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**DISTANCE LEARNING.** Through a plastic barrier, a teacher hands out a worksheet to a parent at Don Juan Lungon Elementary School, Silang, Cavite, December 4. This is in line with the shift from traditional face-to-face classes to distance learning, which ensures that students continue with their education amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Photo by **Ma. Pamela Beatriz Cordero**

# Enrollee decrease “freezes” Philo, Broad Journ, Math programs

by Patricia RecaÑa

**Bachelor of Arts (AB) in Philosophy, AB in Broadcast Journalism, and Bachelor of Science (BS) in Applied Mathematics programs were “frozen” and set to be redesigned for the academic year (AY) 2021-2022 due to failure in meeting block quotas.**

Following the implementation of online learning for the current AY, the DLSU-D administration sent emails to incoming first year students of the said programs to choose different courses.

“In this regard, we (the University) would like to advise (sic) to consider transferring in another program of either your second or third choice,” as mentioned by the

email from the Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Services (OAVCAS).

The email further said that DLSU-D would like to prevent

students paying more as there were not enough enrollees to form a regular class.

Additionally, the Coalition of Concerned Lasallians (CCL) raised an alert about an Applied Mathematics incoming first year student who, as of writing, lost their externally-funded scholarship

due to the said program freeze on August 26.

In line with this, the Philosophy Program Council (PhPC), Broadcast Journalism Program Council (BJPC), and Applied Mathematics Program Council (AMPC) all appealed against the “freezing” of their

respective programs for the current AY.

#### PhPC's response

In an online interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO, PhPC condemned the University's treatment towards the affected students,

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## No updates on USG primary elections schedule

by Patricia RecaÑa

**After no election took place on January 18, which is the announced rescheduled date for primary elections according to the University Student Election Commission (USEC), no official statement and further developments about the matter were published.**

University Student Government (USG) President Neil Manguerra shared in an email interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO that “an inquiry email was sent to the USEC whether they will announce the failure of the primary elections”.

Despite mentions of the Office of Student Services (OSS) and Student Development and Activities Office (SDAO),

Manguerra stated that no reply was given by the USEC.

Due to USEC's lack of response, Manguerra confirmed that, “the Senate along with the OSS and SDAO will be conducting an investigation on the dereliction of duty of the USEC with the Primary Elections 2020-2021 after the Final Examination period”.

**Recounting preparations for 2020 primary elections**  
As discussed at the HERALDO FILIPINO Broadsheet Volume 34 Issue 2, the first primary election under the newly ratified USG Constitution failed, due to the lack of presidential candidates from different colleges.

According to Article XII, Section 4 of the constitution, the line

See **USG ELECTION** | page 3



**SWITCHING GEARS.** A modern jeepney operates along M.H. Del Pilar St. at Silang, Cavite, December 11. The implementation of Public Utility Vehicle Modernization (PUVM) Program introduces new and environment-friendly jeepney models, leaving jeepneys running on at least 15 years old engines subject to phaseout.

Photo by **Ma. Pamela Beatriz Cordero**



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## NEWS BRIEFS

## Submission of SEP requirements continues for AY 2020-2021

by Patricia Recaña

Office of Student Services (OSS) Dean Domingo Reblora Jr. clarified that submission for Student Engagement Program (SEP) requirements through the University Schoolbook are still on-going for the academic year (AY) 2020-2021.

Due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, multiple considerations were given to students such as decreasing the required stamps from 21 to 12, and removing barangay clearance as a requirement for the tree planting activity. Students who failed to submit the requirements within the second semester of AY 2019-2020 will still have to comply upon re-enrollment, while the number of stamps they have previously accumulated will remain, as per Reblora.

As of January 15, out of the 2,275 SEP enrolled students, 1,038 have passed while 848 students are registered as "in progress" due to their incomplete stamps or the unaccomplishment of the tree planting activity. The remaining 389 students have not submitted anything in the Schoolbook yet.

Additionally, an online alternative of the Intro to La Salle Program was offered to pending students, while SEP got suspended for the first year students of AY 2020-2021. "They [first year students] will take SEP once face-to-face interactions in school will be allowed again," Reblora said in reference with Student Engagement Program (SEP) Director Venicris Alonsozana.

## OVCAR confirms 5,917 enrollees at the start of AY

by Patricia Recaña

On September 11, two days before the start of synchronous classes for academic year (AY) 2020-2021, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academics and Research (OVCAR) released an email advisory, confirming that 5,917 college and graduate school students are enrolled out of the 7,785 who are registered in the school system.

The OVCAR also mentioned that "if all will enroll, we are less than three hundred students away from equaling the number of students that enrolled during the second semester of SY (school year) 2019-2020".

As stated in the advisory, 5,325 are undergraduate students while there are 1,936 incoming first year students. Meanwhile, there are 592 enrolled graduate students.

In line with the newly implemented academic framework of the University, the advisory listed instructions on how to handle Lasallians on the first week of classes.

Additionally, the OVCAR emphasized to "provide an explanation to the students on how to (sic) the class will be carried out for the semester so that they can share it with those who are still undecided".

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emphasizing the lack of consideration for their situations.

In line with DLSU-D's sudden emails, PhPC mentioned that the enrollees were "forced to make a decision with regards to their education".

After learning about the emails from first year students, the program council immediately coordinated with faculty and members of OAVCAS.

Before the program freeze, Philosophy program enrollee Risa Adolfo was emailed by the Office of the University Registrar (OUR), informing her that the enrollment for their program was on hold in July.

"We (DLSU-D) will wait at least 10 students to open the program," the email stated. However, the University finally accepted applications for the Philosophy course by July 15, as per another email addressed to Adolfo.

While the student emphasized on sticking to the Philosophy course, Adolfo also asked for clarifications on alternative options such as merging with other courses within the College of Liberal Art and Communication (CLAC) while still being enrolled under the Philosophy course.

OAVCAS responded to just "consider the university's other yet equally established course offerings". In response, Adolfo asked for clarifications on the minimum amount of Philosophy enrollees to continue the program but the office did not respond.

According to PhPC, the administration offered a full tuition refund for students who will transfer, which would take at least 7 business days to process, "making transferring to a different university even harder for the students that opted to do so".

With the help of PhPC, the enrollees sent letters to Brother President Augustine "Gus" Boquer, and to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), informing them about the enrollees' concerns.

Through the grievance letter sent to Brother Gus, Philosophy program

enrollees brought up the case of the previous batch of Philosophy first year students who were able to study within the program despite not meeting the block quota.

"We (Philosophy enrollees) fully believe that it is within philosophy that we will be able to develop ourselves to be prepared for the challenges beyond our lives after our studies," the letter stressed.

In terms of future plans, PhPC mentioned that "as of now, all PHPC activities, projects and plans of re-establishment have been put on hold," due to the lack of members.

## BJPC's response

Similarly with the PhPC, enrollees for the Broadcast Journalism program raised concerns to their respective program council about the email sent by the Center of Admissions and Scholarship (CAS).

BJPC mentioned through an online interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO that the program freeze was later confirmed by their adviser, department chair, and dean.

They also expressed their plan to write a letter for Brother Gus, but was advised to consult with College of Liberal Arts and Communication (CLAC) Dean Christian George Francisco beforehand.

To address their program's freeze, BJPC reached out to different organizations such as College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP), Far Eastern University (FEU) Manila student council, Philippine Normal University (PNU) student councils, Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) Maragondon's The Forum (PUP's official student publication), and the University of the Philippines (UP) Samaskom.

After much deliberation, BJPC issued a statement on August 28, stating that "[The program council] understand(s) that the

University has to recuperate for its loses this pandemic".

Moreover, their statement emphasized the aim to remodel the program to be more effective so that the program will be "ready to serve the country's aspiring journalists with pure passion and greatness".

## AMPC's response

Similar to the previous program councils, AMPC received a message from an incoming first year student who raised a concern over their program's dissolution advisory sent by the administration.

Upon discovering the issue, the informed officer relayed the message to the entire program council and asked their adviser for a confirmation, as stated by AMPC through an interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO.

Consequently, the program council decided to write a formal letter of appeal addressed to Vice Chancellor for Academics and Research (VCAR) Marco Saez about reopening the program.

Along with the letters from the program council and the incoming first year students, AMPC mentioned the Applied Mathematics program alumni's support for the freshmen students and also wrote their own letter of appeal.

On the same date AMPC sent the letters of appeal, the VCAR replied and took note of their concerns. On the following day, the BS in Applied Mathematics enrollees informed the program council that "the administration will stick to their decision on the dissolution of (sic) program".

For the future of the program, AMPC introduced the aim of redesigning the course with the help of the administration. Additionally, the program council planned on conducting events open to all DLSU-D students to strengthen the bond with their supposed freshmen.

## DLSU-D adjusts academic response throughout first semester

Updates in line with pandemic developments

by Lance Mejico

The administration implemented several changes and adjustments in the University policies for the first semester of the academic year (AY) 2020-2021, from modifications on the new academic framework, suspension of the proposed tuition fee increase, to the enforcement of campus security measures.

## Updated care-centered model

The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the academic framework undergo modifications according to the feedback of faculty and students alike. One of the changes halfway through the first semester is the optional increase of 1.5 to 3 hours in synchronous class hours, allowing the previously required 4.5 hours for synchronous classes to extend for 6 to 7.5 hours this AY's midterm period.

As per Policy Development Review Office (PDRO) Coordinator Jerome Buhay, the modified measures for synchronous learning were made in response to a survey conducted in October, which was answered by 1,830 students and 243 professors from different colleges.

Results of the survey indicated that 36 percent of the student respondents and 52 percent of the faculty agreed to increase the synchronous class hours per semester, while 64 percent of students and 36 percent of professors were not in favor of the proposed change.

## Adjusted policies for assessments

Aside from synchronous learning, the IRR Committee also modified the guidelines on submission of summative tests last November, reducing the number of attempts from three to two.

This was also different from measures implemented during the second semester of AY 2019-2020, which allowed students to have unlimited attempts for assessment submissions.

Meanwhile, the care-centered model also implemented new regulations on assessment deadlines for AY 2020-2021 by introducing soft and hard deadlines for its students. Lifelines have also been introduced in consideration to students who cannot comply with the due date set by their professors.

These measures were observed in unforeseen conditions that surfaced in the first few months of classes, such as the emergency maintenance operations of the Philippine Long Distance Company (PLDT), a major telecommunication company during September and the aftermath of Typhoon Quinta in October.

In line with the PLDT's emergency maintenance advisory from

September 25 to 30, Buhay laid out the IRR for deadlines and lifelines policies on September 28, due to the affected internet connectivity of several students and professors.

In the following month of October, the University Student Government (USG) relayed measures from an OVCAR advisory about missed assessments due to Typhoon Quinta.

"For assessments missed because of the effects of the typhoon (brownout, lack of internet signal, etc.), the IRR for lifelines and deadlines must be observed upon careful assessment of the faculty. Further consideration may still be extended over and above what is provided in the IRR," the advisory stated.

Meanwhile, DLSU-D also offered Home-Based Learning (HBL) mode as an alternative setup for students who cannot adapt to online classes. Students with "extreme cases" can avail this learning mode through securing either printed or e-copies of class modules.

With several changes in the academic model for the whole AY, the administration released the second wave of evaluation survey for the implementation of the care-centered framework for AY 2020-2021 in January to assess the efficiency of its implementation for the first semester.

## Tuition fee refund and reduction

Prior to the opening of classes, the DLSU-D administration released initial measures on tuition fee refund and reduction for AY 2019-2020 and AY 2020-2021 in light of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

On June 1, University Brother President Augustine "Gus" Boquer confirmed the tuition fee refund for the second semester of AY 2019-2020 through his letter addressed to the DLSU-D community. He also cited that "miscellaneous and other fees shall be reduced to essential items attributed to the new educational setup".

However, no clear advice or updates have been made in portal accounts on the tuition fee refund and reduction after the announcement.

Consequently, concerns on tuition fee for the first semester of AY 2020-2021 have surfaced during the extended enrollment period for first

year students, as upperclassmen from the College of Liberal Arts and Communication (CLAC) noticed excessive tuition fees for AY 2020-2021.

