





**Continuous excellence.** Dr. Ferdinand Somido and the rest of the accreditors discuss the details of accreditation with the UBLC faculty at UBLC Trattoria Lipena Café on September 5, 2024. | Photo from CCO

## UBLC earns Level II Re-Accreditation

BY LIANNA ANDREI CARINGAL

The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation, Inc. (PACUCOA) granted Level II First Re-Accredited Status to five programs at the University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC), including the BS in Tourism Management, BS in Psychology, BS in Business Administration, BS Education, and the BS in Accountancy, as announced last Sept. 5.

This achievement reflects the university's commitment to academic excellence and continuous improvement, with the help of the deans, heads, faculty members, and students. Two of the mentioned programs shared their experiences during the process, highlighting the university's commitment. However, the question remains: is this accreditation truly a sign of quality or just a way to boost the institution's reputation?

### Raising the Bar

With the recent accreditation, the programs have achieved significant milestones, reflecting their commitment to academic excellence and continuous

improvement. Dr. Jerson L. Mariño, the head of the BS Psychology since 2014, witnessed substantial progress in the program's journey toward accreditation.

"From 2018 to 2022, nagkaroon tayong mga additional na general education subjects na kung saan ito ay kailangan nagschool, as mandated by CHED, may mga pinagpipilian tayong subjects tulad ng Gender and Society, Understanding the Self, Entrepreneurial Mind," Dr. Mariño said. These additions to the curriculum ensure that the program stays dynamic and productive to the needs of the society.

In addition to its curriculum, Dr. Jerson highlighted the improvements in the

facilities specialized for their program. Unlike other institutions, UBLC has dedicated three psychology laboratories: Counseling, Experimental, and Standard Testing, to which the accreditors praise these developments during the evaluation process. These laboratories are set to improve further with the help of the university and the program to ensure developments from the next accreditation.

Meanwhile, Jrycy Joyce Caringal, a 4th-year psychology student, shared her observations on improvements.

"As the programs began preparing for the accreditation, I've observed notable changes, like putting more effort into ensuring that the academic

demands will be met. It encompasses the comprehensive evaluation of the teaching styles and quality in the classroom setting," she said, highlighting that the improvements were visible in the program's curriculum, facilities, and even the faculty.

BS Accountancy program head, Mr. Noel Sales, also highlights the program's notable advancements, and one of its key strengths is its faculty members. This program has its professors holding advanced qualifications and licenses. Mr. Sales mentioned that their program is dedicated to providing quality education, as their faculty members are encouraged to attend national

seminars and conventions with the help of the university's support. As per their curriculum, the program head also mentioned such changes.

"We actually improved our retention policy, we are stricter when it comes to qualifying and evaluation examinations, and we also have an intervention program," said Mr. Sales.

The retention policy involves the standard for every student taking Accountancy, which is evaluated through qualifying examinations. On the other hand, there is an intervention program for those students who fail to pass the tests,

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### New bonds, new plans

## UBLC, Bulacnin ink 5-year MOA

BY PRINSESSE APRIL LINATOC

University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC) and Barangay Bulacnin officially signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), discussing future projects and developments for the next five years, at Trattoria Lipeña, UBLC, Sept. 18.

UB President Lily Marlene Hernandez-Bohn signed as the representative of UBLC, and Hon. Frederick Ramirez, the Bulacnin Barangay Captain, for their side. The agreement is immediately effective when signed, and shall end on August 18, 2029. Prior to the signing, the beginning of the two parties' relationship began in April 2024.

The MOA encompasses the obligations of UBLC and Bulacnin, including implementing projects for the community in line with economic development, human and social empowerment, educational assistance, environmental protection, and socio-civic support. In return, the barangay must let the university use their facilities such as barangay hall, schools, health centers or any other places that can hold and are needed for events and activities.

The preparations for the project start with a community needs assessment and multiple discussions, and the university pinpointed top three problems in the barangay—trash, livelihood, and literacy. The university formed a team to move including the Community Extension Services (CES/COMEX), Research Publications Office (RPO), High School Department, and various College Departments.

The HS Department is initiating research on revitalizing kape and cacao to propose a five-year DOST-funded project. If approved, manpower from Bulacnin will handle operations under the joint management of the university and barangay, with UBLC as a technical assistant. DOST will oversee pre-planting inspections. Extra cacao will support tsokolate production, training farmers and

mothers, with packaging and marketing to follow. Mr. Apolinario Maranan, the External Programs Coordinator, has described such a process as some sort of an incubator.

Moreover, Book distributions and E-Reading learning is also offered, adopting the E-learning web application that develops modules from traditional to digital. Many criminology students have also been performing their On-the-Job Training at the barangay. Coming November, a proposal will also be offered about teaching martial arts and self defense, particularly Arnis, Karate, and Taekwondo.

The Legal Management program is aiding efforts to provide benefits for those without birth certificates and

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### A Greener Future Takes Root

## UBLC launches Environmental Sustainability Initiative

BY SHAIRA MAE CALIBO

Community Extension Services (CES), with the University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC) partnered hand-in-hand with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (DENR-CENRO), took a significant stride in environmental stewardship with the launch of "UBians Punla Para sa Kalikasan," marking the university's dedication to fostering a greener future through education, community involvement, and action, Oct. 21.

UB President Lily Marlene J. Hernandez-Bohn expressed the event's deeper purpose: "We are not merely planting seeds on the ground; we are advocating this activity to increase awareness and concerns for our environment," inspiring action, and highlighting our responsibility to preserve nature for future generations.

Ricardo B. Libon of DENR-CENRO shared alarming statistics on Lipa City's

environment. The city generates 170-180 tons of waste daily, with critical areas like Levittown suffering from transport-related air pollution. Water quality is also declining, with only 5 of 25 sectors rated satisfactory and just 6 of 26 springs remaining active. The Punla initiative supports DENR-CENRO's goal of planting 100,000 trees by 2024, a target that is far from being met.

UBLC's CES Office, led by External

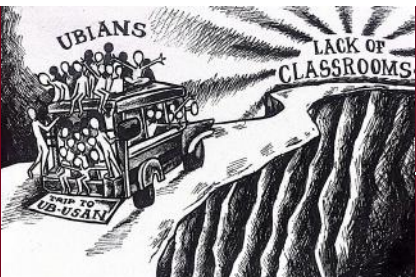
Program Coordinator Apolinario Maranan, integrates tree-planting into the university's sustainability mission, requiring 70% of graduating students to participate annually. Maranan also stressed the urgent need to protect water sources, which are increasingly at risk due to development and climate change, particularly as some areas in

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**Rooting for the future.** Students from GAPS plants seedlings in a bag actively participating in the "Punla para sa Kinabukasan" program on October 21, 2024. | Photo by Ricardo Carlos Comia

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**Discipline over comfort.** Legal Management students brought their school uniforms to change out of their PE attire after class at the UBLC Gymnasium. This practice reflects their commitment to following the campus uniform regulations and promoting discipline within the university. | Photo by Gabriel Aron Kyle Legua

in which they are required to enroll in three-day intervention classes to improve their knowledge.

In line with the said changes, Alecs Francine Maralit, a 3rd-year BS Accountancy student, shared her thoughts, saying that the changes in retention policy become stricter, which she believes is part of the objective to better assess the student performance. Mr. Sales also mentioned that it is a great step for the students in the near future, especially in taking the CPA board examination.

### Overcoming Challenges

Data compilation, gathering of evidence, and limited time and budget are the main challenges that the programs faced during the accreditation process. In Accountancy, as Mr. Sales is assigned in the area of faculty administration, finding it hard to collect evidence and certificates, which requires collaboration among faculty members, many of whom were not always present on campus.

In psychology, Dr. Mariño emphasized that the program's hurdles are compiling

extensive data as there are no sufficient storage areas for them and having a limited operational budget.

"The school is very supportive naman, yun nga lang we have to be considerate pagdating natin dun sa budget," Dr. Mariño said, highlighting their careful prioritization of resources. Ms. Caringal also emphasized the challenge to adapt and fulfill the requirements set forth by the boards, given her limited time.

Nevertheless, these challenges were met with determination. With limited time and resources, the programs were able to attain the requirements and standards and achieve Level II Re-Accredited Status.

### Building the Future

Both programs are setting their goals and sights on Level III Accreditation, targeting the year 2026 or 2027 for the next evaluation. Planned improvements, including enhancing research output, upgrading facilities, and increasing faculty qualification.

For BS Psychology, the goal is to create a more advanced laboratory

environment, while the BS Accountancy program aims to further refine its curriculum and faculty standards. Both programs are focusing on expanding partnerships and providing more external exposure opportunities for students, ensuring a well-rounded educational experience that goes beyond the classroom.

In the question of quality or reputation, the UBLC aims to achieve both—believing that a solid commitment to quality education will naturally foster a strong and respected reputation. With the recent accreditation, the program's efforts, together with the institution to enhance curriculum, upgrade facilities, and uphold high academic standards, have been recognized, emphasizing that despite the hurdles, the institution is not merely aiming to meet the requirements but to exceed them.

As the institution looks ahead to higher levels of accreditation status, it remains focused on advancing its mission of quality education, recognizing that continuous improvement is essential to fully realize its goal.

**UBLC EARNS LEVEL II RE-ACCREDITATION...**from page 1

## UBians observe SG involvement decline

BY LIANNA ANDREI CARINGAL

**The Student Government of the University of Batangas - Lipa City shows a noticeable decrease in the number of candidates. Such positions have been filled through appointments, revealing a growing disinterest of the students. From the perspective of current SG officers and students alike, the decline in participation reflects deeper challenges in student life, ranging from academic pressures to a lack of awareness about the significance of the roles.**

For some of the newly appointed officers, the decision to run, or rather accept the position, was quite spontaneous.

Keith Bea Dimaculangan, SG President, shared that her current position is not what she initially planned. However, friends and mentors encouraged Dimaculangan to run for the position of president instead. Wrestled with self-doubt, and with heavy responsibilities, she took a leap to run.

"Initially, I had no plans of running for Secretary, as I was already busy with my role as a student assistant alongside academic responsibilities," said Ashley Shyree Trinity Enriquez, SG Secretary, who only ran because of people recommending her to be a secretary—the only position left without a candidate.

This significant shift in candidacies highlights the growing hesitation among students to take on leadership roles. They believe the decline in participation stems from a complex mix of self-doubt, fear of failure, and the overwhelming responsibilities that come with balancing academics and leadership duties.

"It is due to a lack of awareness and time commitment. Many students may not know the roles and responsibilities of student government or the impact they can have," said Manuel Delos Reyes, SG P.R.O, as he emphasized the significant challenges that discourage the students from running. Most of it stemming from the perceived 'time commitment' and the pressure of balancing academics, extracurricular activities, and personal life.

Erika De Veas, a 2nd-year Legal Management student, also shared her sentiments, noting that the limited number of candidates willing to run is quite concerning, especially given the large student population at UBLC. She believes that one key factor might be the lack of effective promotion. Having been approached to consider running for an SG position, De Veas noticed that the election didn't seem to attract much interest, possibly due to insufficient publicity.

This sentiment was affirmed by Vannah Panopio, a 4th-year Industrial Engineering student, as she said, "To be honest, I wasn't very aware of the election process. I heard that elections were

happening, but I didn't have much access to details or visibility into the events or candidates." This highlights the need for greater transparency to inform and engage the UBians.

Given the situation, SG officers believe that initiatives such as leadership team-building activities, seminars, social media outreach, and direct engagement with students, could inspire more participation. In this way, Enriquez said that this could work closely with interested students and encourage them to be the next leaders.

"I believe that the best way for student government to inspire future leaders is by leaving behind good governance and a strong legacy," Delos Reyes said, believing that when students see the positive changes SG made, such as better resources and a stronger community, UBians may get the confidence to be involved.

As the SG President reiterated that leaders aren't born; they're developed, and SG is here to play a role in shaping the future leaders of UB. For now, the SG is determined to turn this challenge into an opportunity.

## UBLC strengthens uniform regulations on studes

BY PRINSSSES APRIL LINATOC

**University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC) enforces stricter implementation on uniforms mid-semester, where P.E. uniforms must only be worn for the duration of the class, as stated in the UB student handbook.**

There have been multiple instances where students are blocked at the entrance for not wearing coats or blazers, wearing organizational shirts on uniform-prescribed days, or having incomplete P.E. uniforms—even though the regulations have remained unchanged since UBLC opened. One of the main reasons cited for this issue is that students rarely read or have never read the regulations.

"I think the issue there is that students should follow." Mrs. Milette De Torres, the Student Affairs and External Programs (SAEP) officer, answered.

Mrs. De Torres added that this shouldn't have been a problem, as everything was already stated in the student handbook and during orientations. If more issues arise, she suggested that the manual be amended more precisely so students can understand it.

Dr. Jovi Jane Bernales, a pioneer teacher in the P.E. department, has allowed UBians the freedom to wear P.E. uniforms for the whole day since 2013, based on an agreement reached through a discussion with Dr. Meynard Montalbo, the SAEP officer at the time. She shared her sentiments, expressing her desire to stand up for her students.

"Some students are complaining, the parents are also complaining, about changing from P.E. to school uniform. Why (can't) you accept the students if they are wearing P.E. uniforms but are accepting organizational shirts?" Dr. Bernales questioned.

Dr. Bernales also stressed why the university focuses too much on uniforms rather than the hair and grooming of students, highlighting its effect on student participation and class attendance. What action will be given to students who come in late due to changing, and what action do professors take if they want their students to remain on time?

"Kung maghigipit sila sa rules, higitan nila lahat. Hindi 'yung pipili ka lang... If you are strict, be strict to all rules," Dr.

Bernales said.

Ms. Girly Marie Grace Sarmiento-Balita, P.E. Coordinator, also stated her side. Despite disagreeing with the policy for the convenience of the students, she still shows her support for the university in discipline with school uniforms. To ensure consistency in the execution of the guidelines, actions must be taken, not just by the guards and SAEP but also by the professors in charge of the students.

"Sometimes, ang P.E. uniform ay sinusuat as an alternative kasi parang choice lang nila (students), that's why nagkaroon ng ganoong policy, or nag-strict pa. So, we, as part of the P.E. department, we need to support their rules as well," Ms. Balita said in an interview.

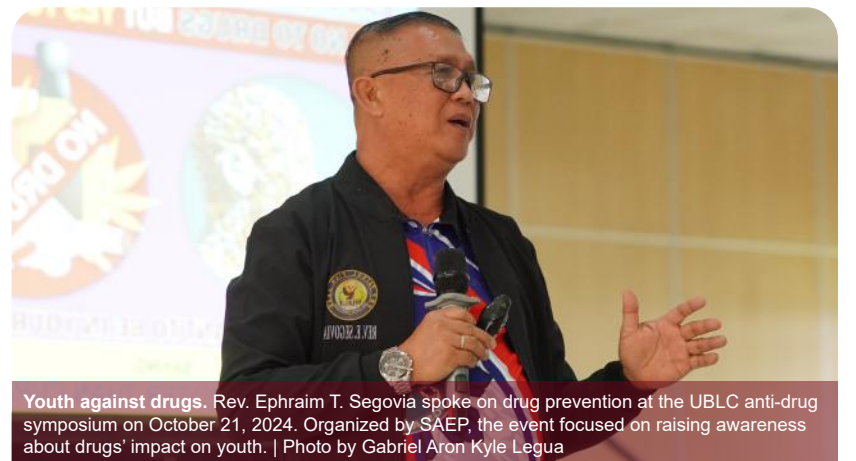
As implied by the coordinator, there are concerns from the students who find the strict implementation inconvenient and troublesome, especially since the university was lenient during the previous years.

"I didn't hear anything about the uniform policy until now because our instructors allowed us to use the P.E. uniform all day without any repercussions," EM, a 2nd year Psychology student, expressed.

He emphasized his disagreement, finding it difficult to bring another set of uniforms. If the policy cannot be changed, he wishes to have sufficient facilities to ease their burden, such as lockers or storage spaces.

"Ang hassle. Kasi magbabaon pa kami ng uniform, tapos magugusot pa ang uniform 'pag babaunin. Tapos sa pagpapalit back into uniform...andaming susuotin, ang hassle," Caitlin Cabrera, a 2nd year Legal Management student, said.

Caitlin also added that she doesn't see the purpose in this policy and considers it a bother. P.E. uniforms still carry the university logo the same way regular uniforms do, so it is a question of why such a policy exists.



**Youth against drugs.** Rev. Ephraim T. Segovia spoke on drug prevention at the UBLC anti-drug symposium on October 21, 2024. Organized by SAEP, the event focused on raising awareness about drugs' impact on youth. | Photo by Gabriel Aron Kyle Legua

## UBLC SAEP leads Anti-Drug Drive

BY PRINCESS LYAN PEÑAMANTE

**Student Affairs and External Programs (SAEP) organized an anti-drug symposium attended by students from College of Information Technology, Entertainment, and Communication (CITEC) and College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE) at the University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC) Multi-Purpose Hall, Oct. 21.**

Ang pinakamalaking problema talaga sa bansa natin ang paggamit ng ilegal na droga," PLTCOL Rix S. Villareal remarked, introducing the widespread drug problem in the country.

The anti-drug symposium aims to spread awareness on the effects of drugs and the implications of RA 9165 for adolescents and early adults. Its goal is to empower future leaders, giving them the tools they need to make informed decisions and lead their communities toward a drug-free future.

In hopes of understanding the role of law enforcement in curbing drug abuse, Patrol Armando Versola of PNP Drug Enforcement Group Region IV-A addressed the legal consequences of drug-related crimes, particularly on RA 9165's penalties for drug importation, transportation, and sale.

"Kung ang tao lamang ay magkaroon ng tunay na pagkakilala sa Diyos, magkakaroon tayo ng isang magandang hakbang ng pagbabago para sa bayan," said Rev. Ephraim T. Segovia, expressing that life would gradually improve as faith and righteousness are deemed essential to a fulfilling life.

Ms. Nancy T. Garcia, Governor of the Tanauan Maalab Tigers Club Batangas, has then invited students to reject drug use vocally, chanting, "Galit ako sa droga!" to strongly reinforce the message that students are crucial in combating drug abuse.

"As growing teens and adults, kailangan nating malaman yung mga effects or consequences kung mapapapasok ka sa gano'ng situation," Dianne Micoso, a first-year Bachelor of Multimedia Arts student, emphasized.

At the same time, Camillus Uziel Cortez, another first-year student, realized the need to stay informed as the issue remains relevant. It can help him warn friends or acquaintances if they encountered such situations, applying the ripple effect of informed relevant advocacy among peers.

Mrs. Milette De Torres, SAEP Officer, expressed that the fight against drugs is not just a battle for those in uniform but a community-wide effort. She called for ongoing collaboration to strengthen laws, improve rehabilitation programs, and empower youth to resist illegal substances in the near future.



**SG involvement hits new low.** SALIG partylist singing the Philippine national anthem at the UBLC SG Election Debate at UBLC Gymnasium. | Photo by Zyrene Morcilla



**Service to Fellowmen.** From left, Ms. Anna Mae Arellano, Social Communications Officer of PRC-Batangas Chapter, Mr. Nicolo Magmanlac, Training Facilitator, and Mr. John Lloyd Espiritu, RCY Focal Person of Lipa Chapter facilitated the first day of the Youth Volunteer Formation Course last October 17, 2024. | Photo by Klyde Angelu Meneses

## Batch BRAHMAN finishes YVFC

BY JULIUS RAYVEN BOOL

The College Red Cross Youth Council (CRCYC) of the University of Batangas – Lipa City (UBLC) marked its beginning on their concluded Youth Volunteer Formation Course (YVFC) facilitated by Philippine Red Cross-Batangas Chapter, and led by Josphine Alexandra De Castro, Dr. Jovi Jane Bernales and RCYC officers—inducting their first batch of 118 bonafide Red Cross Youth Volunteers out of 217 registered members, at BLG. C grounds, Oct. 16-17.

UBLC - CRCYC conducted its two-day Youth Volunteer Formation Course facilitated by Mr. John Joseph Jaen, Chapter Service for Red Cross Youth of PRC-Batangas Chapter, Ms. Anna Mae Arellano, Social Communications Officer of PRC-Batangas Chapter, Mr. Nicolo Magmanlac, Training Facilitator, and Mr. John Lloyd Espiritu, RCY Focal Person of Lipa Chapter. Alongside with the facilitators are UBLC - CRCYC president, officers, and their adviser who helped lead the activity.

During the activity, it is required for the batch to create their batch name, and from all the entries of those who submitted their suggestions. In a majority voting, Batch BRAHMAN was chosen.

The number of participants are based on those who paid the fee of YVFC. However, some who joined weren't able to finish the two-day activity. According

to the rules, those who didn't attend day one are not allowed to participate on day two, so as those who attended day two must have attended day one of activity, otherwise they are not included in the first batch of inducted youth volunteers. Moreover, participants who only attended day one need to finish day one and two of the second batch of YVFC.

"For us to be a bonafide youth volunteer, we have to undergo the two-day training. If you only undergo the day one lang, and then um-absent ka ng day two, hindi ka pwedeng bumalik for batch two na day two lang. So, mags-start ka from scratch," said Ms. De Castro, UBLC - CRCYC President.

Before the day ends, 2nd-year criminology students from College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE) were given several awards, recognized by the facilitators. Jonathan Cazius L. Angeles,

recipient of Henry Dunant Award; Vhaugne Derick M. Goyo, Barakong Bayani Award; Romar Quinag, Sandigan Award; and Errol R. Elosa, Bibo Kid Award.

Concluding its first YVFC, Batch BRAHMAN consists of 118 bonafide Youth Volunteers including the UBLC - CRCYC officers. The remaining 118 members are expected to join the next batches of YVFC.

On the other hand, the remaining members were still able to volunteer through digitally communicating with stranded Batangueños who are in urgent need of rescuing and help during Typhoon Kristine. With their invaluable assistance, PRC-Barako Chapters were able to save all Batangueños in need, while some dedicated members of the first batch were dispatched in the aftermath of the devastating typhoon.

## UBLC-BSED joins SEA Program

BY LIANNA ANDREI CARINGAL

The 4th-year Teacher Education students of the University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC) took part in the 10th Southeast Asian (SEA) Teacher Student Exchange Program organized by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) at Đồng Tháp University, Vietnam, Oct. 1.

The SEA program is an international exchange initiative for education students in Southeast Asia—providing a three-week teaching internship in a foreign SEAMEO member country.

This internship is part of the Bachelor of Science in Education (BSED) curriculum of UBLC. Through this program, the students were not only able to comply with the curriculum requirements, but also harness learning and skills, and collaborate with other participating countries.

"UBLC CEAS managed to establish relationships and connections with SEAMEO, and we are lucky to be able to send our delegates to the SEA Teacher Program," said Dr. Minerva Chavez, dean of CEAS, emphasized that this program significantly contributes to students' development as it provides real-world teaching experience in a multicultural environment.

Dr. Chavez also added that participating in this program helps the students develop critical skills such as classroom management, lesson planning, and adapting various educational

systems. It also opens doors to potential collaborations between participating universities, particularly in research and developing new pedagogical approaches.

To participate, according to Dr. Chavez, the students must be enrolled in a teacher education program at SEAMEO partner institution, usually in their third or fourth year. Candidates must be nominated by their home institution, meet academic standards, and have basic proficiency in English, or the language of instruction in the host country. Specific criteria may vary by institution, but students should be in good academic standing and prepared for teaching practice.

Shiela Rodriguez, a 4th-year BSED Major in Social Studies student, and one of the participants in the SEA program, shared her experiences during their 21-day internship in Vietnam.

"It felt like a roller coaster of emotions, filled with both highs and lows," Ms. Rodriguez said, reflecting on her participation as she described this journey as a rewarding experience, encountering new perspectives on the curriculum, ways of teaching, and formed friendships.

However, Ms. Rodriguez also expressed the challenges she faced during the three-week teaching internship. One significant hurdle was managing her financial budget, as expenses had to be covered out of pocket. She also encountered difficulties with the language barrier. Despite these challenges, Ms. Rodriguez reflected on the most important lesson she learned during the 21-day experience: teaching is not just about imparting knowledge but about fostering understanding and empathy. She explained that every student has unique needs, and being able to adapt her teaching approach to suit their abilities and preferences made her a more thoughtful and responsive educator.

As of the moment, CEAS has no confirmed plans for another exchange program. However, the faculty and administration remain optimistic, and are actively exploring possibilities for similar opportunities in the future. Through continued efforts, CEAS is hopeful for more exchange programs and other internationalization initiatives will become available.



**Global educators in action.** 4th year teacher education student poses with her vietnamese students at the vietnam exchange program which started on October 1, 2024 | Photo from Shiela Rodriguez

## CCJE sees growth in interns

BY LIANNA ANDREI CARINGAL

The College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE) had an increase of criminology student-interns at the recently held 3rd Epaulette Ceremony at the University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC) Gymnasium, Sept. 30.

This academic year, CCJE had 54 fourth-year criminology student-interns compared to last academic year with only 33 students based on the data of the department. With this, Dean Dr. Edward Teredaño, expressed pride in the program's growth, stating, "Every first sem, talagang na-i-improve yung enrollment natin, tumataas [ng] 10 or 15%, ibig sabihin may nagtitiwala sa ating ginagawa."

According to Internship Commander Randel Mendoza, all fourth-year students are eligible for internship placement and the pinning rites, provided they pass the evaluation. However, some students are not eligible as they did not meet the evaluation requirements before the start of the academic year.

The KAHIDASIG batch stands out for its active engagement compared to the previous MATIKSAYAN batch, particularly in academic performance and participation. While the previous batch had fewer updates on emerging criminological theories and methodologies, this year's interns actively embrace advancements in forensic science, cybercrime, technology, and modern law enforcement strategies.

"This continuous improvement of the program serves as a strength to achieve the success of the whole CCJE department," Jhun Robles, a criminology-intern shared.

KAHIDASIG, which stands for Kalupunang Hinirang na may Dangal at Sigasig, embodies the values of discipline, honor, and dedication. As Mendoza puts it, each member of their class embraces and instills these qualities, aiming for high standards not just in their work, but also for themselves. The students are committed to embodying these traits, aiming not only for excellence but also striving to become high-quality interns in the future, as Mendoza added.

The aforementioned number of student crim-interns were pinned on the recently held 3rd Epaulette Ceremony—alongside with the entire department—from freshmen to third-year students. Batch KAHIDASIG were blessed by the University President Ms. Lily Marlene Hernandez-Bohn, VP for Academic Affairs Dr. Aurora P. Tolentino, guest speaker PCOL Jacinto R. Malinao Jr., represented by PLTCOL Angelito K. Guardian, Dean Dr. Edward V. Teredaño, CCJE Program

Head Dr. Glenn R. Aguilá, and CCJE faculty, along with proud parents.

"Let's celebrate as it dignifies justice, integrity, and service," said PCOL Jacinto R. Malinao Jr., the Acting Provincial Director of the Batangas PPO, represented by PLTCOL Angelito K. Guardian, Deputy Provincial Director for Administration. His message emphasized that this ceremony marks the transition of the criminology students into becoming the future law enforcers.

Furthermore, some interns shared their thoughts and reflections during the Epaulette, as students expressed gratitude for the recognition, honoring both their achievements and the sacrifices of their families.

"Personally, it's a reminder of the greater responsibility that comes with leadership," said Jayvee Osing, one of the intern officers, explaining that being in a leadership position during the ceremony is both a challenge and an opportunity to develop accountability.

In line with this, the Epaulette Ceremony plays a significant role in their internship program, which is in partnership with the Tri-Bureau, composed of Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

"In CCJE, this partnership builds an opportunity for criminology students pursuing degrees in criminal justice, law enforcement, and hands-on experience while directly supporting the goals of the Tri-Bureau," said Robles, noting that the partnership ensures the interns to be equipped with fresh ideas and knowledge.

Looking forward, Aaron Recinto, a third-year criminology student and Mr. CCJE representative, shared his hopes for a better Epaulette Ceremony next year that will effectively highlight their skills and capabilities.

With this, Dr. Teredaño reaffirmed the department's commitment to shaping the students' futures. He said that together with the UBLC community, they are committed to equipping the students with the knowledge and skills they need to become competent law enforcers. He also expressed his desire to support the parents in raising responsible individuals by instilling the values essential to public service, contributing to the community's success.



**The future of justice.** College of Criminal Justice Education The Silent Drill Company performs their drill at Epaulette Ceremony at the University of Batangas Gymnasium, September 30, 2024. | Photo by Lowell Jingrey Mongcal

UBLC, BULACNIN INK 5-YEAR MOA...from page 1

will hold a seminar on Ordinance and Resolution Making for barangay officials, preparing for the new city hall's impact. The College of Information, Technology, and Communication will also assist in implementing the Barangay Information System.

As for social work, there will also be a training this November at the National High School on the prevention of sexual violations. Meanwhile, Lipeño Heights, Mayor Africa's housing project, highlights the urgent need to encourage urban-poor membership. Ms. Lanie Malaluan stressed that without this, displaced individuals may lose access to critical aid, as they are not officially considered residents.

Definitely, Bulacnin is an ideal partner for the university, offering easy access for students with just one commute, as well as significant development potential.

"Kung pag-aaralan ulit, ang maganda sa kanya ay ang pagsabay ng Bulacnin sa maaaring 'bagong mukha' ng Bulacnin. Parang kung sa kanila ay dating tahimik

na parang matandang probinsya, bigla silang bubuksan ng panibagong mukha [gawa ng] na nandyan ang city hall at made-develop talaga ang lugar." Mr. Maranan analyzed.

Bulacnin was selected as a partner through a process that involved consultation with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), which identifies the top 10 barangays in urgent need of assistance. Among these are Balintawak, Antipolo Del Sur, and Bulacnin. For years, CES has partnered with various barangays in Lipa, including Balintawak.

"Bagama't adopted na natin noon ang Balintawak, school 'yon—dalawang school lang. Pero yung community, mas accessible satin kasi nandito tayo. Malaking barangay pero maunlad." Mr. Maranan said.

This implies that there are still chances in the near future that Balintawak may once again partner with UBLC if there is an opportunity to collaborate on mutually beneficial projects and initiatives.

