exchanged baskets early in the competition, but the Patriots quickly found their rhythm—capping the first quarter with a buzzer-beating three-pointer, increasing their advantage to 31-21.

Their outstanding performance propelled the team to widen their lead to 53-33 in the second quarter, reflecting their mastery in both ends of the court.

By the third quarter, the Patriots were firing on each hoop, extending their lead to 85-45, with a relentless scoring assault when even bench players sustained the high intensity, leaving the Titans struggling to keep pace.

Combing skillful offense with solid defense, the Patriots sealed the last quarter with a commanding 112-66 victory, claiming their spot as the DCCAA Men's Basketball second runner-up.

Lady Patriots seize title in league debut; Patriot Spikers relive last season's stint with silver

by **Jorene Louise Tubesa**

Fate branched out different paths for the Patriot volleyball teams in their recent league.



Photo by **Cedric Labajo**

As both were gunning for the crown of the 2024 Dasmariñas City Collegiate Athletic Association (DCCAA), it was only the Lady Patriots—who debuted in the league this year—that successfully weathered the final leg against the former finalists from last year's pilot season, Philippine Christian University - Dasmariñas (PCU-D), last December 2 at the De La Salle Medical Health Sciences Institute (DLSMHSI) Animo Center.

Meanwhile, the Patriot Spikers tasted another bitter end as history repeated itself when they faltered to the finals thriller against the same Dolphins of the PCU-D, who were also their opponent during the last 2023 DCCAA showdown.

Serving a fierce prowess as ultimatum

Banking on the balance of searing attacks and firm floor defense, the Lady Patriots cruised to a one-way victory for the crown after a 3-0 sweep against the Lady Dolphins.

Starting off strong, the vigor and pride of the green-and-white clamped down a comfortable lead with a 6-0 blitz, fueled by finals Most Valuable Player (MVP) Janella Sabado who amassed nine points within the early moments of the first set, 25-14.

Amping the momentum from their dominating performance in the opener frame, DLSU-D continued to nail down attacks on the PCU-D's court, but their error-prone plays helped the Lady Dolphins to stage a deadlock at a crucial 24-24. With deuce intensifying the match, a clean hit from Sabado delivered the shot needed by the Patriots to claim the set win, 26-24.

The Lady Dolphins tried to surge a comeback in the middle of the last set, capitalizing on the continuous faulty plays of the Lady Patriots, but the latter got their groove back and struck down coordinated attacks that eventually led them to their gold.

Several Lady Patriots were hailed for special accolades in this year's season, namely Sabado as First Best Outside Hitter, Shaira Pemero as First Best Middle Blocker, Mary Anne Adia as Best Setter, and Maria Aure as Best Libero.

"*Naging* memorable *kasi unang sabak namin*, *nag*-champion *[agad] kami*, and *sa* 3-0 *na 'yan*, *parang naipakita namin kung ano talaga 'yung tine*-train *namin*,' said Team Captain Abigail Ragual.

An unwanted déjà vu

The DCCAA title remains elusive for the Patriot Spikers after they falter once more to the hands of the defending champions PCU-D Dolphins with a hard fought 1-3 standing.

Despite notching a 25-20 win in the first set as their cushion, errors fanned the flame for the Patriots' demise that the Dolphins used to push a gritty point-exchange, eventually also edging past the green defenses to nab a set win, 23-25.

As pressure closed in, the neck-to-neck affair between the challengers and the title holders intensified into deuce. The Patriots held small leads from time-to-time but the deft offensive sleights of the Dolphins proved to be too overwhelming as they ended the third and last frame with 24-26 and 25-27 set scores.

The tight-knit match was a testament to the Patriots' resolve to win, and some players were also recognized for their brilliant performance throughout the season namely Popoy Alabin as First Best Outside Hitter and Renz Cruz as Second Best Middle Blocker.

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Several leagues are slated for the teams as they gear up for the annual Private Schools Athletic Association (PRISAA) in both the provincial, regional, and national stint.



Sixto

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Damot at dangal

Hindi nalalayo ang estado na kinakaharap ng mga estudyanteng-atleta ng De La Salle University-Dasmarinas (DLSU-D), o "UD", sa reyalidad ng mga pambansang atleta ngayon kung *training environment* lang din ang pag-uusapan. Mula sa mga pasilidad hanggang kagamitan, naghihikahos sa pang-institusyunal na suporta ang mga atleta. Sa usapin naman ng mabibigat na ekspektasyon, pareho lang ding tila niluluto sa *pressure cooker* sa kung paano asahang mag-uwi ng panalo ang mga ito. Sa 'di patas na sistemang nanghihingi ng mga parangal kahit walang matinong puhunan, napapatanong na lang talaga ako kung saan nakukuha ng mga administrador ang kapal ng mukhang maningil.