These concerns gained the attention of national and regional chapters of National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP), urging the DLSU-D administration to release the tuition fee breakdown for the current semester.

In line with this, The HERALDO FILIPINO also reached out to the Office of Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administrative Services (OVFCAS) and the Finance and Accounting Office (FAO) twice to clarify tuition fee concerns back in July 2020, but no response from the administration was issued as of press time.

Additionally, on January 20, the University Student Government (USG) announced that there will be no tuition fee increase for AY 2021-2022 based on the multi-sectoral meeting on tuition fee concerns.

## On-site classes and campus entry

As the national government only allowed limited face-to-face classes for medical schools in areas under modified general community quarantine (MGCQ), updates on the resumption of traditional classes are still in question.

While face-to-face classes are still suspended, campus entry for non-essential purposes remains halted to observe safety precautions.

On the other hand, GSO also enforced no student entry policy since the quarantine period to ensure students' safety while parents and guardians are allowed for in-campus transactions as long as they follow health protocols set by the University and the national government.

Moreover, walk-in guests are only permitted to enter the campus for official businesses, requiring them to undergo "strict screening" in line with pandemic guidelines.

As of January 2021, faculty and staff are allowed to enter campus premises for essential activities and engagements, but they are required to submit a health checklist form a day before they enter the campus, as stated in the August 2020 advisory by the General Services Office (GSO).

## Lasallian students share online class concerns on social media

by Elaine Aznar

With the continuation of the no-student entry policy in the University for the academic year (AY) 2020-2021, DLSU-D students expressed their concerns and difficulties regarding the new mode of learning through social media and Schoolbook.

Before the AY started, The HERALDO FILIPINO then asked students regarding their problems on the upcoming AY through a Facebook post on September 8, and where we listed down the concerns we received.

## Concerns during online classes

User Keanu Berches shared problems over stable internet connection during online classes, "especially if may mga kapatid ka rin na mag-online class and magkasabay

kayo ng time and isang wifi/router na ginagamit niyo".

Bachelor of Arts (AB) in Communication student Patrick Jayson Basco commented "they [the administration] haven't mentioned anything about procedures on on-site meetings IF ever there will be any".

To follow-up, The HERALDO FILIPINO asked how were the students after a week of classes through a post issued on October 3, where

most students commented on the increased number of assessments.

As mentioned by a Bachelor of Science (BS) Computer Science student, "puro assessments nalang rather than advance studying. I spend at least 5-6 hours straight sitting in front of the screen doing assessments".

In addition to this, Office Administration student Ahron Gabrielle Orticio commented "sana may synchronous meeting once a week para kabilang papao ang tuition hindi

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## USG PRIMARY ELECTION from page 1

of presidential succession indicated the speaker of the House of Representatives of the second Senate to assume presidency, as confirmed by the USG on August 19.

To address the vacant positions from the student government, USG opened applications on September 24 via Facebook. Guidelines and details on the vacancies were also featured on the said USG post.

Despite the incomplete roster of members within USG, Manguerra requested a consultation with USEC regarding the Omnibus Election Code, election awareness, campaign, election preparation status, and the status of election commission officers on November 6.

USEC then held a meeting with the Congress, the High Court, and the Executive department about the primary elections and its possible postponement on November 17. Additionally, the election commission presented justifications and validity for their plans.

As the power of postponing the elections is not within the authority of the student government, USG recounted possibilities that can either be an initiative launched by the student body or an approval from the administration. "The latter was chosen for convenience and considering the hard situation to garner votes from the student body with the pandemic," Manguerra stated.

The following day, USEC planned for the flow and guidelines of the primary elections, while the Congress provided the decision to support the request of the elections postponement.

USG along with College Student Government (CSG) governors, the SDAO director and the OSS dean then gathered for the endorsement of election postponement in a meeting held on November 25.

In reference to the Article IV Section 6 of the USG Constitution, it was stated that the primary elections were supposed to be held during the first semester, on the first Monday in December which was on December 7.

By December 9, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academics and Research (OVCAR) approved the postponement of the 2020 primary elections, accomplishing the need for confirmation from the administration.

Finally, USEC officially announced the postponement of elections due to challenges brought by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic through a post issued on December 10.

After the election commission announced the rescheduling from December 2020 to January 18, the post stated that the elections were postponed "to provide a better voting structure for our student body".

## USG Officers as of AY 2020-2021

With the aim to address the failure of primary and general elections last AY, the student government posted vacant positions to apply for under USG and the constitutional commissions on September 24.

According to the USG post, the Executive positions open for applications were vice president, attorney general, Federal Reserve governor, and secretaries of Business Affairs, Outreach and Initiatives, and Sports and Recreation.

Regarding constitutional commissions, the vacant positions mentioned in the post were members of the Office of the Solicitor General, and Internal Audit Service.

In contrast, the constitutional commissions along with the Judiciary department retained its past members, as provided by Article XV, Section 12, Paragraph 2 of the constitution.

Going back on August 2, the virtual letter by the House of Representatives mentioned the current count of the Legislative department which has 10 out of 14 senators, while the members of the House of Representatives are 25 out of 36.

## Changes on primary elections

With the implementation of the no student policy in the University for the AY 2020-2021, different platforms and mediums will have to be utilized for the elections, as per Manguerra.

"Although, with the plans of the USEC, appropriate measures were incorporated to ensure the authenticity of the voting process, but this [different platforms used for elections] remain untested," the USG president added.

Manguerra also expressed doubts about the student body's participation in the election and used the USG and OVCAR surveys as reference for usually reaching 2,500 to 3,000 respondents.

"We expect to garner enough voters with proper election promotion and development," Manguerra added.

With the given reference, only half of the student body is expected to be reached through online mediums as there are currently 5,917 enrolled students as of September 11, according to OVCAR.

In addition to the electoral changes, Manguerra mentioned that "self-student initiative is the only way to garner potential student leaders in elected offices" following the absence of the Sinag and Sentro political parties.

## DLSU-D community initiates relief efforts for Typhoons Rolly and Ulysses victims

by Azreil Nathanielle Nuestro

In response to the onslaught brought by Typhoons Rolly and Ulysses, the DLSU-D community initiated projects to support affected victims through different monetary and in-kind donation drives.

In October and November last year, the Philippines was struck by Typhoon Rolly and Typhoon Ulysses which affected over 2.3 million people across eight regions.

With over 23,089 individuals displaced in evacuation centers and over 46,987 people relocated outside the evacuation centers, the DLSU-D community also aimed to give support for the affected citizens.

## The University's response to relief

Starting November 12, the Lasallian Community Development Center (LCDC) called for in-kind donations, specifically rice and packed goods for their donation drive named the "Kada-uno Relief Operation". Their target beneficiaries were victims from Cagayan, Isabela, Bicol, Batangas, Marikina, and Rizal.

Once the donation drive attained its goal, the LCDC posted an update on November 27, stating that "katawang ang iba't ibang La Salle schools sa Kada-uno Relief Drive Operation, tayo ay nakapaghahid ng tulong sa ating mga kababayan sa Cagayan, Isabela, Bicol, Batangas, Marikina, at Rizal".

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Meanwhile, the organization Visual and Performing Arts Production Unit (VPAPU) launched a relief effort to extend help for the affected communities through monetary and in-kind donations such as canned goods, coffee, crackers and or biscuits, hygiene needs, blankets, and basic medicines.

VPAPU posted an update, stating their heartfelt gratitude for the donors in their Facebook page on November 27.

The Council of Student Organizations (CSO), particularly DLSU-D Psychological Society (DPS), Lasallian First Aiders - Red Cross Youth (LFA-RCY), Junior Philippine

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# Admin streamlines, dissolves offices for AY 2020-2021

by Lance Mejico

As part of the administrative adjustments in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, DLSU-D enforced streamlining measures and dissolution of offices at the beginning of the academic year (AY) 2020-2021.

Three functions under the Office of Vice Chancellor for Mission, External Affairs, and Advancement (OVCMEAA) were transferred and merged with other offices, including the University Linkages Office (ULO), University Lasallian Family Office (ULFO), and Campus Ministry Office (CMO).

In an interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO, VCMEAA Myrna Ramos said that ULO was transferred to the Office of Vice Chancellor for Academics and Research (OVCAR) at the second semester of AY 2019-2020. The decision was made due to the crisis brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, and for the University to "maximize its resources" amid the distance learning setup.

Meanwhile, both CMO and ULFO are now under the Lasallian Mission Office, which is also handled by the OVCMEAA.

As the pandemic pushed the administration to streamline operations of some offices, the Student Welfare and Formation Office (SWAFO) was also resized for AY 2020-2021.

According to Office of Student Services (OSS) Dean Domingo Reblora Jr., there had been a decrease in manpower in SWAFO, with fewer staff working under the office.

Despite being resized, Reblora said a SWAFO Coordinator was appointed for the current AY to manage the office operations, including the issuance of good moral certificates for graduating students and resolution of some pending cases.

"They are also contemplating on coming up with an online hearing

**STUDENT CONCERN** from page 2

from the USG as "may mga prfs pa rin na nagpapa-assessments and quiz during the self care week".

Some students also commented under a post by University Student Government (USG) regarding self-care week guidelines on November 16, stating that despite the rules on no submissions and deadlines until November 21, their professors were still giving them assessments due on the said week.

"Most of my blockmates can't even rest this healthcare week because of the deadlines na naka-amba after ng week na ito, kabit may ganitong reminders or advisory, we can't *kasi babagsak kami*," AB Communication student Bianca Nicole Carlas said.

BS Hotel and Restaurant Management student Jrem Torres also asked for help on behalf of students

[cases]. We are just consulting lawyers if it's possible *kasi gusto natin makita ang legal pros and cons nito*," he added.

Reblora added that OSS will soon call a technical panel composed of associate deans and student representatives, in order to craft new policies in the Student Handbook that will be fit for the situation.

#### Office dissolution

While other offices have been either transferred or merged for AY 2020-2021, the Sports Development Office (SDO), on the other hand, was dissolved amid the pandemic.

As per Reblora, the University decided to dissolve the office before the start of current AY due to the shift to distance learning and absence of sports engagements for the following semesters.

With SDO being dissolved for the meantime, all projects and plans for SDO were now put on hold for the whole AY.

#### Status of employees after transfer, dissolution

Despite streamlining measures in several offices within the University, Ramos and Reblora assured that all employees working under the affected offices were either retained in their department or deployed to other offices for the current AY.

As for functions under OVCMEAA, Ramos said former ULO Director Wilson Jacinto returned to his "mother" department, while the office secretary was deployed to

the University Advancement Office (UAO). The two "faculty on-loan" under ULO also returned to their respective colleges after the office's transfer to OVCAR.

Same measures were also applied to some staff working under SWAFO and SDO, as they were temporarily deployed to other offices, according to Reblora.

Meanwhile, former SDO Director John Casidsid had been appointed as the new SWAFO coordinator, following the resignation of Rafael Julius Estrada as the former SWAFO director.

#### On possible return of streamlined, dissolved offices

As the resumption of onsite classes remained in question, OVCMEAA and OSS were still uncertain on future plans for streamlined offices.

Ramos clarified that the effectiveness of ULO's transfer and future plans for the office still depend on the decision of OVCAR. Despite the transfer, she assured that ULO projects will still push through this AY.

On the other hand, Reblora cited he cannot give definite plans yet on the dissolution of SDO as the office remains reliant on the situation of the pandemic.

"Until such time that the vaccines available, *yung efficacy niya ay dependable* and more than majority of the members of our community in DLSU-D are vaccinated, *saka lang siguro tayo ng mga konkretong plano, na masasab nating ito na nga iyon*," said Reblora.

from the USG as "may mga prfs pa rin na nagpapa-assessments and quiz during the self care week".

On a Facebook post of the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) last January 20, student Andrei Sumaylo recounted their experience as they travelled from Bohol to submit requirements then got denied to enter the University.

"Not only did you guys fail to state that we are not allowed in the campus in the announcement, but also waste the time of the students and risk their health and safety willing to submit the requirements," Sumaylo said.