## Campus starts faith-based initiative

BY PRINCESS LYAN PEÑAMANTE

**A** newly founded faith-centered organization at the University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC) is rising to revitalize campus spirituality, aiming to build a close-knit community that fosters reflection, connection, and a renewed commitment to faith among students and faculty, Oct. 10.

Spearheaded by Dr. Aurora Tolentino, the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), and supported by Dr. Daniella Decena and Dr. Mercedes Macarandang as the faculty in charge, this organization aims to build a strong spiritual foundation within the university. Although not yet officially registered or recognized as of October, the initiative is already collaborating with the Sto. Niño de Lipa Parish Church. It receives support from faculty members across various colleges and is actively engaged with student volunteers who share the vision of nurturing faith on campus.

This organization's roots trace back to a casual conversation between the UBLC President Lily Marlene J. Hernandez-Bohn and the VPAA, Dr. Tolentino, which eventually evolved into a formal initiative.

"Since we are an educational institution, it would be beneficial to incorporate catechism, with the hope that the curriculum and learning materials will be Catholic-based," said Dr. Tolentino.

The mission is clear: to support the spiritual life of students, particularly the Catholic majority, by incorporating faith-centered activities into their daily lives. She added that both she and the president shared this vision for

the institution, drawing from their own experiences studying in Catholic schools.

A vital aspect of this initiative is the campus' partnership with the Roman Catholic Parish of Sto. Niño de Lipa in Marawoy, where UBLC is proudly located. This collaboration significantly strengthens the campus ministry's efforts by linking it with the local parish, providing additional spiritual support and valuable resources.

This budding ministry is built on a three-fold objective. First, Liturgy plays a central role, introducing regular masses on campus, offering students and staff a dedicated time for prayer and reflection. The second pillar is Catechism classes, deepening the students' understanding of Catholic teachings and values. Finally, Fellowship, encouraging students to live out their faith by connecting through faith-based events and discussions.

The organization emphasizes faith, aligning with UB's core value—Faith in God. It aims to help students cultivate their spiritual lives and resist harmful influences in a challenging secular world. By promoting prayer and various spiritual activities, the campus ministry guides students in navigating life's challenges with a strong moral compass.

With the support of this rising organization, UBLC held a Holy Mass on October 10 at the Multi-Purpose Hall, attended by students, faculty, and staff, as part of its efforts to revive spiritual life on campus. Presided over by Rev. Fr. Ariel Lubi, CSSR, the Mass provided a space for reflection and prayer, emphasizing the importance of spiritual perseverance.

"Perseverance in prayer is not about our condition to God; it is not always repeating our intention, our wishes to God; perseverance in prayer is about developing our intimate relationship with God kahit na ang hinihingi natin ay hindi maibigay," Fr. Lubi said.

In light of this message, a society that often sidelines spirituality, this organization at UBLC serves as a beacon of faith, helping students connect with God and live out their beliefs. Rooted in Liturgy, catechism, and Fellowship, it aims to make a lasting impact by encouraging students to embrace their spiritual journeys as integral to their lives.

As the UBLC continues to evolve, with a focus on fostering a supportive and nurturing environment, the organization is poised to play a crucial role in shaping the spiritual life and the overall well-being of the UBLC community.



**UBLC's first liturgical event.** The UBLC Campus Ministry conducted its first liturgical act on October 10, at the UBLC Multipurpose Hall, Building C. This group of people consisting of faculty and student volunteers was initiated by UBLC President Lily Marlene J. Hernandez-Bohn and VPAA Dr. Aurora Tolentino, aiming for spiritual renewal at the university, and to support students' spiritual lives by incorporating faith-centered activities. | Photo by: Gabriel Aron Kyle Legua

## UBLC honors educators

BY LIANNA ANDREI CARINGAL

**T**he faculty members are honored during the Teacher's Day celebration at the University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC), with the theme "Empowering Educators: Strengthening Resilience, Building Sustainability," highlighting the adaptability of educators, Oct. 7.

The celebration highlighted the recognition of top faculty members during A.Y. 2023-2024, with awards now based solely on overall performance and dedication, rather than student surveys.

"The shift from basing recognition solely on student surveys to incorporating teacher achievements and evaluations was made to provide a more comprehensive and fair assessment of teachers' work," Ms. Keith Bea Dimaculangan, SG President, said as she explains the reason behind why there is a shift happening in evaluating the top-performing faculty.

She also added that this new approach, as evaluated by the administration, ensures that teachers are recognized for both their direct influence on students and their broader professional accomplishments.

The top part-time faculty awardees were Dr. Mayling Ilagan Capuno as top 1, followed by Ms. Joan Villanueva, Ms. Mary Grace, Ms. Mercedes Macarandang, and Ms. Charmaine Mae Plata for their outstanding contributions.

As for the full-time faculty awardees, Ms. Rechee Rivera got the top 1, followed by Atty. Ricardo Manalo II, Ms. Anabelle Magsino, Mrs. Kielly Chrizza Mae Lara, and Dr. Jovi Jane Bernales.

Ms. Rechee Rivera, one of the awardees, expressed her sincere gratitude for the honor. "I am grateful to UBLC, and most especially to the students," she said, gratefully sharing the achievement with the CEAS faculty and staff for their unwavering support and patience.

Dr. Aurora P. Tolentino, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, expressed her deep gratitude to the teachers for their unwavering commitment and dedication to their students.

"Sa mga guro dito, maraming maraming salamat sa paglilingkod, maraming maraming salamat sa dedikasyon, at maraming maraming salamat sa pagtupad ng pangarap ng mga batang ito," Dr. Tolentino voiced.

Although President Lily Marlene Hernandez-Bohn was unable to attend due to prior commitments, her

inspirational message was delivered by Mrs. Milette De Torres. In her message, the President recognized the teachers for their invaluable contributions to the university and their students.

"On this day, we give special recognition and express our gratitude to the men and women who with their courage and passion to teach have managed to inspire students to become responsible, God-fearing, and skilled individuals," she stated.

Organized by the UBLC Student Government and the Student Affairs and External Programs, the event featured a variety of activities and recognitions for the university's hardworking teachers. They were offered complimentary items at booths hosted by J and J Events and Gifts Galore, StarFinder, and UBMAC. They also enjoyed free snacks, including ice scramble, juice, popcorn, and pancakes. This initiative aimed to create a festive atmosphere and provide educators with a memorable experience. The celebration showed appreciation for the faculty—the core of the UBian community.



**Salute to UBLC educators.** Teachers enjoy their complimentary meals using free food stubs at the teachers day booths at UBLC Gymnasium on October 7, 2024. | Photo by Ricardo Carlos Comia



**UBian spirit sparks.** Brahmmy, the University of Batangas mascot, entertaining the crowd during the Tatak Brahman Orientation at the Multi-Purpose Hall on August 6. The event welcomed students with lively performances, campus introductions, and a celebration of UB spirit. | Photo by Shaira Mae Calibo

## Tatak Brahman takes stage

BY LIANNA ANDREI CARINGAL & MA. SOPHIA LAURINE RAMIREZ

**T**he Tatak Brahman Orientation kicked off, as the University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC) welcomes its students to the new academic year through various booths with a vibrant academic year through various booths and a parade throughout the campus, Aug 6.

Students, faculty, and staff were greeted by "Parada Ala Brahman," a fiesta-theme parade through the campus, led by UB Pres. Lily Marlene J. Hernandez-Bohn, the university president, and various offices—bringing together UBians in a joyous procession. The atmosphere was electric as the Tatak Brahman Orientation officially began when everyone fully gathered in the multipurpose hall.

Tatak Brahman Orientation is designed to help new and returning students acclimate to university life and features a series of discussions. These include an overview of the university's profile, introductions to the different departments and their faculty members, and an outline of the rules and regulations that every UBian must follow. In addition, it is to acknowledge the UBAT topnotchers and celebrate the top enrollees among freshmen and transferees.

UB Pres. Hernandez-Bohn, in her speech, highlighted the institution's history, built through courage with the founders' intention of nation-building despite challenges.

"Challenges today are different. The institution has evolved, but we have our unique set of challenges different from

what they had 8 decades ago. But still, what we learn, we continuously update, we continuously improve, we continuously grow," Pres. Hernandez-Bohn said as she emphasized the university's continued perseverance and strength.

The orientation is divided into two sessions to ensure that all students are accommodated. The morning session welcomes the College of Education, Arts, and Sciences (CEAS), the College of Information Technology, Entertainment, and Communication (CITEC), and the College of Engineering and Architecture (CENAR). The College of Management and Tourism (CMT), College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE), and College of Health Services (CHS) had their session in the afternoon.

Adding to the excitement, the UBLC Dance Street, along with the appearance of the university mascot, Brahmmy, performed a lively and powerful dance that left smiles on the faces of all the students.

Apart from the Tatak Brahman Orientation, interactive booths were set up by student organizations at the UBLC gymnasium, open until August 8—offering students a chance to engage and immerse in the culture of UBLC.



**Test of will among UBAT takers.** UBAT takers from different schools listens to the briefing before taking the exam at the UBLC Exam Room. | Photo from CCO

## UBAT takers face challenge to enroll

BY JANNAH DENISE MATO

**T**he University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC) has a significant number of students taking the University of Batangas Admission Test (UBAT) with 1,348 college examinees for A.Y. 2024-2025. As the competition with other educational institutions against state universities and colleges grows, UBLC faces the challenge of converting UBAT takers into enrollees.

The UBAT is a standardized test given to all new students, including freshmen and transferees, to assess their cognitive abilities and competencies at each level. It serves as the first step in the university's admission process. The test also comes with a non-refundable fee of 250 pesos, as part of the guidelines for applicants.

In an interview, Dr. Olive Maaño-Calingan, the Counseling and Psychological Wellness Center (CoPWell) Assistant Officer, explained how not all those who take the exam proceed to enroll. "Hindi lahat ng nagte-take ng UBAT will pursue enrolling. Kasi may mga kalaban tayo na state universities, mayroon tayong local colleges, so if we're given an opportunity to be enrolled with free tuition fee, 'di ba iga-grab natin 'yon,'" she stated.

Dr. Maaño-Calingan also pointed out that even after enrolling, some students withdraw to join state colleges or universities offering better financial aid.

This is a common occurrence for UBLC, where potential enrollees are hesitant to continue with the enrollment process despite passing the exams, due to the competition with state universities who offer little to no tuition fees. However,

this does not mean that UBLC is struggling in terms of quality education.

For instance, Jarius Barrion, a high school graduate who took the UBAT but did not enroll at UBLC revealed that his decision to enroll at another school was driven by a scholarship offer. "Naka-avail po kasi ako ng 50% discount na scholarship sa school ko ngayon," he expressed, saying that financial aid had an impact on his choice.

Despite enrolling in a different school, Jarius still shared advice for students who may be considering taking the UBAT. "Mag-take na kayo ng UBAT dahil maraming magagandang opportunities sa UB," he encouraged.

To remain competitive and to attract more enrollees, UBLC continues to focus on maintaining its quality of education. Providing more opportunities for students could also bring in more enrollees.

While many students are interested in the UBAT, continuing to improve its programs will help UBLC attract more students to enroll at the University of Batangas. As of 2024, UBLC welcomed new facilities like the Industrial Engineering Workshop and improved teaching quality, hoping to increase enrollment rates.

**UBLC LAUNCHES ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE...***from page 1*

Lipa that were once cold can no longer be replenished.

A research initiative that would examine the differences between traditional crops like cacao and kape is conducted as an extension to Punla in hopes of reviving the original kape of Lipa City. According to Maranan, once the area in Bulacnin is identified, it will be a valuable contribution to the community, supporting both livelihoods and efforts to address deforestation.

"I think requiring graduating students to plant a tree is truly a great idea. It helps us give back to the environment and create a lasting impact." Jamaica, a fourth-year BS Psychology student, shared her thoughts on the new requirement.

One of the highlights of the day was the ceremonial oath taken by the UBLC students, faculty, and staff, pledging their dedication as Nature Advocates. Following the oath, participants took part in a symbolic seed planting activity, setting the stage for a greener campus. A ribbon-cutting ceremony officially launched the UBian Seedling Nursery, located beside the Industrial Engineering workshop facility.

Participants further demonstrated their commitment by signing a pledge board, with each signature or thumbprint symbolizing an individual's promise to uphold environmental values. This act fostered a collective sense of purpose, uniting attendees under the shared mission of environmental advocacy.

To ensure the longevity of the initiative, CES is actively collaborating with the school's gardener, CES coordinators, and faculty members. "Kaya mahalaga sakin din yung participation ng faculty na may puso sa environment, na gabayan nila to guide yung mga 4th year students at iba pa."

As UBLC continues its journey toward sustainability, the university community is encouraged to actively participate in future environmental initiatives. The success of "UBians Punla Para sa Kalikasan" highlights the power of collaboration, with the CES office leading the initiative, supported by the whole community of the institution. Together, they created a unified effort that promotes environmental awareness and inspires the campus and surrounding communities to act. This initiative reminds us of our shared responsibility to protect the environment for future generations.



**Decades of service recognized.** University of Batangas held its Service Awards 2024 on October 8 at the UBBC Culture and Arts Building to honor faculty and staff for their loyalty and dedication. Recognized were UBLC awardees Mrs. Kielly Chrizza Mae T. Lara and Dr. Jerson L. Mariño for 10 years of teaching, Mr. Roilan B. Bunyi for 10 years of service, and Ar. Angelo N. Albalate for 25 years of teaching, alongside other honorees celebrating milestones of up to 35 years. | Photo by Nicole Palicpic

## UB commends decades of service

BY LIANNA ANDREI CARINGAL

**The University of Batangas (UB) held its Service Awards 2024 to recognize the loyalty and dedication of the institution's most important assets: human resources, educators, and even the non-teaching staff, at the UBBC Culture and Arts Building, Oct. 8.**

"I salute to the men and women who stayed and remained dependable, patiently carving a name for themselves in the history of this institution," said by the Pres. Hernandez-Bohn, as she praised the dedication of those who have shaped the university's legacy for many years.

All teachers from every educational level and employees from different departments of the UB Batangas and Lipa Campus were invited to the Service Awards to honor those special individuals who stayed with the institution throughout the 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 years of their careers.

The Service Awardees from UBLC were Mrs. Kielly Chrizza Mae T. Lara, Mrs. Maria Carolina R. Martinez, and Dr. Jerson L. Mariño for their 10th year as faculty members, Mr. Roilan B. Bunyi for his 10th year as an employee, and Ar. Angelo N. Albalate for his 25th year as a faculty.

"I consider UB as my bread and butter, without UB, hindi ako mag-grow as a person or as an individual and because

of UB, natutulungan ko yung family ko, parents ko, wife ko, and napapag-aral ko yung mga anak ko," Dr. Mariño said, as he shared his deepest gratitude to the profound impact that his second home, which is the university, has had on his personal and professional life.

The awardees wore various shades of blue in their glamorous attire, a color which represents loyalty and responsibility. Together, they held hands and bowed proudly in front of their fellow UBian brothers and sisters.

The awards were emblems of UB's acknowledgement of their dedicated staffers who have been creating legacies of excellence for decades. The way they exhibited spirit, intellect, and purpose truly deserved to be commended for being integral parts of the institution's growth.

The celebration lasted with a special dinner engagement, "UBian Gala," where faculties and employees fashionably mingled while in their fine tuxedos and shimmering cocktail dresses at the UB Millenium Gym.

## UB hybridizes UBIAN Con

BY PRINSESSES APRIL LINATOC & FAYE ASHER DE VERA

**The 3rd Unifying Borders Internationally through Annual Network Conference (UBIAN Con) kicks off in a mixed physical and virtual setup at the Juan Y. Javier Cultural and Arts Building Auditorium, UB Batangas City, on Aug. 15 and 16—featuring local and international keynote and plenary speakers, parallel sessions of research discussions, and a project exhibition.**

The annual UBIAN Con, themed "IT and Engineering in the Digital Age: Addressing the Social and Ethical Implication," assembles researchers to discuss, exchange ideas, and present their latest findings in Engineering and Technology. Now in its third year, Pres. Hernandez-Bohn indicated that they planned to hold the conference using a 'hybrid' method compared to previous years—making it a blend of in-person and virtual conventions.

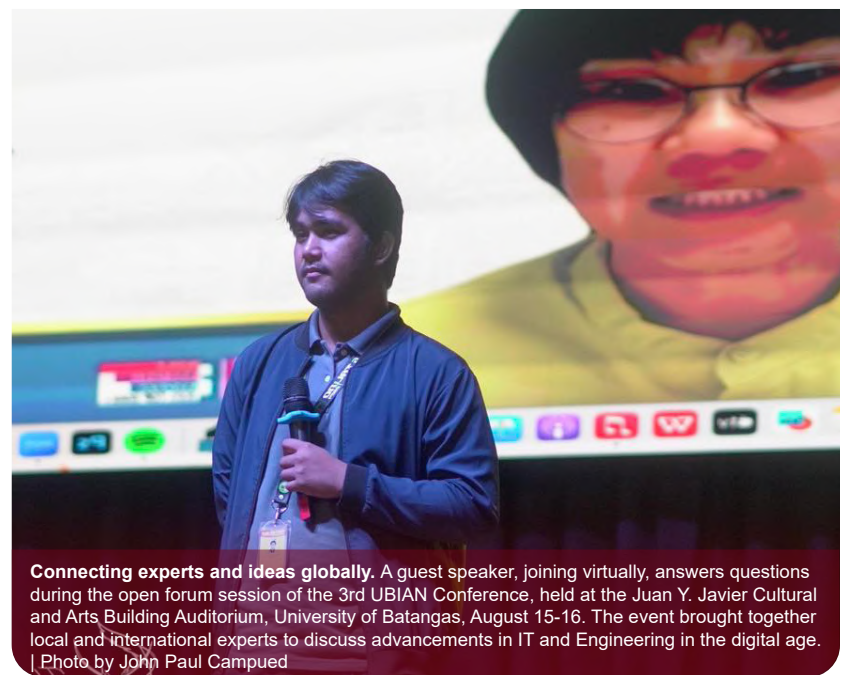
Before UBIAN Con, researchers were invited to submit unpublished papers and posters aligned with the conference theme. Accepted papers are then orally presented through parallel sessions on the day of the event at the UB Life building, in which all accepted abstracts are to be published in the Book of Abstracts and Conference Proceedings. Selected papers are recommended for publication in the University of Batangas' Refereed Journal. Best papers, oral

presentations, and digital posters are awarded on the event's last day.

Simultaneously, recorded mini-lectures played but in a separate parallel session and uploaded to the conference website afterward.

Networking and socialization followed for the presenters and researchers to gain collaboration opportunities, feedback, and connections with companies or individuals that can provide financial or technical support.

The two-day conference has invited many notable speakers, both local and international, including Dr. Hui Lin Ong, Ernesto C. Boydon, Dr. Dmitry Zaitsev, and Engr. Mark Kennedy Bantugon, Pastor Arguelles Jr., Engr. Florencio Lopez Jr., and Dr. Tatiana Shmeleva. The conference attendees are students from the University of Batangas—Batangas and Lipa Campus, guests from the partner school; UPHSD-Molino, and global virtual participants via Zoom.



**Connecting experts and ideas globally.** A guest speaker, joining virtually, answers questions during the open forum session of the 3rd UBIAN Conference, held at the Juan Y. Javier Cultural and Arts Building Auditorium, University of Batangas, August 15-16. The event brought together local and international experts to discuss advancements in IT and Engineering in the digital age. | Photo by John Paul Campued

## UBLC leads Balete coastal clean-up drive

BY PRINCESS LYAN PEÑAMANTE

**In partnership with the municipality of Balete and the local tourism government, the University of Batangas – Lipa City (UBLC) conducted a coastal clean-up drive to protect Taal Lake and local fisheries at Barangay Poblacion, Balete, Sept. 28.**

Spearheaded by the Community Extension Services, representatives from 18 different organizations within UBLC worked together to collect waste along the coastline, picking up almost a dozen sacks of plastic cups, plastic bottles, twigs, dried leaves, and other pollutants threatening marine life.

"Ang tinatarget natin ay most or 70% [student organizations] ang makadala sa gawaing ito upang mas mapalalim natin sa mga bata ang consciousness at pagmamahal sa kalikasan. Mahalaga ring ma-remind sila na ang mga ganitong lake o any coastal (area) ay hindi dapat tinatapanan ng basura," said Apolinario Maranan, the External Program Coordinator.

The event commenced as Mary-Ann Lantin, Balete Department of Tourism officer, highlighted that Balete encompasses five coastal barangays: Palsara, Poblacion, Look, San Sebastian, and Calawit. She noted that Balete is a significant breeding area for tawilis, and participants must focus on collecting non-biodegradable waste. At the same time, recyclable plastics are sorted separately

for potential sale, and biodegradable materials are for proper disposal.

"Talagang sinusuportahan natin ang Taal kasi ito ang isa sa mayamang pinanggagalingan ng pagkain ng Batangueño, ang tawilis at tilapia," said Maranan.

Pollutants like plastic waste and invasive green weeds pose a threat to tawilis eggs during their crucial breeding season—with its population declining by over 50% in recent decades due to factors like pollution, overfishing, and competition from introduced species, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The coastal clean-up drive is part of a broader push for environmental education and community involvement, participating in the National Coastal Clean-up Drive, held last September 26.

As part of the drive objectives, participants also collected Talisay seeds, a tropical tree that helps prevent soil erosion, along the lake. These seeds will be planted during the university's Tree Planting Campaign, which supports forest conservation.



**Protecting waters with community effort.** On September 28, the UBLC community took part in a coastal cleanup at Taal Lake, Barangay Poblacion, Batangas, collecting waste to protect the ecosystem and support local fisheries. | Photo by Klyde Meneses



## Mayor Africa: Lipa City officially debt-free

BY JANNAH DENISE MATO

**Lipa City Mayor Eric Africa made a historic achievement by leading the administration to a debt-free status as of September 2024, signing the last check voucher to pay off the last debt of the city last Sept. 12.**

In an interview, Mayor Africa explained why debt repayment is their top priority and how important it is for the city to become debt-free. "Loan is a mandatory obligation. Kung mayroon kang projects or programs, hindi mo siya pwedeng i-implement until hindi mo nasa-satisfy 'yung demand ng loan."

According to Mayor Africa, they were able to carry out projects and programs while paying off debts. Lipa's revenue increased from Php 1.7 billion when he became mayor in 2019 by 65%, or Php 2.7 billion. He also said that there was a significant amount of debt because of various loans that they were able to prioritize because of their belt-tightening measures.

The debt repayment strategy began with significant cuts to unnecessary expenses like fuel and traveling expenses, which he made changes to and used all the savings to pay off loans. Also, efficiency in tax collection further reinforced the city's finances even without introducing new tax measures.

During his first five years as Mayor, not a single tax item that raised revenue was introduced. He further explains how

the loan payments are automatically deducted from the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), which is now the National Tax Allotment (NTA).

He also shared that over half of the city's revenue now comes from local sources, allowing the city to be more self-reliant.

"Hindi na tayo reliant sa NTA. Ibig sabihin, kung mag-collapse ang national government, ang Lipa City ay more than 50% revenues ay galing sa local. Unlike before na reliant tayo sa national tax," Mayor Africa said.

Mayor Africa also placed a strong emphasis on saving and thrifting, which helped the city pay off its debt faster. He also highlighted how the citizens maintained their discipline despite the city's debt-free status.

Additionally, Mayor Africa's vision includes keeping Lipa financially stable and less dependent on national government funding. He shared that over half of the city's revenue now comes from local sources, allowing the city to be more self-reliant without being tied up in loan payments.

Now free of debt, the city can invest

in a range of development projects including sports facilities, animal shelters, the construction of the new city hall, and other community projects.

"Ang biggest benefit ng achievement na ito ay may freedom na 'yung administration ngayon na mag-implement ng projects and programs kasi mayroon tayong extra money na before ay naka-allocate sa loan payment," Mayor Africa stated.

Additionally, he shared how the road to becoming debt-free required hard choices. Many city employees felt the effects of budget cuts, and some programs had to be paused to save money.

"Almost lahat ng mga choices ko ay laging may affected, laging may naaapektuhan. Like, may mga nag-suffer talaga na mga projects and programs na kailangan ko i-stop," he said. With the debt from the previous term out of his mind, Mayor Eric Africa's aim now is for Lipa to remain financially stable and free from bank loans so that resources would always be available for the city's future needs, and can open better opportunities for growth and development.



Leaders unite in Lipa. House, Speaker Martin Romualdez, Former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Senator Ralph G. Recto, Luis manzano, Senator Bong Revilla and other government officials and representatives waving their Philippine Flag at the 22nd Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair on August 24, Lipa, Batangas. | Photo by Lowell Jingrey Mongcal

## Lipa hosts 22nd BPSF

BY PRINSESSES APRIL LINATOC & LIANNA ANDREI CARINGAL

**L**ipa, Batangas, holds the 22nd Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair, providing P563M worth of services to Batangueños at the Aboitiz Pitch, the Outlets at Lipa, Aug. 24.

Under the BPSF, more than 100 government agencies participated, offering citizens a wide range of services. These included free medical consultations, legal assistance, educational services, and employment opportunities. The processing of essential documents like passports and government IDs was also available.

BPSF is an initiative of Pres. Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. and House Speaker Martin Romualdez aimed to deliver comprehensive public services to ordinary Filipinos in various parts of the country. Since its launch in July 2023, the BPSF has reached 21 provinces. Lipa now hosts it for Batangas, led by provincial leaders Senator Ralph G. Recto and Former Governor Vilma Santos Recto.

The event featured programs like Cash Assistance and Rice Distribution (CARD), Start-up Investment, Business Opportunity & Livelihood (SIBOL), and Integrated Scholarship & Incentive Program (ISIP).

Various services were also conducted in other parts of the city, including the Lipa City Youth & Cultural Center, Claro M. Recto Events Center, and Lipa Academy Sports, Culture and Arts.

"Ito ang hangarin ni PBBM, ang maging malapit ang ating gobyerno sa taong bayan," said House Speaker Martin Romualdez, emphasizing the BPSF's mission to create a swift, convenient, orderly, and joyful Bagong Pilipinas.

While the activities caused heavy traffic in some parts of Lipa, they also demonstrated the strong support of thousands of Batangueños who attended the event. Prior to the BPSF, Lipenos were given early notice of traffic advisories in anticipation of the expected turnout.

In addition to these services, the program brought entertainment through the Pagkakaisa Concert—held after the Serbisyo Fair at The Outlets at Lipa, featuring well-known artists such as Yeng Constantino and Flow G.

## STS Kristine sinks Batangas

BY LOWELL JINGREY MONGCAL

**T**he province of Batangas has reported the highest number of fatalities in the country following the massive flooding and landslides from Severe Tropical Storm Kristine, internationally known as Trami, as it made landfall last Oct. 21 to 25.

Extensive damages caused by Kristine caused the provincial government of Batangas to declare a state of calamity on the entire province on October 25. According to the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO), damages to fisheries and agriculture were estimated at P118 million. The Presidential Communications Office has also reported the loss of 61 lives with at least 20 fatalities from Talisay; the majority of the fatalities were caused by drowning and landslides as torrential rains and powerful winds swept the province.

Residents, rescuers and relief operations struggled to reach certain towns as thick mud and debris from the flood and landslide caused main roads to be inaccessible. While some houses and roads built along the coast have been submerged as the lake's water levels increased due to the storm's extensive rainfall.

In a PDRRMO press conference

last October 27, Batangas Governor Hermilando Mandanas claimed that the massive flooding and landslides were not caused by quarrying but instead by the 3 days of consecutive heavy rain.

"Sa kadamihan lamang ng tubig, bumigat ang lupa at bumagsak. Pero napansin ninyo lahat ng mga apektadong lugar ay nakapaligid sa lawa ng Taal. Ang lawa ng Taal tumasag ng isang metro. Ang tunay na dahilan nito, ang nilalabasan ng tubig ng Taal, ang Pansipit River, yan ay nabarahan nung pumutok ang bulkan, 2020 pa. Hanggang ngayon hindi pa nade-dredge," Gov. Mandanas said.

According to the governor, watersheds in Talisay, Tanauan City, Malvar, Laurel, Agoncillo, Santa Teresita, Cuenca, Alitagtag, Mataas na Kahoy, Lipa City, Balete, and San Nicolas have been designated as protected areas as part of the Taal Volcano Protected Landscape under Presidential Decree No. 923.

Gov. Mandanas publicly pinned the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR) for the catastrophic flooding that struck Lemery, Agoncillo, and Taal, attributing it to the DENR's failure to dredge the Pansipit River, which significantly contributed to the disaster.

In an interview with the Philippine News Agency, Talisay Mayor Nestor Natanauan said, "We noticed Taal Lake rose by more than one meter in just three days. I have to mention this because all the people concerned are now here with us... This has been our plea for a long time now because there have been disasters. If it can't be done now, it will happen again and again."

Mayor Natanauan further emphasized the urgent need to prioritize the declogging and decongestion of the Pansipit River to reduce flooding, improve water quality, and restore the lake's ecological balance.

Addressing this issue promptly is crucial to preventing a repeat of last month's tragedy, which claimed multiple lives in Batangas.



Caught in the storm. A man plunges in the lake to catch fish that escaped from flooded fishpens following the destruction caused by Typhoon Kristine on October 25. | Photo by Lowell Jingrey Mongcal



First in history. Mayor Eric Africa greets and shakes hands with supporters after filing his certificate of candidacy for mayor at Lipa City Hall on October 3, 2024. Mayor Africa is the first uncontested mayoral candidate in Lipa City's history. | Photo from: Mayor Eric B. Africa FB Page

## Africa "uncontested" in 2025 Elections

BY JANNAH DENISE MATO

**F**or the first time in Lipa City's history, Mayor Eric Africa is set to retain his position unopposed in the 2025 midterm elections, as no challengers filed before the October 8 deadline.

"I am humbled by the trust given to me by the Lipeño voters, considering that I am the first Mayoral candidate running unopposed or who ran unopposed. Talagang testament ito nung paniniwala nila na ginagampanan ko 'yung aking trabaho," he shared.

In an exclusive interview, he noted that the lack of opposition might be a sign that people trust him as a leader. He also sees it as a challenge due to the high expectations set for him.