Bilang *Sports In Charge* ng Publikasyon, bahagi ng aking responsibilidad pangasiwaan ang mga palaro sa loob ng Unibersidad. Bunsod nito, hindi na bago sa akin ang bumisita sa iba't ibang korte sa kampus. Dahil din dito, masasabi kong may ideya ako sa estado ng mga pasilidad at kagamitan ng mga atletang *Patriot*. Hindi nagsisinungaling ang mga mata kong saksi ng madudulas na sahig sa Mariano Trias Hall (MTH) *Court* na nilalagay sa alanganin ang mga atleta, maliit na dyim na pinaghahati-hatian ng iba't ibang *varsity teams,* mga *waiting room* na p'wede nang ikumpara sa isang bodega, *track ovals* na bitak-bitak at hindi pantay ang *flooring*. Idagdag ko na rin na madalas nga e kinakailangan pa nilang mag-*outsource* ng pasilidad sa labas ng UD gamit ang pera sa bulsa ng mga atleta upang mag-ensayo. Kaya nga hanga rin talaga ako sa mga atleta natin, kung paanong nasisikmura nila ang ganitong kondisyon ng pagsasanay at pagpapakitang-gilas sa kanilang bawat laro.

Sa 'di patas na sistemang nanghihingi ng mga parangal kahit walang matinong puhunan, napapatanong na lang talaga ako kung saan nakukuha ng mga administrador ang kapal ng mukhang maningil.

Sa totoo lang ay sa laki ng binabayarang matrikula ng mga estudyante sa UD, nakapagtataka na rin kung saan ba napupunta 'yung perang inilalaan para linangin ang mga pasilidad sa kampus. Mantakin mo, pumapatak ng P75,000 bawat semestre ang binabayarang matrikula sa kurso ko, pero pangit pa rin ang *flooring* sa Ugnayang La Salle (ULS). Kahit bente pesos man lang sana mula sa libo-libong ibinabayad ng bawat Lasalyano ay mailaan talaga sa pagpapabuti ng mga kagamitan ng mga atleta. Makakita man lang sana ang mga estudyante rito ng totoong pag-ayos sa mga pasilidad. Balita ko naman e uso pa rin ang progreso at maayos na pamamahalang institusyonal ng ibang paaralan ngayong 2025. Baka lang gustong sabayan ng UD 'yung *trend*.

Ang mahirap pa rito, pasan-pasan din nila ang bigat ng pag-uuwi ng karangalan para sa Unibersidad. Ngunit dahil sa kakulangan ng maaayos na pasilidad ay dumudoble ang hirap sa bawat laro na kailangan nilang harapin. Imbes na nagpopokus na lang sana sa maigihang pagsasanay, madalas ay kailangan pa nilang indahin ang kalagayan ng kanilang paligid, mag-*adjust* sa kalumaan ng kagamitan—o 'di kaya ay problemahin kung saan sila p'wedeng mag-*training*. Kumbaga, hindi tuloy maabot ng mga atleta natin 'yung buong kakayahan nila.

Kung talagang naghahangad ang UD ng magagandang resulta sa larangan ng *competitive sports,* piliin din sana nilang mamuhunan sa mas dekalidad na pasilidad at kagamitan na magagamit ng mga atleta sa kanilang pag-eensayo. 'Yun sanang ligtas gamitin, hindi mukhang pinaglipasan na ng panahon, at p'wedeng gamitin ng marami. *Give and take* nga kung tawagin; hindi 'yung *take* lang nang *take* ng dangal, pero wala namang ma-*give* pabalik sa mga atleta.

SPORTS BRIEF

Following their struggles as rookie varsity

United Patriots shares plans for 2nd Sem AY '24-'25

by **Romella Jayne Perlas**

The DLSU-D United Patriots reveals their plans to organize club-funding events, an outreach program, and a football festival for the second semester of the academic year (AY) 2024–2025 to support players and coaches as they gear up for the upcoming Private Schools Athletic Association (PRISAA).

In an exclusive interview, Executive Director Karl Andrew Gojar shared that these events were supposed to be implemented during the first semester; however, they were unable to do so due to time constraints and bureaucratic processes.

"*Nagp*-plan *kami ng mga* club-funding events *para ma*-support *namin ang mga* players *na magre*-represent *sa* University next PRISAA. So, *'yung* plan *na iyon*, *pinaka*-main goal *n'un* is *makapag*-training camp *kami*. So, *buong* week, possible *na nandito lang kami sa* University… then, before *'yung* week *na iyon—'yung* training camp *namin—'yung ibang* funds, *gagamitin namin pang*-transportation allowance *sa mga* players," he stated.

Gojar reported that fundraising events are needed to aid financial constraints within the team, which hinder the players' ability to train regularly, as some cannot attend practices due to the lack of allowances. Moreover, Gojar emphasized, "*Kung meron silang* opportunity *na ma*-excuse *sa* classes, *p'wede kaming mag*-training every day, every morning," highlighting the team's difficulty in fulfilling academic and athletic requirements without sufficient institutional support.