Apart from the use of Facebook, several students also raised issues in the comments section of a Schoolbook post issued on February

2 which was meant to inform the academic community that the Center for Innovative Learning Programs (CILP) was receiving concerns on not being able to reach the Schoolbook site during the finals term week.

Students commented that the website was still unreachable even with fast internet connection despite the initial post suggesting that it was related to slow internet speed.

However, after the incident, an update post stated that "the members of CILP [...] have identified that the issue on the access and connection problems are neither caused by the heavy usage nor the servers". The post also featured suggestions to ease students such as clearing the browser's cache, using a different browser, and using incognito mode.



**SAFETY MEASURES** Churchgoers stand on white circles painted on the patio grounds of Nuestra Señora De Candelaria Parish Church Silang, Cavite, December 25. The separated circles serve as a mark and constant reminder for people to practice social distancing in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Photo by Ma. Pamela Beatriz Cordero

# Batch 2020 virtual graduation pushes on Feb. 6, encounters several delays

by Elaine Belen and Hedrick Alcantara

After more than five months of preparation, the Batch 2020 virtual graduation had commenced on February 6, following "final calibrations" by the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) which set the event from 9:30 AM of the same date to 6 PM.

According to OUR's Facebook post, "the 45th Commencement Exercises (Virtual Graduation) will be at 6 [PM] today to accommodate final technical and online recalibrations. The university would like to make sure that the candidates are well presented in the virtual graduation."

The event, which lasted for more than an hour, flashed names and pictures of graduating students from both undergraduate and graduate studies, utilizing video clips from the previous batch's on-site graduation before the coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) pandemic.

As of press time, the actual video of the virtual graduation and all related announcements regarding the event cannot be found from the OUR Facebook page.

#### Recount of delays

In an article by The HERALDO FILIPINO, Marketing Communications Office (MCO)

initiated the virtual graduation project in August 2020 tentatively but it was not held then due to a delay that MCO "cannot control".

"Nevertheless, the virtual event will still push through and an official announcement on this would be released as soon as it is finalized," MCO said in an email to The HERALDO FILIPINO September 2.

However, the DLSU-D College of Liberal Arts and Communication (CLAC) Student Government announced on September 22, 2020 that "there will be no graduation ceremony this year," adding to their Facebook post that MCO is instead preparing for a tribute which was eventually uploaded on October 24.

The tribute included an announcement for the delayed online graduation, teasing to "watch out for the virtual graduation ceremony in January 2021! (to be presented by the OUR)". On February 4, another teaser video was released which highlighted the February 6 event date.

#### Graduating students' reaction

According to several online interviews conducted by The HERALDO FILIPINO, some batch 2020 graduating students expressed mixed reactions towards the virtual graduation.

"Overall, I could say na I appreciate what they made for us but the turn out of the video, *parang ipinilit na lang na magkaroon ng virtual grad*", said Casvel Teresa Lopez, one of the graduating students.

A graduate from Human Resource Development Management course said: "I guess it's ok naman *kesa* (sic) sa wala pero syempre mas prefer ko na may actual *grad* talaga para mas feel pero understandable *naman* since *pandemic* pero sana may effort ng konti (sic) parang minadali *kasi yung paggawa ng video*".

One graduate said they were unaware that there had been a virtual graduation until their co-graduating friends sent the link for the video. "Actually, 'di ko alam na graduate na pala ako haha sinend lang sa'kin ng mga kaibigan ko," they wrote.

# What makes a family

I might even go as far as say that I'm proud of it. I saw families in a different way because of my upbringing and that stayed with me until now. Different types of media also started to cover non-traditional families and gender

## There will always be the textbook definition of a family: a father, a mother, and a child. Mine didn't have a father.

realization that seized the mind, but rather a sense of gradual understanding that sinks with time.

I was curious whenever my classmates talked about their dads, older brothers, or even their uncles and grandfathers at home. Even milk commercials on TV depicted fathers as a ray of hope. I simply can't relate; I never knew how male-dominated families were truly like. Just like myths, I only heard stories about it.

My mother would work for the whole day and be

home for the weekends, I grew up with my grandmother and my two older sisters. We eventually learned to be

more independent, and by that point everyone had their

own roles to fulfill. But functional as we were, we also tend

to fight over the simplest things, such as responsibilities

and work. Despite that, the need for a father figure never

really occurred to me — I never felt like there was a

missing piece or an empty space in our home. In a

male-dominated and patriarchal society, my home was

different. The people that supported and helped me grow

were all women.

Now that I'm older and blessed with a deeper

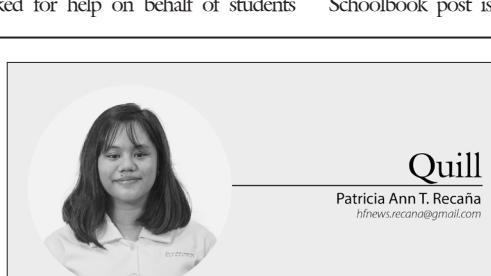
understanding of how society works (plus a little brother),

and her mother, who were simply eating dinner. As if there was no problem; as if her mother didn't just break down at the thought of Benjo leaving. Benjo's annoyance was palpable as Jane entered the house, mentioning how ungrateful she was and how painful it was for him to provide for her. The assumption of roles in the family were shown in that one scene. Benjo the "breadwinner" was back, the mother didn't have to worry anymore, and Jane was just an ungrateful child.

The implications hit too close to home. Even the mother believed that a family is never complete without a father.

This pushed me to think about where we are right now. As a living proof that non-traditional families can function, it was a privilege to be able to live in an environment that didn't conform to the norm. It made me think about other kids in non-traditional families, and how they too, are probably wondering why their family can't be like everyone else's. There will always be the textbook definition of a family: a father, a mother, and a child. Mine didn't have a father.

And that was okay.



Traditional families don't exist—at least from where I'm from.

Like every other kid, I was taught from a young age that the father was the breadwinner of the family, and the mother was the "ilaw ng tahanan" simply because of certain subjects in school. A child's mind was simple: take someone out of the picture and the perfect family wasn't so perfect anymore—or worse, *incomplete*.

However, growing up also made me realize that these ideas just promote patriarchal traditions, for there are mothers that provide, and fathers that tend to their kids, while some don't do that at all. Take that from someone that grew up without men in the family. Non-traditional families might look a bit different from the ones in the textbook, but they are just as real and valid as everyone else's, with their own set of problems and merits. Personally, this wasn't exactly a hard-hitting

realization that seized the mind, but rather a sense of gradual understanding that sinks with time. I was curious whenever my classmates talked about their dads, older brothers, or even their uncles and grandfathers at home. Even milk commercials on TV depicted fathers as a ray of hope. I simply can't relate; I never knew how male-dominated families were truly like. Just like myths, I only heard stories about it. My mother would work for the whole day and be home for the weekends, I grew up with my grandmother and my two older sisters. We eventually learned to be more independent, and by that point everyone had their own roles to fulfill. But functional as we were, we also tend to fight over the simplest things, such as responsibilities and work. Despite that, the need for a father figure never really occurred to me — I never felt like there was a missing piece or an empty space in our home. In a male-dominated and patriarchal society, my home was different. The people that supported and helped me grow were all women. Now that I'm older and blessed with a deeper understanding of how society works (plus a little brother),



# Of X's and O's

What the Filipinx/Filipino debate tells us about our collective identity

by Maria Victoria Busine | Art by Charles Howard Gaa

**The term Filipinx, mostly used as an alternative for those people living in the United States with Philippine origin, had sparked debates across different social media platforms when it was included in the English online resource platform Dictionary.com in September 2020. The arguments online had posed some thoughts and questions to ponder on about our roots, our language, and our own collective identity as Filipinos — or dare we say, Filipinx.**

#### Delving into our roots

From our earliest encounter with formal education, we are taught that the term "Filipino" indicated our nationality, and our citizenship as...well, *Filipinos*. History books have taught us how our country is named after King Philip II of Spain, a reminder in itself of our long history with colonization.

Looking back, aside from the origins of Filipino as a word and the fact that it is used to describe the people residing in the Philippines, we never really had a say on what to call ourselves and the land we call our home, especially under the rule of Spain. It was decided for us by colonizers that invaded our country, until it became something that we simply grew up using as locals.

John Toledo, an Assistant Professor from University of the Philippines Los Baños stated in the article *Filipino or Filipinx* that "Filipino also used to be uncomfortable for Spaniards who saw its nationalist agenda, forwarded from two fronts by the Propagandistas and the *Katipuneros*, as contradictory and dangerous for the Spanish hegemony."

Today, we continue to identify ourselves as Filipinos despite its complicated roots of colonialism and the various attempts at redefinition. As locals, we see them everywhere, from our official documents, textbooks, and even with our Constitution.

In addition to this, Marrian Pio Roda Ching wrote in the article *Is the Filipino language even as gender-neutral as we think it is?* that "to identify one's self as a Filipino and to speak the language

requires a constant interrogation of our shared histories, while confronting the links between our personal privilege and another's oppression."

Digging deeper into the roots of the Filipino/Filipinx debate, it points out that the language we use tells a story beyond the letters we see, and how important it is to be informed of how certain preferences came to be.

#### Behind the x

Dictionary.com defined *Filipinx*, pronounced as *filipineks* or *filipinks* as "a person of Philippine origin or descent, especially one living in the United States" which is used "in place of the masculine form *Filipino* or the feminine form *Filipina*." *Pinxy*, its informal counterpart, is used in place of the masculine form *Pinoy* or the feminine form *Pinay*.

The historical usage of *Filipinx* and *Pinxy* traces its origins in relation to the term *Latinx*, a gender-neutral term used to refer to Latin Americans who live in the United States. Arguments from many people in the large diaspora say that the term *Filipino* is a remnant of the gender-conforming roots of the Spanish language that influenced *Filipino* that we know and continue to use today.

But while *Filipinx* is new to the ears of some, it is actually used more by people overseas and across different social media platforms, according to founder of LGBTQ Scholars of Color Network Kevin Nadal PhD. He also referred to the term as *generational*, adding that as "younger people use it way more than older people" wherein "older people may even dislike the term."

Nadal also stated that *Filipino* people in the Philippines don't seem to be using the term just as much, as it actually sounds like "it's referring to *Filipinx American*."

The character x, as seen in the entry for *Latinx*, is used as a replacement for gendered inflections -o and -a as a classification for males and females respectively, with OnlineDictionary.com adding that Spanish and other Romance languages have "gendered grammar."

"The spellings *Latinx* or *Chicanx* are particularly embraced by groups that wish to include members whose gender identities are nonbinary," it said.

"By respecting the gendered grammar of Spanish in our English use of these loanwords, biological sex and binary gender identity are imposed onto English discourse in ways that otherwise would not have occurred," Dictionary.com added.

#### On evolving language and identity

As the discourse on *Filipinx* and our language also touched on the concept of gender and the aim for inclusivity of different gender identities, this also shows how the words we use affect how we talk about ourselves and how the struggle continue on how we define who we are, regardless of where we are in the world.

In a VICE article *Are You Filipino or Filipinx?* Nanette Caspillo stated that *Filipinx* is "an unnatural term because the suffix "-x" does not exist in the Philippine linguistic system."

Caspillo, a former University of the Philippines (UP) European languages professor, also explained that the language is "the human expression of man's interior and exterior reality" that "is shaped by the history of its people and the reality where it finds itself, including the laws of nature. Like anything bound in space and time, language evolves."

Meanwhile, Mykel Andrada, Director of *Sentro ng Wikang Filipino* at the University of the Philippines-Diliman, agrees that language evolves as it is dynamic. "Tatandaan natin palagi na 'yong wika, dinamiko 'yan. Kapag sinabi natin na dynamic, it is always in a constant change, lagi 'yan nagbabago," he stated.

#### Filipino or Filipinx: The gray area in the debate

At face value, the *Filipinx* or *Filipino* might seem like just another this-or-that argument. But it's exactly this line of thinking that fuels the polarization between people with the same roots, all of whom are simply living and experiencing different realities in different parts of the world.