"I view the election as a chance or opportunity for me to report sa ating mga kababayan kung ano ang ating nagawa at ano ang ating plan for the next three years. Kung may kalaban o wala, gagawin ko pa rin 'yung dapat kong gawin na umikot sa lahat ng barangay," he stated.

Among his accomplishments, the mayor highlighted Lipa's debt-free status, an achievement he considers his legacy, which had previously hindered the city's development for decades. For many years, the city's resources were tied up in bank payments for long-standing debts, limiting the funds available for other important projects and programs.

"Yung last loan ng previous administration ay ako na rin ang tumapos. So very proud ako na nagawa ko with[in] a very short period of time 'yung mga utang na tingin ko ay nakaka-hinder sa full development ng Lipa," he said.

Looking forward, his plans include constructing a 20,000-capacity sports complex, a new government center, and offices for national agencies to bring services closer to residents. Additionally, he also aims to create an animal shelter, continue tree-planting programs, and ensure the city's ongoing projects are sustained even under future administrations.

Reflecting on his vision for the city, the mayor emphasized a balanced and sustainable approach to development. Through all the projects and programs, he wants to make sure the next Lipa administration can start with a clean slate and that everything they need for the continuity of good governance will already be set up.

"Ang vision ko for Lipa ay [maging] isang progressive city na may opportunity ang mga tao sa free and quality education, free health services, mayroong opportunity sa work. At tsaka sa mga taga-Lipa, ay maging proud sila na sila ay Lipeño."

The mayor has served the city for two decades, starting as a councilor for four terms, followed by two terms as vice mayor, before becoming mayor in 2019. Mayor Africa is assured of his third and last term as Mayor of Lipa. His long career in public service has earned him the trust and support of the community.

## Lipa launches 'Trabaho Center'

BY LIANNA ANDREI CARINGAL

**L**ipa City officially opened its new Trabaho Center building, spearheaded by Mayor Eric Africa, alongside City Administrator Ronnel Sarmiento and members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod last Sept. 30.

Lipa City has been recognized for its outstanding Job Placement Program, which continued even during the pandemic. Since 2019, the program has helped 51,084 Lipeños secure jobs through partnerships with private companies, making it a major success.

In partnership with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Public Employment Service Office (PESO), the Trabaho Center serves as a response to the upsurge of employment, which attempts to meet the needs of employers and job applicants. It also offers several key services, including real-time labor information, job referrals, career guidance for students, and support for disadvantaged groups like PWDs and senior citizens. It also provides government internship programs and student employment support through the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES). These initiatives provide financial aid and work experience, supported by an annual budget of 2–3 million pesos.

"When it comes to employment,

business, and opportunities, dito 'yon sa Trabaho Center," said Mr. Mark Joseph Trinos, the Supervising Labor and Employment Officer, highlighting its central role in providing a one-stop solution for employment services and business-related opportunities in Lipa City.

According to him, the center's goal is to match individuals to jobs based on their qualifications. "Ang goal natin dito ay mailagay ang tao sa trabaho based sa kanyang credentials," he said.

However, he also pointed out that a challenge arises when many people, regardless of their educational background, seek employment primarily for financial reasons, which often results in underemployment.

The facility is located at the Lipa City Hall Compound, Brgy. Marawoy, with a building footprint of 111.625 sq.m and a total floor area of 223 sq.m, is equipped with a conference room, two offices, a multipurpose hall, a pantry, and public comfort rooms that are PWD-friendly. This is built to ensure the comfort and

convenience of the clients and the transacting public.

With over 15,000 employers in Lipa, the center aims to simplify the hiring process and help connect qualified candidates to job opportunities. However, challenges remain, especially with the rise of automation and virtual jobs reducing local demand in certain sectors. As companies increasingly adopt AI and new technologies, many job roles are becoming obsolete, and digital processes are replacing traditional job applications.

In line with the challenge, the administration is setting its sights on computerization as a key strategy for the future. With the world rapidly shifting to a digital-first economy, the goal is to develop an online system that would allow job seekers and employers to interact more efficiently.

Mr. Trinos mentioned that the goal of Lipa City - PESO is to keep up with the growing trend of AI through systems that will ease the doing of business and applying work, especially for fresh graduates.



Opportunities Unveiled. A local official unveils the commemorative plaque during the inauguration of the new Lipa Trabaho Center at the Sangguniang Panlungsod, located at the Lipa City Hall Compound in Brgy. Marawoy, opened on September 30. | Photo from: Mayor Eric B. Africa FB Page



The Brahmins' Journal  
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The Official Student Publication of University of Batangas-Lipa City

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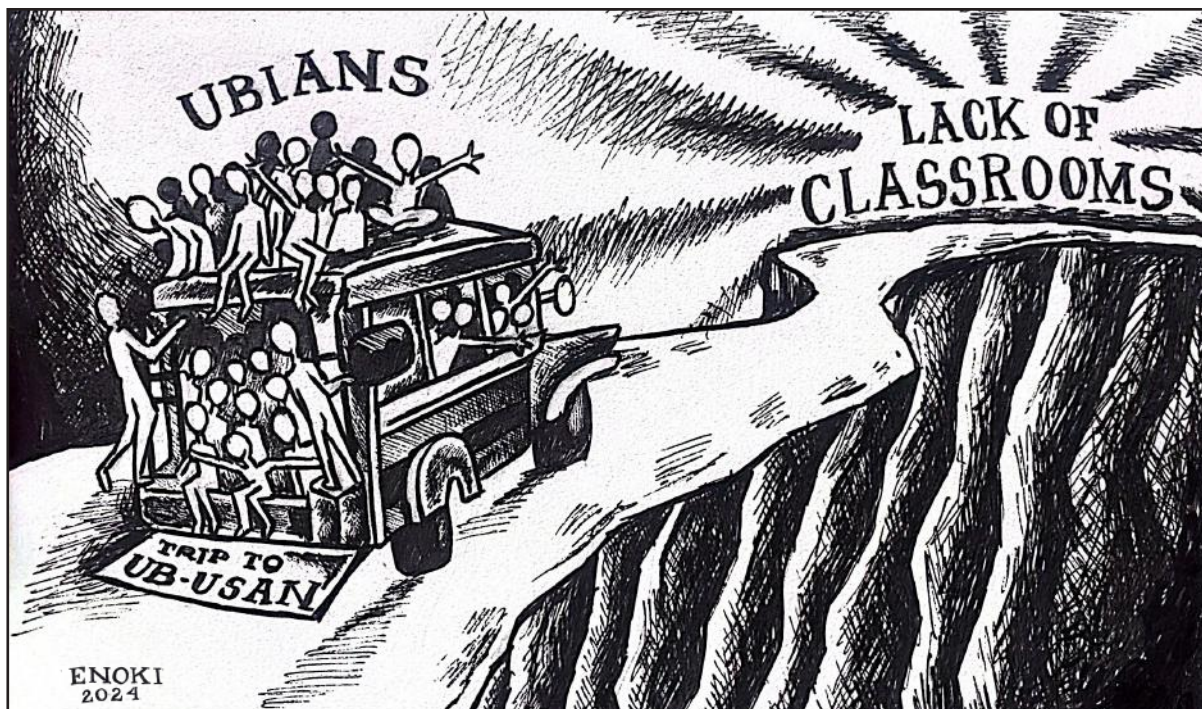
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## EDITORIAL

# Classroom Crisis

For a private university experiencing problems with the availability of classrooms, it is embarrassing.

The University of Batangas - Lipa City (UBLC) Campus has been operating for no less than 13 years, offering a wide array of programs to thousands of students despite its campus size. As the number of enrollees per year grows, the lack of available classrooms has become a growing concern for students and faculty members. Stated in the UBLC's mission is to provide quality education that promotes personal and professional growth, preparing individuals to thrive in a global, technology-driven, and research-oriented environment. The UBLC must accommodate the increasing demands.

One of the many concerns of students is the shortage of classrooms. With an enrollment of nearly 3000 students enrolled for the college department in the first semester, students and professors have a hard time finding available classrooms for their classes, and some are being forced to attend classes in undesignated classrooms not fit to their curriculum.

"May time na di available yung designated room namin, kaya pinahanap na lang kami ng ibang room. Hindi naman kasi nagagawan palagi ng prof namin ng paraan kung saan kami mag ka-class." shared Karl, a fourth-year Bachelor of Multimedia Arts student, with his experience taking 3D animation classes in the Moot Court—a room designed for legal simulation rather than creative or technical work.

Some professors have resorted to online classes and asynchronous settings to address the conflict. While this approach was acceptable during the pandemic and the rise of hybrid learning, it feels outdated and irrelevant in today's context, where face-to-face classes have largely returned. These band-aid solutions fail to address the root of the problem and only highlight the university's lack of preparedness.

Buildings A and B, with only 20 classrooms in total, can no longer meet the growing number of students. Buildings A and B are three-story buildings located

on the campus. Building A only has 12 classrooms for college use, with much of its space occupied by administrative offices, labs, and specialty facilities. Building B also shares the same dilemma, with only eight classrooms and the rest of the building occupied by the junior and senior high school, a shared library, and ongoing facility development. Building C, built in 2019, was bigger than the other two, with 22 classrooms in total. While it seems more efficient than the other two, Building C cannot bear the weight of UBLC's rapid growth as it also houses the laboratories for courses in architecture, engineering, and others.

The students deserve more than makeshift solutions; they deserve an environment that supports their ambitions and fosters academic excellence. The conflict in classrooms is more than just inconvenience; it directly affects the quality education students receive. Learning conditions are extremely vital to their ability to engage with the lesson material. Students who are not in the right

classroom setting lead to disengagement and a diminished academic experience.

What makes the issue unusual is that problems with scarcity of classrooms are not common to private institutions. Unlike public institutions often constrained by lack of finance and government bureaucracy. For a private university experiencing problems with the availability of classrooms, it is embarrassing. UBLC must uphold the quality education and facilities it provides. It is crucial for the university to prioritize addressing the issue to ensure the quality education it promises to the students. Regardless of any course, all students must have equal and fair access to a space inside the campus where they could learn. The students must be ensured that no one is left behind and the future of the university rests on the success of them.

The role of a University is not only in supporting its students' growth but also investing and producing the future contributors of our society.

People often ask where I study, and I answer, "UB." They reply with a slightly confused look, "Oh, UP?" they ask, referring to the University of the Philippines, a huge institution well-known and respected in the country. And each time, I have to clarify: No, I'm not from UP—I'm from UB, the University of Batangas Lipa City.

Considering it is only one letter of the alphabet, the mix-up may seem trivial. However, each time it happens, I am reminded of the greater misconceptions students from smaller universities encounter. A stigma that implies small campuses limit a student's quality and stunt their professional growth. People think that

attending a smaller campus somehow limits one's potential, opportunities, or performance.

This belief is often left unspoken, casting a shadow on many students who persevere and excel in these schools. Suggesting that only well-known universities produce high achievers or leaders.

In many work fields, the first thing recruiters look at in a resume is the name of the school. For some, the university alone can serve as a key to internships, networking events, and workshops. Even mentorship opportunities may not be as easily accessible to people like us. This difference can be daunting when the opportunities you need most to prove

yourself appear just out of reach due to nothing more than the school name at the top of your application.

I am already in my fourth year at UB, and through the years I have heard a lot of questions and not a single compliment about my choice. I grew up in Manila, so people often ask me, "Bakit di ka pa sa ano nag enroll nagbabayad ka lang din naman," "Sayang naman diyan ka pa pumasok pwede ka naman sa iba," and even "Nagsasayang ka lang ng panahon wala ka naman matutunan diyan." In the back of my mind, some of it might be true. Despite putting in a lot of effort, dedicating countless hours, and giving my best. I wondered if I have limited myself by staying in UB. Is this even worth it?

But why would anyone enroll in such schools in the first place? I know from the get-go that a university like this might not fully meet the needs I need for my chosen career. But UB is for all people from different walks of life. This includes those who live farther in the region, those who are balancing part-time jobs with family responsibilities, and those who are experiencing financial and academic pressures.

## Stunted Student

DePRESS

Lowell Jingrey D. Mongcal  
Editor-In-Chief



Choosing a smaller university doesn't mean choosing a smaller future. UB is also a place where ambition, talent, and purpose thrive, where stories are being written. For many, it's not about attending the most prestigious school, but finding a place where they can grow, learn, and make meaningful progress toward their goals.

There are doors you cannot open; I know I have closed a lot of opportunities for enrolling in a small university. I would have to work harder to make my own

connections, make my own way, and prove myself. The moment I stepped through the doors of UB, I already knew that it wouldn't be the university shaping my future but my own persistence and effort.

Looking back, I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. But dreaming doesn't require others' permission. I will decide how far I will go. My journey is my own. Different doors, same room—what matters most is what you do once you get inside, not which door you enter through.

## Worse off or better off?

Int-rin-sic

Princess April Y. Linatoc  
Associate Editor



Ang kabataan ang pag-asa ng bayan.

I have long since lost count of how many times I answered highschool and elementary essays and exams with this quote. Now, in the age where I am part of this so-called 'youth,' I wonder how I, and the people around me, live up to the expectations we once had as kids.

It is quite evident how much people have changed over time—technological advancements, societal and cultural shifts, power dynamics, and even small habits are different from what it was

ten, twenty years back. If we were to compare the world now to several years ago, people are now very dependent on technology. This has critically affected our mindset and has seeped into our being. Yet, nothing about it is surprising. The main difference between then and now is the state of our technology, the same thing we were promoting at the top of our lungs before. We had high hopes, particularly for the youth, to utilize this growing aspect to make the world a much better place.

But I wonder how this was justified—

did these 'youth' truly made use of technology as it was built to be? Or have we simply taken advantage of these tools—handed on a silver platter, for personal gain and gratification?

We spoke highly of their potential. We believed in their passion for, and kindness to the environment. We trusted their loyalty to uphold their word. But, the way it is now, the majority of youth remained as kids who never matured, never grew up.

It is not about them being chronically online—dismissively labeling some as "iPad kids." It is not just the perceived hypersensitivity of this generation to mental health issues, shaped by increased willingness to discuss and destigmatize emotional well-being. It is not even the widely debated rumor that "IQ levels are falling generation after generation," leaving the youth of this era to bear the brunt of it.

The narrative is much more complex than this surface-level critiques. It is the repeated 'not my problem' mindset whenever responsibility arises. It is the unwillingness to step up and resolve their own problems that they made themselves, by themselves—always

waiting for another to clean their own mess. It is the constant reliance on 'adults' despite disregarding their advice—dismissing and devaluing the hard-earned wisdom they had to offer

and often dismissing it as 'the world is different now' or 'this generation is different from yours'. It makes me wonder where this attitude and behavior stems from. Is it decreased resilience or just plain spoiled and entitled nature?

With the rate at which technology is improving, the scale of people keeping up with the change is declining. Deloitte's 2023 report indicated that 65% of professionals believe their organization's technology changes too quickly to keep up.

Which is why we must conduct a comprehensive evaluation whether we are worse off or better off with this change. It may have empowered us to connect and innovate, fostering the

It is not the 'tool' that changes the world—people do

potential for positive change. But it has also introduced challenges that can isolate us and encourage a focus on instant gratification.

Maybe the world would be better without technology, but the opposite may also be true. After all, it is not the 'tool' that changes the world—people do. Let's redefine what it means to be the "hope of the nation" by building a society that reflects the ideals we once held. It is not too late for us youth. Only then can we foresee societal issues as something consigned to the museum and not an everyday occurrence.



## Targeting Truth: The Peril of Philippine Journalists

Quill of Liberty

Shaira Mae T. Calibo  
Managing Editor

Philippine Journalists are among the most targeted individuals—facing threats, harassment, and even physical violence. This reality has intensified under a climate of “red-tagging,” where journalists and other activists are labeled as communists or insurgents and putting them in direct danger. This system, used by powerful entities and backed by government policies, harms the safety and the fabric of democracy itself. The attacks on journalists are attacks on the public’s right to information and freedom.

Over the last five years, the Philippines has seen a disturbing increase in violence against journalists, with at least 22 media professionals killed between 2019 and 2024. In 2019, three journalists were killed, including Eduardo Dizon and Dindo Generoso, both of whom were recognized for their critical coverage of local issues. The pattern continued in 2020, with five journalists murdered, including Cornelio Pepino and Jobert Bercasio, who were both shot on separate occasions. In 2021, at least three additional journalists were targeted, including Renante Cortes, a well-known “block time” broadcaster.

The situation escalated in 2022, when at least six journalists were killed, including popular broadcaster Percival “Percy Lapid” Mabasa, whose death underlined the increased dangers faced by those on the field. In 2023, two more journalists, Cresenciano Bundoquin and Juan Jumalon, were murdered. As of 2024, the disturbing trend continues with the murder of Maria Vilma Rodriguez in Zamboanga City.

Journalists are society’s watchdogs; that’s a fact. Conducting investigations, informing the public, and promoting transparency. They expose corruption, investigate human rights violations, and push for accountability. A government that oppresses this profession undermines its own legitimacy and weakens the foundation of democratic society. Unchecked abuses become unavoidable when the powerful can avoid scrutiny. The public suffers the brunt of ignorance, injustice, and corruption.

Journalists in the Philippines have played a critical role in exposing corruption despite significant risks. For

example, investigative journalists have revealed multi million-peso scandals, such as the 2013 Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) scam, which was exposed by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) and other sources. Similarly, the 2009 Maguindanao Massacre case, in which 58 people were killed, including 32 journalists, uncovered profound government corruption and impunity, resulting in convictions after years of media attention.

In recent years, media organizations such as Rappler, led by Nobel Laureate Maria Ressa, have consistently reported on abuses of power, including disinformation campaigns and human rights violations linked to the government’s controversial drug war. Additionally, local journalists in provinces have successfully reported on smaller-scale corruption, such as mismanagement of public funds and nepotism in governance, prompting administrative and legal action.

While precise data on how many journalists have successfully held officials accountable is challenging to quantify, their efforts have led to critical legal reforms, public awareness, and the ousting or prosecution of corrupt officials. This reinforces the indispensable role of a free and fearless press in upholding democracy and protecting public interest, even under dire threats to their safety.

Defending the rights of journalists means protecting the public’s right to know and their ability to act in a democratic society. All who value a transparent, accountable government should condemn today’s press harassment and intimidation. It’s time to call for stronger protections for journalists and demand accountability from those who seek to silence them. This is not simply about the safety of individuals but about the strength and future of democracy in the Philippines. Without a free and protected press, our society risks slipping into darkness. Their voices are muffled, and truth becomes a casualty of power.

The Philippines must remember that dissent, debate, and civic engagement are not threats but rather are the foundation of a democratic society.

Defending journalists is defending democracy itself

nepotism in governance, prompting administrative and legal action.

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The Philippines must remember that dissent, debate, and civic engagement are not threats but rather are the foundation of a democratic society.

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (MT 20:28). A passage from the Sacred Scriptures concerning the essence of why the Son of God became man. But is this the same essence that flows from Pastor Apollo Quiboloy, the self-claimed “appointed son of god”? The man who founded a religion and who is now in jail with cases of human trafficking and abuse.

On September 1, 1985, Pastor Apollo Quiboloy founded a religion titled “Kingdom of Jesus Christ” and called himself the appointed Son of God, a deity, and a reincarnation of Jesus Christ. His followers believe that the pastor will save them, for he was appointed to be the one who holds the keys to heaven here on earth.

Is he holding the keys to heaven or another kind that unlocks the secrets within his KOJC Compound?

Last June 2024, the Philippine Department of Justice issued his arrest warrant for qualified human trafficking and other acts of child abuse. One can listen to the testimonies of those who experienced abuses and will wonder if God will permit such transgressions by His “son.” A twelve-year-old girl’s trauma comes from being forced to have sex with the pastor because he wants to test her womanhood. He claims that it will still be intact because they had sex with God’s spirit, but he warns her not to tell anyone because the angel of death will be chasing her. This goes against God’s kindness and mercy.

On August 5, at Cagayan de Oro, General Rommel Francisco Marbil, the director of the Philippine National Police, stated that these individuals were referred to as personal assistants or pastorals who were exploited and manipulated within Quiboloy’s church. This goes not just against religion but also against



## A Fallacious Claim

Discernment

Mark Joseph N. Calingasan  
Business Manager

human dignity and the sacredness of a human person, which our constitution as a country declares and values.

Is this the son of god, who comes in luxuries and other pomps? Who stands on a stage singing alleluia but living a kind of hell at the back of it? Who mercilessly abused minors and threatened them psychologically? And who wants to be served by all his followers instead of being a servant to all of them? And lastly, is this the kind person that will sign our salvation?

In Christianity, we are assured that Jesus, as the son of God, came to us as a servant, as someone who showed care and sympathy for the loss, the weak, the widow, and the orphan. The Holy Bible recounts story after story of how Jesus lived his life selflessly, up until he was

condemned by an unjust ruler with an unfair accusation and was killed in the most brutal form of execution those days. Now, can we see this with the story of Pastor Quiboloy?

Is this the kind person that will sign our salvation?

With all of these thoughts, let us see the state of our beloved homeland, are we that uneducated to believe in someone whose teachings go against his way of life? And to quote at last the Scripture, Jesus warns us already, he said “For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am

the Messiah,’ and will deceive many” (MT 24:5). Filipinos and followers of Pastor Quiboloy were one of the many who were deceived. We need to think straight and not be fooled by a televangelist, for we deserve more than that. We deserve a savior that will bring us to heaven and will save our souls.



## End Casual Misuse

Lynx of Courage

Lianna Andrei G. Calingasan  
News Internal Editor

In recent years, mental health topics have become more common in the Philippines. However, a troubling trend emerged. The more people talk about mental health, the more they misuse related words, like “depression,” and “anxiety”. While it’s good to see more open talk on these topics, careless use of these words can dilute their meaning and trivialize mental health issues.

Many Filipinos are now open to discuss their struggles on mental health, which led to more conversations and a slow improvement in the stigma around these issues. It’s common to see or hear people saying “depressed ako” or “may anxiety na ako.” They use these phrases when they feel unpleasant emotions, like sadness and frustration, about a situation. While every person experiences sadness at some point, these emotions are not as simple as it is, nor even the same as clinical depression or anxiety disorders. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is defined as having a depressed mood or loss of pleasure or interest in activities for long periods of time. This includes the symptoms of poor concentration,

hopelessness about the future, changes in appetite or weight, and having thoughts about dying or suicide, which lasts at least two weeks, nearly every day. On the other hand, people with anxiety disorders often experience intense worry and fear. These feelings are usually accompanied by physical tension and other symptoms. As we can observe, the given definitions are far different from just having regular mood changes or fluctuations.

Casual use of these words blurs the real meaning of serious mental health conditions. It gives the impression that depression and anxiety disorders seem

By embracing informed dialogue, we can help.

minor and easily overcome. This feeds into a deeper issue. growing stigma in this country. People think that those who are struggling are just overreacting, dramatic, or “mahina ang loob.” This discourages them from seeking help. They fear a society that sees mental illnesses as a sign of weakness. The more people treat these conditions as jokes, the more the public’s understanding is skewed. This creates a cycle: people hesitate to speak up, mental health issues remain hidden, and stigma thrives.

Changing the narrative starts with awareness and deep understanding. Mental health is not just a trendy topic. It is vital to a person’s well-being. People should go beyond surface-level discussions. They should know when sadness becomes depression when stress becomes anxiety, and when it is time to seek professional help. It is time for every Filipino to stop casually saying “depressed ako,” without fully understanding what it truly means. If we want to break the cycle, we must know our responsibility to reshape the conversation around mental health in the Philippines. By embracing informed dialogue, we can help. It can dismantle the stigma, promote awareness, and foster empathy. This would create a society that prioritizes mental health. It would treat it with care and respect, and people would feel empowered to seek help.

that is not always the case.

Some people have a narrow view on how people become addicted to illegal drugs. They often overlook the emotional, social, psychological, and genetic factors that can lead individuals down this path. Understanding addiction requires empathy and an open mind, recognizing that it is rarely a simple choice but often a response to deeper struggles.

The solution is not a drug war, but rather accessible and free drug rehabilitation programs.

If you ask someone on a deeper level, they will most likely tell you drugs are bad, and that you should not use them because they can ruin your life. Easy to say right? But you cannot just tell those people to stop using drugs. It’s a choice, or sometimes a necessity. It’s a difficult choice to make even when you have no intention of becoming an addict. It’s a disease. It’s an addictive feeling, a growing obsession that takes hold of your body until you are

trapped and unable to find your way out. I think the problem with drugs is that they are illegal when they should not be.

Drug addiction is most accurately described as a mental obsession that leads to a physical compulsion. It is a health issue and should be treated as such: with a multi-pronged approach that does not involve the police on a maximum scale. This also turns it into a community issue as well, as workers take drugs or vices out of necessity. I think we should see it more as a chronic disease which contradicts society’s common perception of it.

The solution is not a drug war, but rather accessible and free drug rehabilitation programs. Though Duterte’s presidency ended, the drug war still continues. Repeatedly, other countries have shown that a drug war is never the real solution. It is a sad fact, indeed.



## Beyond The High

Orphic

Jannah Denise B. Mato  
News External Editor

Drug addiction is a subject that too often goes unspoken. I think I may have asked, “What do you think about people who use drugs?” I cannot help but wonder: Do drug addicts comprehend the extent of their misery? Are they aware of the chaos and destruction that surrounds them, or is their perception clouded by their addiction? I don’t think I understand why people use drugs when it is already labeled by society as “immoral” or “life-destroyer.”

One thing that shattered my view of drug addiction was learning that most small-time pushers and users were working-class. They were vendors, construction workers, truck drivers who needed drugs to stay awake and work. It

is so rampant in the country that you have no idea some people we encounter daily struggle with it. This issue has numerous layers. They include the harsh working conditions in the Philippines; political involvement in the drug trade and war and the limited rehab options for addicts. It seems like some people are slaves to their vices, trapped in cycles that are hard to break.

However, some cannot afford to know what drugs are, let alone how to use them. When in fact, it has been going around for ages. I still think of drug addiction as a moral failure. We cannot blame the people. The past administration linked drug users to violent crimes, killing innocent people and raping children. But

# L(OS)T FILIPINAS

Undeterred

Ma. Sophia Lauraine A. Ramirez  
Auditor/Cultures Editor



Being politically aware is a necessity, and it always has been, but now, more than ever, we see our country's political scenario. With Sara Duterte's controversial hearings, the resurgence of the Marcos family in politics, and the "I'm in heat" sentiment of Robin Padilla, among others, our top officials cannot seem to keep themselves out of the trending lists, rarely for good reasons. With the world's eyes turning to the Philippines for the 2025 elections, sitting on the sidelines can no longer be an option. We must recognize the urgent need to hold our leaders accountable and demand more than just theatrics—our

country deserves better.

As Edmund Tayao, a political analyst and key personality in good local governance in the Philippines, stated:

So much has been written, so much debate has already occurred, and we still have the same politics since the start of the country's existence. Our fight for independence could not be completed without any of our leaders wanting to get rid of the other. The main issue during elections remains about corruption, and there has hardly any talk of concrete plans when elected to office. Candidates prefer promising the moon and the stars

and/or more and more handouts, and most importantly, avoiding as much as possible giving anything definitive on an important issue lest s/he be held accountable to it.

It is disheartening to see our public servants, who should be echoing former Sen. Gerry Roxas' words, "We have all been elected to serve, and in service, we must give all," seemingly forget their duty once elected. Their lack of understanding of their roles is a cause for frustration, especially when the public seems to have also forgotten their purpose.

The normalization of mediocrity and immunity within our governance has led to a dangerous culture of complacency. We no longer hold our leaders to the standards they should meet as if being inadequate is to be expected. Each election season promises are forgotten once the votes are counted, and what remains is a trail of scandals, inefficiencies, and inaction.

Perhaps part of the problem lies in the deep-rooted tradition of patronage politics. The cycle of electing individuals based on names, popularity or financial incentives has robbed us of seeing genuine public servants in positions of power. This issue is not new; it has

plagued our elections for decades. But as voters, do we not share the blame? Our collective apathy and susceptibility to vote-buying schemes only serve to preserve this broken system.

This brings us to a critical point: How can we expect good governance when the people we elect have shady backgrounds? Only in politics are ex-convicts welcomed with open arms—even coffee shops have stricter requirements. Are we that naïve that we can entrust the country's future to people we cannot even trust our children and bank accounts with?

Why even elect them? For their non-existent credentials or possible human rights violations, as well as for ethics and basic common courtesy. I guess looking

at one's resume is optional when running for office.

I am not asking everyone to be perfect; that would be hypocritical. Certain prestige demands certain obligations, and these public servants seem only to see the appeal of power and influence rather than the hard work and dedication attested to their office.

In those sentiments, I echo Edmund Tayao's words, "How much more do we need to see to be convinced that we are deserving of something better?" As the 2025 elections approach, one thing is clear: the roster of

candidates will include professionals, ex-convicts, alleged human rights violators, and frauds. Welcome to the Philippine political circus—who will take the spotlight in the opening act? You will be the judge.

I guess looking at one's resume is optional when running for office.

The color of one's skin is perceived as more than a feature, it is a silent social code that taints our judgment in subtle but deeply ingrained ways.

A person with a darker complexion is often seen through a distorted lens—viewed as less desirable, less capable, or even less trustworthy. When Filipinos encounter a darker person, suddenly it's their first time seeing one. But how hard is it to act normal around someone just a few pigments darker than you?

Growing up Morena in the Philippines is tremendously ironic because I have witnessed everyone kissing the feet of

fair-skinned celebrities and foreigners while degrading the same complexion as mine. Celebrating beauty from afar but rejecting it within our community is a

double standard we must address once and for all.

Colorism favors the light-skinned as it discriminates against individuals with a dark skin tone. From name-calling and lower self-esteem to limited opportunities, colorism carries real and damaging impacts, not just a harmless preference. It's about time we

face this issue in the context of basic human decency, transcending beauty.

As a nation that endured over 300 years of colonization from Spain, followed

by the Japanese, then Americans—all light-skinned outlanders; it is no wonder that Filipinos still uphold the colonial mentality of associating fair skin with supreme beauty, success, and worthiness, while dark skin is often degraded to the margins. Despite our vibrant legacy of natural golden skin, the relentless promotion of skin-whitening products reflects how colonialism may have ended almost a century ago, but their mindset remains strangling our culture.