The United Patriots recently won silver in the football tournament held at Letran, Laguna, in April 2024, and also finished as the 2nd runner-up in the regional PRISAA.

Patriot Talamayan secures lone victory in international tourney, Cagebelles settle for 6th place

by **Jorene Louise Tubesa**

Patriot cagebelle JC Kyla Talamayan took home the prestige for being the 3-point shoot-out champion at the 10th Xiamen International Elite Universities Basketball Tournament, tallying 15 field goals out of 25.

Held last August 2024 in Xiamen, China, the Patriot cagebelles graced the international stage as the lone Philippine representative, concluding their invitational tourney conquest at sixth place for the women's basketball category.

The Patriots went head-to-head with other invited university-based teams from Australia, China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and South Korea.

Last academic year (AY), the Patriots' men's basketball roster was a contender for the 9th edition of the same tournament.

The DLSU-D teams worked in coordination with the Federation of School Sports Association of the Philippines (FESSAP) for competing in out-of-country leagues.

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FINAL PUSH. DLSU-D Patriot cagers revved up all their might to notch the bronze, 112-66, in the finale of DCCAA's second season. The Patriots were previously the silver holders during the pioneer season.

Photo by **Michael Emanuelle Griño**

Patriots dominate Blue Hawks, clinches gold in NCRAA finals

by **Patricia Nicole Odulio**



BREAKING DEFENSES. Lady Patriots surged a drop ball play to scratch past the walls of the defending champions Lady Blue Hawks in hopes of a title in the 30th NCRAA. Victory remained elusive for the green-and-white as they suffered a 1-4 defeat.

Photo by **Emmanuel II Hoylar**

The De La Salle University - Dasmariñas (DLSU-D) Patriots conquered the last leg of the 30th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) men's volleyball after reigning over the Blue Hawks of Immaculada Concepcion College (ICC) last August 9 at Ugnayang La Salle (ULS).

Seizing the gold, the Patriots concluded this season victoriously in the best-of-three finals showdown, where they cleanly finished with a 2-0 standing against the Blue Hawks.

Sporting top-notch athleticism throughout their matches, the green-and-white bagged four spots from the roster of six mythical players. Jayvee Tabuclao was hailed as the Best Libero, Valeriano Sasis II as the Best Middle Blocker, John Robert Phillip Alabin as the Best Outside Hitter, and Marlouie Gajudo as the Best Server. Meanwhile, Paul Bryan Malaiba proved to be a mighty hit as the season's Most Valuable Player (MVP).

Finishing their first game with a victory, the Patriots managed to save their chances in the blink-or-miss-it moment after ending the fifth set with a score of 15-13. To further seal the deal, Alabin was crowned the best player of the game.

The Patriots returned stronger in the second game after they captured the championship with the set scores 3-0 against the Blue Hawks. Their spikes and digs swiftly lead the team to secure the first set with a four-point lead, 25-21.

Despite the tight-knit match on the second and third sets of the game, with barely a gap against ICC's players, the DLSU-D spikers still managed to take a step ahead and lock in gold, winning 25-23 and 26-24, respectively.

The Patriots utilized the expected fiery championship match as a platform to showcase their hard-hitting team play and skills, resulting in the defeat of Blue Hawks.

NCRAA's stage is definitely not the team's dead end as the Dasmariñas City Collegiate Athletic Association (DCCAA) is the next scene for them to dominate.

Lady Patriots bow to defending champs Blue Hawks, end title bid with silver

by **Jorene Louise Tubesa**

The De La Salle University - Dasmariñas (DLSU-D) Lady Patriots yielded to the defending champions Lady Blue Hawks of the Immaculada Concepcion College (ICC), 1-4, during the last leg of the 30th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) women's volleyball held at Ugnayang La Salle (ULS) last August 9.

Settling for silver, the green-and-white concluded this year's stint with a struggle in the best-of-three finals showdown, where the Patriots finished with a 0-2 standing against the undefeated champions.

Both the Patriots and Blue Hawks faced each other last year with mirrored results as the Dasmariñas-hopefuls failed to notch a set against the twice-to-beat Hawks.

With new faces on their roster, the Patriots delivered within their might, leading two athletes from the team into mythical spots. Leira Patrice Aure was named the best digger after her notable floor defense, while Frances Sean Lyonna Quintana was hailed as the best server of the season.

Compared to their performance in game one, the Patriots managed to avert a total collapse in their last stand as they were previously swept by the champs in an overwhelming 0-3 clash.

In the do-or-die game two of the finals, the Patriots hacked out an early onslaught through searing opposite attacks in addition to the Blue Hawks fanning the flames with their error-prone plays, eventually closing the first set in their odds, 25-21.

Despite nailing down a set, the Caloocan-based volleybelles found their footing to hack out a comfortable five-point lead in the initial scenes of the second frame, which eventually immobilized the Lady Patriots to recover.

The Patriots were unable to get back on track as the Blue Hawks kept the decisive command of the match, eventually taking over the game and securing three sets for the crown.