Ultimately, by focusing the debate on which is the "more correct" term to refer to our identity, we overlook how languages evolve along with the people who use it, and how

language reinterprets their reality. On one end, those living apart from the Philippines are seen as privileged and unaware of the realities that the people are experiencing here in the country, while locals are viewed as unacceptable of the idea behind *Filipinx*.

Associate Professor of Linguistics in University of the Philippines (UP) Tuting Hernandez provided some insights in line with this, stating that the divide on the opinions seen in the online world is rooted in the "people's refusal to understand the lived experiences on the other side." In the article *Ekis: The Gigil Over Filipinx*, he wrote that *Filipinx* is not "meant to replace existing identities."

"It (*Filipinx*) was coined as an alternative to *Filipino/Filipina* for those who do not identify with this binary. It also carries with it the histories, relations, and alliances of those who choose to own and identify with this label—histories that are unique and have long diverged from the histories of other Filipinos in the Philippines and in diaspora; relations that are their own, forged in communities that are different from ours; and alliances borne out of the political need for visibility in a struggle that might be far from our everyday life," he added.

Hernandez also delved deeper on how the word *Filipinx* emerged due to the difference in experiences of being away from one's homeland. "Proponents of the term should understand that *Filipinx* speaks of their experiences and realities and not those of other Filipinos, but we also have to acknowledge that the *Filipinx* experience is unique and valid and different from ours," he wrote.

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Beyond the battle of what is preferred between *Filipinx* and *Filipino*, the real question lies on whether we are chained by foreign influences of our language, or liberated when we form our own meanings despite the touch of what is not originally ours. Either way, the discourse on *Filipinx* is a testament to how languages change as we go—reflecting our shared experiences, identity, and social realities built upon who we once were, who we are today, and who we wish to be.



# At the end of the rainbow

Why the SOGIE bill's fight against discrimination matters

by Maria Victoria Busine | Art by Alexandrea Rey

**Stretching for over two decades, it can be said that the fight against discrimination has gone long enough, but it's a fight that continues to matter today. As more struggles brought about by prejudice against the community require legal action, the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Equality Bill came to be as it seeks to protect against discrimination that was based on protecting one's sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.**

**However, as the bill underwent an online Senate hearing conducted by the House Committee on Women and Gender Equality on November 4, debates erupted regarding what the SOGIE Equality really stands for. In line with this, The HERALDO FILIPINO tackles the long-standing fight and what it means for everyone — regardless of the gender they identify with.**

## Two decades of the struggle

Many proposed bills in Congress go through long deliberations, starting from the House of Representatives up to the Senate. In the case of SOGIE bill, an already long process of deliberations became even longer. Talks about the fight against discrimination had been going on in the legislative body for years, making the bill one of the slowest-moving bills in our country's history. LGBTQIA+ rights advocate Jonas Bagas refers to this as "the institutional weakness of the Congress."

The bill's earliest version goes back as far as 2000, filed by the late Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago and former Akbayan Representative Etta Rosales in the 11th Congress. This marked the beginning of the years-long struggle in the legislative body to attain legal protection against gender-based discrimination.

Later on, the bill was refiled in the 14th Congress, but was not able to make it past the committee level. Similar bills were filed in the 15th Congress and 16th Congress, all of which had seen no progress at the time. Despite this, several efforts still made its mark in the long fight for SOGIE equality, such as the Supreme Court granting the petition of *Ang Ladlad*, a Party list aiming to represent the LGBTQIA+ community, after the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) denied them twice of accreditation on the grounds of "immorality."

17 years after the first version of the bill was filed, the House of Representatives eventually approved it during its final reading on September 20, 2017, garnering 198 votes in favor of the bill. However, the Senate still failed to tackle the bill by the end of the 17th Congress session.

As the succeeding 18th Congress went into session, the approved version was later adopted as a "working draft" by the panel. December 16, 2020 also saw a recent development in the deliberation of the bill, where Senator Risa Hontiveros sponsored the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) Equality Bill at the

Senate plenary. This marks the second time the bill was brought up for debate on the Senate.

Furthermore, Hontiveros emphasized that the proposed measure is not limited to the protection of the LGBTQIA+ community alone.

"*Labat ng tao ay may* sexual orientation at gender identity or expression," she said. "*Ang sinasabi lang natin, straight ka mang lalake o babae, bakla, lesbyana, bisexual, transgender o queer, labat tayo ay may ambag sa lipunan, labat tayo pantay-pantay.*"

## What the fight means

Behind the long years of paving the way for SOGIE equality also comes the question of what it stands and fights for. While a survey by U.S. based Pew Research Center in 2019 stated that 73 percent of Filipinos agreed with the statement "homosexuality should be accepted by society," it does not erase and remove the fact that gender-based discrimination is still present within our country, both reported and unreported.

News stories like the death of transgender woman Jennifer Laude from the hands of United States Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton back in 2014 only adds to the long list of violence and discrimination that the LGBTQIA+ community has been facing for so long. Fast forward over six years later, on September 2020, and we have President Rodrigo Duterte granting absolute pardon to the convicted US Marine despite his murder charges, spurring debates on the Philippine's justice system, along with the prevalent gender-based violence and discrimination that persists today.

In response, several LGBTQIA+ groups have condemned Pemberton's absolute pardon, such as University of the Philippines (UP) Babaylan who stated that "this is a direct attack not just [on] Jennifer Laude and her family but to every trans person and every victim of our corrupt and unequal 'justice' system."

Additionally, several Metro Manila student organizations like Far Eastern University Sexuality and Gender Alliance (FEU SAGA) and the Samahan

ng Progresibong Kabataan (SPARK) also called for the urgent approval of the SOGIE bill in a statement condemning the decision.

"This is not about placing special rights for a specific minority group, but a gesture that recognizes the equal rights and protection of the LGBTQIA+ community that should have already been in place under the ambit of both national and international laws," they said in a joint statement.

While upholding the dignity and equality for everyone is already written in the Philippine Constitution and several international covenants like the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the growing cases of hate crimes and abuses that the LGBTQIA+ community continues to face tell a different story altogether. Amid the debates also come the different misconceptions around the question of what the SOGIE bill is for, like ones that point to it as giving "special rights" that impede on the rights of other people.

However, supporters and advocates of the bill argued that the provisions protects everyone against different forms of discrimination. The bill also specifies instances of gender-based discrimination in different aspects of life such as work opportunities, education, and access to public services and health services.

## Why it matters

For years, discussions on the SOGIE bill and what it stands for continue to resurface on the news and circulate within different social media platforms. But these discussions also come with the common misconceptions that pose long-standing questions on the concept of gender, ranging from concepts that challenge our deeply held beliefs, traditions, and norms.

On top of the long legal fight against discrimination not being prioritized and the misconceptions that spreads faster than fire, the SOGIE bill was also met with criticisms from supporters of the Church. It is unsurprising as the Philippines is a country with over 80 million Catholics, and it cannot be denied that these deeply held beliefs and traditions still hold influence over the matters of the state.

However, even with all the information floating around in the online world, a part of the fight for SOGIE equality involves the tireless efforts in order to educate and correct the common misconceptions out there. In light of this, Shein Capila, the *Inang Reyna* (President) of Kasarianlan, an LGBTQIA+ youth organization in Polytechnic University of

the Philippines (PUP) shared that "No matter how tiring it is, we should continue educating people how important it is to be gender sensitive."

Capila also shared how the youth organization Kasarianlan handled cases of experiences of bullying, discrimination, and harassment, and added that "We all believe that universities, especially state universities, should act as a safe space where students can comfortably know themselves more and realize their potential as individuals. Embracing diversity and genuine acceptance is an ultimate goal for every school institution out there."

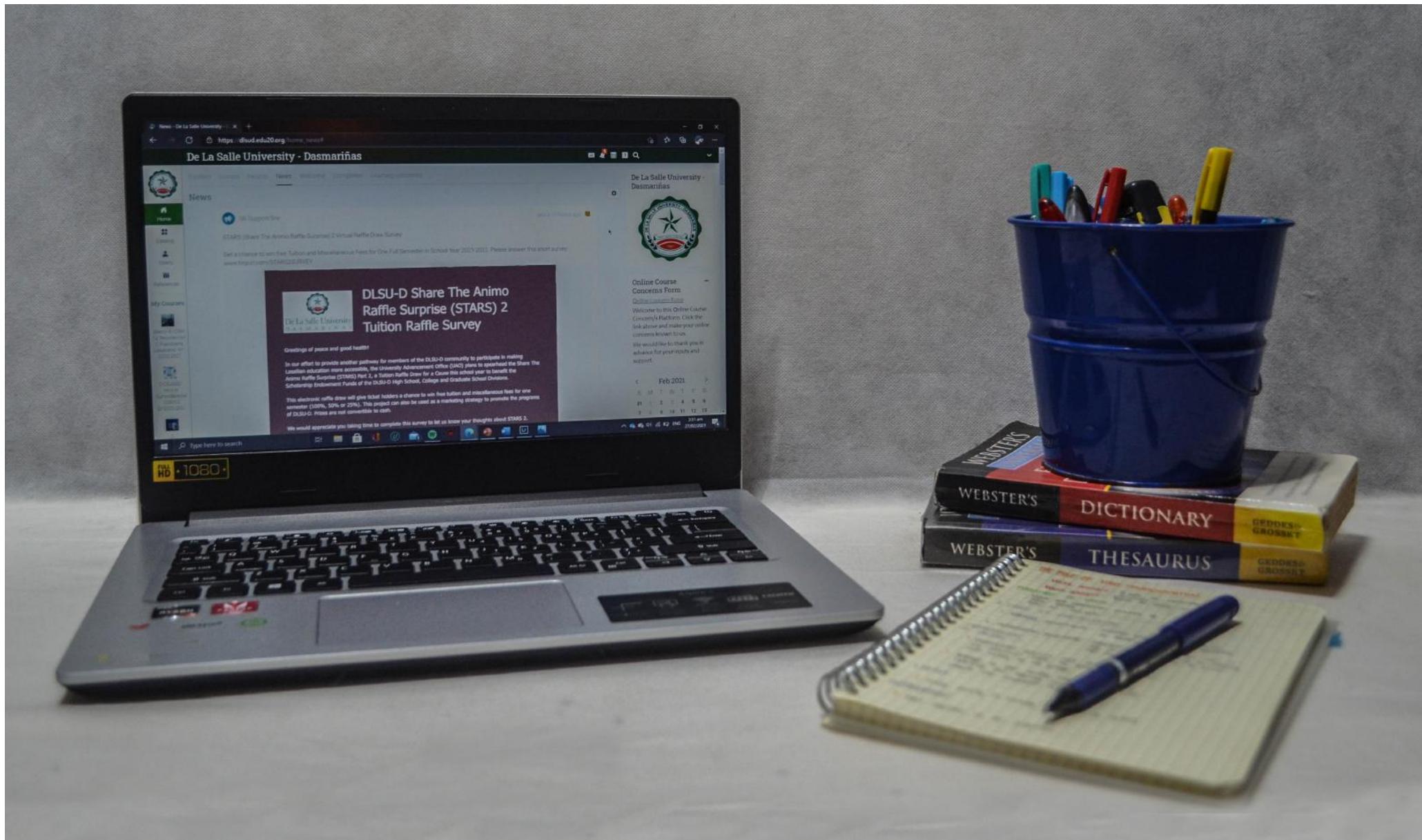
As we continue to break past the traditional notions associated with gender and sexuality, it can't also be denied that these socially constructed concepts of what it means to identify with a certain gender still tends to be misunderstood at times. Sensitivity and respect to the spectrum of gender that does not box and limit someone's expression of identity is the core of fighting for everyone's equal right to be protected from any form of discrimination. It can also be as simple as recognizing that other people identify themselves in a manner that may be different and unfamiliar to you, and taking the time to understand their preferences without judgement.

Moreover, while acknowledging and respecting the spectrum is a key step to seeing others equally and eye-to-eye, it also matters to recognize the fact that the fight for SOGIE equality is molded by experiences and stories of injustices due to stereotypes that have been around for so long. As the new generation, it is our duty to remember and be informed about these stories, and to make sure none of them ever happens again — not on our watch.