Turn on the television, flip through a magazine, or browse social media feeds, and a familiar pattern emerges: most lead actors, models, and influencers have light skin. When Filipinos, especially the kids, see the visual bias in the media, they internalize the message that being fair-skinned is the ticket to social acceptance so they inevitably fall for the skin-bleaching advertisements.

Imagine hearing back-handed compliments EVERYDAY like: "You're beautiful even though you're dark-skinned," "Mas maganda ka siguro

## I Wish I Had Your Complexion

A Tortured Morena's Plea

Jashmine D. Cuevas  
Features Editor



kung maputi ka," or "I wish I had your complexion, but I could never pull it off unlike you!" As if this envy is supposed to make me feel honored. Please, just act normal.

It's difficult to appreciate my skin after years of hearing these so-called "compliments" that only remind me how alienated I am. So I wish I had your complexion, but instead of shaming morenos/morenas unprovokedly, I could finally mind my business without getting

triggered by skin-whitening commercials, weird looks from strangers, and unsolicited remarks.

Perhaps colorist Filipinos are simply ignorant and not supremacists for we are victims of colonialism indeed, but our mentality can still be corrected as long as we educate ourselves. Still, it will never erase the fact that while you educate yourself on unlearning colorism, a morena kid out there had to unlearn the self-hate you instilled in her.

Celebrating beauty from afar but rejecting it within our community is a double standard we must address once and for all.

Legal Management Student

Ano po ba talagang ginagawa ng CopWell?



Sumasagot din sila sa mga tanong kagaya ko, try mo minsan magtanong sa kanila para may ginagawa sila.

Psychology Student

Sometimes I know more about my professor's life experiences than the actual lesson. I wonder why I can't seem to find those questions in the exams?



Ang mga kwentong buhay ng professor ay minsan kapupulutan ng aral sa buhay madalas chismis. Malay mo, baka maging bonus question pala sa finals.

MMA Student

Pumapasok lang ba ako for attendance?



Minsan subukan mo din pumasok para sa baon.

IE Student

Is there any event or new activity this upcoming year? it's so quiet lately.



Relax ka lang, baka nag-hang lang 'yung committee sa brainstorming stage.

IT Student

Bakit hindi masarap balik-balikan ang pagkain sa canteen? Ang mahal and parang walang gana kainin huhu



What if sa canteen mo makita ang magpapagana sayo kumain at magpabalik-balik sa canteen.

Legal Management Student

Sino pong nasa loob ni Brahmy?



Sasagutin ko na sana ang tanong mo kaso mas interesado ka pala kay Brahmy kesa kay Kaka Lito.

Sa malayong pulang pulo ng litong-lito, isang lugar na malayo sa sibilisasyon at salitang marahan ay hindi uso, nananahan ang makatang tumutugon ng karunungan sa mga usisa ng bawat Brahman ng sanlibutan.

Ang pangungusap ko'y tulad ng pulitikong nag-aalmusal ng gin sa kanto. Ang katwiran ko'y katumbas ng sa mga pilosopong umahon mula sa mababaw na hukay ng mga nabubuhay at nangamatay sa intelektwal. Nasaksihan ko ang kauna-unahang pagningas ng apoy, pagtayo ng Mahabang Muog ng Tsina, panahon ng pabebe hanggang sa panahon ng mga estetik at OA. Kumapit sa inyong silya at maghanda sa tabas ng dila na siyang nagturo kay Socrates at nagmulat sa mga pilosopong taga-Atenas.

MGA TALINHAGA  
NI KAKALITO





# Lady Whisperlune's SOCIETY PAPERS

INQUISITIVE WORDS,  
EMPOWERED VOICE.

August - October 2024

Dearest Gentle Readers,

A new author has graced these pages, a seeker of secrets who has scoured high and low for every whisper and indiscretion. Please do not trouble yourself with speculation over my identity, for that is a luxury even you shall not be privy to. Consider me a mere observer, a keen watcher intent on unearthing the truths our fine society prefers to leave hidden. Rest assured, nothing escapes my notice, and soon enough, neither shall it escape yours.

A fine institution indeed, this esteemed university is polished and pristine for all to witness. Yet even the most hallowed halls bear their shadows—those minor, inconvenient blemishes primed neatly behind rose-tinted windows. But fear not, for no secret shall remain buried for long. Try as they might to cover their mysteries from prying eyes; this author is more than ready to uncover every hidden truth.

As we reach the latter part of the season, secrets have unraveled, and truths now shine with an even greater brilliance. And in this dazzling glow, a certain Songbird chirps and steps forward—a member of the ton with no title yet considerable renown, whose name dances on every whispered tongue. Esteemed and notorious in equal measure, This individual—a figure of fascination—whose understanding of the ton knows no bounds and whose charm is only rivaled by the intrigue that trails in his wake.

The Songbird sings a tune sweeter than honey but with a darker note hidden beneath the melody, each word a feather-light touch that conceals the claws. His song, dear readers, carries a siren call of familiarity, invitations wrapped in tones of friendship, yet always holding one in their delicate yet unrelenting grip. It has been said that this renowned individual is a person of authority, especially within the walls of the university. Yet, perhaps he wishes to make himself known outside the four corners and has developed a curious inclination for messages and conversations with female students that cross the bounds of propriety. These messages, though often framed as casual inquiries, have left students uneasy and unable to decline without risking offense. Conversations about class schedules turn to questions of personal whereabouts, and innocuous-sounding requests take on a more sinister tone.

But alas, perhaps, this Songbird is not truly a gentleman. For no gentleman of good standing would leave their recipients feeling a sharp pinch of unease storming beneath the surface. Dear Readers, let it be known that this figure's voice carries a troubling refrain. This middle-aged, not-so-gentle man cloaks himself in the sophistication of foreign languages, his eloquence and supposed scholarly demeanor masking intentions far less refined. Known to weave his linguistic expertise into conversations, he presents as a cultured academic, yet his actions suggest a discordant undertone. His messages, often persistent, begin innocently enough, with a name or question about class, but quickly evolve into inquiries of a personal nature such as asking for locations and vicinity of residence.

With that, the authorities would like to spread awareness of the Safe Spaces Act—a law that provides protective measures and prescribes penalties for gender-based sexual harassment in streets, public spaces, online, workspaces, and educational or training institutions—has empowered individuals to recognize and report such encroachments on their comfort and dignity. This law, a shield against both physical and digital misconduct, reinforces the right of all to study and work without fear of unwanted advances or discomforting attention. Yet, gentle reader, one wonders if the esteemed leaders of this institution will choose to act upon these complaints or if they shall merely insist that the Songbird's ways are "just his nature."

Gentle Readers, secrets have unraveled, and truths now shine with an even greater brilliance. And in this dazzling glow, certain figures find themselves unable to hide any longer. Will justice be served, or will these shadows linger, protected by the walls that ought to expel them? Only time, and perhaps this author's pen, will tell.

Yours Truly,  
Lady Whisperlune



The Brahman's Journal  
INQUISITIVE WORDS EMPOWERED VOICE

The Search for the Next Pia Worse-bach!

By Stiff Harvey  
Artwork By Enoki

Each academic year, we 'commemorate' our beloved delegates from various departments, eagerly anticipating their performances that bring both learning and enjoyment to the 'UBee-yarns'. These delegates represent their unique identities, showcasing their commitment to student body growth and development. But behind the scenes, hidden stories unfold—unseen and unheard by most. Now, those shadows will come to light at this stage, leaving the community to judge based on what they see. Are you ready?

#### The Wits and Artistics

We hail the professors and a select few students blending into what some might call the 'purr-fect' combination. Ironically, the perfectionist professors here seem to cling like cats to their favoring students who aren't quite 'the best' and gaining a magic high grade—quite the 'perfect Hermione,' don't you think? Leaving those students, who are better than them, probably. Meanwhile, some professors have stuck around, unfortunately leaving us with the 'sa una lang magaling' types. Passionate about handing out high grades but without the hassle of actual teaching, how convenient, right? Convenient enough to land them at the bottom of student evaluations. Coincidentally, there is a 'James Yapsa's annual Hello-win event'—an ideal chance to invite this 'ghosting' professor. After all, nothing is scarier than students paying for a class only to be haunted by the absence of real lessons. Incidentally, some 'archi-tick' professors are the epitome of validated latecomers. Imagine two to three hours waiting is literally a waste of time. Come on, at least consider your students who are present, who are also begging for their plate that is off-due. On the other hand, from the 'alEou' and 'koi fish', if they seem to receive the incentives in some, it is also equated to insensitive comments from professors who seem to forget their professionalism.

#### Tick-nology meets Creativity

They say they are the pioneers of capturing 'ano ba (sh)yun', but behind the lens, a picture takes a twist. Imagine a lab—monitors suspended on old CPUs, keyboards worn to the bone, and a window that feels more like a zoo exhibit (also, exhibit every semester, yes, quite pricey, right?), a not-so-satisfying environment to study. And for these senior 'erm-erm-eyy' students, the future of virtual reality is their everyday reality, mostly 'Fried-days', as they only see their professor on a screen (robot yarn?!). Truly remarkable for their tagline, AI enablers, perhaps. This class (every batch, mostly) was promised the hands-on experience of 'bicho' production, yet the face-to-face connection was left behind, leaving them with more questions than answers. In making once a school year memorable, a student and a professor shall intertwine excellently, however, this one professor from this beloved department seems to be lost on their tagline, making these alleged students to be distraught about their 'lit-era' subject. How come, no advancement is made in utilizing the technology given to you? Making your students use a mobile phone while performing

Microsoft software is quite difficult and the PowerPoint is flashed on your face rather than to the students. First take, no lesson is acquired, followed correspondingly by the application—zero. Currently, these students are standing for a hopeful promise that their tuition, dreams, and dedication will be worth it.

#### The Archival One

Greetings to the department specializing in making experiences memorable, complete with management leaders. However, among today's modern thinkers, there is one professor—whose personality appears old-fashioned enough—who appeals greatly to both intellect and senses: whoever listens to their stories remains only as much as the lesson itself. Their classroom is like a 'soap opera': the class never knows what surprises will be arriving or discussed long after it is due to end. Now, we cannot ignore the fact that these professors are in their golden years. Perhaps it's no surprise that their 'mind-sh\*t' remains firmly rooted in the past, lagging behind the era of open-mindedness and inclusivity. At the top of today's academic staircase, those who champion LGBTQIA++ awareness and modern sex education look down, perhaps a bit pityingly, at this "golden treasure" left behind by the times. Below-the-belt jokes about such issues, and insensitivity toward members of the community or topics like teenage pregnancy, are frankly appalling.

#### The Campus Marching Band

They teach and preach to maintain 'just-tease' and '(h)indi-great-tih'. Unfortunately, some here have interpreted this in their ways, showcasing unconstructive attitudes among their 'Ar-Rot-Tea-See' peers and disturbingly yet allegedly, 'say-ekis-wal' exposure in the presence of other even younger classmates. Incidents that humiliated and exposed several, brought great lament, making the concepts of 'res7' and 'lie-ability', much less characteristic of this order. This is unacceptable and an obvious infringement of any law concerning this and the provisions that the 'uni-worse-ity' lays out. The majority strives toward embodying justice in its purest essence while calling for accountability to ensure a safe environment for all students. It is time for these protectors of the future law to remember that respect and professionalism are the very basis of their field in and out of the classroom. In the essence of social awareness, let us not hinder watching out for these individuals who are capable of doing the concept of Barako Gay Pageant as this also hinders the voices of our LGBTQIA++ students, who will rather feel invalidated than empowered, this is far but a vulnerable topic to deal with opposing to heterosexuals. The majority are said to be true that homophobia lives within them but it is not always the truth however, many are capable, and for as long as these situations exist, these stereotypes will never die.

#### Crocodile Den

Next up is the home of 'entitled profes-rawks' and judgmental few,

who are not only educators, but mind-benders, good at pushing students into mandatory team-building events (not the first time). Such is the 'p-rekt-tice' that has attracted a commotion of outrage, with one student after another furious in separate complaints that they were charged attendance fees, not that they would join. Frustrations are rising—mostly when professors grade based on attendance. For instance, a 'siko-lugi' has been condemned for apparently being more faculty-controlled than 'hindi-pendent,' where it hosts activities that occur frequently and are allegedly resource-intensive, all at the command of the 'fact-all-tea'. Its bold demand, though, was transparency about its financial transactions since students need to pay for five free attendees from the faculty, on the said team building within the city. This theme concerns fairness, bringing attention to even bigger problems concerning the financial burden students incur to meet qualifications for 'corny-culum'. One of those 'peck-ulty' is charming—flashed with jewelry and a very demure, cutesy attire. Still, behind those thick dresses and blinding accessories, a not-so-charming personality hides. High maintenance with high standards, everything about it is a flaw. We believe that it is for the best of everyone—hearty practical exams and good quality materials—but it is a mere anti-poor approach, imagine justifying that these selected students are from a UBE - Lipa: a 'prey-bait' institution, hence, must comply to these high requirements and commandments. Let this speak for the truth that this 'univer-sh\*tty' is creepily becoming a crocodile den. Plus, this dashing personality is as dashing as their time, blinded by the real schedule and sometimes coming to class past due, and intentionally extending the class hours—note that the schedule is an evening class.

Before we crown the next Miss Uni-worse, let's take a moment to announce this year's "honorable" awards! These milestones might just make our delegates 'sashay away!' Departments have generously showered students with 'in-sen(s)i-tibs' and required a 'pear' of qualifications to earn those extra 'cry-deaths.' These awards recognize efforts that are, let's say, 'many-fool-at-eve,' whether it's liking a post for an exemption or attending film viewings—yes, we know who's guilty!

Special mention goes to the departments with the most songbirds: under the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313), they're rewarded with shiny silver handcuffs and a 1x1 ID reading "Perpetrator of Sexual Harassment." Congratulations to: 'Kadiri-mnology,' 'Chia S-eeds,' with dishonorable mentions for 'Seen-war' and 'She Empty!'

And for the ultimate 'Pabaya Professor' award, we won't name names, but every department has one. True UBians, you know who they are. As Lizzo said, "it's about damn time" to do something about it!

Finally, only one will claim the Miss Uni-worse crown, bearing the weight of 'con-tea-roversy' and unveiling truths hidden behind four walls. Who deserves the sash representing a "hell-worse" image? Cast your votes now!

# THE PESKINESS OF THE PERMITTING PROCESS

By Iris Morcilla  
Photo by John Paul Campued and Iris Morcilla

**M**ondays should be a busy day for welcoming the students from their long weekend vacation, but instead, store owners face unexpected circumstances. The lined-up stores see men in uniforms, two by three feet of white tarpaulins at their hands, followed by the clacking iron sounds of closing doors and padlocks. The simultaneous roll of the window at 3 p.m. in front of the university indicates the closing of stores and to rest up for the day. Hence, closing their stores at 9 a.m. became an alarming emergency to the UBian community and store owners.

risks to perishable goods or any valuable inventory. There is no doubt that the two visits of the CPLO operation division in July and September warned the business owners about their lack of compliance with the ordinances. Thus, on the third visit in November, the government forcefully closed its stores.

"Nakikiusap ako na baka pwedeng huwag na muna nilang i-padlock kasi meron akong pagkain dyan (na nakahain). Sabi ko, please, uubusin ko lang. Hanggang tanghali po, uubusin ko. Pero hindi sila pumayag. Pagdating nila, automatic wala silang pakialam kung marami kayong tinda, basta na sinarado nila, lock," Mary Jane, the owner of the Arquejosue store who was selling for 13 years in front of the campus, narrates.

Similar to how we wish to have a little consideration whenever we are in a tight situation, Aling Mary begs to have half a day to sell the dishes she prepared. Nevertheless, the CPLO operation division closed her store with a padlock they brought, leaving her weeping at the scenario.

#### Compliance to (co)operate

According to Tax Ordinance No. 132, Series of 2007, Chapter III, Article A, Section 3A.01, there shall be a collected annual fee for the issuance of a mayor's permit to operate a business, pursue an occupation or calling, or undertake an activity within the city. The government aims to instill in business owners their obligation to their consumers, users, nearby residents, and the environment by adhering to the set regulations.

"Actually, tatlong visits pero walang sinabi sa batas na kailangan mag-render ng tatlong visits. In consideration lang

'yan, informing the business owners na may obligation sila sa city, dapat kang kumuha ng business permit. First, second, hindi nag-report. Iyong final demand, hindi ka pa rin nag-report. That will be our basis para i-enforce namin ang closure," Celso Andal, the Licensing Officer IV and the head of the Admin and Records Division, answers when asked about the request consideration.

The authorities find it hard to control the business owners to operate legally. Hence, it leads them to impose a courtesy visit to each barangay and inspect the existing establishments. Some questioned the enforcement, while some understood the rigidity of the authorities.

"Kung hihintayin mo yung three visits na yun, so ibig sabihin, hindi ka nakakacomply sa government. So meaning, ang nangyayari doon is 'yong business owner 'yong hindi nagkakapag-comply, sila yung hindi fair compared kay government,'" Keith Richard Monecia, the owner of R.KAPE who was also socializing with the UBians for almost two years, sharing his opinion about the situation.

#### The return of fair trade

The little box in front of their office serves as their hearing aid for hearing the complaints from the Lipeños. Hence, they were compromising without neglecting their responsibilities and abiding by the law. One of the concerns of the business owners is the complicated process and the expense of processing documents. Due to this rising complaint and aiming to provide a good service to fellowmen, CPLO proposed an online application for business permits to be implemented by 2025. Aside from this, they implement Section 3 of Tax Ordinance No. 05, Series

of 2023, or the sari-sari store's exemption from the payment of fees and taxes.

"Kumuha agad ng business permit nang hindi na nila ma-experience yung experience ko na pinasaraduhan na lang bigla agad-agad," Mary Jane advice to the future business owners.

As the famous quotation of Jackie Joyner-Kersey said, it is better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret. Keith instilled this quotation in his mind to avoid any difficulties and have a seamless operation.

"So, para ma-lessen or ma-iwasan mo 'yong ganoong problem, i-settle mo muna yung mga legal requirements na kailangan mo. Kasi kasama naman siya sa planning ng business," he added, advising the future business owners.

The 'pity-pity' and R.KAPE remain one of their choices from the lined-up stores at the front of the campus. The luscious and fragrant dishes, affordable prices of student meals and coffees, and accommodating and friendly staff will still make the UBians cross the pedestrian lane and sit at their monoblock chairs to order a meal that will satisfy their hunger.

As the issue of permits is now resolved, UBians saw once again the employee in uniform, a new menu displayed in colorful tarpaulins, followed by the familiar clacking iron sounds of opening doors and unlocking their padlocks, but now a different store in place. The simultaneous roll of the window at 8 a.m. in front of the university indicates the new day for store owners to greet everyone with confidence rooted in the legal documents they hold, serving the people while ensuring a safe and trustworthy environment for all who pass through their doors.

#### Building's price tagging

Last 2023, the City Permit and Licensing Office (CPLO) caused an uproar among business owners when they asked for permits, such as the mayor, barangay, and business permits. This enforcement effort was to instill in the business owners their obligation to the city, both to the government and the public, per the Local Revenue Code of Lipa City.

In November that year, the operation division of CPLO visited barangay Maraway to check the compliance of business permits within the community. One of those businesses is the Arqujosue store, also known as 'pity-pity' due to the price of their dishes.

"Nagulat na lang din kasi kami noong bibili sana kami ng lunch. Sarado silang lahat tapos may mga nakapaskil na tarpaulin. Wala daw permit yung establishment," Mika, a 4th-year UBian student who regularly eats outside the campus, said when she reminisced about the number of closed stores in that month.

The situation behind the closed doors was unknown to the UBians—the loss of income, damage to reputation, and

# UNLOCKING BLUEPRINT FOR LASTING CHANGE

By Shaira Mae Calibo  
Photo by Julius Rayven Bool

**F**or a university, students are its lifeline. Institutions like the University of Batangas-Lipa City (UBLIC) strive to provide modern infrastructure, supportive learning spaces, and exceptional educational resources. As UBLIC grows in population and reputation, it aims to create an inclusive, innovative environment fostering academic excellence and personal development.

#### The Space Dilemma

The recent opening of new facilities, like the Industrial Engineering Workshop, equips students with cutting-edge tools for real-world innovation. However, many students and faculty of the institution still face persistent challenges due to the lack of adequate classrooms.

"Minsan nabigla ako na wala palang room na naka-prep samin, lalo na nung first few months na pinapa-move kami ng moot court for business subjects," shared Bianca, second year BS Accountancy student, about the disorganization that leads to canceled or rescheduled classes.

These concerns go beyond just classroom availability, touching on the overall capacity to meet student needs effectively. Sentiments are evident in the experiences of the students from various

programs, each facing unique struggles and disorganized learning environments.

"Maybe factor na rin na hindi na hybrid ng online class at face-to-face ang learning setup kaya biglang parang kulang yung mga rooms," John, a fourth-year Architecture student, explains that they ought to check both buildings B and C for available drawing laboratories.

The challenges faced by students and faculty reflect the strain of a growing campus population and limited facilities, extending to issues like parking and room shortages, highlighting the urgent need for adaptation.

"Sana magkaroon ng markings pag overflow na," MSL sharing that poor parking ticket distribution is the problem. A difficulty that frequently arises on event days or during exam week.

The university faces classroom shortages, overcrowding, and disorganized schedules, disrupting learning. Limited parking and unorganized ticketing add to the strain. Addressing these issues is essential for an inclusive and efficient academic environment.

#### Proposed sketch for new walls

The campus focuses on updating learning spaces to support a digital,

interactive environment. Students seek smart classrooms with multimedia systems for dynamic learning and quiet study areas with comfortable seating and power outlets for focused work, especially during exams.

"Improved facilities can foster interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative teaching methods by providing flexible, technology-rich spaces that encourage interaction and creativity," Ar. Lucy, a professor from the College of Engineering and Architecture department, remarked when asked about how improved facilities could enhance education.

Modern classrooms with advanced equipment enable immersive learning, while informal gathering spaces and cafes foster spontaneous discussions and idea-sharing among students and faculty.

"A wellness center with mental health resources, quiet zones, and relaxation areas, along with modern study spaces featuring flexible seating, charging stations, and strong Wi-Fi, is essential for supporting students' academic success and well-being," said Rafael, a fourth-year architecture student.

Upgrading the university's infrastructure would enhance its

reputation, attract more students, and showcase its commitment to quality education. Improving facilities that support student well-being and holistic development is crucial to building a stronger community.

#### Beyond the blueprint

UBLIC envisions a campus that nurtures growth, collaboration, and sustainability by addressing academic and personal needs with inclusivity and environmental responsibility. Despite facility improvements, faculty still face space constraints.

"There is limited space for holding submitted plates, and the faculty room is not enough to accommodate all our needs," Ar. Lucy lamented, sharing the pressing need for adequate storage and workspace.

These limitations hinder both the organization of academic materials and faculty efficiency. Other than that, Ar. Lucy also proposed a Student Organization Center to provide a dedicated space for student leaders, streamlining activities, and promoting professionalism.

"The library is often crowded with students who are not studying

or reading but merely chatting." Ar. Lucy admitted, sharing her observation of the need for outdoor tamayan areas for students to wait between classes and study.

To address UBLIC's growing challenges, a comprehensive approach is essential: expanding classrooms and parking spaces, enhancing smart and collaborative learning environments, and organizing schedules and ticketing systems more effectively. Initiatives like a Student Organization Center, wellness facilities, and outdoor study areas can foster holistic development, inclusivity, and environmental responsibility. By prioritizing these upgrades, UBLIC can create a supportive, innovative campus that meets the evolving needs of its students and faculty.



# Lipa's Traffic-Busting Two-Wheeled Wonder

By Jannah Ocampo and Zyrene Morcilla  
Photo by Zyrene Morcilla  
Artwork by Alexander Manalo

For decades, Lipenians have been using jeepneys and tricycles mostly for daily transportation—despite the notorious traffic and changes in fares. The never-ending wait for a ride to pass by, unknown safety when commuting, sudden uprise of fare rates, and the non continuous and interrupted trips are the common struggles of them. Now with the intent of relieving the commuters' exhaustion hailed by accustomed transit, comes the modernization of public transportation in Lipa. This year on, with the emergence of Angkas, can this city alleviate and beat the inconvenience of traveling from places to places?

## Reving through Traditional Rides

Angkas, which first operated in Metro Manila, broadened its motor taxi service and launched their app—hoping to provide quality service for struggling commuters in Lipa City, Batangas. As the number one growing solo-transportation service in Lipa, Angkas has a well-founded group to operate and manage it. From July 2023, the management of Angkas Lipa started hiring employees and training riders until it was launched on April 01, 2024. Angkas Management legalized and enhanced the concept of 'habal-habal' for transportation, as they want to offer safer, single-passenger transport that is convenient for traffic congestion. They developed this Philippine motorcycle taxi to make it quick, convenient, and cheaper than it is for commuters.

"Tanging motorsiklo lang naman ang nakakasingit sa traffic, 'yon ang advantage niya compare sa ibang sasakyan. Actually, ten out of ten ang statistics namin kasi ganoon siya ka-reliable for everyday commute ng mga passengers dito sa Lipa," Mr. Dave Macahilos, Expansion Associate of the Angkas management. They are aware of the benefits motorcycles have, so they utilize it to provide convenience to people. With great passenger service they offer, it eases the daily travel experience of Lipeno commuters.

Since motorcycles can cut in through little spaces on the road, and can go to places with speed and no trouble, they can easily reach possible bookers within the three kilometer radius from where they are located. Even in remote areas, Angkas can detect those who are in need of rides and provide their services. It can be said that anytime, anywhere, they can offer available riders that will take passengers from places to places, with the same rates of fare no matter what

inconvenience there is to them.

"As of now, mataas ang booking sa Lipa unlike sa mga nearby cities kasi dito, talagang pina-patronized talaga siya ng mga commuters. Cost efficient, with 100 percent insurance, reliable, and safest—are the words to describe Angkas," added Mr. Ronnel Cuenca, the Emergency Response Personnel and Field Officer of Angkas.

They have ensured to operate their system competently to accomplish the state of Angkas now, as well as its future condition—by taking action and putting riders and passengers at its top priority. They conduct skill assessments and seminars to test the capabilities and knowledge of riders and teach them ways how to act in every circumstance on the road and with the passengers.

"Given na iyong marunong mag drive kaya in-e-enhance pa namin ang kanilang skills. Ang gusto naming matutuhan [nila] is ang safety and disciplines," Mr. Ronnel said, which both admins agreed in regards to Angkas' safety protocols.

The primary role of Angkas is to maximize the mobility of bikers and provide fast service by utilizing technology. Social media is another way to access the availability of Angkas riders in late hours, and even in remote areas. Compared to other modes of transportation, Angkas give freedom and consideration to both motorists and passengers, while also securing safety and awareness of hygiene during the ride. For them, good feedback from their services is what makes them stand out from others.

## Behind the Helmet

Undoubtedly, Lipa traffic has been a common frustration to many but with the emergence of Angkas the problem was solved with evolving view points of drivers and commuters on transportation. Ruben Salvacion and JC Zapanta, two Angkas riders with distinct dreams and motivations, share a common thread of resilience and hard work.

Driven by an unwavering spirit and a heart full of dreams, Salvacion has held a diverse range of

jobs, from being an Angkas rider to a vlogger but his ultimate ambition has always been to become a successful businessman. Despite experiencing three major setbacks in his previous business ventures, his entrepreneurial spirit remains undimmed.

"Sa tulong ng Angkas, nakakaipon ako para sa aking business na manukan," May matibay na pananalig siya na maging negosyante siya balang araw," he says, his voice filled with unwavering optimism. For him, Angkas rider was a stepping stone towards his dream, allowing him to save for his poultry business," he explains.

Angkas has provided a fresh start with an income that covers the essential expenses, giving him the financial stability he needed to support his family and the freedom to pursue his passion. He also found a way to give back to the community by offering free rides to students which are seen in his vlogs.

Zapanta, on the other hand, is driven by a deep dedication to his family. He wakes up before dawn, starting his day at 5 a.m., ready to take on the challenges of the road. He sees himself as a role model for his children, striving to provide them with a better future.

Being an Angkas rider requires a combination of patience, respect, and resilience, as they often encounter demanding passengers and difficult situations on the road. Zapanta shared that he has learned to handle aggressive or rude drivers by staying calm and avoiding confrontation. It is important to remember that a driver's role extends beyond simply getting from point A to point B. The job is to be responsible by providing a safe and professional service to passengers, even in challenging situations.

"Hayaan mo na lang sila. Madalas may mga nag-aaway sa kalsada, pero hindi ako nakikisali. Palaging magpapakita ng kagandahang-asal sa mga pasahero, hindi kailanman magiging bastos, dahil naniniwala akong ang paggalang ay nagbubunga ng paggalang din. Kahit mainit ang ulo ng isang pasahero, palaging magbibigay ng magalang na bati, 'good morning,' 'good afternoon,' 'thank you po sir!', 'goodbye,'" Zapanta explained, this approach has been

incredibly effective for him.

Safety is paramount for themselves and their passengers. Mr. Salvacion, a traffic expert, shares tips with passengers, advising them to avoid using their phones while riding, to check for dizziness, to be mindful of their surroundings, and to ensure their helmets are properly secured. Mr. Zapanta emphasizes the importance of the presence of mind—always being aware of potential hazards on the road. Driving requires constant vigilance, as unexpected situations can arise at any moment. Safety should always be the top priority when you're on the road.

Mr. Salvacion, driven by his entrepreneurial spirit, is using Angkas to achieve his dream of becoming a businessman. While, Mr. Zapanta, a dedicated family man, is using his work as an Angkas rider to secure a better future for his children. Indeed, two living examples prove that with the power of hard work and determination, a successful life is possible.

## The Pillion Viewpoint

As Angkas continuously spread throughout Lipa, it is recognized by commuters and known from friend to friend. Students, especially UBians, have praised Angkas for easing their commutes. They've found a way to navigate the city's traffic, manage their tight schedules, and even save some of their allowance on fares.