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The fight for SOGIE equality may be long, but that alone is a testament to what it stands for, and will continue to fight for in the name of battling discrimination. The legal fight for equality is not a case of a special treatment but instead stands for a call to address what the existing laws do not cover. As stories of gender-based discrimination both known and untold continues on, bills that aim to ensure that there is protection to not let this happen again paves a way for a better future.

"As gender advocates, we bring these stories with us. We remember every name, every case, every pain — and we make sure to use our voice and fight for a more accepting future," Capila stated.



# Making ends meet

The state of DLSU-D scholarships amid pandemic

by Lance Mejico | Photo by Miguel Luis Abenales

**The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic was a huge blow for private universities across the country, urging several schools to enforce provisional administrative measures to make ends meet. In DLSU-D, Center for Academics and Scholarship (CAS) was one of the offices who bore the impact of the crisis as the University decided to reduce its allocated budget for scholars, which leads to decreased scholarship benefits for the first semester of the academic year (AY) 2020-2021. With reduced grants and work-from-home setup, The HERALDO FILIPINO takes a closer look at how University scholars and administration bear with the challenges brought by the health crisis.**

#### Decreased grants

In an online interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO, Scholarship Coordinator Linda Palomino said there are no 100 percent scholarship grants for Student Financial Aid (SFA) scholars, while slots for academic scholarship decreased for the current semester. She explained that this was due to the reduced budget allocation for scholars for the current AY.

Palomino then clarified that there is no significant difference in terms of number of scholars in comparison to the previous AY, but only in scholarship percentage and benefits given to students.

Instead of full scholarship grants for SFAs, CAS delegated a lower percentage to accommodate the needs of old and new scholars, with 50 percent being the highest scholarship offer for AY 2020-2021. The number of academic scholars were also reduced to 30 from the 40 grantees in the previous AY.

“During the costing *namin, talagang bindi kakayanin ang 100 percent*. We decided to give the most grant *na pwe de namin ibigay sa office* is 50 percent *para lahat sila ay ma-cater*. And then, *mayroon ding mga 25 percent and 10 percent*,” she explained.

When asked how much from the budget in AY 2019-2020 was reduced, Palomino did not give specific figures and percentage of the budget reduction.

The HERALDO FILIPINO also sought the statement of the Finance and Accounting Office (FAO) on the budget allocation for scholars, but they have not responded as of press time.

Meanwhile, student-athletes have also encountered challenges as several sports leagues have been suspended during the pandemic.

This led the administration to temporarily dissolve the Sports Development Office (SDO), which is the umbrella department for varsity players, and to cut off athletes’ monthly allowances for the current AY.

However, Athletic Team Captain Mark Puspos mentioned that some benefits have been retained.

“Adjusting is [a] must in this time of pandemic. We need to work to feed ourselves and to sustain internet access for our online classes or assessments,” stated Puspos in an online interview.

While benefits for SFA grantees and student-athletes have been adjusted, Performing Arts Group (PAG) scholars maintained their scholarship status as is.

“They are still enjoying other benefits like exemption from attending Physical Education (PE) Nation Service Training Program (NSTP) classes, though they are required to accomplish some tasks implemented by the two offices before they finally get excused from attending synchronous and asynchronous classes,” Cultural Arts Office (CAO) Coordinator Joel Refuerzo shared.

#### USG financial grant program

Despite decreased scholarship grants, other opportunities remained for aspiring scholars. This included the University Student Government (USG)’s Financial Aid Grant Program, which aimed to provide P10,000 assistance to 20 bona fide students in the University.

The application period ran from January 4 until January 10 during the first semester of AY 2020-2021, making it the first student financial aid grant program launched by the USG since the ratification of the new constitution.

USG later announced that they will be increasing the number of financial aid grantees for the second semester of AY 2020-2021 from 20 to 40 students.

Despite decreased scholarship grants, new opportunities for other students, meanwhile, were launched through the University Student Government (USG) Financial Aid Grant Program, which aimed to provide P10,000 cash assistance to 20 bona fide students in the University.

This was the first time that USG launched a student financial aid grant program since the ratification of the new constitution.

On February 26, USG announced that they will be increasing the number of financial aid grantees for the second semester of AY 2020-2021 from 20 to 40 students.

#### Work-from-home duties

As the pandemic limited face-to-face meetings to purely virtual interactions, students also faced adjustments in fulfilling their responsibilities as scholars, shifting to a work-from-home scheme for the first semester of AY 2020-2021.

According to Circle of Student Assistants (CoSa) President Rod Mascardo, CAS made significant adjustments in their duty hours in line with pandemic restrictions.

“Regarding our duty hours *naman*, it is greatly reduced. In my case, my duty hours should be 90 hours, but because of the new guidelines, 45 *na lang po iyon*,” Mascardo said.

He added that several of their duties remained, with most of the tasks being secretarial tasks for their respective departments.

As students are still banned from entering campus premises, student athletes have taken it upon themselves to do self-trainings at home since the quarantine period began.

#### Changes on scholarship process

In consideration to restrictions during the pandemic, the scholarship application process also faced adjustments as CAS lifted some requirements for AY 2020-2021.

This included the freezing of grade requirements for SFA scholars, as grades for the second semester of AY 2019-2020 have not been considered as a basis in granting their scholarship merits.

According to Palomino, CAS acknowledged the circumstances of students during the distance learning setup, especially at the height of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) where everyone was just adjusting.

Requirements such as performance evaluation at the end of the semester and home visitation for SFA scholars have also been relaxed.

Instead of home visitation, CAS assessed the application of SFA scholars through phone call verification in lieu of pandemic guidelines.

As the COVID-19 pandemic halted in-campus meetings, Palomino said digital means were utilized to submit scholarship requirements.

“Base(d) from my experience kasi, the application process was not difficult/complicated at all. It was easier

*pa nga po* compared from the pre-pandemic time, which is good considering that our situation is difficult because of the pandemic,” Mascardo said when asked on the modified scholarship applications for the current AY.

On the other hand, the criteria for scholarship of PAG members were kept, which includes attendance and performance for 30 percent, and attitude and academics for 20 percent.

#### Hopes for on-site classes

As in-campus classes remain halted for the next semester, scholars expressed their hopes once the situation allows the face-to-face setup.

As athletes faced drastic adjustments during the pandemic, Puspos hoped that varsity scholars will regain their full benefits as soon as on-site classes resume.

In an interview with THE HERALDO FILIPINO, newly appointed OSS Dean Domingo Reblora Jr. said he cannot guarantee that similar benefits will be applied once face-to-face classes resume, as the administration is also dependent on the number of enrollees in the University.

“There are things that we are not so sure of yet right now because we are just speculating in the sense that yes we are going back to face-to-face classes, but the question is, do we still have the same number of students,” Reblora explained.

As for PAG scholars, Refuerzo said that students can expect “more intense, energetic, and passionate student artists” from their members once conditions allow.

“It is too early to plan at this time but just like before, meaningful and quality presentations and productions are expected to be delivered,” Refuerzo added.

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No one was exempt from the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, and this included private universities and the scholarship opportunities they provide. In a crisis that crippled both the former educational setup and the old normal, it takes both efforts from the University and its students to make ends meet – with the University adjusting the requirements to better assist the students they serve, and the students working around the University’s reduced benefits and adjusted policies. As the pandemic posed many uncertainties, both scholars and the administration are left with no choice but to remain hopeful amid difficult times – that someday, making ends meet would not have to be the sole option anymore.

# The cost of development

Revisiting the possible effects of the Bacoor Reclamation and Development Project

by Patricia RecaÑa | Graphic Art by Stephanie Arreza



Set to cover the 11 barangays, the Bacoor Reclamation and Development Project (BRDP) was proposed with humble intentions of creating job opportunities, and increasing tourism within Cavite. Defined as the cultivation of areas fit for human needs, reclamation projects are done for the benefit of citizens and businesses. However, through Bacoor locals and the local sectors of Panday Sining (PS) and Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA), we learn that the BRDP may cause relocation of families, economic displacement of fisherfolk, and environmental harm within the area — all during the pandemic. In line with this, The HERALDO FILIPINO revisits the issue to understand the possible effects of the reclamation under the guise of development.

#### Bacoor reclamation project in a nutshell

Initiated by the Bacoor government and the owner of Erabelle Fishing Corporation, the proposed 320-hectare BRDP was said to provide developable land above Manila Bay following the increasing urban population growth in the area.

Along with BRDP, the Bacoor government also proposed to undertake the 100-hectare island Diamond Reclamation Development Project (DRDP) which totals to 420 hectares of land to be built upon.

According to the fact sheet, the development plan would encompass and affect Barangays Siniguelasan, Alima, Campo Santo, Tabing Dagat, Digman, Kaingin, Maliksi III, Maliki I, Talaba II, Talaba I and Zapote V.

#### Retracing the footsteps

In The HERALDO FILIPINO Volume 33 Issue 2 special report, we tackled the implications of the reclamation project to the land and livelihood of the Barangay Maliksi III residents. Three years later, the BRDP saw progress through the issuance of the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC), officially jumpstarting the project.

The reclamation plan proposal traced its roots back to 2019 while DRDP was proposed back in 2016 by the Bacoor local government. Following the requirements for ECC of BRDP, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) conducted public hearings with citizens and stakeholders.

During the DENR hearing on January 9 last year, Alyansa ng mga Mandaragat sa Bacoor (ALYANSA) claimed that the project would cause economic displacement of local fishermen and coastal communities, harming the oyster and mussels businesses in Cavite.

The Bacoor City government then released a statement, which mentioned that “the City hopes to integrate in these two projects a most effective approach to the long-term cleanup of Manila Bay as mandated by a SC (Supreme Court).

Should the reclamation project push through, Manila Bay will also be affected as artificial islands are built on the area, fulfilling the purpose of the Manila Bay reclamation as per DENR's prior clean-up program.

Following the hearing, PAMALAKAYA filed a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman on February 17 of the same year, citing possible violations of the project under the Fisheries Code. Despite the efforts and opposition from citizens and organizations, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu signed and granted the ECC for the project on March 5.

After the approval, PAMALAKAYA once again condemned the actions of DENR through a statement by National Chairperson Fernando Hicap on March 10 and said that the supposed lead agency on restoring the ecosystem of the Manila Bay is the one violating its very own program.

DENR issued the ECC to the Bacoor City government in June, officially securing the project's construction.

As stated in the permit, “the project area shall be within the geographical coordinates specified in the project's Environmental Impact Statement with the following components: internal road network,

drainage system, containment structures, storm surge protection structures and access ways”.

Villar reiterated her disapproval of DENR's decision on June 23 and said the project could result in massive flooding in areas around Manila Bay and cause destruction on legislated protected areas.

On the same day, Bacoor City Mayor Lani Mercado-Revilla supported DENR's approval of the permit and mentioned in a statement that BRDP will generate about 700,000 jobs for citizens and P1.8 billion additional income from tourism.

In a follow-up statement posted on June 25, PAMALAKAYA - Cavite denounced the approval of the ECC, saying that “sinamantala nito [...] ang pagbubulos ng atensyon ng madla sa pagharaan sa pandemyang covid19 [coronavirus disease 2019] para supilin ang tyak na malakas na paglaban sa proyekto ng reklamasyon,” the local chapter added.

#### Effects of BRDP to local livelihood and environment

To give emphasis on the effects of the reclamation project in a local scenario, The HERALDO FILIPINO reached out to representatives of mass organizations: PS - Bacoor and PAMALAKAYA - Cavite.

As said in statements made by PAMALAKAYA, the reclamation project would displace at least 700 fisherfolk and coastal families within Bacoor.

PS - Bacoor Representative Jian Tayco addressed the relocation by saying, “karapatan ng mamamayan na manatili at karapatan ng mamamayan ang makasama sila sa pag-unlad na sinasabi ng lokal na pamahalaan. Hindi dapat sila isinasantabi”.

With the continuation of the project, areas for fishing grounds would decrease from 900 to 480 hectares. PAMALAKAYA - Cavite Provincial Staff Ed Valdez also said small fisherfolk can only work as far as 15 km away from the shore, in reference to the Fisheries Code.

When discussing the relocation of Bacoor fisherfolk, Valdez asked “makatao ba yung settlement na pupuntahan?” as they possibly would be unable to utilize their skills on fishing.

When talking about job offerings by the BDRP, the provincial staff raised that “kailangan na 'tin isipin kung kaya nito makabuhay ng pamilya and [kung] contractual din siya”.

In terms of environmental effects, the nature of the project would be the construction of artificial islands. Valdez then emphasized that “kapag natambakan ng lupa sa dagat, bindi na [ito] pwedeng bawin”, as coral reefs get destroyed in the process.

The provincial staff also pointed out the possible Fisheries Code violation as mangroves, natural barriers that mitigate large waves, would be cut down for construction.

Another environmental effect of the project would be possible flooding and potential irreparable damage to the Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park as mentioned by Villar in a press statement issued on June 23.

In reference to the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act, the statement read that “the project will be building on the buffer zone of this protected area and will destroy the landscape in which the wetland now thrives.”

The area is also internationally recognized by the Ramsar Convention due to the park's role for the survival of threatened, range restricted and congregatory bird species.

However, the BDRP report denied Villar's statements, stating that the project is not in protected areas. The report also proposed mitigation options such as wave deflectors for flooding, and use of sea-worthy vessels for possible damages to marine ecosystems.

With the economic decline the country is facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the continuation of the Bacoor development project would defeat its own purpose with its effect bringing the downfall of its local businesses, and coastal communities.

#### Actions taken by the local sectors

More than the release of statements, PS and PAMAKALAYA had launched initiatives to raise awareness about the project and give support to the fisherfolk of Bacoor.

According to Valdez, PAMALAKAYA assisted in forming an organization with the fisherfolk aimed to collate their calls on the reclamation. Educational activities with the locals were also held to further let them understand the situation.

Importance of building organizations and alliances with other institutions were also shared. Different kinds

#### Mobilizations and government responses

For more awareness on the effects of BRDP to the citizens and environment, organizations assemble for mobilizations, sometimes on notable events such as the filing of complaints to DENR and Urban Poor Day.

To commemorate Andres Bonifacio's 157th anniversary, progressive groups from local sectors of AB, BAYAN, Alyansa sa Pagsulong ng Karapatan ng Mamamayan (KARAPATAN), College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP), and many more organizations slammed the continuation of reclamation projects amid the pandemic.

Instead of reclamation efforts, the mass organizations demanded immediate and sufficient relief projects for greatly affected families by the recent fire in Siniguelasan, Bacoor back on November 1 last year.

According to PAMALAKAYA - Southern Tagalog in a statement, the fire that broke out on Barangay Siniguelasan, one of the areas under the BRDP, was highly suspicious.

When asked about the matter, Valdez said “ang sinungay isang kapabayaan ng pamahalaan,” as local government units (LGUs) could give funds to build more sturdy homes for struggling coastal communities.

Regarding the responses from Bacoor LGUs towards the reclamation project, Valdez answered that the city government actively avoids talking to the fishermen.

Meanwhile, Tayco answered that “ang mga mamamayan dito sa Bacoor, laging open makipag-dayalog sa LGU. Laging open sa pakikipag-usap, ngunit ang LGU ay hingkay at di sinero sa pagtugon sa mga pangangailangan at karapatan ng mamamayan ng Bacoor.”



Photo by PAMALAKAYA (contributor)

of assistance such as finances, legal counseling, and media coverage were given through the support of other alliances.

Valdez also highlighted the importance of media coverages, and added that “kailangan maging aware labat sa Bacoor para makapukaw tayo ng malawak na support at para ma-pressure yung duty bearers at stakeholders na 'wag ipaputuloy yung project”.

In terms of PS - Bacoor, Tayco said mass organizations such as Student Christian Movement of the Philippines (SCMP), PAMALAKAYA Cavite, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) - Cavite, and Anakbayan (AB) - Cavite also gathered for community organizing.

Tayco also listed different initiatives by organizations such as, “pagtulungan sa community work, pagtulungan sa labang ligal ng maralita, at paglusad ng mga diskusyon ukol sa makataong reklamasyon, batayang karapatang pantao, atbp.”

While reclamation projects are built upon the notion of improving the quality of life within an area, may it always take into account the plight of the people who have lived and grew within that land, and recognize that reclaiming their community means changing their lives.

The BRDP may indeed create more jobs and increase tourism in Cavite, but so long as the fisherfolk's plight remain unheard and environmental concerns remain unaccounted for, this development may cost us more than it intends to bring on the table. The current threat of COVID-19 pandemic also makes it harder for the locals to adjust, much less cope with the possible effects once the project pushes through. The promise of development hangs true, but as said by Tayco, “development projects should not be at the expense of the people.”

# BRIEF REPORT

## THE AFTERMATH OF 2020 PHILIPPINE ECONOMY

by Adriel Jerome Toledo, Elaine Aznar, Maria Victoria Busine

Despite all recovery efforts so far, the country's economy took a turn from bad to worse by the end of 2020, according to IBON's research group on December 27. What does it mean now to us Filipinos?

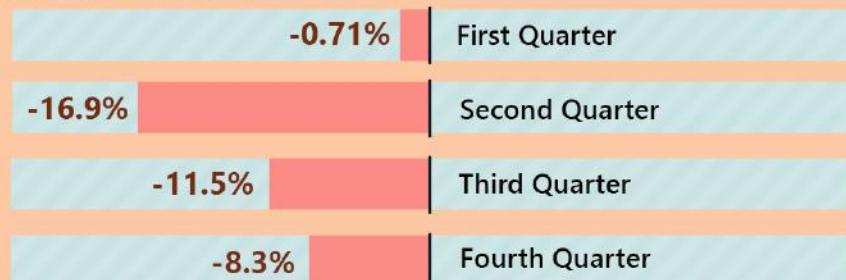
### THE EXTENDING SLUMP

The Philippine economy suffered a decline following the numerous natural disasters and the monthslong strict lockdown to contain the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which compromised everyone's way of life.



The slump in gross domestic product (GDP) was the sharpest plunge since the beginning of the 1946 Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data collection on annual growth rates, and the first GDP decline since 1998 (-0.5).

#### GDP Rates in 2020



The country's GDP hit its lowest at -16.9% during the second quarter of the year when the pandemic was declared and strict lockdowns across the country were implemented. In the third quarter, the economy is slightly bouncing back following the ease in community quarantine measures.



The country's accumulated debt breached the P10 trillion mark to fund the pandemic response, with the government borrowing P2.3 trillion in 2020.

#### What does it mean?

Looking into a country's debt has another perspective, the debt-to-GDP ratio. The debt-to-GDP ratio in the first half of 2020 is 48.1%, which is higher than the recorded ratio 39.6% as of end-2019, proving that our liabilities were quantifiably bigger than what we earn.

Estimated lost income due to the slump of the country's economy, the worst performing out of Southeast Asian countries.



### Why is the Philippines the worst-performing economy in Southeast Asia?

- Former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia stated that one of the reasons why the Philippine economy is lagging is its small budget allocation for COVID-19 response, amounting to 5.88% of GDP which is also the lowest among other economies in the region.
- The prevalence and management of the country's COVID-19 cases, As more cases meant increased economic disruptions, and lesser time to actually generate economic activity without mobility restrictions.
- Delays in the actual spending for COVID-19 response caused a missed opportunity that negatively affected the economy.

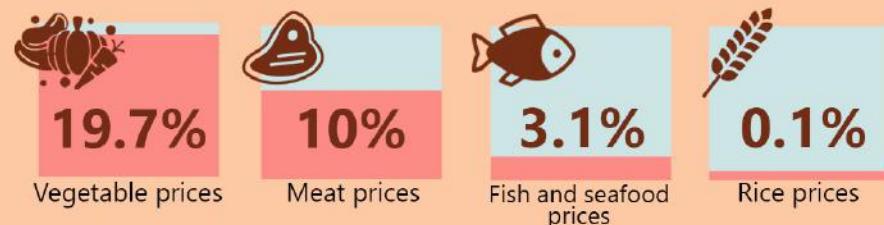
### Economic sectors that suffered the most income losses include:



The inflation rate (general rise in price of goods) in December 2020. As of 2021, prices of food products like meat and vegetables soared while the price of rice fell.

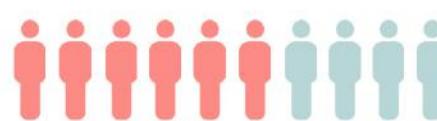


### The rise in food prices amid the pandemic:



### THE WORK FORCE

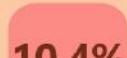
Following the implementation of quarantine measures, thousands of businesses were shut down, affecting millions of Filipinos as they were left no choice but to lose their jobs—causing the country's workforce to suffer.



Filipinos are in informal, regular, government contractual, or agency-hired work



Reported number of jobless Filipinos in 2020, according to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)



The country's unemployment rate amid the pandemic, which was the highest in 15 years



The most recent unemployment rate equivalent to revived 800,000 jobs was reported in October 2020 as the quarantine restrictions gradually eased, and the economy slowly started to circulate again



Underemployment rate (the number of people who work part-time or work at a job unrelated to their education and skills).

#### The regions with the highest unemployment rates:

National Capital Region: 12.4%

Ilocos Region: 11.5%

Calabarzon: 11%



Minimum wage in the National Capital Region (NCR), which is insufficient in comparison to the P1,051 living wage for a family of five.

Provincial minimum wage, which is not enough to meet basic needs especially amid the pandemic.



### WHAT'S NEXT FOR 2021?

- According to the World Bank, there is a foreseeable bounce of 5.9% economic growth this year. However, this is below the government's target of 6.5% to 7.5%.
- The country's economy for 2021 is unlikely to see growth until the second quarter. Acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Chua described that the first quarter of the year would be a "slow start" and added that "nothing significant has changed."

## EDITORIAL

## End the system perpetuating police brutality

To end police brutality means ending the system that allows it.

On December 20, the shooting incident of Sonya Gregorio (52) and Frank Gregorio (25) was added to the long list of police brutality cases this 2020. In a viral video that caught their deaths, a voice shouts "my father is a policeman!" Not as an assurance, but as a *threat*. Earlier on April 23, retired soldier Winston Ragos was also shot at Barangay Pasong Putik, Quezon City. Ragos, who allegedly "attempted to pull out a gun from his slider bag" was shot twice in the name of "self-defense", just a few weeks after President Rodrigo Duterte's "shoot-them-dead" statement on national television.

Anyone with eyes could see that whoever fired the shot is the murderer. That time, however, the murderer was exercising a "judgement call", including "shoot" as the first option.

It is easy to get lost in the echochamber and even easier to simply run with it: blame the father, blame the daughter, blame the victims, blame each other. We fall under the machinations of a fascist state the moment we allow them to put a face on the enemy, which they can and will label as *anyone* but themselves.

Police brutality incidents were by no means scarce in the history of our country. It's a cancer that's outlived administrations. Like the virus we've spent an entire year trying to eradicate, the culture of police brutality lives on through a conducive host and environment. And we allow it to spread every time we dismiss the brutality as "accidents", "acts of self-defense", and "isolated cases".

**We fall under the machinations of a fascist state the moment we allow them to put a face on the enemy, which they can and will label as anyone but themselves.**

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Not all police brutality incidents have the fortune of being heard or caught on camera. Not all victims receive the justice they deserve just as not all perpetrators receive the punishment they deserve. This is what the "not all" narrative truly means, especially to those whose lives mainstream media cannot reach.

That is why ending police brutality demands so much more than putting one criminal behind bars. It will take more than a trending hashtag, a series of statements, and the masses taking the role of watchdogs in their own right—but it's a start. It begins with recognizing two harsh truths: one, the state is teeming with violence, and two, the state is what enables and promotes this violence.

In a system that establishes the police as judge, jury, and executioner, we must never forget who gave them the authority to do so, and we must continue to hold them accountable until the culture of impunity is no more.



Hanged Man

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## We are more than our work

Instances of role-engulfment are closer than we think, most especially in a culture that promotes hustle and grind above all else. The younger generation, having grown up to social media, are expected to hit it big by the time they reach their twenties, on top of graduating from a prestigious school, managing a side-hustle, and living healthy.