"Iyong friend ko, since bago palang ang Angkas dito, ginagamit na niya kapag gumagala siya, tapos mas mura 'yong rates kaya naisipan ko rin i-try. Maganda naman 'yong experience ko kasi they're always punctual, hindi na siya hassle kasi hindi ko na kailangan maglakad at dito na ako mismo sinusundo sa bahay," said Mr. Zaion Hiwatig, a regular Angkas user.

He only knows his home and the school, and as an inexperienced commuter, he views Angkas as the safest option to travel somewhere unfamiliar to him. A motorcycle taxi that can only ride one person, has a

location tracker and the care for safety, as well as the consideration for hygiene, and is a quick and accessible ride—is his ideal everyday transit.

Since then, he preferred to use the Angkas app to commute daily, making it easier to get to school on time and eliminating the need for long walks in his subdivision. He finds it convenient to use the door-to-door service with a low rate of fares.

"It's really faster and easier as a transportation mode, especially for students who travel from one place to another point." Hindi na nahihirapan na mag-abang ng masasakyan at maka-encounter ng hindrance, hindi na malalate plus tipid sa pamasaha lalo from malayo galing; so it's great but the only inconvenience is 'yong hindi ako sanay sa motorcycle but na-feel ko naman na safe during our ride," a statement expressed by another frequent UBian passenger of Angkas, Mr. Sean Laot.

Students, who are always in need of saving time, and often on a budget, find this app more reliable than it is. The comfort given by the soft cushion on the backseat is what makes the passengers assured on the journey. Undeniably, their feedback from the service is the corroboration of the Angkas' title—the number one motor taxi in the nation.

Angkas have never failed to give their utmost service to passengers who have booked them. Given the infamous heavy traffic, together with the Filipino time customs, this app becomes the solution to Lipenios' struggle of day-to-day involvement with the common public transportation. Traditional transport vehicles are hard to replace, but this innovation takes Lipa to another level. With the ride-hailing apps, and the eagerness and accountability of the management to produce dependable and community-oriented riders, a new ride to beat commuter hurdles emerged.



# THE WHINING VOICES OUTSIDE THE PIGSTY

By Iris Morcilla  
Photo by Gabriel Aron Kyle Legua



**A**frican Swine Fever (ASF) spread throughout Batangas, including Lipa City, when the terrible news of an epidemic arrived in Lipeño's pigsty at the beginning of August. The clamoring voices of meat consumers started to arise, while the small whispers went unnoticed. Consumers who buy pork for their main dish, vendors whose primary products are pork, people whose main income is hog farming, and their children who are seeing their parents' predicament have also been whining and weeping from the outbreak.

## What is ASF?

ASF is a highly contagious viral disease of pigs discovered by Robert Eustace Montgomery in Kenya in 1921, whose mortality rate is 100 percent. It may not affect human health, but it has detrimental effects on the hog industry. "It's hard. Financially, dahil bagsak presyo na naman. Mahal 'yong feeds. Mahal din 'yong bili sa mga biik. Sayang din dahil pinag bebenta sa sobrang murang halaga. In terms of worry, mental exhaustion, physical exhaustion... talagang mag e-effort at mag e-effort ka to keep it that way. Nakaka-drain siya, to be honest. Especially kapag makikita mo na siyang nag re-reflect sa parents mo. Nakakatakot sa pang araw-araw kasi hindi mo naman alam kung andyan pa ba or wala na (yung virus). So parang everyday is a mental and physical battle to keep being stable," Belle, not her real name, relayed her struggles about the

effect of the ASF on her as a college student and as a daughter whose family's business is hog-raising. According to the Department of Agriculture, the previous flood may have caused the recently buried pig to float and spread the virus to nearby pigsty. Romelito Marrasigan, Batangas Provincial Veterinary Office chief, assumes the reason for the rapid spread was because the majority of the residents of Lobo are engaged in backyard hog raising. As of August 8, Lobo has the greatest number of affected barangays (17); Calatagan has five; Talisay and Lian have two apiece; and Rosario and Lipa have one each.

## Saving the pigsty

The swine disease can be easily transmitted via direct contact with infected pigs, body fluids, or foods they eat. Lack of biosecurity can also be the reason why fomites such as equipment and people will come into contact with swine. Thus, constant disinfection and prevention are necessary to protect the hogs from the virus. "Hindi kami basta-basta lumalabas o gumagala sa kung saan. Laging may handang chlorine para

disinfect palagi pagkauwi kung saan man magpunta," AM, not his real name, a 4th year UBIan student who tends to the pigs of his brother's pigsty, narrates how his days changed during the outbreak.

Most of the local hog raisers combat the virus with their knowledge and strategies. They rely on the exchange of information from the contacts they have with other hog raisers. Some had the chance to attend seminars held by authorities such as the Department of Agriculture (DA), Provincial Veterinary Office (PVO), Barangay Biosecurity Officers (BBO), International Training Center on Pig Husbandry (ITCPH), and non-governmental organizations. These seminars highlight biosecurity as the main precautionary measure while awaiting the rollout of vaccines.

"There are five bio securities we should check. The people, the animals—including the flies and pets such as cats and dogs—the food supply, the water supply—especially if it comes from well—and lastly, the vaccination," Dr. Ruth S. Miclat-Sonaco, ITCPH Lipa Center and NLP Director, explained, highlighting the importance of biosecurity, regular surveillance, and monitoring of hogs using the Geographical Information System (GIS). Nonetheless, she believes that the vaccine is the missing link for the outbreak of ASF for the second time. Although effective, biosecurity will be difficult as the main point of control.

Aside from disinfection using chlorine, with enough biosecurity, apog or agricultural lime (made from burned and crushed sea shells) surrounding their pigsty and walkways has been proven effective—surviving the first ASF outbreak during the COVID-19 pandemic. John Carr (2020), a global swine consultant, further explains how the heat from the lime kills the virus and lowers the moisture in the environment, disinfecting the area, unlike other disinfectants.

## Future of hog raising

The spread of the virus from Lobo has been significantly faster in the months of July and August. Upon the announcement on August 6 of Batangas being in a

state of calamity, checkpoints started to check every swine passing the road.

"Kapag may nakitang konting sign lang ng ASF sa mga checkpoint sinusunog agad ang baboy tapos ibinabaon sa lupa," AM said, reminiscing the burnt pigs on the checkpoint.

They say it is best to take precautionary measures since it is contagious. Prevention should not be biased and should give fair compensation to affected individuals. Hence, the government provides indemnification, compensating the hog owner who loses their profit. The compensation depends on the type of affected pig, whether it is a finisher or a piglet. However, some of the hog raisers still feel alone in the middle of the crisis, receiving no help from the government since the first outbreak.

"May response ba? Hindi ko sure kung nagkaroon nga ng response even noong 2020, noong unang break out niya. Pero even ngayon na mas parang kita mo yung effect ng ASF sa mga tao, especially dito sa Batangas, parang so far ang bagal ng kilos ng government about it. Kung iyon na lang 'yong means of income ng mga hog raisers. How else can they support themselves, kung hindi sila tutulongan ng gobyerno? Parang mabagal, mabagal yung response kasi lumalala pa," Belle said as she was asked how the government has been helping them.

For years, the government has been working to overcome the disease. Their movement may be slow and need room for improvement; however, they are continuously distributing disinfectants, conducting seminars and training programs, and strengthening their network to have vaccines from foreign countries. DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. plans to launch the government-controlled vaccination of Vietnam's AVAC ASF live vaccines, which are said to be safe and effective, in the second week of August. Moreover, the ITCPH has a vision for Batangas

to be the number one producer of meat and overcome the current situation of the hog industry. They believe that Batangas has the needed technology, buildings, and programs to help the hog raisers, while everyone's cooperation will make the pigsty disease resilient.

"Magdadagdag na naman ng puhunan doon (sa pagbababoy). Pero itutuloy pa rin. Kung talagang wala na o naubos na, magpapalipas lang ng panahon na maalis iyong virus. Tsaka na lang ulit. Pero tutuloy at tutuloy, ito ang buhay namin," Mrs. Glec, a hog raiser, said, looking for the promising future of hog raising despite the crisis it was facing now.

The worry among consumers continues as holidays are just around the corner. However, since the outbreak, there have been more than 120 days of worrying about how some people can continue their lives without sacrificing a meal at their table or letting their child be part of the crisis. Nevertheless, the outbreak was just a season. ASF is just a whining season, and with a proper vaccine, the winning season will come nearer.

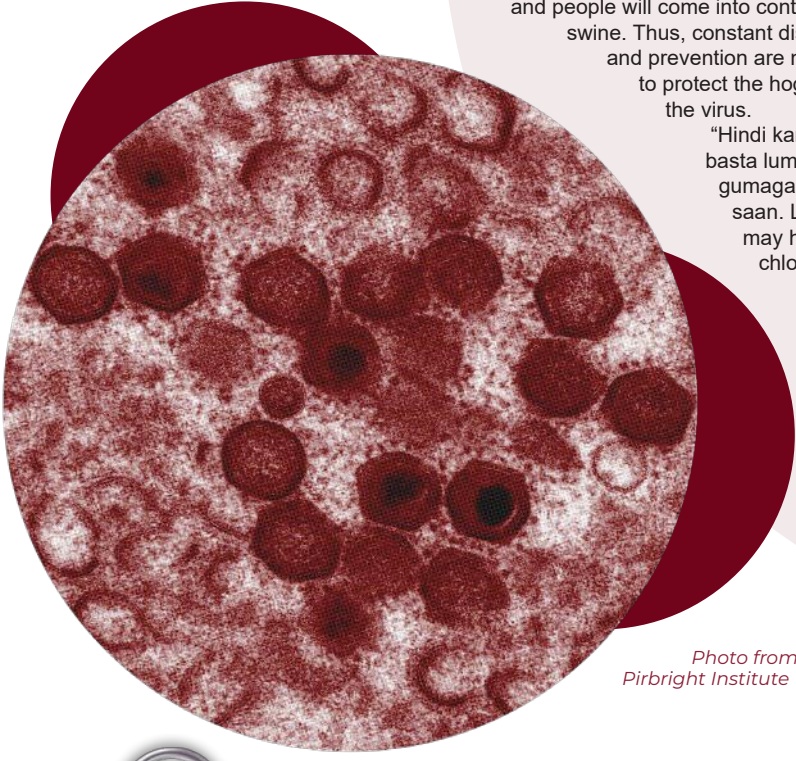


Photo from: The Pirbright Institute

# WHAT IS MPOX?

By Iris Morcilla  
Artwork by Marianne Mercado

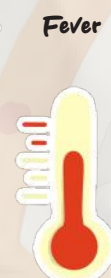
**M**px, formerly called Monkeypox, is an illness caused by the monkeypox virus (MPVX), an enveloped double-stranded virus of the Orthopoxvirus genus. The virus has two distinct clades, Clade I (subclades Ia and Ib) and Clade II (subclades IIa and IIb). According to Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa, the variant circulating in the Philippines is Clade II, which is safer since infections are less severe than Clade I. Hence, the Department of Health advises not to be alarmed since it can be treated. Nonetheless, health is wealth, and prevention is better than cure. Be alert, be informed, and stay healthy with these guides.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The signs and symptoms of mpx usually begin within a week or start 1-21 days. It usually lasts 2-4 weeks or longer, depending on the immune system. Below are the common symptoms of mpx.



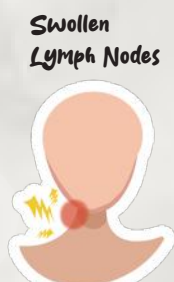
Skin Rash or Mucosal lesions



Fever



Headache



Swollen Lymph Nodes



Muscle Aches

BACK Pain



Low Energy

## PREVENTION

When it comes to our health, prevention is a powerful and proactive strategy. Adhere to the following guides below to keep from being infected.



## TRANSMISSION

Although mpx is not airborne, be aware of the four listed possible ways to catch the virus.



### Close Contact

It can be skin-to-skin, mouth-to-mouth, mouth-to-skin, and face-to-face with someone who has mpx.



### Infected animals

As a zoonotic disease, it can be spread between animals and people through bites or scratches or activities such as hunting, skinning, trapping, cooking, or eating animals.



### Pregnancy or birth

Mpx during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, complications to the parent, or death of the newborn.

1. Avoid close contact with people who have rashes similar to mpx.
2. Avoid getting in contact with contaminated materials. Avoid sharing personal things.
3. Avoid contact with live or dead wild animals, especially around areas where mpx recently occurs.
4. Wear masks, especially if you are coughing or sneezing, and cover lesions when around other people.
5. Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
6. Do not pop blisters or scratch sores since they can spread rashes and cause sores to become infected.
7. If infected, isolate yourself and contact your health care provider.

As of September 12, there are already three cases reported in CALABARZON. However, with enough awareness and discipline, mpx is easier to counter than COVID-19. The knowledge about signs and symptoms, transmission, and prevention measures are powerful enough to reduce the threat of mpx and safeguard public health.



## PROVE, HE 'WHEEL' DO! RIDE OF PATRICK'S LIFE

By Hannah Divine Perez  
Photo by Ricardo Carlos Comia

Encountering a person with a disability can stir thoughts in our minds that they need help or they are pitiful and heartbreaking, but life situations are different and every life is special. Patrick shows himself on his wheels, sitting and driving towards his dreams.

### Defying Limits

Despite the whispers, stares, and criticism, Patrick Garing, a 4th year Legal Management student at the University of Batangas—Lipa City (UBLC), perseveres despite being diagnosed with minor cerebral palsy—defying the limits of his physical disability.

Patrick's life began even before he became conscious of his condition. Being born prematurely, his bones did not develop easily as he grew up, which made him have a hard time carrying himself with his own two feet. This, of course, led him to experience 'living' a bit differently.

Even though he lives a life full of kindness, it's far from perfect. Although unsurprising in the current society, it is unfortunate that Patrick has been subjected to bullying ever since he was a kid. He faced discrimination because of his condition and feels eccentric in the eyes of others.

Despite feeling as if the world is against him, he refuses to let others' opinions define him, never letting it crush his dreams. He did not let his condition and situation hinder him from being able to explore and instead dedicated himself to rolling his own set of wheels to live the way others do. He is determined not to let them diminish his aspirations or self-esteem. Conquering this kind of situation reflects how Patrick has a powerful spirit and principle to fight in.

Regardless of the fact that he experienced challenges growing up, he continues what he is passionate about and contemplates where he's destined to excel—law. He is a visionary, mapping his own path despite life's twists and turns with the help of people surrounding him.

"Every time may pasok ako, ihahatid niya [father] ako sa room ko. Kapag kailangan naman bumaba, ayun tinutulungan ako ng friends ko tumawag

sa baba sa faculty para humingi ng tulong," Patrick's heartfelt statement in telling his story whenever he attends his classes.

His father sacrifices time and puts efforts into fulfilling his son's dream. He will go with Patrick to school every time his son has classes before proceeding to work. It was his routine, showing sacrifices and affection to Patrick. He assured that everything in his son's situation is well in the best way possible and continues their routine with a positive mind to show his support to his son. By doing so, he instills a sense of security, love, and determination, empowering him to face each day with confidence.

Seeing Patrick's dedication to live, there is never a reason for him to leave from his reveries. His condition does not hold him back from dreaming. Even at some point, he also questioned why he was experiencing this kind of situation. It may be hard to accept, but he follows nothing but his beliefs and destiny. Questioning was just a phase for him because he always has a dream for tomorrow.

### Dream Weavers

No matter his condition, Patrick proves that he is enough to be treated as normal as how people treat others. Patrick breaks down barriers and challenges stereotypes. By embracing his uniqueness, he inspires others to do the same, fostering a culture of inclusivity and acceptance.

"Everyone has their situation, and di ko nakikita yung kanya as anything different... Kasi normal siya," Vittorio Opeña, his friend and classmate, expressed.

Patrick gained true friendship and the respect of his colleagues, who genuinely treat

him as a peer. He is only physically challenged, but Patrick shines academically and as a diligent student engaging with his classmates.

"He is our friend, classmate, groupmate, Patrick, nothing more, nothing less, just perfect," Vittorio said and added that whatever the situation and condition that Patrick is in, he is treated just like a normal person who lives morally and dreams immensely. He is empowered to control his wheel and take the journey without any hesitation, refusing to be defined by what he is.

Destiny proved itself not too cruel as Patrick gained reliable friends that help him around whenever he is in need. For the last four years, his friends have been his guide around the campus. In that aspect, he's grateful for being surrounded by people with good hearts.

To continue his dream, friends and peers are not only instruments for him to believe in himself to keep going in reaching his dreams. Considering his atypical situation, he is hopeful for his second home, the UBLC campus, to be more convenient and accessible for people with disabilities like him. On behalf of the PWD community in UBLC, he wants to use his voice to advocate for the development and improvements of facilities.

"Sana nga magka-ramp na para mabilis maka-taas-baba ang wheelchair... Syempre minsan nakahihiya tumawag ng tutulong. Sa building kasi ng law wala namang elevator, kaya kailangan talaga buhatin kung tataas o bababa ako," Patrick confides as he narrates his experience having a hard time going around with his wheelchair on campus.

Growth and improvement are the top priorities of the university not only for the institution itself but also for the students who live with a heart in the university that treats everybody as a family.

The campus must be designed with ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms and classrooms to ensure that all facilities are reachable for students with mobility challenges. The existing accessibility measures are still insufficient, leaving gaps in convenience and accessibility for students with disabilities,

particularly since ramps are limited to first floors and

elevators are not universally available across all buildings. This creates challenges for students like Patrick. The university is open for improvement of the campus to make it more PWD-friendly.

"UBLC has three currently enrolled students considered to have physical disabilities. They follow a policy aligned with Republic Act No. 9442, also known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities. This legislation ensures that students with disabilities are not denied admission to university programs based on their condition." The Admission & Scholarship Office confirms that the university is open to welcome any student, regardless of their condition.

In UBLC, the students with disabilities also take the same curriculum like other students to maintain fairness and equality for all students. It reflects that they are the mirror of good management of the campus in how they fully welcome the students with sympathy in each condition.

### Quest for Dreams

People tend to conform to societal norms, aligning their behavior with their abilities and their sense of belonging, and Patrick wishes to break the stigma placed on PWDs. Whatever experiences he encounters, Patrick's dedication is something no one can destroy. He has a dream and passion, and he is a persevering person who puts in effort and reaches his goals despite the baggage he has. A true inspiration not only to himself but to people around him.

Growing up has been a challenge for him; he deals with endless trials, but he chooses to move forward despite having a condition which puts him having a hard time to move and roam the world. He is a genuine believer that he can, so he does things that people think he can't. Life for him progresses slowly but promises a bright future. It may not be the ideal life, but it is a perfect one that suits his unstoppable mind.

Giving up is never in Patrick's vocabulary. He opens the wings of his dreams and rolls his wheels toward his goal. It's not about how rocky the journey is but about his belief that he can. With an unwavering will, Patrick moves fearlessly, turning his dreams into reality.



# BEYOND THE BADGE

## CALL OF MICHAEL'S LAWFUL DUTY

By Jashmine Cuevas  
Photo by Kyle Angelu Meneses

As the university succumbs to the tranquility of the night—when faculties, staff, and students have all gone to rest in their homes—marks the start of a man's duty. He takes two forms, and he's among us. It's a familiar routine for him, patrolling the campus and checking doors while forcing his senses to remain awake even with a growling stomach.

But his mind isn't on his duties as much as on the legal readings waiting for him back at his apartment. Some might ponder, how does he do it? It's certainly an atypical and exhausting duty, but for Michael Salazar, it's more than that—it's his ultimate shot to end a generational curse.

### Paving the Way

As though fate had decided for him to be a protector, Michael is the eldest and the only man among his four female siblings. He hails from Calaca City from a family with an adverse economic background. Michael was denied support for his education by his biological father, however, he stood firm on his desire to graduate despite the monetary struggles and age gap between him and his classmates.

He was an ROTC Commander and a consistent Dean's Lister, admired by his peers and faculties at his former school for his determination. Eventually, he earned his undergraduate degree in criminology. He is now 44 years old and has been a security guard for 25 years, starting the job early in his late teens.

Michael began his guarding duty at the University of Batangas-Lipa City (UBLIC) around January 2024 to accommodate his studies as a second-year law student in the same institution.

### Guard to Greatness

Being a security guard can be burdensome, but according to Michael, it's not as demanding as other jobs which require hard labor, such as construction. "Kasi yung guard, puyat ka lang, pero hindi pagod ang katawan mo," he said, in reasoning why he chose that profession.

Michael's story didn't unfold so easily. There was a point when he was still in college that he had to resign as a security guard because his superiors wouldn't grant him a leave of absence even if he had examinations. But when he decided to juggle both, he battled with night duty until 6:00 a.m. and his college class started at 7:00 a.m.

"Kung kinakailangan na sumabit, umupo sa hulihan, gagawin ko yun para maka-attend ako ng klase," he recalled with a bittersweet smile.

His journey didn't end when he finished college, not even when he passed the June 2021 Criminologists Licensure Examination.

"Yung takbo ng buhay dito sa Pilipinas, kailangan mo ng backer...Kaya hindi ako nakapasok sa serbisyo. Unang-una,

overaged. Pangalawa, kahit qualified, walang backer," Michael dismayingly expressed.

Though his achievements were fulfilling, he's aware of the realities in his profession where only the affluent keep rising, thanks to their connection. This became one of the reasons that fueled him to pursue law, to have a better shot in life.

### Two Lives, One Dream

Two essential requisites to be admitted to the UB College of Law are to pass the entrance exam and the interview. Due to Michael's unique professional background, he was unsurprisingly questioned on how he would manage his time as a law student and security guard. Knowing the strenuous nature of studying law, everyone, even himself, expects that his body and mind are bound to be separated—both literally and figuratively.

"Buti sana kung babasahin mo lang, kailangan mo pang aralin...Hindi naman ako ganun katalino, mahirap syang intindihin kasi legal sya. Pero dumaraan, basa ka nang basa, natututunan rin," Michael described his study habits as second-year law student.

This extensive period of reading is a norm among those who study and practice law. After his guarding duty, he would go back to his apartment at six in the morning to nap until 10 o'clock. Next, he would do his chores and then spend the rest of the day burning his eyebrows 'till 5:00 p.m. when his class starts.

His classes would end at 9:30 p.m. which also marks the start of his duty as one of the university's security guards right after. This is his routine, the cycle that he does and has to live with through the end of his law school days.

### The Endurance Saga

Within 24 hours, Michael is fortunate enough to have slept at least four of them. As a result, he frequently falls ill and would need to lean on something to remain on his feet, as he sometimes feels dizzy during his guarding duty. But this is nothing compared to his purpose—ending a generational curse. The root of it all and the very same thing that drives him to pursue two fields at once: poverty.

Every so often, he feels the need to eat only once a day. "Hindi na ako nag-aalmusal, gastos yun. Kumakain ako ng tanghalian...para isang beses na lang kakain," he unabashedly recounts.

His salary as a guard could only feed him as he survived college through multiple scholarships. Currently, he earns minimum wage and it mostly dissolves in rent bills, law school tuition and expenses.

Even so, everyone has their limits. At one point, Michael was so close to giving up because he could no longer afford his education. Studying was never an issue for him, as that's what he liked, but the

mounting financial pressure burdened on his shoulders halted his tracks. Luckily, he was able to acquire loans to aid his school expenses; however, it bounced back right at him as it reflected in his salary like a never-ending saga of torment.

### Breaker of Chains

In all sincerity, law school is expensive, private law school moreso. Despite his economic background, Michael chose the University of Batangas for its promising upshot. With UB College of Law's fervent standing in the region, he believes that his success in the legal field is guaranteed. If not an attorney, then he aims to be a judge someday.

Another alternative job for Michael is to be in the military. He discussed, "Kakaunti yung nasa private na umaasenso. Meron naman, pero yung nasa government ang mas stable. Yun ang isang bagay na sigurado." It's his initial goal that aligns with his undergraduate degree. He considers working in the government, for it offers a higher chance to have a stable life.

"Ayaw kong maging dahilan ang kahirapan upang hindi matupad 'yung pangarap ko," in justifying his relentless efforts.

To be at his age and still have big dreams, time is truly a state of mind. Michael Salazar comes off as a man who views his current struggles as temporary. He knows that the sacrifices he makes today—balancing long shifts as a security guard with the demands of law school—are merely pawns in the chess of his life.

Poverty is a generational curse, it kills more dreams than failure, but Michael wasn't a willing victim. He dares to break the chain of curses that run deep in his lineage. He wished for youth not to take for granted but to understand that it's a privilege to have someone willing to support their studies because he wasn't fortunate in that aspect.

As night consumes the university, Michael Salazar begins his duty patrolling the campus, fighting to keep his senses alert by recalling his legal readings, despite the growling of his stomach. He knows that beyond his badge, he is now forging a life where the simple pleasure of enjoying delicious food will no longer be a rare treat, but a daily reality—one in which he can savor meals three, even four times a day, without worry or restraint.



## RUNAWAY TREND

By Mikylla Martinez  
Photo by Gabriel Aron Kyle Legua

As the sun sets and shadows stretch across the road, footsteps echo through the streets. Beneath the exhausted pants from running miles and the feeling of blood pumping up to their chest is a journey that brings peace, focus, and resilience. The rhythm of a young girl's steps and the steady beat of her heart create a meditative state, allowing her to clear her mind and process her thoughts. By then, it became more than just movement—it's a way to connect with oneself, set personal challenges, and feel a sense of accomplishment with every mile. It was often seen as something only for athletes or fitness fanatics, but has now become a popular activity embraced by individuals from all walks of life. Through voices like Hamilene Dela Paz, it becomes clear that running offers a unique blend of simplicity and introspection, making it much more than just a trend—it's a lifestyle choice that resonates deeply with many.

## Miles of Meaning

One of the main reasons running has become so popular is its simplicity. Unlike other exercises that need special equipment or gym memberships, running only requires one thing: a good pair of shoes. For Hamilene Dela Paz, a third-year BS Legal Management student at the University of Batangas-Lipa City (UBLIC), her running journey began after seeing videos on TikTok.

"I started running just to see what the hype was about, but over time, I fell in love with it. It became a routine for me, something I look forward to," she said. This is a common story—what starts as a trend often turns into a passion.

The beauty of running is that you can do it almost anywhere. Whether it's around your neighborhood, along a city street, or in a park; running offers freedom. Its convenience is a big reason why so many people are drawn to it. What often starts as a simple jog can quickly become a daily routine, as it did for Hamilene.

While it has always been a common activity, social media has played a huge role in its current rise in popularity. Social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram have made running seem fun and accessible, where influencers share their running journeys and motivate others to start their own.

Initially, running was just a way for Hamilene to fit in with the trend sparked by social media, wherein the influencers—who shared their authentic journeys and experiences with the sport—inspired and helped her realize that running was not just about following a fad; it was about building her own strength and resilience. As Hamilene continued her running journey, she discovered that it offered more than just physical benefits; it also became a powerful mental escape. Each run became an opportunity to reflect, to set intentions, and to find peace amid her busy schedule. With every stride, she felt a growing sense of

accomplishment and confidence, realizing that running wasn't just a physical activity—it was a tool for personal growth. This simple habit of lacing up her shoes and hitting the pavement became her way to reconnect with herself, giving her the strength to tackle challenges both on and off the track.

"At first, I just wanted to try it because everyone else was doing it. But after a while, I really started to enjoy it," she uttered.

For her and many others, running has become more than just a trend, it's a way to feel good both physically and mentally. Every stride is a moment to unwind, to let go of stress and leave behind the worries that fill her day. With each mile, she gains a sense of clarity and peace that no other activity can offer. Running allows her to reconnect with herself, to find strength she never knew she had, and to push her limits with every step.

For some, the joy of the sport lies in the challenge—the drive to improve personal bests, reach new distances, or conquer challenging terrains. For others, it's simply a time to appreciate nature, to breathe in fresh air, and to witness the beauty of a sunrise or sunset. As she runs, she becomes part of a larger community of people who understand the struggles and triumphs that come with the sport, sharing a mutual respect and camaraderie that is rare to find elsewhere.

## Tie It Right

While running is simple, there are still a few essentials. The most important item is a good pair of running shoes. Wearing the right shoes helps avoid injury and makes running more comfortable.

"When I first started running longer distances, I realized how much good shoes matter. They made a big difference," she noted.

Poor-quality or inappropriate running shoes can cause issues for runners, such as joint strain, shin splints, knee

pain, or fractures due to inadequate cushioning. Lack of grip or stability can also lead to slips and ankle sprains on uneven surfaces. In contrast, well-fitted, high-quality shoes offer cushioning to absorb shock, proper arch support, and a firm grip, improving comfort, balance, and posture, which makes running smoother and safer.

Staying hydrated is essential for runners, especially during longer runs, with water bottles and hydration belts being popular tools. Technology further enhances the running experience, with apps like Strava, Nike Run Club, and MapMyRun offering features such as progress tracking, route discovery, and social connectivity. These tools make running more engaging and motivational.

Strava is particularly useful for Hamilene, helping her monitor key metrics like distance, pace, and time while keeping her runs fresh with route-mapping features. Its social aspects connect her with other runners, providing encouragement and fostering consistency. Challenges and virtual competitions inspire her to push her limits, making running a rewarding, community-driven journey.

A standout feature of today's running culture is the unique, eye-catching style that runners bring to their outfits. Bold, neon shoes that pop on every step, breathable gear in vibrant patterns, and reflective jackets for that extra evening glow—each piece tells a story.

Many runners choose compression leggings or shorts with smart pockets to stash essentials, while headbands and caps not only add personality but also keep focus sharp. It's not just about looking good; for these runners, each outfit is a motivating ritual that transforms an ordinary run into something extraordinary.

## Reaping the Rewards

Running is known for its physical benefits, such as improving heart health,

helping with weight loss, and building muscle. Within a few months of engaging with the sport, Hamilene has lost more than eight kilograms and has noticeably felt the positive changes in her body. She became more active, more alive, and more energetic than ever.

But it offers more than just physical benefits. For many, it also helps with mental and emotional well-being as it gives you a chance to clear your head and reduce stress.