**At the end of the day, we can only choose to lay down our armors or die in it, as the armor gets heavier over time.**

With this, the Iron Man question takes off with a bit more dimensionality, because once we take off the "armor" that we consider our responsibilities, we are met with inner selves that are just as workaholic and overcompensating as the former — completely blurring the line where armor meets skin.

Jeffrey Davis' article *You Are Not Your Work* effectively tackles this, as he makes an important distinction between *meaningful work* and *meaningful life*. Both will vary for different people, but in our desire to be everything all at once, work and life tends to overlap and take over the other. This

holds especially true for those who are particularly passionate in their line of work, leading to higher chances of role-engulfment and burnout.

We all have our reasons for pushing beyond our limits: be it from wanting to accumulate valuable experience, collecting job titles and achievements like pins, treating responsibility as an anchor — or perhaps even as a way of hiding. But what we do does not necessarily translate to who we are, because there will always come a time when we will *stop* doing. At the end of the day, we can only choose to lay down our armors or die in it, as the armor gets heavier over time. You may never run out of work, but you *will* run out of fuel. You'll get tired, get sick of people seeing the same old mask of iron, and sustain damages that are beyond repair.

From personal experience, the responsibility of work can be quite comfortable if you get used to it long enough. But get used to it too much, and you'll forget why you were willing to take the load in the first place. There's nothing wrong with taking pride in the weight of the armor, and treating work as an extension of oneself. But when the time comes and we're forced to strip ourselves of all that society perceives to be valuable, may we all remember our names before the things we do, and see our worth beyond the weight we carry.

This is more than getting a life outside work. This is being *more* than your work, with or without. After all, there's no use asking what's beneath the armor if there's no one left in there.

## Different one

about his identity. With that, the people around him insisted on piling more challenges, making an already bad situation take a turn for the worse, contributing

Growing up, his life only became more miserable. People hated him because of who he was, while some, accepting as they were, turned out to be fake. He felt worthless. Some of his friends may be there to support him, but mostly he just supported himself.

**If someone could openly speak about his sexuality, then others will also be encouraged to be open to everyone.**

Being true to himself came naturally, as he was already open about who he was. Some people in the same situation as him were not like that, but he also believed that people are like dominos, and if someone made the first move, everything else would fall into place. If someone could openly speak about his sexuality, then others will also be encouraged to be open to everyone.

Along the way, he was able to become more mature as his environment changed. The more he was surrounded by open people, the more he became honest and comfortable with himself. The scars, the tears become more worth it as he felt freer than before. Much like a diamond rough around the edges, he might look fragile but he will never break, true to his nature. He was not afraid to let the whole world know who he was. That he was gay.

*That gay is me.*

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There was no tuition fee hike for the academic year (AY) 2020-2021, making it the second time that the University did not implement a tuition fee increase since the onset of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.



The deadline and amount of assessments given sometimes do not adhere to the Implemented Rules and Regulations (IRR) guidelines even during self-care weeks where there shouldn't be any.



The University Student Government (USG) launched the Financial Aid Grant Program titled "University Student Government Financial Aid Grant Act", which aims to provide P10,000 financial aid to 20 selected DLSU-D students.

Istampam  
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Months before the Miss Universe 2015 pageant, then-to-be-crowned Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach posted a tweet saying, "Kalmang guys. Ako bahala. Babawi tayo sa Miss Universe!!" The tweet, dating all the way back to May 3 of the same year, was no more than a boost of confidence for her fellow Filipinos, until she made history by winning the crown and being the third Filipina to have claimed the Miss Universe title.

Screenshots of that tweet resurfaced on social media recently, along with other famous tweets and Facebook posts of people claiming what seemed to be like destiny at work. Synonymously mentioned were the words "Law of Attraction", trending into a hashtag as more and more people come forward and announce their intent to the world.

The law of attraction is the belief that one's thoughts attract the things one is focused on. And that the mind has the power to eventually materialize those thoughts into reality. However, most of us seem to have a deluded idea on how it really works. Simply thinking and expecting something to happen does not mean that it will happen, and this goes for everything. When we want something, we must also have the will to act upon it.

For instance, merely retweeting Wurtzbach's tweet in hopes of sharing the same fate does not make one a beauty queen that instant. It takes a beauty queen months, or even years, to prepare for pageants. They invest their time perfecting their walks and poses, as well as in practicing for the question and answer portion. They develop the

discipline for strict diets and workouts to stay physically fit.

It's like learning a new language. We have to learn that language's alphabet, develop new vocabulary, construct proper sentences, and practice

**Unlike most things  
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are not just one click  
away.**

through conversations. It takes a process to be able to speak or converse in a new language fluently.

Trying out new things is also a form of choosing. Before entering college, I actually had trouble deciding what course to study. I was

torn between the many courses I was interested in. One reason for this was because I was worried that I might choose the wrong one and end up shifting after a year or two. I filled my mind with doubts, overthinking until I ended up with drawing conclusions without giving it a try first. The first step was the heaviest: it carried my uncertainty and worries over the outcome, but even then, it was a risk I knew I had to take. Instead of doubts, I chose to believe that my growth and success depends on my commitment to what I've already chosen.

Everything involves and requires a process. We must go through different steps or levels before achieving our goals, as there are no shortcuts in life. Unlike most things today that are instant, our dreams are not just one click away. Regardless of what we hope for, we must clearly set out goals and focus our energy on it, invest our time and efforts in order to make it happen.

When we think positively, we translate it into positive energy and attract positive things. On the other hand, if we think negatively, we transmit negative energy and attract negative things. Through inviting and surrounding ourselves with positive influences, developing and maintaining a healthier lifestyle, we learn to cultivate a positive mindset.

The law of attraction is a powerful law that is constantly at work throughout our lives. What we claim is what we attract, provided that we combine it with concrete plans and actions. Manifest and let the universe know of your intentions. Be bold no matter the circumstances, don't let your dreams remain as dreams. And just like Pia Wurtzbach, may you claim the crown of your dreams.

Abduco  
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At some point in our lives, we've all heard variations of the saying "don't bite off more than what you can chew" or "don't take a step longer than your leg". We may hear these phrases in the form of a warning or an advice; mostly being the former. You probably heard it from one of your English classes during Elementary or Junior High School, then shrugged it off as a simple expression, unable to comprehend its meaning.

Looking back, the phrase may probably hit you differently now, with years of college and senior high hanging off your belt. But what exactly does it mean when you bite off more than you can chew? As the phrase suggests, you may take on more work than you can possibly do at a given time, make promises you cannot keep, or attempt to do something which is otherwise impossible to do. Reading this now, you might have realized one thing: you probably have done exactly what the phrase has told you not to.

At first, it doesn't seem all that bad trying to accomplish more and believing that you can do more. But

as we acknowledge the weight of the responsibilities we've taken along the way, we now realize that we can only go so far taking on tasks that we thought we could handle, and that we can't always be doing more than one task at a time. There are also instances when we are pushed into positions of responsibilities—not necessarily because we want to take them—but because people think that we can.

When we are faced with responsibilities bestowed by other people, we often feel the need to comply with them, sometimes without asking why they gave such responsibilities to us in the first place. Some of us may feel powerless in these situations, made to believe there's a good reason why it happened. However, that's not always the case.

I remember a time when I was personally asked by a colleague to take on the role of a scriptwriter in one of our plays back in Senior High school. At the time, I had zero experience in writing any form of script or literature, so to be a scriptwriter for a play really

made me scratch my head. We were also desperate to find our wardrobe stylist and our stage designer, so we just approached anyone who we think is fit for the position despite knowing very little of their capabilities. And at that

**We feel "powerless"  
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moment I realized that my colleague is doing the exact same thing with me.

There was a lot of pressure in making the decision of whether I should take up the role, especially that most of the people in my class who were viable options for the off-stage roles have already volunteered to be actors. I started asking myself questions like, "What if I turn it

down? Will there be another person to fill in for me? What if I'm their only option?", and "There must be someone else who can do the job far better than me, right?"

Before I could utter the word "no", another colleague of mine had already stepped in and volunteered, and I was able to breathe freely again. Had no one else stepped up to take the role, I would have forced myself to take it and exhausted myself doing work that I never wanted to do in the first place. I could still turn the proposal down, but it would mean leaving a responsibility unfulfilled, and that was something I didn't want to be in my conscience.

The first step to making any decision of whether you should take up any responsibility is to be honest with yourself. We feel "powerless" in making our decisions not because we are, but because we fear that we might disappoint. We sometimes tend to take more than we can handle because we think we can do it and not because we know the extent of our capabilities well. Some of us are assigned tasks

for reasons irrelevant to the cause of the responsibility and not because we are necessarily fit for the job. But that shouldn't hinder us from making a decision of our own apart from the ones that are decided for us. It might be selfish for one to choose their own welfare over a responsibility that they would otherwise not tend to as expected of them, but if it means saving the trouble of you underperforming and disappointing people, then being selfish is not so much of a bad thing.

And if you ever find yourself in a position where you've taken too much on your plate, then it's about time you start asking yourself if you can finish everything you've put in front of you. There's no shame in refusing to take up a task or leaving a responsibility to be taken up by someone else, especially if you know yourself that you can't take care of it well. There is a sense of accomplishment when acknowledging one's extent of capabilities, whether you can or cannot, being honest with oneself is a quality we should develop.

## WITBREAD

## Why we should stop calling it the 'new normal'

by Janniel Janer (JOU31)

On TV, radio, blogs, newspapers, online articles and on social media—everyone is discussing about how COVID-19 birthed this 'New Normal.' The term is unexpectedly not new. It has been around and used in business for some time now. According to economic Professor David Laibson, 'New Normal' may not intend to imply permanence, but rather some vague degree of longevity.

Self-isolating, quarantining, social distancing, this has been our reality and we are unsure for how long.

Since the lockdown, I have been repugnant to the phrase 'New Normal.' I cannot exactly place a finger on why I have been resistant to such a benign phrase. One thing is for sure, I am not okay.

For a fact, I knew that this is not new and of course, it is most certainly is not normal.

It is not normal to ride a jeepney, with dividers.

It is not normal to go to school through Zoom.

It is not normal to queue up at the grocery front, maintaining the six feet

distance between you and the other customers, patiently waiting for the security to shoot you with his shotgun thermometer and pump some sanitizer in your palms while you're stepping on their disinfecting mats.

It is not normal to see sari-sari stores fenced and covered with plastic.

It is not normal, to lose your job without any assurance if you will get a new one because apparently, what you do for a living is deemed as unessential.

On my journey to self-decolonization from studying pre-colonial and colonial Philippines, our language is majorly responsible on shaping our worldviews and realities even if we barely register most of the time. If you ask me, what should we call it then?

I would say either 'The Great Pause' if I am feeling poetic, or simply, our 'current reality.'

There is a great pause in our economy, our individual financial situations, on doing our usual things. And that is just the start of it. On the

bigger picture, there is a heightened uncertainty and anxiety affecting us in several ways. And that is our current reality.

None of our fears and uncertainties are normal.

As we do our part to win over this crisis, social distancing and wearing masks will not help us alone. We also need to self-actualize and acknowledge that we are in an unfamiliar situation, and with true change comes discomfort. Discomfort that will soon lead us to a Better Normal.



Unclear justification on the breakdown of fees particularly on the laboratory fees, recollection fees, and other miscellaneous fees.



LCDC and other DLSU-D organizations led fundraising programs for people affected by the consecutive typhoons last year. Additionally, (REED) Department held a virtual concert titled, RENEW: Himig, Aral, Dalangin on January 27 in support of medical frontliners and DLSU-D scholars.



Last minute announcement regarding the delay in premiere of the batch 2020 virtual graduation.