"When I'm stressed or overwhelmed with school, I run. It helps me think more clearly," Hamilene shared.

The repetitive motion of running, combined with the peacefulness of a sunrise or sunset, creates a peaceful setting that helps the mind relax and the spirit feel refreshed, giving a break from everyday stress.

## More Than Just a Trend

As more people discover the benefits of running, it's clear that it's more than just a passing trend. It's become a lifestyle for many, and Hamilene is just one of countless other youth runners. It is no longer just a way to lose weight or stay fit—it is a way to de-stress, reflect, and grow as a person.

Whether alone or with friends, it has become a part of daily life for many. The next time you see someone running, you might wonder: are they chasing fitness, freedom, or perhaps something even more personal?

Running might have seemed as a mere trend for some, but it has grown into something deeper for the actual runners. It has become a journey of self-discovery, offering moments of clarity and peace amid life's chaos and overwhelming noise. Whether you've been running for a while or are thinking of starting, ask yourself, what are you really running for? Maybe, like Hamilene, you'll find more than you ever expected. Because sometimes, the simplest activities have the greatest impact.

## BURNOUT SYNDROME: FROM THE ASHES

By Ameera Jay Aldon  
Artwork by Ricardo Carlos Comia

If stress is about having too much, burnout means not having enough—not enough drive, energy, or effort to even care. Like buildings on fire, people have the ability to burn out. In today's world, burnout is no longer something only people with work professions experience. It has become a silent crisis that affects those from any walks of life. Whether you're a student with academic responsibilities, a parent who has a family to provide for, or even someone who just wants to get through the day, burnout is an inevitable result of the many factors that put weight on our well-being.

## The Initial Ignition

Unlike usual misconceptions, burnout is not relieved solely by resting or getting some sleep. It is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress—a form of fatigue that persists despite any efforts to recharge.

The term dates back to the 70s, when it was first used as a slang to describe 'extreme drug use,' until psychoanalyst Herbert Freudenberg utilized it in a clinical manner. As quoted by Pascal Chabot in his book 'Global Burnout: "Like substance abuse, burnout is an illness of immoderation," signifying the toll that it takes on people when experiencing excessive stress and pressure.

For students, burnout has become a near-universal experience, as many find themselves dangerously playing with fire by juggling coursework, extracurriculars, jobs, and personal pressures with little space for rest. The lines between school and home blur, with stress trailing students like smoke wherever they go. This relentless cycle of striving fuels exhaustion, creating flames that even weekends or holidays struggle to extinguish. Mental health experts warn that student burnout poses serious risks to motivation, mental health, and overall well-being.

## Individual's Inferno

Many students face intense pressures throughout their academic journey, and for some, this pressure culminates in a profound experience of burnout. The overwhelming demands of both academic and personal life can often leave students feeling isolated and mentally exhausted.

"When you bottle up your emotions and all the pressure, then it suddenly bursts and empties you out," said Sam Magbanua, a first-year BS Legal

Management (BSLM) student.

Sam shared that major triggering factors of burnout are financial discussions, family disorientation, and most commonly; a heavy workload along with academic pressure. She also shared a specific time when she experienced burnout:

"Tuwing midterms season, laging nagsasabay-sabay. Kailangan mong mag-aral, tapos ikaw pa aasahang kumilos sa bahay. Tapos may orgs ka pang sinasalihan, sobrang bigat sa pakiramdam. Parang nauubos na ako," Magbanua added.

Some even reach the extent of severe depression and suicidal intentions due to how draining the feeling is. Like a candle slowly losing its flame and sitting in a pool of its own wax, burnout comes with reaching your limits and not knowing what else to do in that state. It drives people to feel such emptiness and hopelessness, and that's when you know it's not just exhaustion, but a deeper hole that makes you cave in.

Another first-year BSLM student stated the distinct difference between burnout from mere exhaustion, "Kapag burnout, kahit gaano katagal ipahinga at itulog, hindi nawawala ang pagod. Hindi maalisa sa isip at dibdib mo."

The weight of burnout can also manifest in a pervasive sense of isolation, where students feel they are navigating their struggles alone.

"Sometimes you think you're the only one feeling this way. Kahit may mga kaibigan naman ako, they might not understand what I'm going through. Baka sabihin nila pagod lang naman 'to," one student recounted.

This sense of disconnection can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and despair, making it harder to reach out for help. As academic pressure continues to

rise like a bonfire fed with more foraged wood, students may find themselves trapped in a cycle of self-doubt and fear of failure. This ongoing emotional battle can lead to a reluctance to engage in social activities or seek support, further deepening the sense of loneliness.

## Rekindling the Flame

Majority of the youth today find themselves adrift in a fiery sea of expectations within their own homes, weighed down by the lack of warmth and encouragement from those who should be their strongest anchors. In place of familial support, they turn to friends, partners, and even the quiet solace of pets. During their search for relief, students often refuge to leisure time, spending time with those who truly see them, love them, and hold space for their truest selves.

To lighten the arsons within, many immerse themselves in hobbies as a way of finding a new spark. Embracing time management and organizing responsibilities helps balance the weight of academic and emotional demands. While some take on more tasks for distraction, others find comfort in isolation, exercise, routine changes, or simply resting to recharge.

If stress feels like being drowned, burnout is the feeling of being dried up—dried up of emotions, ecstasy, or the will to even live. Like buildings on fire, people can easily burn out. When a flame starts and slowly spreads within, the feeling of emptiness is an inevitable outcome. Still, no building fire is impossible to extinguish, especially if its foundation is still intact.

As students, we learn how to rise from the ashes, and conquer the world with fiery hearts without letting the blaze claim us instead.



# THEME UBIAN

By Adrian Climaco  
Artwork by Deo Arquisola

The naked truth about "Dress to Impress" is simple: it's about making a fashion statement where your personality shines. A popular game, as stated, frees you to customize your avatar based on a theme or merely your interpretation of your persona. But it's more than just a virtual fashion show—it's a playground for creativity, where you can explore your dream outfits.

For UB college students, it reflects during Wednesdays, their "wash day," when the pressure to pick the perfect look kicks in. Whether you're into sporty, chic, or quirky styles, your in-game outfit reveals a part of your real-life student persona. In the virtual world, fixed codes allow you to showcase your unique style like never before. Each code unlocks the potential to express your chosen look in a way that reflects your personality. So, which code will you choose to make your fashion statement?

## The Minimalist ★★★★★

These are the students who embrace simplicity yet still manage to slay in their fitted white polos and black slacks. To them, life feels like a sleek CAD design—clean, precise, and technical. Spot them with their oat-white tote bags stamped with quotes like "Less is more" or "Function follows form," and you'll know they're in their upper years, carrying the weight of campus facility improvements on their shoulders. They've earned respect—after all, the next building may rest in their talented minds and hands, designed to be as functional as they can be. Yet, despite their technical mindset, they're grounded, pairing their look with chunky high-cut sneakers and sunglasses for that extra layer of protection (let's face it, those eyebags need a shield).

## The Techy Cyberpunk ★★★★★

Rocking their thrifted vintage look—an oversized black shirt with a skull print and baggy jeans loaded with pockets, perfect for storing pens and pencils—these students are always art-ready. Their style is unmistakable, often accompanied by black headphones, either for entertainment or as a defense from deafening professors' lectures. Yet, despite the distant appearance, their passion for the arts and their digital creativity is undeniable. Masters of programming and animation, they've earned the "ambivert" label, not because of how they socialize, but because sometimes they're laser-focused on perfecting their craft alone or sometimes they're mere social butterflies interacting with their co-creatives. And no outfit would be complete without their favorite jacket—essential for surviving the freezing temperatures of the computer labs (they will work there for hours!).

## The Jet-Set Treasurer ★★★★★

Thesis defense ready—that's their mantra. Dressed in snappy white long sleeves, a chic black coat, and tailored black slacks paired with stilettos, they reflect professionalism. But beneath this polished exterior lies a set of eye-catching prints and flowy-cut bikinis, a testament to their vibrant personalities. After hours of tackling problems and enduring practical exams, they yearn to feel the summer breeze on their skin. Yet, behind those are sleepless nights and telltale eyebags, reminding us that they need time to refresh and recharge. For half of the year, they are dedicated students; for the other half, they are somewhere else traveling half of the country (only applies to those who have audited their bank accounts).

## The Compassionate Hipster ★★★★★

Paper and pens? Check. Textbooks? Check. Outfit? Uh-oh, not quite! They grab whatever feels comfortable. Earth-tone plaid polos, printed white shirts, and blue jeans, they can move with effortless ease. Whether darting from whiteboards to community outreach programs, they embody a spirit of unstoppable energy while rocking their laid-back look. The only standout piece in their vanilla fit is their branded leather boots, which they wear with undeniable confidence. Completing this stylish yet practical outfit are their rectangular tortoise-shell eyeglasses and a self-heating travel coffee mug (trust me, it keeps drinks warm all day!).

## The Sophisticated Overthinker ★★★★★

These students are fighters—strong-willed and determined. But beneath their quirky skirts, cozy cardigans, and black leather boots lie the minds of over-analytical future lawyers. With endless readings and memorization sessions, their high-end outfits become a way to redeem themselves, helping them feel powerful and in control. Their fashion statement screams class and confidence, mirroring the traits they strive to embody. Makeup is their secret weapon—smokey eyes and nude lips give them that polished, rich-woman vibe straight out of BGC (Bonifacio Global City). Don't underestimate them, though. Behind the confidence, they overthink their outfits daily, because they're here to serve justice while delivering a queen moment and please, do not argue with them as it will be a long debate forum (slay, girl!).

## The Netflix Detective ★★★★★

\*Ta-dum\*  
Starring in their very own black noir film, these students are the ones you can't afford to overlook. Dressed in cargo pants and army green fitted shirts, they subtly highlight their physical strengths. Though there's often a misconception that Criminology students come off as arrogant, beneath their tough exterior lies a soft heart, quietly stealing attention from men and women all around campus. Some prefer to stay grounded, rocking their humble Doc Martens while marching in step with their peers. They're more than just students—they're detectives, whether it's solving an exam or pinpointing the person they've got their eye on. (Though let's be honest, they're a bit predictable.)

## The Lab Delegate ★★★★★

They may be the newest players in the game, but when it comes to fashion, they're far from rookies. Laboratory gowns may be their daily armor, but these students never back down from a challenge—embracing the "scientific chic" archetype. While they might seem like overachievers trying to prove something, they've already proven it with their smart-looking outfits. Beneath those lab coats? A sleek red dress and white sneakers, ready for the next Red Cross operation. After their shift as student nurses, they volunteer for medical missions, honing their skills while making a difference. They're always dressed for success, whether in the lab or on the frontlines. (Never back down, never what?)

Every student who stands out with their fashion statements never goes unnoticed—and rightfully so. Regardless of what other people may think, at the end of it all, we know who we truly are, and we marvel at just how creative we can be. While there may be codes or cheats to replicate a look, our personalities remain uniquely our own, and that's something to embrace. Hard as it may seem, choosing the best outfit is a literal jigsaw puzzle, but once you piece together the confidence to rock your ideal fit, you can face the world with authenticity and own the naked truth—U are Beautiful inside and out.



# DANDADAN

WHERE LOGIC TAKES A BACKSEAT TO LUNACY!

**D**andadan, the latest sensation from mangaka Yukinobu Tatsu, is an anime that defies genre conventions, blending supernatural horror with science fiction in a way that feels fresh, innovative, and exhilarating. The series introduces an outrageous premise where ghosts and aliens exist side by side, but it's how Tatsu manages to weave these seemingly disparate elements together that truly sets the story apart. Through vibrant action, humor, and unexpected emotional depth, Dandadan presents a narrative where the supernatural and the sci-fi genre aren't just juxtaposed—they're intrinsically connected.

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ⓘ More Info

By Klyde Franzine Angelu Meneses  
Photo Grab from Dandadan Animation Produced by Science Saru

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At its core, Dandadan follows two main characters: Ken Takakura, alias Okarun, a high school boy who is obsessed with aliens except supernatural entities, and Momo Ayase, his schoolmate who is skeptical of extraterrestrial phenomena except ghosts. The plot begins with their individual encounters with the unnatural events—Okarun's ghostly encounter and Momo's first run-in with aliens, which quickly escalates when the two are forced to confront a world where these two forces, often considered polar opposites, are linked in unexpected ways. What makes Dandadan so captivating

is how Tatsu blends traditional ghost story elements with alien mythology. Ghosts, spirits, and curses often evoke an air of mystery and unease, rooted in folklore and mysticism, while the alien element introduces high-tech gadgets, extraterrestrial powers, and an expansive universe.

The genius of Dandadan lies in how the two genres complement each other rather than feeling like separate plot threads. For example, the spirits aren't just ghostly apparitions or traditional poltergeists—they are often tied to otherworldly forces, with their origins tied

to alien dimensions or phenomena. On the flip side, the extraterrestrials aren't the typical cold, calculating invaders. They have complex personalities, strange powers, and sometimes bizarre motivations that mirror the eeriness of traditional ghost stories. The overlap between these two elements creates a thrilling synergy, where one character's supernatural encounter might be linked to an alien invasion, or where a ghost's curse could be caused by an alien artifact. The chemistry between Okarun and Momo is also key to the series' success. As the two of them are thrust

into this chaotic, supernatural sci-fi world, their dynamic is central to the plot's emotional beats. Momo's skepticism contrasts with Okarun's deep belief in the unnatural, but over time, their journey reveals how these two seemingly incompatible elements—faith in the paranormal and reliance on scientific reasoning, are both necessary to unravel the mysteries they face. In a sense, Dandadan uses the fusion of these genres to highlight themes of balance and mutual understanding.

Dandadan is an absolute treat. The action scenes are intense, fast-

paced, and visually stunning, with a mix of traditional animation and surreal, otherworldly designs that brilliantly capture the bizarre and thrilling nature of the plot. The creatures and entities that populate the world—whether ghostly spirits or alien invaders—are distinctive, with creative designs that playfully blend elements of horror and sci-fi. The anime is a testament of how blending genres can lead to fresh, exciting narratives, and one that will leave viewers eagerly awaiting each new twist and revelation in the bizarre world of Dandadan. 10 out of 10 stars.



# MCU

## Phase 4 and 5

### MULTIVERSE OF MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

By Klyde Franzine Angelu Meneses  
Artwork by Lowell Jingrey Mongcal & Alexander Manalo

**A**t this point, I think I'm not the only one who's feeling a bit fatigued by the direction the MCU is heading. What started as a well-thought-out universe with deeply personal stories for its characters is now getting bogged down by a heavy reliance on crossovers, multiverse gimmicks, and constantly introducing new characters in the easiest way possible—through the multiverse. It's starting to feel like Marvel's lost its way when it comes to crafting solid, self-contained narratives.

Let's talk about the multiverse for a second. At first, it was a cool concept, something that opened up a ton of possibilities. I loved Spider-Man: No Way Home, and even Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness had its moments. But now? It's like every new character that's introduced has to be from another universe, another timeline, another dimension. Want a new hero? Just say they're a variant. Need a new villain? Boom, another multiversal threat. It's an easy fix that's quickly becoming a crutch. Instead of taking the time to build up these characters in the established universe, Marvel's throwing them in with barely any explanation, and it just doesn't hit the same. This is where I think the MCU is dropping the ball. Back in the earlier phases, Marvel was all about giving characters their own stories. Each film was an opportunity to dive deep into a character's motivations, struggles, and growth. Think about how Iron Man set up Tony Stark's arc or how Captain America: The First Avenger grounded Steve Rogers in a way that made sense for his time period. These were character-driven

stories, and that's what made the MCU so special. You could get attached to each hero individually before they came together for the big crossover events.

But now? The focus is more on setting up the next big crossover or introducing yet another hero who's tied to some convoluted multiverse plot. The worst part is, a lot of these characters feel like they're just there to check a box for whatever team-up is coming next. It's like Marvel's treating the multiverse as a catch-all solution—no need to spend time on a compelling origin story or meaningful character development when you can just pull a version from another dimension. That leaves fans feeling disconnected and less invested in the characters themselves. Another thing that bugs me is how the "Sacred Timeline" concept is just completely thrown out the window. Remember when the TVA in Loki made such a big deal about protecting the timeline? Now, it's like that whole idea doesn't matter anymore. The multiverse has turned into a free-for-all, and there's no real sense of stakes when the timeline is constantly being twisted and bent in every direction. What happened to the sense of structure, continuity, and purpose?

Honestly, I think it's time for Marvel to pump the brakes. The multiverse is a great concept, but it shouldn't be the default solution for everything. Marvel needs to focus on standalone films, where characters can breathe and develop without relying on gimmicks. It's time to bring back those deep, character-driven stories that made us fall in love with the MCU in the first place. 6/10.

## Shattered Mirrors, Shared Reflections: Muslim-Christian Unity in Diversity

By Ma. Sophia Lauraine A. Ramirez & Adrian D. Climaco  
Photo by Ricardo Carlos Comia

The mirror of society is a rich mosaic of faith and religion. It blends pieces of individual diversity into a picture of harmony, with each tile representing unique beliefs and practices. Religion is the belief and worship of an entity—a way of life. Faith means a trust in something that has been there, which perhaps each of us cannot see or put hands on; whereas religion is the expression or practice of that faith—to be in a relationship with what one holds dear, sacred, and worth honoring. In today's society, the spectrum of religion is vast and varied, and coexistence is a challenge we face.

From wars to strife, there is no denial of the fact that religion has caused some of the troubles on this earth. But today, religions of all shades make a mosaic together that colors its unique shades more deeply towards our differences and more in-depth towards our shared perspective towards a better future. In line with this, it is important to bring about meaningful awareness celebrations such as the Muslim-Christian Friendship Month as a beacon of unity, fostering camaraderie and understanding among faiths. This celebration reminds us that, regardless of religion, being united means harvesting acceptance with each other despite our differences, strengthening the bonds that make us one community, mirroring the fragments of hope.

### Cracks in Beliefs

From cultural practices and traditions, dialect, ideology, religion, ethnicity, habits, and attitude, it is evident that throughout our shared history lies the shared dichotomy of our beliefs. Muslims in Islam view Jesus as a prophet, not a divine entity. In Christian principles, Jesus is the Son of God, symbolizing salvation and saving millions of sinners. Muslims believe in human responsibility for their sins, not solely Jesus'. More so, religious conflicts occurred between Muslims and Christians during the Crusades from the 11th to the 13th centuries. Christian armies sought to regain Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslim control, sparking centuries of warfare and distrust.

Likewise, humans are different; every face and everyone seems to contrast, and beliefs are another piece of this contrast. That much is not a new subject; there will always be things that people disagree on, and our vast differences are perhaps to blame for the disputes and disagreements.

Historically, religion has been the source of political, economic, and personal conflict. Tensions have been seeping and growing as clashes between religious ideologies persist. There are even times when these tensions erupted and manifested in violent confrontations. The Philippines faces tensions between Christians and Muslims, with Filipino Muslims residing in Mindanao. These Muslim groups, particularly Moro, have a long history of self-governance and distinct cultural identity. Their presence in Mindanao, calls for autonomy, and practice of Sharia, distinguishes them

from other religious groups in the country, highlighting the ongoing conflict between religious ideologies.

It would be strange for religions not to clash, as some of them truly give opposing views on principles and morality. When diverse faiths intersect, the question of right and wrong becomes a fascinating exploration of human morality, which is a system of principles concerning the distinction between good and bad behavior, is a complicated matter. All opt to raise questions and it becomes even more confusing when religion, with its diverse interpretations and teachings, describes its stance on morality, but for each faith, both sides of the coin are casting for one goal—lifelong servants.

Muslim-Christian conflict often sees faith find its balance between fueling the tensions and paving ways to healing. However, cultural misunderstandings and political disputes cloud that picture. But, in an untold way, faith still has great potential for collaboration, in giving and redefining identities and community bonding, and in filling human life with profound meaning, which is why it is among the most powerful forces in society.

### Unity in Diversity

Respect. When asked about the mutual customs that bridge the gap between culture and religion, leaders and faith believers seemed to agree that respect is the only way to peace and unity. We are all humans, each with our different Gods and faiths. Yet, the differences we have reflect a story of camaraderie, bonds, and friendship.

Islam and Christianity similarly preach valuable teachings like compassion, forgiveness, and justice. It reminds everybody of the possibility of mutual dialogue, even amidst war and hope

for reconciliation. Thus, faith can bring division closer to understanding in this quest for peace. In a world that often emphasizes differences, it's comforting to remember that religion, with its focus on individuality, also encourages us to see the bigger picture that includes everyone. It's a reminder that we are all part of a larger community, living with purposes that must help enrich everyone despite differences. This notion remains as the celebration of the Muslim-Christian Friendship Month commences.

"Every year ay may celebration ng Muslim-Christian friendship, from that pride na ito ni UB, na dapat hindi ka mapahiwalay sa grupong ito, dahil looking forward na magkaroon ng kapayapaan at pagmamahal sa pagitan ng Muslim at Kristiyano." Sir Apolinario Maranan, the Community Extension Services Head, states.

He emphasized that fostering a deeper understanding and culture of Muslim-Christian friendship is a responsibility the youth should also embrace. He highlighted that each generation brings unique traditions and perspectives, which serve as bridges to connect and enrich interfaith relationships. By cultivating these connections, young people can play a significant role in promoting harmony, mutual respect, and shared values across diverse communities.

The Muslim-Christian Friendship Month that is celebrated every September in the city of Lipa embodies the hope for unification, peaceful tomorrows, and truthful camaraderie between religions. As each being in this country reflects the Filipino identity, each also reflects unity, regardless of the ingrained differences. Despite all these individualities, one thing remains clear: we are all Filipinos, surviving and thriving as we take this world hand in hand amidst the stark disparages and discourse. Embracing

diversity presents challenges and milestones down the road, enriching us all to be more resilient and flexible in times of difficulty and triumph.

"Hindi na natin pinag-uusapan dito ang racial discrimination, tayong lahat ay Pilipino, kaya sa pagtutulungan at pagkilala sa isa't isa ay lalong gumaganda ang samahan," expressed by His Royal Highness Sultan Faizal Cogoyan "Cocoy" Benaning Bansao, Paramount Sultan of the Royal Houses of Sultanate of Batangas, in an interview during the 9th anniversary and celebration of Muslim-Christian Friendship Month at the Multi-purpose hall at the University of Batangas-Lipa (UBLC).

This testimony is not just a mere statement but an advocacy. The cries of the Muslim people who face such harsh judgment towards who they are. After all, each ponders the desire to join hands together as it sheds light on a lifelong alliance, regardless of their differences. As long as their teachings are of the people to commit a common good, it is the hope we all reflect on.

### Faith in its Entirety

In preserving and observing culture, Muslims and Christians pride themselves on peace and love. In a time when peace is a fragile subject, diversity bridges the understanding of society's different cultures. The friendship must remain continuous. The people that we turn to are each other, and we are the ones that help each other.

Between gaps and lapses, humanity can create change, especially for the younger generation. From universities creating unity in different organizations,

influence is the affluent asset that exists mid-air. Hence, voice is a weapon for those who are in the corners of each room, feeling the pressure of being different because of religion. Despite all these, UBLC—as an advocate for dialogues for unity and understanding—aims to uphold the building blocks of solidarity among student Muslims and Christians, not just sharing a common goal of worshiping their respective beliefs but to spread goodness in each other.

"Schools and universities are not mere centers for academic learning; they play a big role in students' understanding. Unity in diversity, from those words we can coin the word UNIVERSITY, it influences and promotes unity in the community it serves," Mrs. Milette De Torres, Student Affairs and External Program Officer, stated in extension to this year's theme, "Unity in Diversity."

It emphasizes unity among individuals and diversity being a strength of the university. By respecting each other's differences, we have attained profound partnership with all the members of this academic community for eight decades. This is indeed a milestone that we shall celebrate.

The Muslim-Christian Friendship Month serves as a gentle reminder of the power of unity, understanding, and empathy. In celebrating our shared humanity, we recognize the importance of respecting and embracing our differences. Faith, in all its diverse expressions, is transfixed in the mosaic of our daily lives, cut and fragmented to highlight the beautiful image of unity in diversity. Thus, whether we call upon Allah, God, or any other deity, these are manifestations of hope, guiding us through life's challenges. In a world often divided by words or steel, let us remember that faith, at its core, connects us all.



# BLACK, WHITE AND BLUE

## THE CHARM OF MALICE

By Julius Rayven Bool & Ma. Sophia Lauraine A. Ramirez  
Photo By Lowell Jingrey Mongcal

If an apple a day keeps the doctor away; then, an amulet of the evil eye keeps the envy at bay. An iconic cobalt blue on the outer circle, white pupil, and small black iris are more than its vision.

An ancient belief aimed to ward off pessimistic energy from the malicious glare has transcended into a major pop culture symbol and a trinket fashion in the 21st-century capitalist marketplace. If the eye morphs with the mediums of the modern world, it raises the question: how has a belief born in ancient superstitions, become a chic accessory? Are people aware of its original purpose, or is the evil eye merely a relic that exploits consumer interest in mysticism?

Wearing an amulet without understanding its significance might diminish its protective power. And so, what exactly is its charm—inciting people to hop on the trend—and how does this 'cultural icon' shape its relevance?



### Sight from the Past

Seeking down the road, the evil eye is an antiquated superstition of ancient civilizations. A culture that spread primarily in Ancient Mesopotamia. Born out of malice, it came from a look of jealousy. A person bridled with envy, either intentional or not, may cast the spell. In these instances, a person whose jealous gaze causes catastrophe may not be aware of the curse they cast. Jealousy is a look that kills like no other, its negativity even gives power to the undeserving—spoiling and spreading at a steady pace.

Much like the sight they symbolize, many people wore amulets or talismans with an eye on them. Aimed to combat the evil eye—like Hamsa or the Hand of Fatima known in Africa & Muslim. In Greece, they used apotropaic symbols to protect against it.

The evil eye, whose presence spans across continents, is known by many names. In Turkey, it is called "nazar boncugu" which means sight and bead. As time passed and civilizations developed, the evil eye spread its grasp. It swam across continents, even reached Ancient Egypt, merging with the Eye of Horus.

Living close to home, the Philippines also has a close concept of the evil eye and its amulet. Locally known as "usog," it partners with an equivalent protection called "Pwera Usog." This superstition protects young children or babies from being greeted or touched by others who unknowingly emit negative energy. Hence, these perceived people that bring negative energy, asked to smear their own saliva under the foot or palms of the

child, mimicking the symbol of the cross.

A culture that stood the testament of time had an undercurrent but never truly gone, the evil eye took many forms. However, they all pointed to a single belief: the sight of malice.

### Neoteric Outlook

Winding through the road, over millennia where all that's wrong is right and all that's bad is good, the evil eye amulet became a trend. Navigating its superstition, developed into today's mainstream—protecting one's overall mental wellness. Its course of action is most clear amongst millennials and Gen-Z—eliminating feelings of uncertainty. Some may wear or display the amulet without full knowledge of its historical and cultural background.

Many UBLC students are aware of its superstition; some started believing it when they got to learn its meaning.

"I learned it from my friend. I know that whenever you have some achievements in life and you know that someone feels envy, their glares or anything they say could cause harm to you. And to avoid it, you can use [the] evil eye as a protection to that bad luck," Allysa V., a 2nd year BS Accountancy student, said.

Even so, most students still do not know its origin. Nonetheless, as a kid, Mr. Lacorte knew about the evil eye and then started believing it in high school. His reliance on the evil eye came from the surrounding people sharing their experiences. As for Ms. Allysa, her friend gave her an evil eye bracelet. She said it would protect her from those who envied her. So, Ms. Allysa believed it and now owns 2 such bracelets.

Speaking of owning a charm, how can someone determine the amulet's effectiveness if they bought it themselves? Adults and other people assert that for protective charms and pendants to be effective, they must be received from another individual. Like Ms. Allysa, her friend, gave her the amulets, making their power more reliable.

Looking through the other side of the glass, some college students opt to use this to pass their academics and board exams—it repels bad omens, like a mug or frame falling and breaking the glass. It might be seen as an overreaction to some, but to many it's a protection.

Coming forth to its trend, the evil eye propelled its symbol in the digital realm. They even use the evil eye amulet as an emoji on their social media platforms. They believe that, even in the digital realm, negativity on their accounts could become real. Hence, a desire for "protection" against the stresses of social media, fast-paced living, and the pressures of success.

"I used that emoji whenever I had some achievements. It could be on socmed post or notes on ig or mess," Allysa said.

Since then, the evil eye amulet has morphed from a protection tool into a cross-cultural trend. It allowed people to connect in something ancient yet relevant to modern fears. For some, it's an expression of personal style; for others, it's a nod to spirituality.

### A Scry for Sale

The road is there, so they dare chase the sublime; evil eye have found a new home in consumer capitalism. The fashion industry has seized the popularity

of mystical symbolism, using the evil eye amulet to attract spiritually inclined buyers. Marketplaces have turned it into a ubiquitous style statement. A protective symbol transformed into a trendy emblem. It strayed from the path of cultural roots, and its significance diluted in favor of aesthetics.

However, a paper from the Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization argues that it defends their assets from envy and economically unproductive impulses. From a purely economic standpoint, the evil eye's popularity represents a way to earn income in the cultural shift toward wellness and spiritualism.

The evil eye amulet has become a familiar icon from a specific belief to generalized use. The once-revered tool is now a prop, an insignificant anecdote, used as an accessory rather than a shield. However, this mere charm still carries a deeper meaning for many. After all, if an apple a day keeps the doctor away; then, an amulet of evil eye omits negativity that lurks around the way.



## PEN BITES in a BYTE WORLD

By Lowell Jingrey Mongcal & Ma. Sophia Lauraine Ramirez  
Artwork By Marianne Mercado

If someone asked for a copy of your notes, would you give a handwritten piece of paper or send a message through a screen? In a world saturated with screens and digital devices, handwriting is gradually becoming a relic of the past. As technology transforms how education is taught and learned, a complete page of notes can be sent with a single click, and assignments can be turned in within seconds.

### From Scribe to Screen

As humans evolve and their knowledge becomes more vast, the journey from scribe to screen reveals more than technological progress. It shows the relationship between humans and their ideas. Fast and, at times, instant ideas that appear and disappear in the blink of an eye become abrupt and more challenging to track, thus requiring a more efficient note-taking approach.

Schools are rapidly adopting technology to enhance the educational experience, with students relying on computers, laptops, and tablets most of the time instead of pen and paper. This shift from traditional writing to digital brought convenience and accessibility, encouraging outputs to be produced more efficiently. Technology saw the rise of alternatives previously deemed impossible, highlighting the advancements of humanity.

While technology brought promising changes, it also proved to have its own set of challenges. It hinders a student's ability to multitask as screen fatigue, distractions, and reliance on automation become more common, thus impeding the students' ability to be self-sufficient.

### Pen's Timeless Appeal

Written carefully, ensuring that the ink used is not a waste but with purpose,

these notes testify to the timeless nature of humanity and our shared experiences, with each student rushing to catch up with their professor's speed, abbreviating, and sometimes, even consciously, writing in calligraphy so messy that reviewing would prove to be a challenge. These memories are tied to a piece of paper, forever immortalized by a pen, a testament to the human touch. From ancient scrolls to elegant quills, handwritten notes have always held a personal touch. Adored for its sentimental value, it is precious to be given a letter filled with affection and effort. From the swirls of a letter to the scent of papers, the written world holds the appeal of time.

Mistakes, although a part of human nature, are given emphasis when writing on a piece of paper. There is a certain attention paid to every strike or dash made in an effort to omit or rephrase. In comparison to the digital scheme, where things can flow as erasures can be done without much cost and consequence. Thus, it is in pens, that attentiveness on the words that are written do we ensure that erasures are minimized and every pen strokes are deemed significant.

Handwriting provides a

counterbalance to constant screen time, providing a refreshing alternative and a sense of connection and concentration that often felt lacking in the digital setting. Students who take time to write by hand often find they absorb knowledge deeper and reflect better. Many students who prefer handwriting say that it improves their understanding and helps them recall information better.

As Audrey van der Meer, a psychologist and study co-author at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, says, "We don't see that [synchronized activity] in typewriting at all." EEG-studies from 2017 showed increased brain connectivity was only seen when writing by hand rather than simply pressing keys on a keyboard and concluded that delicate and complex hand movements might be more beneficial for education.

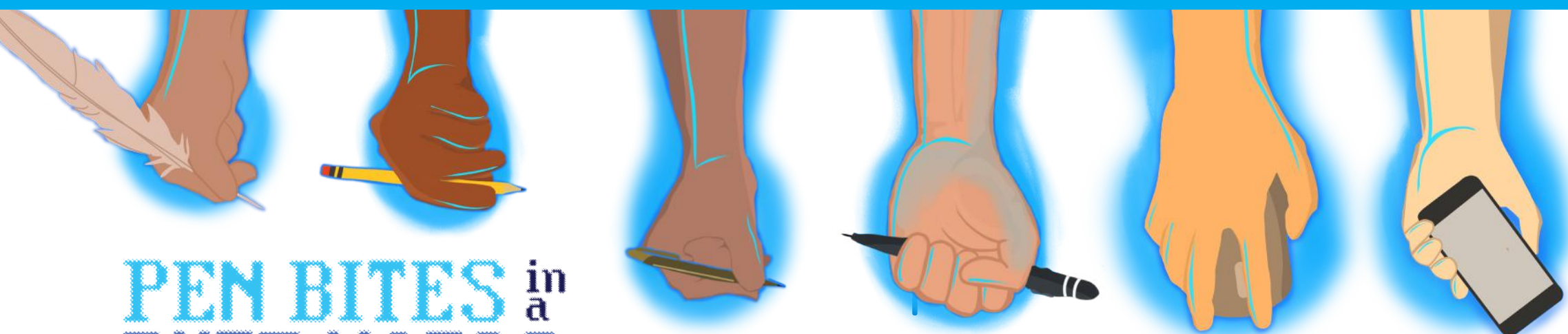
The charm of pen and paper lies in its simplicity. It does not require fancy equipment, nor must it always be beautiful. Handwriting can be done anytime, anywhere, without the need for expensive gadgets—as long as there is a pen, anything can be written, even without a piece of paper. They just need

to be understood, complete, and concise. In their simplicity, they offer a sense of ease and comfort, a familiar tool for expression in a complex world.

### A Time for Refills

As technology progresses in this digital age, we must preserve and appreciate the value of writing by hand. Our decisions about how to write with information become increasingly important. Will you go for the tactile, introspective feeling of writing by hand or the convenience and ease of digital writing? Or a combination of both that offers the balance you need, allowing you to customize your writing experience in any way you see fit.

In a world where technology continuously evolves along society, the pen remains significant as a meaningful and personal way to write. Whether in a journal, a note, or a personal letter, it creates a connection that digital devices cannot replicate. Shaped by what feels best with your writing preference and needs in today's digital age. When someone requests a copy of your notes, would you pick up a pen or tap a screen? The decision, as always, is in your hands.



# PET PEEVE PARADOX

By Klyde Franzine Angelu Meneses  
Artwork By Lowell Jingrey Mongcal

In a world where social media magnifies every complaint and critique, a curious phenomenon is taking root: the normalization of the pet peeve mentality as a standard for judging others. What might have been a private annoyance has transformed into a public test for acceptable behavior.

Pet peeves are personal irritations that vary from person to person. They can range from common behaviors—to more unique quirks, misuse of certain words, or habits that disrupt one's sense of order. The uniqueness of pet peeves lies in their subjective nature; what annoys one person may not bother another at all.

## The Rise of Criticism: When Thoughts Become Voices

With the rise of pop culture and social media, pet peeves became even more widespread. Television shows and movies began highlighting and criticizing characters' pet peeves, making them relatable to audiences. Social media platforms further fueled this trend, allowing people to share their pet peeves and bond over shared experiences. Memes and hashtags like #petpeeve

became popular, creating a sense of community among those who found humor and validation in expressing their annoyances. This cultural acceptance has transformed pet peeves from private grievances into topics of public discourse.

The existence of pet peeves can profoundly affect interpersonal behavior. When individuals encounter their irritations, forms of silent criticism become vocalized. They may respond with a spectrum of reactions, ranging from passive-aggressive comments to direct confrontation. Such responses can initiate a cycle of negativity, where one person's annoyance provokes defensiveness in others, leading to conflict and miscommunication—as the normalization of discussing pet peeves cultivates a culture of criticism. As individuals bond over shared grievances, there may be an unspoken encouragement to judge and critique others, thereby magnifying minor annoyances and making conflict a common occurrence.

## Top of the Food Chain: Annoyance to Alienation

As our anger builds, so does the tendency to judge. We may start to view them as annoying, fundamentally flawed, or inconsiderate. This judgment can cloud our perception and lead to a narrow understanding of their behavior. Instead of considering their perspective or the reasons behind their actions, we label them as "bastos" or "walang pakialam". This judgment solidifies our annoyance, causing us to view them solely through the lens of that one behavior. Over time, every instance of that behavior reinforces our irritation, transforming the person into a full-blown pet peeve.

"Kaya, ayaw namin kay Ma'am \*\*\*\* kasi hindi siya nagbibigay ng consideration sa plates. Pet peeve talaga yan ng section namin," heard from the corridors of UBLC Building C.

The tendency to judge others may also stem from insecurity. Students may feel the need to project their insecurities onto their peers to fit in or elevate their status within social hierarchies. This cycle can lead to a toxic environment where kindness and understanding take a backseat to judgment and exclusion. Accents and speech patterns are integral to identity, yet they often become targets for ridicule. Students with unique accents may be teased, leading to feelings of self-consciousness. This judgmental behavior can discourage individuals from fully expressing themselves, hampering their communication skills and social interactions.

"Naalala mo ba si ano? Diba Bisaya yun? Nung nag compete siya noong Buwan ng Wika utas kaming magkakaibigan kasi ang weird ng pronunciation niya ng mga words at kakahiya, pet peeve ko siya kapag nagsasalita," overheard from a group of students chatting loudly in the hallway between classes.

The repercussions of pet peeves extend beyond personal discomfort—it can fundamentally alter student behavior. What starts as an eye roll or a passive-aggressive comment can escalate into open hostility. Students may begin to isolate themselves, avoiding situations where their peeves are triggered. This withdrawal impacts their academic experience and stunts their social growth. Friendships that once flourished can quickly sour over petty grievances. A student may snap at a friend for talking too loudly during study sessions, leading to hurt feelings and misunderstandings.



"Kaya ko pet peeve sina ano, dahil yung circle of friends nila ay nangha-hate sila ng tao nang walang reason," shared a rant of a freshman from the CEAS Department.

The impact on individuals and society necessitates a comprehensive

approach to mitigate its effects and promote a more inclusive and respectful environment. Individuals acknowledging and addressing this issue can create a safer, more empathetic world for everyone. Therefore, this justifies their actions of having pet peeves towards a particular group.

It can become a deeply ingrained trait, perpetually shaping how individuals perceive and judge others. This entrenched mindset poses significant concerns, as it may foster polarization, emotional reactivity, and entrenched biases. Acknowledging and accepting this reality is crucial, as it allows for targeted efforts to mitigate its harmful effects and promote constructive dialogue despite the challenges ahead. Moreover, recognizing the persistence of the pet peeve mentality encourages a nuanced understanding of its influence on personal relationships, social interactions, and community dynamics. By accepting its presence, we can strive for increased empathy, critical thinking, and open communication, ultimately navigating the complexities of a divisive societal landscape.

Over time, these minor incidents accumulate, creating an environment where communication breaks down. The very connections that enrich the college experience become strained and fractured.

## Recognizing Flaws: Man vs. Man

Hate incitement has become a pervasive issue worldwide, becoming a personal annoyance, frustration, and even anger for many individuals. Initially, hate incitement may have been a distant concern, barely registering on personal radars. However, growing awareness, personal connections, and emotional resonance have evolved into a pressing pet peeve. The proliferation underscores a societal need for inclusivity, respect, and social cohesion. Addressing this issue requires a nuanced understanding of its complexities, therefore recognizing it as a pet peeve—which can also spark positive change.

# AI-TOM

## LINE AUTOMATED EXCELLENCE:

### HOW AI REVOLUTIONIZES STUDENT EXPERIENCE

By Klyde Franzine Angelu Meneses  
Artwork By Alexander Manalo

In today's fast-paced technological landscape, artificial intelligence (AI) stands out as a groundbreaking force—revolutionizing lifestyle, culture, work habits, and education. At the University of Batangas-Lipa City (UBLC), students witness firsthand how AI reshapes their academic journeys and everyday lives. This exploration highlights the cultural shifts and evolving educational practices shaped by AI, revealing both the advantages and challenges it brings. As the UBian community adapts to this dynamic environment, understanding these changes is essential for navigating the complexities of modern education.

## A New Era of Learning

Let's be real. How many times have you let AI do the heavy lifting for your homework, essays, or last-minute study sessions? It's clear that technology's made its mark in the classroom and our academic lives. But here's the real question: Are you teaming up with AI to handle your assignments, or are you secretly worried it's doing more of the work than you are? Let's dive into how AI's changing the student game—one algorithm at a time.

The integration of AI into student life began subtly, but it was during the COVID-19 pandemic that its role became particularly pronounced. With the abrupt shift to online classes, students faced numerous challenges, including adapting to new learning environments, managing time effectively, and accessing resources. As schools wander aimlessly on how to continue education despite the circumstances, they started adapting and relying on technology that can maintain synchronous classes—recreating real-time teaching experiences. Over time, as these educational methods struggle to maintain engagement, students began seeking AI tools to support their learning. Platforms like AI-driven tutoring systems and virtual study assistants gained traction, offering personalized support

that addressed individual needs. Learning methods become more efficient—with commonly used AI apps like ChatGPT, Quizlet, and Grammarly playing a crucial role during the height of the pandemic.

This newfound reliance on technology helped students adapt to the demands of online education and led to improved academic performance for many. A ripple effect occurred as students began sharing their experiences with AI tools. Social media groups and online forums dedicated to discussing AI in education sprang up, where students exchanged tips and recommendations. The awareness of artificial intelligence among students, particularly at UBLC, has significantly increased in recent years.

## Revolutionized Teaching

The effectiveness of AI-driven approaches becomes evident as students grasp complex lesson concepts more quickly and thoroughly. Unlike traditional teaching methods, which often rely on a one-size-fits-all model, the AI's ability to customize its instruction ensures that no learner is left behind. This enhances engagement and fosters a deeper understanding of the subject matter, showcasing the potential of AI to revolutionize the educational landscape.

"Parang naging teacher ko yung AI; dahil meron akong prof na hindi masyadong maayos ang turo. Kapag hindi ko maintindihan nang maayos ang turo, tinatanong and pinapa-explain ko sa AI in which, mas nege-gets ko siya," Lhadimir A. Arce, a 1st Year BS Psychology student, said.

Before the advent of AI tools, Information Technology students often faced significant challenges when encountering coding problems. When struggling with bugs or errors in their code, they typically resort to traditional troubleshooting methods, such as manually reviewing their code line by line or consulting textbooks and online documentation. Usage of AI applications

like Blackbox, Code Chat, Copilot, and CodeGPT offers real-time code suggestions, helping students write more efficient and error-free code. Students can troubleshoot issues faster and learn new programming languages more effectively.

"Mahirap kasi i-search ang mga problema sa coding, lalo na pag manomano mo siya hahanapin. Sa AI kasi, pwede mo ipa-debug sa kanya ang mga erros sa program mo," said Paul Steven O. Vidal, a 2nd Year BS Information Technology student, regarding the effects of how AI made his programming course undemanding and time efficient.

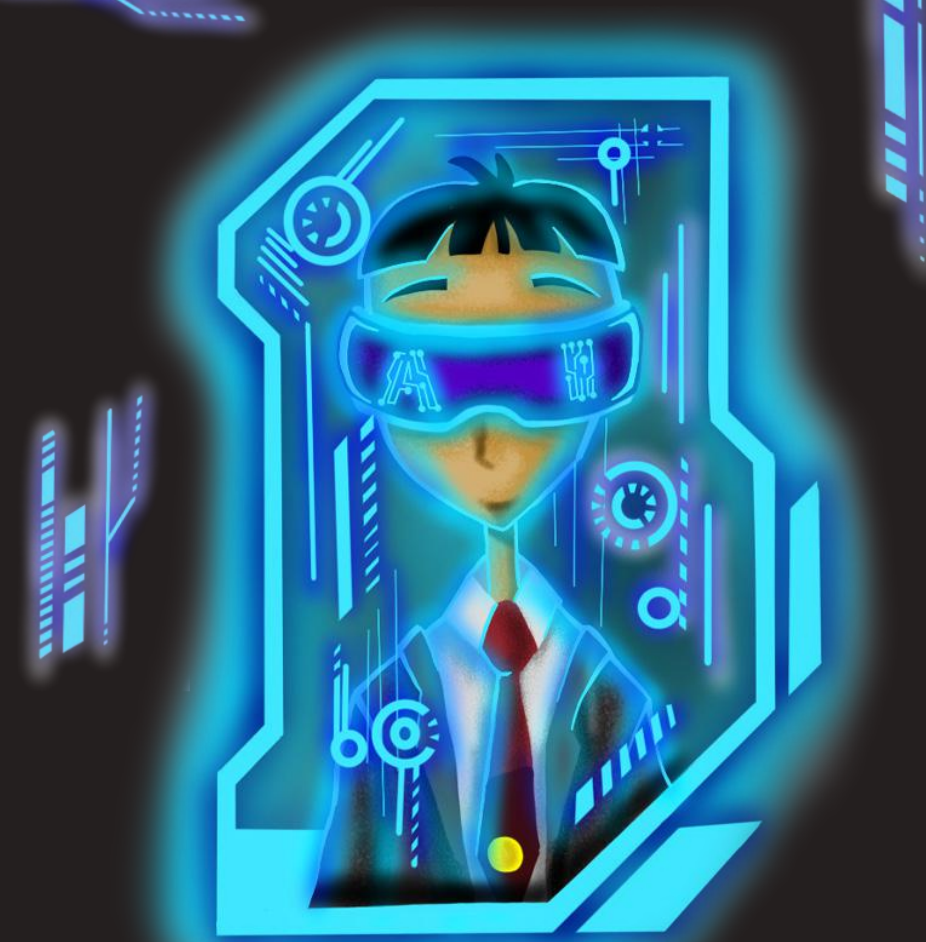
## Impact beyond Academics

As university students juggle academic responsibilities and part-time jobs, artificial intelligence is emerging as a vital resource. AI-driven scheduling apps are optimizing time management by analyzing workloads and suggesting efficient study plans that align with work hours, reducing stress and promoting a healthier work-life balance.

Mark Aaron R. Magnaye, a 1st Year BS International Hospitality Management student, said that he is a part-time student working, particularly in call center agencies. With the help of AI, he has found a valuable ally as he navigates the challenges of his busy lifestyle. Utilizing AI-powered scheduling apps, he efficiently organizes his study sessions around his work shifts, ensuring he meets academic deadlines while fulfilling job commitments, making the most of his university experience.

The integration of artificial intelligence into the daily lives of the students of UBLC is significantly transforming their social behaviors and interactions. AI-driven platforms and social media algorithms facilitate student connections based on shared interests and academic pursuits. Apps like Facebook and Discord use AI to recommend groups and events that align with students' profiles, fostering new friendships and collaborative opportunities. This ease of connection encourages students to engage with a broader academic and social network. As the quest for love increasingly shifts to the digital realm, students are turning to dating and matchmaking apps to navigate their busy university lives.

With demanding schedules, these platforms provide a convenient way to connect with potential partners who share similar interests and values. AI-powered apps like Tinder analyze user preferences and behaviors to suggest compatible matches, increasing the chances of forming meaningful relationships.



In addition to romantic pursuits, students are integrating AI into their daily routines to enhance efficiency and convenience. Intelligent assistants such as Siri and Gemini help manage tasks, while fitness trackers promote health and well-being. This integration of technology allows students to better balance their academic responsibilities with personal care. Shopping apps like Shopee and Lazada also leverage AI to offer personalized recommendations, making it easier for students to find essential items, from school supplies to everyday necessities.

By embracing AI across various aspects of their lives, students are discovering innovative ways to boost productivity, stay organized, and maintain a healthy lifestyle—enriching their university experience.

## What's Next?

AI is undoubtedly reshaping the student experience, offering exciting possibilities and potential pitfalls. On

the positive side, it revolutionized how students learn, making education more personalized and accessible. However, the rise of AI also brings challenges, as students may become overly reliant on technology, using AI to do the heavy lifting on assignments and reducing opportunities for critical thinking and problem-solving. As we look into the future, the key lies in balance, as AI is a powerful tool and must be used wisely. Students should embrace AI to enhance their learning without letting it replace the hard work and creativity that true education requires.

In the lives of the UBLC students and its community, AI continues to advance in academic, cultural, and social lives. While these technologies present numerous benefits, students must balance digital engagement with meaningful in-person interactions. By harnessing AI's potential while fostering authentic relationships, they can effectively navigate their university journey and prepare for future challenges in a digital world.

# A WRONG Turn

By Mark Joseph N. Calingasan  
Artwork by Deo Arquisola

As I step in and sit,  
Looking out in confusion.  
The tarps were split,  
Of those two who were in union,  
When they ran for their seats.

Stepping in the spotlight,  
Is the extra-judicial killer's daughter.  
On another sight,  
Is the son of the Martial law's commander.  
Everyone is now looking for the funds.

The red and green parted,  
So I opened my mobile  
To search where it all started.  
The issues went flooding, file after file.  
What have they done on their seats?

Tears flowed down as I scroll  
Their treacheries and lies.  
I am enticed, carried by the trolls,  
And Filipinos got nothing as a prize.  
When will it end, this horrendous cycle in our land?



# How to let A LIFE GO

By Faye Asher De Vera  
Artwork by Ricardo Carlos Comia

Like dark, long roads, her ways are unknown,  
The path is there, but never clear.  
Passengers of the wheel, in their seats felt blown  
Though the jeepney moved still, is Alice worthy to steer?

Beyond the dark, long roads, her secret hides.  
Because darkness has its way of shrouding the truth

Imagine how many people rode in the lies.  
How can one go on if there's a monster making its way inside?

How can one get off on cursed wheels?  
Is it the dark long road we should fear?

The road may be dark, but it's the driver that should make us safe

The question remains, should we let Alice steer?



# TRUTH be told

By Adrian D. Climaco  
Artwork by Deo Arquisola

Pearl of the Orient—where wisdom once soared,  
An owl flees through the night, its strength no more.  
Feathers dull, hoots faint, eyes weary with age,  
Wisdom, now cloaked in a clever, silent cage.

A comrade mimics the song of stupidity,  
Echoes a nonsensical yet amusing rhythm.  
A parrot with its colorful exterior caught delight,  
But within, no depth—just a hollow flight.

As I continued to read this book, I sighed  
The owl's voice in the trees fades like sand  
With his 'friend' parrot, peskily singing, I cried  
The fake boon tone is something I cannot stand

"We are not allies, Kaibigan," the owl did say,  
Wisdom opts not to knot with a Ne'er-do-well.  
"But I, too, carry wisdom", the parrot blazed,  
Or are you like little Miss Inday with lies to tell?

A book forged by dreams or borrowed wings,  
In Mercado, it serves the foolish imprudent kings.  
For a ten million coin for its tuft created so poor,  
Serves no brilliance and 'tis rotten to its core.

"Should I give this a chance?"—thoughts are clogging,  
Inside its thin pages, there is not much as dazzling.  
But Mommy says, "Look, this book can teach,"  
But it feels stolen, there is no news to preach.

As this jeepney bounces bumper to bumper,  
I ponder genuine stories that truly matter.  
In this mean world, I beg for tales with magic,  
Howbeit, I only see narratives, ever-so-cryptic.

The true meaning of what glows and what glints,  
Is indistinguishable for me to grandly understand.  
But, when that unsightly identity triggers misery,  
Through my eyes, what truth could forever stand?





# A Farmer's WORTH

By Prinses April Linatoc  
Artwork by Marianne Mercado

It is like a dream to be able to carry life,  
Crops and grains harvested, true symbols of vitality  
It is an honor ferrying the blood and sweat of another,  
From soil to table—here is the work of a farmer

Gathered in sacks, packs, and bundles,  
Stacking everything up in the jeep like a puzzle  
These people, I see, are satisfied;  
I mean, who wouldn't be seeing their efforts materialized?

And so, I left the barn full,  
Hoping to return hungry and eager for another brimful  
But I came back, not famished, just dumbstruck,  
As I returned with a dreadful, rotten stomach

For what reason should I continue traversing the road,  
If, at the end, I have to see them suffer?  
Struggling and bustling, filling more than the jeepney can hold—  
Months of hard work, alas! Straight down the gutter

Season after season, they work,  
Only to receive a few coins up in a fork,  
Like the fare I charge for every trip  
Once it all comes down, is it still worth it?



# WEIGHT of the Ride

By Princess Lyan Peñamante  
Artwork by Ricardo Carlos Comia

Inside the metal beast, stories unfold,  
as it jolts through city streets,  
revealing the uneven pavement,  
the cracks where dreams slip away  
To the left, a mother,  
bearing burdens greater than her child,  
Beside her, a girl—young, bold—  
marked by hands that know no kindness,

The driver steers through this chaos,  
but do they hear the voices?  
The unspoken cries, the hidden fears,  
for every route that leads astray  
Will you shut your eyes, and pretend to sleep,  
while the world reveals its scars beneath?  
When the fire to speak burns fiercely within,  
will you turn away from the cries, the haunting pain?  
With every shout, every cry for change,  
the roads unveil their hidden truths,  
voices rise like a tide,  
demanding a journey towards equality.  
Together, navigate the streets of hope,  
forging a path where all are seen,  
Proclaiming that strength lies in unity,  
for silence will never drown the call for change.

Here lies the task of the truth seeker,  
the one who picks up the fallen words,  
Who risks the threat of silence and shadow,  
to ensure the light reaches every corner  
In the noise, in the silence,  
Us, both weapon and shield,  
A duty carved deep within the soul,  
To question, to speak, to bear witness.

We ride through streets tangled in secrets,  
Knowing that silence is a thief of justice,  
Every truth untold is a wound left open,  
A way concealed by those who benefit from the dark

In a world where silence stifles truth,  
The fearless pen becomes a pulse, a lifeline,  
A flame that keeps hope alive through the shadows,  
An echo stirring hearts, kindling change

The voices of the oppressed deserve their ink,  
The cries of the fallen echo in every line,  
The pen, our voice, cut through lies,  
Reminding the world that truth has a right to shine



# In the Kitchen of politics

By Iris A. Morcilla  
Artwork by Marianne Mercado

Hurry, hop in, squeeze in! Fans must not be late!  
Catch a ride, all together, for the man in the billboards  
That tall, handsome, and famous chef will compete—  
Worry not! He'll fill our empty plates; trust his words

Qualification? Fools, he has thousands of followers,  
He'll surely win despite the sudden participation.  
A cheer so loud, when he lays the basic kitchenware,  
Yet his cooking method raises the audience's confusion.

In his frying pan, there's a battle of chicken and fish  
It's amusing, really, when the people still applaud.  
Despite the evident questionable taste of the dish,  
His charm works to the judges' blind taste buds.

Will he still win when we check his golden refrigerator?  
Be diligent! Count the 7,107 dishes set aside for his worms  
Hey, wake up! Have you not been told of his fake demeanor?  
He was crowned a chef but clueless about kitchen work.



# THE KING'S BURDEN

By Katherine Gwyneth A. Peramo  
Photo by Gabriel Aron Kyle Legua

The seconds raced to one, the air succumbed to unending hollers and honking. All was customary, and yet, for the first time—in all of the rides I've been on—it felt like time stood still as all else zoomed past me.

In the entirety of my existence, this might've been the first that I considered myself decrepit. And it wasn't the creaking metal frames, worn-out tattered seats, or rickety exhaust pipe that led me to this conclusion, rather, it was the silence that echoed after that phone call.

It was at that very moment I realized that against the bustling streets, the long vehicle queue, and the dominating red light, the King of the Road meant nothing.

The day started roughly, as the morning sun cast long shadows on my dented, rusty frames Lito and I persistently weave through the labyrinth of vehicles along the busy streets of Lipa City Public Market. I've seen him hustle his whole life, but today was different. He was clutching the steering wheel tightly, and his mind centered on the fact that his sister was in the hospital, lying in critical condition. And it wasn't only the expenses that weighed on his shoulders, but also the time that kept running whether we navigated the roads or remained still against the mind-numbing traffic.

Our passengers were a diverse set of lives—and despite the early hours—they boarded with weary, exhausted faces. Students, workers, and even mother and child alike all were yearning to be at their destination on time. In that early morning, as the hours crawl by, the traffic thickens as we reach the city hall, turning our journey into a slow, torturous crawl. The gridlock is relentless, and it is what devours time and gnaws on everyone's patience. I feel the weight of their frustration, the silent prayers for a miracle that would clear the road ahead. The minutes stretch into eternity, and the city's pulse beats with a cruel rhythm.

In the stifling heat, tempers flare, and sighs of impatience fill the air, and one that I would not forget was Owen's, a 30-something-year-old professor at the university. He was Lito's cousin. He boarded half an hour ago, coming from the hospital where Lito's sister was admitted. It was already past seven o'clock in the morning, and all he could do was incessantly check on his watch, look out the window, and fidget in his seat. His brows furrowed in frustration, knowing that for the nth time—along with other passengers—he was late.

That morning, as we finally reached the pedestrian lane, Owen, along with the others, got off with disappointment and haste. Whether it was mine or Lito's fault, it didn't matter. Yet, the question sank deeply, could we have done better?

Hours came running, and the weight of those who arrived late, the exhaustion, and the never-ending route clung to my hoary, faded body. The swift accounts of these commuters, along with Lito's, bear testament to the city's unforgiving grip and everyone's will to escape it.

Come past five o'clock in the evening, and the stop near the intersection was crowded with people yearning for the comfort of their homes. Amidst was a frantic, pale-faced Owen scanning every passing jeepney for a space to squeeze into. Whether it was fate or luck that led him to us, we did not know. Looking back, I think it was simply an inevitable curse.

Owen absent-mindedly boarded the front seat, hands trembling as he frantically accessed his phone while mumbling repetitive silent prayers and pleas. Lito was unsure to ask, but when his first question didn't bring Owen back to reality, his heart dropped as he feared his speculation.

"Oi, Owen! What happened?" Lito urged as he gradually stepped on my breaks as he reached the tail end of the traffic queue.

Owen sat there frozen, his mind racing, not knowing what to do or say at the moment. He turned to Lito, his trembling hands pointed to an exchanged conversation on the phone, then heavy-heartedly mumbled his four-year-old daughter's worsened condition. Silence rang loudly, and for a minute, the news left us gasping for air. Time was running out, the line of traffic kept going, and we were all but stuck, staring in the middle of what could've been our reality's nightmare.

Lito gripped the steering wheel, and I heard the honk of my sirens. Every passing minute is subtracted from the rhythm of her niece's heartbeat. The traffic was endless, what was supposed to be a minute distance became an excruciating gap full of dread and despair.

Owen kept fidgeting, mind wandering with worry and distress while trying to peek through a silver lining amid the stationary traffic. Lito kept trying, navigating my tattered body as exhausted motorists eyed my unpredictable presence. As the light turned green, passengers clung to dear life as I sped past moving vehicles while Owen clung to hope for time's gradual passing. Deafening horns filled the air, adding tension to the hasty, vexed crowd.

"A little more, Kuya," Owen mumbled with an on-edge body and frantic eyes as he looked at his phone, the hectic vehicles, and the dying seconds of the green light alternately.

The clock started the countdown, and Lito veered me vehicle after vehicle as the race after the clock began. 12 vehicles in front. Then there were ten. Seven. Until there were only five vehicles in front of us. With five seconds left on the clock, we had nowhere to go but forward. The phone rang, pulling us all out of haste's tension.

We pulled to a stop in front of the traffic queue as the light turned red, leaving us stuck at the intersection. Owen gripped his phone tightly, silence prevailed despite the busy, crowded street.

"We're almost there. Hang in there, 'toy," Lito offered with a faint hint of hesitation. Just seconds later, Owen's call ended leaving him taken aback. Lito was about to ask when Owen spoke, unmoving, "H'wag na, Kuya... It's all too late."

Owen's left hand gripped the phone while the other clenched into a fist, his head bowed down, and as the light turned green, we were left with a sobbing father who lost his daughter's final hours to traffic.

We moved in silence, the traffic dwindling but the tears never-ending. Lito was unsure of what to do or say. As we reached Lipa Medix Medical Center, Owen got off as an empty shell of a man, unsure of wanting to face the truth.

As Lito and I navigated the streets of Lipa and dropped off the last passenger of the day, exhaustion crept in. But the heavy weight of death clung tightly, leaving me dejected. Traffic is a nightmare, and in this urban jungle, my metal frames groan under the weight of the realization that maybe I am too old for this—unable to keep up with the changes.

The depth of today's event flashed before me, reminding me of the relentless gridlock that turned what should have been a simple journey into a torturous ordeal. Each of my passengers, young and old, disembarked with weariness, disappointment, fear, impatience, and every other emotion painted on their faces. Everything replayed with clarity—the honking, the fumes, the endless stop-and-go—a brutal, unforgiving grind to which people conceded, out of enervation. There's no escape, no relief, just the harsh reality of urban chaos. And I am nothing but a bearer of the daily struggle of commuters, their dreams, and distress alike, a silent witness to their relentless battle and a constant in the ever-changing tide of traffic and life.

As the key knob turns, the question still remains, could I have done better? Perhaps I am too old, teetering on the brink of obsolescence, a relic in an age of technological advancements. Yet, as the city sleeps and my engines' roar tapers off, the fact also remains that tomorrow, this jeepney will once again carry the hopes and burdens of its commuters.

After all, I am nothing but a means of transport.



Interview

Each mile traveled carries a lifetime  
stories, leading to right destination.

Steering fates  
on every turn.

Challenge is the  
driving force  
that propels us  
forward.

We cling to the  
path where each  
step shapes our  
journey.

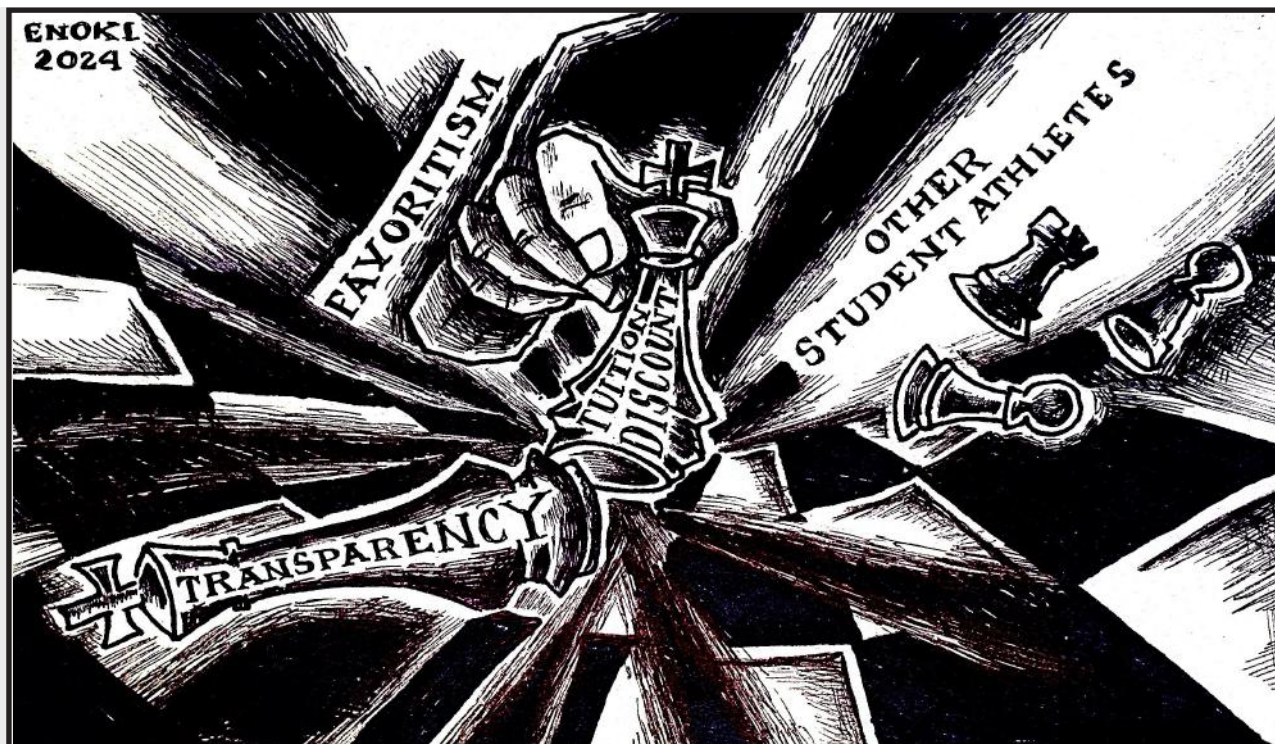
Each shout echoing in  
the silence of need.

*Steering Fates*

## EDITORIAL

### FAIR PLAY, FAIR PAY

*It's an open secret that palakasan literally translates to sports and also applies to favoritism which leads to corruption.*



Every game begins and ends with a buzz - a sound that crowns champion and sends others home with bruised dreams. Yet, for many Brahman athlete, that final buzzer has fallen to deaf ears seemingly frozen in the realm of benefits such as scholarships, tuition discounts, and allowances. Policies were never clear on what awaits athletes on the finish line despite the blood, sweat, tears, and hours they spend on the track. Even if these athletes end up winning competitions and finish races before whistles are blown, they can never be victors as rewards remain comparable to half-hearted consolation prize in little leagues. Across various sports, particularly

those in lesser-publicized disciplines like chess, table tennis, and badminton, athletes have expressed confusion over how tuition discounts are awarded. Many are left wondering whether the process is based on performance metrics or subjective judgment. Reports of perceived favoritism, where promises of higher discounts go unfulfilled, have further eroded trust in the system. No athlete should bear the weight of feeling undervalued. By not playing with the rules and standards on scholarships and perks, the university has handicapped players of less popular sports. A chess varsity player's statement reveals the consequences of a flawed

system: undervalued athletes lose motivation and commitment. For example, an athlete said that he is unmotivated to play as policies remain unfair and inconsistent. The frustration is not isolated. Athletes across various teams—particularly those in sports that don't garner as much attention—face the same issues. They see their hard work go unrecognized, while athletes in higher-profile teams such as basketball and volleyball receive the lion's share of discounts and benefits. It's an open secret that palakasan literally translates to sports and also applies to favoritism which leads to corruption. For example, it was easy for

a coach-favorite athlete to be awarded additional scholarship regardless of performance. In fact, a source has told TBJ that his ten thousand pesos discount rocketed to fourteen thousand just for playing favorites. Again, this lack of policy gives too much discretion to coaches. Any good tactician would see the core problem. Discounts are often based on personal connections, not merit. When athletes admit that their rewards come from their relationship with the coach, it exposes the favoritism at play. For those in smaller sports, this feels like a slap in the face. Hard work is overshadowed by influence, undermining the very foundation of fairness in the system.

This disparity reflects a deeper problem: a broken system that does not honor the true spirit of competition. It isn't just about discounts—it's about how athletes are treated. When they perform at their peak, they expect recognition that matches their sacrifice. They don't want empty promises or a discount that comes with a string of conditions. The final buzzer is long overdue. When it sounds, it is an athlete's prayer that echoes through a chamber of clarity, fairness, and justice that will yield a true arena of victors celebrated with cheers and rewards that an athlete truly deserves. After all, isn't that what champions play for?



### LIGHTS, COURTS, ACTION

Injustice

Nicole N. Palicpic  
Sports Editor

As a student who fancies sports, I've always been inspired by how it brings people together. But looking at the state of our sports facilities, I feel disappointed. These places, meant to encourage growth, teamwork, and health, often fall short of what they should be. It's time to ask: are we giving enough attention to spaces that could inspire the next generation of athletes? Take a walk around our campus, and the problems with our sports facilities are impossible to ignore—cramped courts,

rusty volleyball posts, poor lighting, and insufficient seating paint a stark picture of neglect. Worse, the gym is overcrowded, shared by high school students, PE classes, and multiple varsity teams, leaving little room for anyone to train, play, or even simply enjoy the space. How can we expect students to develop their skills, foster school spirit, or represent our institution with pride when the very spaces meant to support them are falling apart? It's time to stop treating our sports facilities as an afterthought and start

investing in modern spaces that match the potential of our athletes and the needs of our community. Improving sports facilities isn't just about having nicer places to play. It's about creating opportunities. Better facilities encourage more students to participate in sports, leading to healthier lifestyles and helping reduce stress. For competitive athletes, access to quality venues can mean better chances to develop their skills and even pursue careers in sports. And it's not just about individuals. Sports facilities are shared spaces within the university—places where students come together to train, compete, and support one another. Whether it's varsity teams preparing for tournaments, PE classes fulfilling academic requirements, or friends enjoying a quick game after class, these spaces foster school spirit and camaraderie. Investing in better facilities isn't just about improving athletic performance; it's about creating an environment where every student feels motivated, supported, and proud to represent our university. Of course, there are challenges. Renovations and upgrades require

funding, and some might argue that the money could be spent elsewhere. But this isn't about choosing between education, healthcare, or sports. They're all connected. Sports teach us discipline, teamwork, and resilience—qualities that help us in school and life. As students, we have a role to play. We can start small: organize clean-up drives, raise awareness about the importance of sports, or just make better use of the facilities we have to show how much they matter. But we also need to call on officials and school administrations to prioritize these spaces. Sports facilities aren't just courts and fields; they're places where dreams are built, where students like us find

confidence and lasting purpose. Picture a varsity volleyball player, staying late after class, adjusting her spikes under flickering lights, or a basketball team squeezing into limited court time because PE classes, clubs, and other teams need the same space. Think of the student who wants to start training for their first intramural game but feels discouraged by rusty equipment, uneven flooring, or lack of proper guidance. These spaces aren't just venues—they are silent witnesses to countless stories of perseverance, determination, and passion. The question isn't whether we can afford to improve them—it's whether we can afford not to.

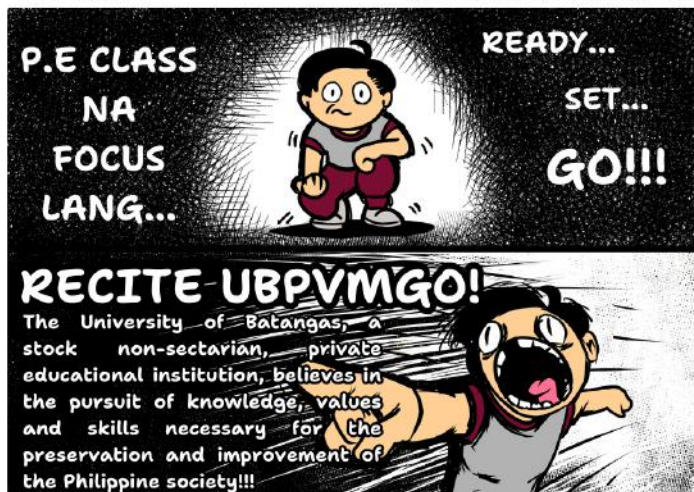
**Better facilities encourage more students to participate in sports**

Kaya Pa

By: Lowell Mongcal



P.E CLASS BY: LOWELL MONGCAL



## SWEAT TALKS

How does having sufficient and well-maintained facilities contribute to an athlete's growth, and how important is it for their success and long-term career?



For me having a sufficient and well-maintained facilities ay makakatulong talaga sa mga athlete dahil unang una makakaiwas ang mga player sa injury at makakapag focus mismo sa kani-kanilang mga training. Masasabi ko naman na importante ito sa career ng isang athlete dahil sisipagin talaga ang mga player na mag laro or mag training pag meron silang magagandang kagamitan at maayos na pinaglalaruan kaya para sa kin makakatulong talaga ito sa pag improve ng isang atleta.

Rhon Denielle Dionlay, a 3rd year BS Industrial Engineering student - Table Tennis Player

In karate, for me it is very important kapag mayroong maayos na facilities for athlete because it provides a safe environment for trainings. Siguro for the equipments na we are using, those equipments na ginagamit will help us to be well-built, focus, motivated and I think it is essential investment rin sa mga karate athletes to have a proper equipments especially the flooring, kahit may rubber matting na nag kakapallos padin and what more pa diba if wala.

Aubrey Bagsit, a 2nd year BS Social Work student - Karate



Having enough well-maintained facilities helps us flourish as athletes because they offer a secure environment that encourages us to develop our skills. It is crucial for our long-term career and success since it fosters personal growth, healthy competition, and encourages exercise, all of which can improve our competitive performance.

Aizel Estolano, a 4th year BS Business Administration - Financial Management student - Volleyball Player





## Blueprints of a SPIRIT WARRIOR

By Nicole N. Palicpic  
Photo by Lowell Jingrey Mongcal

In the dimly lit corners of a bustling gym, where sweat meets steel and echoes of determination ring out, he tests his endurance with every breath. His hands are not just tools of aggression but instruments of grace, striking with a flow that blends art and combat. To some, the idea of switching from drafting blueprints to executing jabs and hooks might seem contradictory, but for him, it's a natural flow—a framework of disciplined chaos and calculated precision. This is the world of Klyde, a rising figure in the combat sports scene who sketches his journey with grit, determination, and clear intentions.

### From Pencils to Punches

Klyde's journey into the realm of combat began long before architecture ever entered the picture. At the tender age of seven, he donned his first taekwondo uniform, already immersing himself in the rigorous discipline of martial arts. However, the road was not without its bumps; frequent injuries forced him to pause his training, compelling him to seek new paths. Soccer became his next love, a sport that carried him through his elementary years as a varsity player. But life has a way of redirecting him, and high school brought him face-to-face with yet another challenge: relocation. The change of scenery shifted his focus to table tennis, a sport that seemed worlds apart from the combat arena he would eventually dominate.

"Life's a crazy ride... we think we're going in one direction, but somehow, after all the twists and turns, we only realize that in the end, the heart always returns to its original roots." This held true for Klyde, as each twist—from soccer to table tennis—led him back to martial arts.

What started as a quest to sculpt his physique evolved into a full-fledged dive back into the world of combat sports. With foundational skills in taekwondo, Klyde found himself embracing the striking techniques of Muay Thai and the complex

maneuvers of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ). Soon, he ventured into Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), where the visceral allure of the fight—bloodied knuckles, roaring crowds, and the raw adrenaline—felt less like violence and more of a calling.

Klyde's combat evolution didn't stop with MMA. The allure of boxing emerged unexpectedly during a sparring session, where his Muay Thai skills proved ineffective against a boxer's fluid movements and flurries of punches. That day, a realization dawned—his striking needed refinement. Boxing became his new obsession, a sport he once dismissed as "boring" but now viewed as a crucial element in his martial artistry.

As his skill set expanded, so did his understanding of himself. Combat sports became a form of meditation, a discipline that helped him cultivate self-control, patience, and humility—qualities he had struggled to maintain in the past. The ferocity of training translated into a calm, calculated presence in the ring, and life outside of it. Every punch thrown and every takedown executed symbolized not just a fight against an opponent, but a fight against his inner weaknesses.

### Stepping into Fear's Arena

His story is not merely about fists and fight nights; it's about the pursuit of

balance in a life where chaos is the norm. As an Architecture student, the demands on his time were relentless. Design projects and combat training seemed at odds, but Klyde found common ground. The hours he spent perfecting his fighting technique—punches, kicks, grapples—were mirrored by hours spent drafting floor plans, both pursuits requiring an unyielding focus.

"Both require discipline and critical thinking," he muses, drawing parallels between the precision of a punch and the meticulousness of a blueprint.

Yet, the fight was not just physical. Klyde confronted fears that many young fighters face: the fear of failure, the fear of stepping into the ring, the fear of letting his guard down. Early sparring sessions were marked by trembling hands and hesitant strikes.

Over time, those fears were tempered, forged into unwavering strengths through countless hours of sparring, rigorous training, and a mindset that embraced struggle as a gateway to growth.

His journey extends beyond the ring and the drafting table. As a member of his school's official publication, The Brahman's Journal, he's found a unique way to connect his athletic pursuits with his creative passions. Writing about his experiences and the broader world

of sports provides a release from the physical demands of training. It also allows him to share the lessons he's learned with others who may struggle with balancing their own pursuits.

When asked how he manages to juggle student life, fighting, and publication work, Klyde's response is refreshingly grounded, "Prioritize, don't panic." The same mental resilience that carries him through a grueling fight also carries him through sleepless nights of architectural projects and writing deadlines. He's learned to pace himself, to embrace setbacks as opportunities for growth, and to remain focused on a long-term goal rather than short-term frustrations.

### A Path Uncharted

Klyde, now in his third year, finds himself at a crossroads as graduation edges closer. The question looms—will he pursue combat sports professionally, or will he focus on architecture? The answer remains elusive, even to him. For now, he's content to walk both paths, letting his passions guide him where they may.

"I haven't decided yet," he admits. "But when time comes, I'll know."

Klyde's story is not one of a singular triumph but of a life lived with unrelenting passion and resilience. It's a testament to

the power of discipline in shaping not just an athlete, but a well-rounded individual. As he continues to step into the ring and draft his future, Klyde serves as a reminder that sometimes, the fight worth winning is the one where the stakes are not just victory or defeat, but the pursuit of something greater—self-mastery.

The echoes of his journey linger, much like the rhythmic pounding of a speed bag. Klyde's story is far from finished, and whether he's sketching the next architectural marvel or training for the next big fight, he embodies the spirit of a true fighter—one who embraces life's contrasts, dances between chaos and order, and emerges stronger with each step. In every punch thrown and every line drawn, Klyde leaves behind a legacy not just of skill, but of unwavering spirit, inspiring those who dare to pursue their passions relentlessly.

His path will forever be a reminder that greatness isn't a destination—it's the courage to keep fighting, to keep creating, to dream boldly, and to rise each time life knocks him down. As Klyde continues to carve his legacy, true strength is revealed not in what is conquered, but in how he endures with unwavering hope and resilience through every challenge he faces, inspiring those around him to do the same.

## BREAKING BARRIERS THROUGH BLOCK BLAST

By Adrian D. Climaco  
Artwork by Riezelle Fabula

Imagine a tiring day with a lot of stress piling up and you open your phone to browse a chaotic world and yet you choose to click on that game application that you always come back to—a stress reliever. Across all platforms, games have become a source of escape and leisure. From nostalgic arcades to immersive multiplayer experiences, people find moments of joy and relaxation in the games they play. This sense of satisfaction aligns with the idea of 'Eudaimonia', a concept of happiness rooted in well-being and fulfillment.

In this emerging digital era, various applications are booming throughout the timeline, some of which are being utilized for entertainment, monetization, and sports. Platforms like Mobile Legends (MLBB), Call of Duty Mobile or PC, or even Valorant are some of the top-tier video games that people often play. However, amidst all these high-end video games, one is breaking barriers, notably, it is rather a mere puzzle game and yet it captures a lot of people from its addictive gameplay. Block Blast—a free and popular block puzzle game, is the perfect choice for those looking to unwind and challenge their brain.

### A box full of blocks

Block Blast is that kind of game where its simplicity is enough to suck you in and, later on, hook you because of its strategic depth. Imagine it as Tetris in modern fashion—you move different blocks around into the grid, making clear rows, thereby getting some points. With blocks coming block after block, you start thinking ahead and thinking not about which pieces go where but two steps in advance. Cool twists of unique block shapes and power-ups keep your brain on the go and fingers typing away as you go through.

To ace the game, you need to think ahead of your moves and not leave awkward gaps that will intentionally mess up your flow. Spreading the blocks evenly all over the grid gives you so much room to maneuver, and cleaning more than one line at a time earns you some sweet bonus points. Keeping it cool is the secret technique—it is easy to panic when the screen gets filled up, but running around leads to mistakes. And if things go wrong, there is the trusty 'Revive' option to give it another shot. Master these tricks, and you'll not only beat the challenges but also enjoy every bit of the ride.

### Full Blast for Mental Box

Whether you're passing the time casually or seeking a mental workout, Block Blast offers an engaging experience that keeps you coming back for more. It shares a feeling of satisfaction when you win and that little adrenaline in figuring out where to place those blocks. Moreover, it would positively impact one's mental health because most people experience stress and anxiety and its gameplay aims to reduce it.

When a person is playing, he or she is absorbed by its puzzle-solving aspect and forgets other daily pressures. The ability to clear lines and strategize ahead requires focus and can stimulate the release of dopamine, the "feel-good" hormone, boosting mood and reinforcing a sense of achievement. This sense of accomplishment and progress while moving through levels can be a great boost to self-esteem and gives much-needed emotional satisfaction.

Playing the game is repetitive yet refreshing enough to make one's mind feel peaceful and relaxed, yet focus on it. Stress could be a hormone-reduced condition from this level of mental exercise. These periods of joy can

decrease levels of the stress-related hormone cortisol as well and let the players enjoy good mental health without losing alertness of the brain. Puzzle games, virtual or not, are helpful alone in maintaining a full-gear mental aspect.

### Block Blast Tournament

The Philippines has one of the largest mobile gaming populations in Southeast Asia, with around 43 million gamers, according to FWD Life PH. The gaming market is projected to grow by 14.3% between 2020 and 2023, driven by grassroots communities, affordable smartphones, and youth enthusiasm for competitive gaming. Filipino esports teams like Tier One, Nexplay, and Team Secret are gaining international recognition, showcasing the country's talent and creativity.

Block Blast, a strategic puzzle game, has become a tournament sensation in the Philippines, aligning with the nation's gaming culture. Its simple mechanics—arranging blocks to clearing rows—appeal to players of all ages while offering depth for competitive play. The game's accessibility, lightweight design, and offline playability make it a hit, especially

in areas with limited connectivity. Filipino gamers quickly embraced Block Blast through local tournaments, school events, and social media, with content creators further fueling its rise as a nationwide phenomenon. This occurrence happened only to the major impact of its users to simply put their stresses away and hence, it created a world of tactics aiming to slay other players with the use of their critical thinking skills. It is rather a proud moment because it is jumping fence to fence of high-end games and yet this simple game took a place at the top of the tier.

Success at Block Blast in the Philippines shows that being plain can stand out within a competitive gaming atmosphere. Players of any age are drawn in because it's simple, yet the game requires strategizing that cannot be achieved in higher-level games. The rise of Block Blast demonstrates the extraordinary reach of easily accessible gaming for bringing enjoyment, developing minds, and uniting players into a world of thrilling digital excitement. This phenomenon highlights the potential of straightforward gameplay to engage a diverse audience, proving that complexity isn't always necessary for success.





## UBLC smashes way to SLCUAA quarterfinals

Rise to Quarterfinals. Brahmins' Perez and Quijano rise in unison to deliver a powerful block against SMCL's spike. | Photo by Nicole Palicpic

BY NICOLE PALICPIC

**M**en Brahmins' spikers secured their spot in the SLCUAA quarterfinals with back-to-back victories, dominating Saint Michael's College of Laguna (SMCL) in straight sets, 25-5, 26-24, 25-21, and following it up with a four-set triumph over TRIMEX Colleges at Mapúa Malayan Colleges Laguna, Oct. 19-20.

Parducho kicked off the first set with a powerful spike, followed by Fausto's well-placed service as the Brahmins set the tone for the game. Villanueva and Andres bolstered the defense, stuffing SMCL's early swings and extending the lead to 4-0. UBLC continued to exploit SMCL's struggles with short spikes and unforced errors, soaring to a 17-4 lead after a roof block by Longcanaya and Quijano. A clutch dig from Villanueva kept the rally alive, and an outside hit from SMCL sealed the set at 25-5.

SMCL came out swinging in the second set, grabbing a 4-1 advantage. UBLC quickly responded, as Quijano's stuff block shifted the momentum and

cut the deficit to 5-6. Villanueva and Parducho teamed up for another crucial block to take the lead at 7-6. Perez sent one of the opponents to the floor with a ferocious spike, igniting his team's energy and impulse.

With the score deadlocked at 22-all, Mercado's kill leveled the game after a thrilling rally that left both sides scrambling for control. UBLC remained composed, trading blows with SMCL before clinching the set 26-24 with a clutch spike.

The third set saw SMCL mount a strong challenge with determined play, but UBLC's consistent serves and lethal spikes kept them in control. They showed

great poise in the clutch, finishing strong to close out the set 25-21 and clinch the match in straight sets.

"All of our efforts from training were paying off," UBLC captain ball Perez remarked.

He also advised that maintaining momentum is crucial for success, as he encouraged his teammates to continue working hard in training to be even more prepared for their goal of winning the trophy.

The win not only strengthens UBLC's position in the standings but also sends a clear and resounding message to the competition: the Brahmins are here to fiercely contend for the championship.



Determination even in loss. Marin and Bandola leaps forming a wall of defense to block FAITH's powerful attack on Sept. 29 at the FAITH-ISAAC Gym. | Photo by Nicole Palicpic

## Lady Brahmins stun in 3-0 loss to FAITH

BY NICOLE PALICPIC

**I**n an intense match during the elimination round of the United Collegiate Championship League (UCCL) Season 18, the UBLC women's volleyball team produced as much as six consecutive points to tie the 3rd set at 17 all, until First Asia Institute of Technology and Humanities (FAITH) ended the game at 25-19, 25-11, and 25-22 on Sept. 29 at the FAITH-ISAAC Gym.

FAITH jumped to a quick 5-2 lead, with UBLC struggling to regain momentum as their rival extended their advantage to 9-3. Despite UBLC's attempts to rally, including a spike error from FAITH, they lost the set 25-11.

UBLC showed heart in the third set, narrowing the gap to 17-18 after key spikes from Captain Princess

Villapando. However, FAITH sealed the match 25-22, leaving UBLC with valuable experience for future games.

Reflecting on the match, Villapando expressed pride in her team's performance, "Masaya at nakakaproud, kasi kahit hindi kami nanalo, nakita ko naman yung effort at connection ng bawat isa sa paglalaro."

For more games in the near future, she hopes for more improvements, stronger connections, increased effort, fewer errors, and a greater sense of teamwork.

In an earlier game, the UBLC men's volleyball team also failed to win their match against FAITH in three sets, 25-12, 25-15, and 25-19, despite strong efforts and notable plays.



Brahmins break free. Abrahan takes flight for a layup, leaving defenders behind, at the BSU-Malvar Gym, Oct. 13. | Photo by Nicole Palicpic

## Brahmins snap losing streak, outlast hot-shooting CEFI

BY HANNAH SAMANTHA PASAHOLO

**U**BLC mens basketball breaks their three-game skid at the expense of hot shooting Calayan Educational Foundation Inc. 110-102, at the BSU-Malvar Gym, Oct. 13.

Despite CEFI's barrage of three-pointers, Brahmins came out on top (50-43) at the end of the second quarter. The Brahmins were simply too quick for the Cougars with most of their points coming from fast breaks.

The Cougars continued their sweet shooting from beyond the arc in the third quarter. However, the Brahmins refused to lose and consistently converted their shots from the perimeter and even underneath the basket. With baskets scored back-and-forth, neither team was able to pull away on the third.

UBLC regained the advantage after a 4-0 run. Thanks to wing Prince Guce, who made a crucial layup and followed it up with a steal that led to another two-point conversion—giving them a significant lead in the match (78-76).

The Brahmins continued momentum in the fourth period with a suffocating defense that stopped the Cougars'

three-point game. Abrahan made a key defensive stop with a jaw-dropping block on the Calayan Cougars' layup in the final three minutes of the fourth quarter. This intense defensive effort energized the Brahmins and helped secure their victory in a tightly contested match.

"Sinunod lang namin 'yung bilin ni coach palagi na, go hard and nag stick din kami sa play ng kalaban," he said.

On the offensive end, Guce starred with a double-double performance with 20 points, 10 rebounds on top of 5 assists and 2 steals.

Brahmins' Captain Ball, Al Franco Camacho, conveyed pride in his team's effort, saying, "Masaya na po kaming uuwi ngayon at may maipagmamalaki na sa UB."

This victory marks a significant turning point for the UBLC Basketball Team as they look to build on this success in UCCL Season 18.

## Brahmans falls short to Asiatech 91-94

BY PRINCESS LYAN PEÑAMANTE

**U**BLC Brahmins men's basketball team fell short in a tightly contested 94-91 matchup against the Asiatech Jaguars during the Southern Luzon Colleges and Universities Athletic Association (SLCUAA) league held on Oct. 19 at DLSU-Dasmariñas, Cavite. Defensive lapses and crucial turnovers in the final moments ultimately cost the Brahmins the game.

Brahmins started strong, showcasing sharp focus and excellent coordination. They matched the Jaguars stride for stride in the opening quarter, which ended in a 19-19 tie. By halftime, Brahmins held a slim 47-42 lead, thanks to their well-executed defense and offense, which created turnovers and scoring opportunities that shifted the momentum in their favor.

However, the momentum shifted in the third quarter as the Jaguars' aggressive offense exploited the Brahmins'

defensive lapses, allowing them to take a slim 72-70 lead. Entering the final quarter, Brahmins fought back with relentless energy, narrowing the gap to 86-82. Despite their late-game surge, Jaguar's composure under pressure and well-executed plays in the dying minutes secured their victory, 94-91, leaving the Brahmins just short of a comeback.

UBLC Team captain Al Franco Camacho fired up his teammates after the game, telling them to step up in future matchups. Despite the loss, Camacho

remained optimistic, highlighting the Brahmins' potential to bounce back. He pointed out lapses in execution and focus during critical moments, urging the team to address these issues as they prepare for upcoming games.

"Sana wala nang petiks-petiks, go hard na. Wala na yung nilalaro-laro pa," he said, stressing the need for the Brahmins to play with intensity and consistency moving forward. With lessons from the loss, Camacho vows better execution next game.



Brahmans stumble against Asiatech. Ponsica looks to break through the ASIATECH defense with a quick move during their visit at DLSU-Dasma. | Photo by Nicole Palicpic