# HERALDOODLES

## HONEST WORK BY PUSAKAL



## MAY PERA SA BASURA BY ARAW



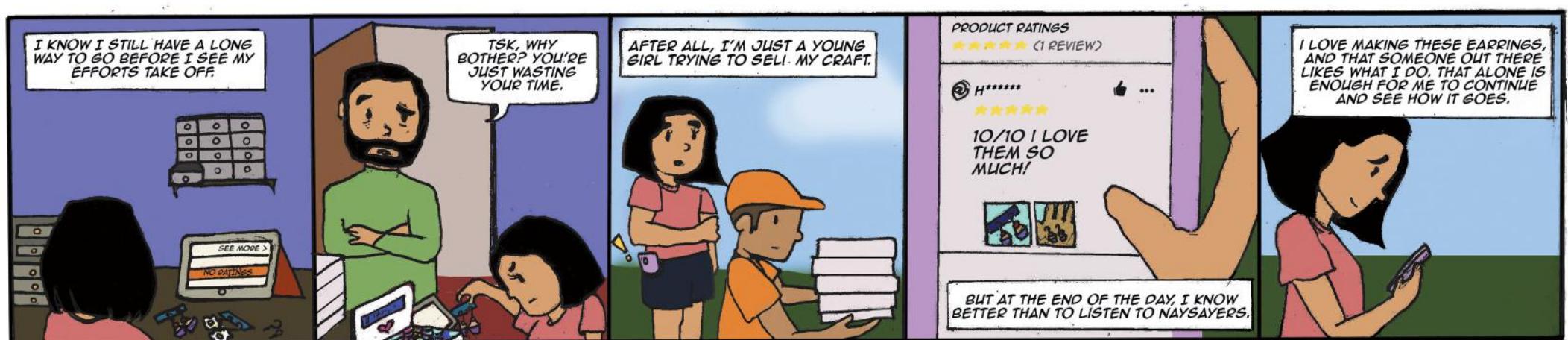
## LOVE AT FIRST SELL BY ESPEJO

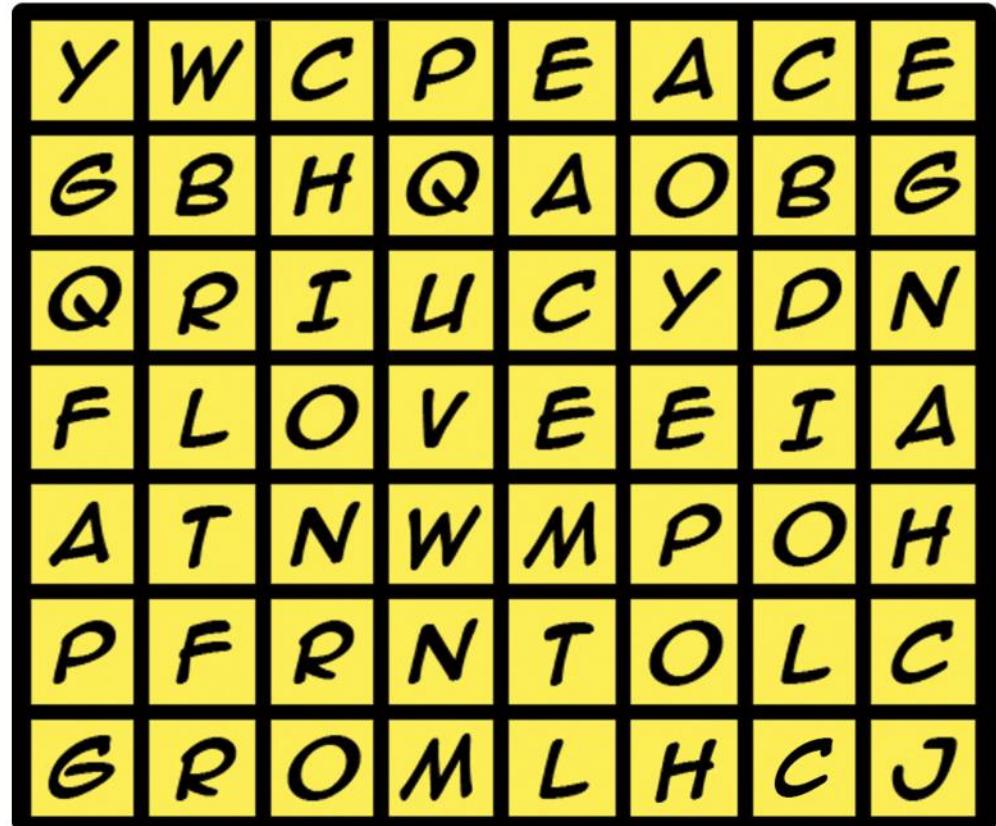


## SELF-CARE BY CRYPTID



## SECOND THOUGHTS BY JOYCE





THE FIRST 3 WORDS YOU FIND  
WILL DESCRIBE YOUR 2021

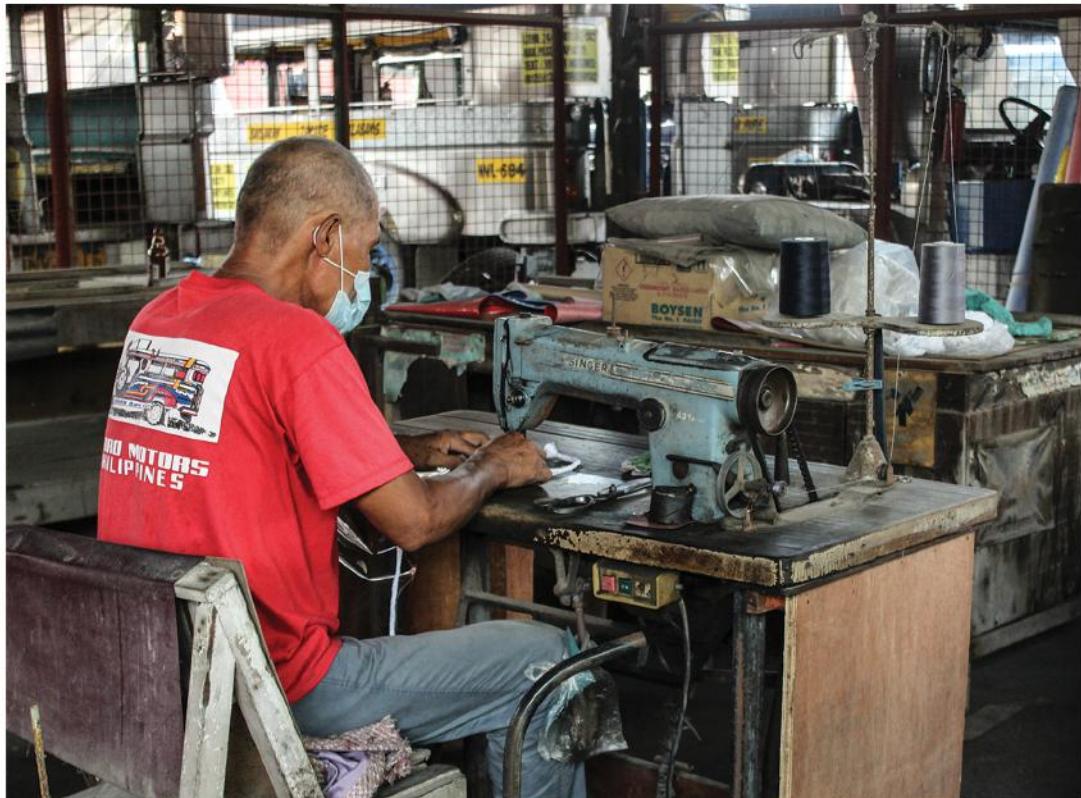


FIND THE 5 HIDDEN ABDULS IN THE PICTURE



SPECIAL TOPIC: GISING BY DARLA THE BUDDHA

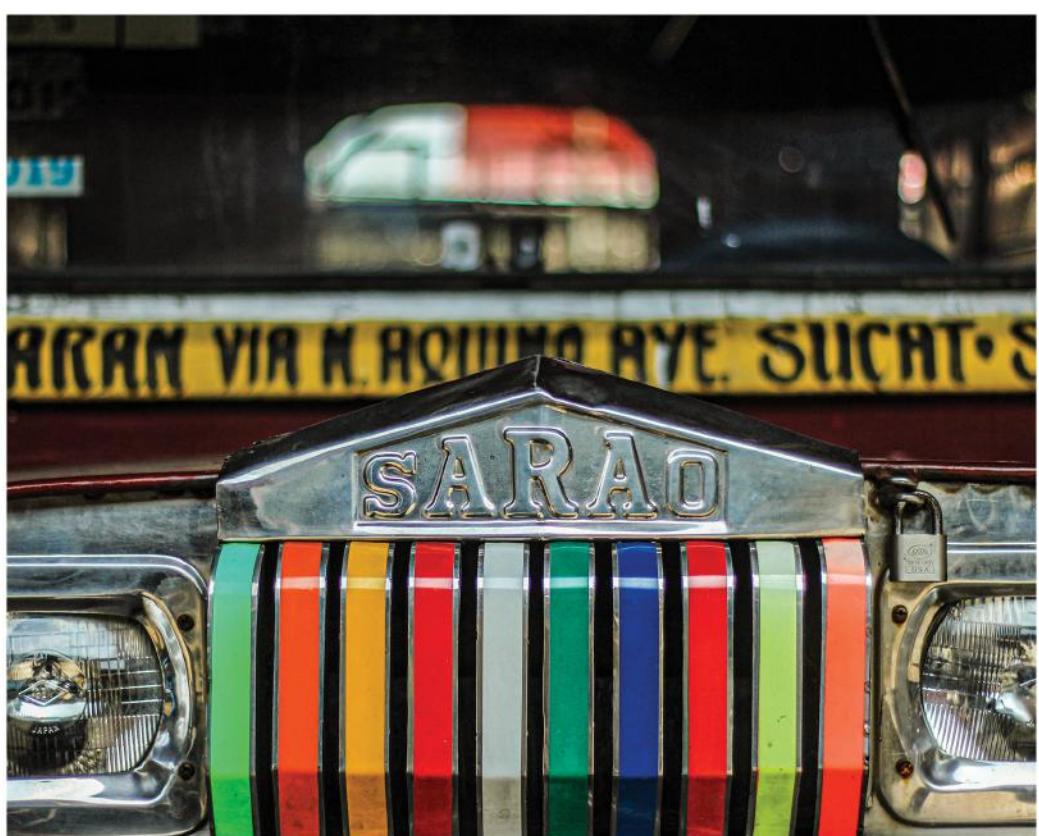




## History on wheels

Jeepneys have always been considered as the most popular and most accessible means of public transportation here in the Philippines. For so long, these "Kings of the Road" have carried the Filipino's culture, character, and creativity in every *pasada*, bringing life to our bustling roads. Jeepneys were developed from Willys jeeps left from the American-Japanese war. Sarao jeepneys, in particular, were one of the first to be manufactured in the country, tracing its roots within a small shop in Binakayan, Quezon. Now, as one of the leading automotive manufacturing companies in the jeepney industry, Sarao Jeepney Motors, Inc. continues to manufacture more jeepneys, headed by Edgardo Sarao and his brothers. The festive colors of jeepney are never lost to the common folk, as daily commuters have come to rely on jeepneys to get them where they needed to go.

However, due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, jeepneys too, have retreated back to their *talyers*. Faced with impending jeepney modernization and phase out, only time will tell if the "Kings of the Road" can rule the streets again, or if the post-pandemic world will have to leave the iconic jeepneys to the old normal. When asked about jeepneys becoming a cultural symbol, Mr. Sarao only said, *"It represents the Filipino's resiliency on all conditions in life na abutin natin, we manage to you know, bumaba tayo, umangat ulti tayo, binaha tayo, tumakbo padin tayo, umaandar padin."*





## Slipping under

When does hustle culture become toxic?

by **Elaine Belen** | Graphic Art by **Angela Hernandez**

**Getting something done is no easy feat, especially in the middle of a pandemic. For some, this is an opportunity to devote extra time in pursuing a new skill or learning a new hobby, such as taking that extra e-class, starting up a new business, or scheduling a workout session in your already busy day. But while productivity is usually seen as a positive trait that any individual can possess, there are times when productivity takes an unhealthy turn, in our attempts to chase that lofty goal at an unrelenting pace.**

### What's the hustle?

People tend to applaud and celebrate the go-getters who work hard and finish all their tasks immediately. Even when running low and already on the verge of breakdown, these "hustlers" can still function without having a meal, and are able to juggle between six different jobs like they're made for it. Driven by an unseen force, these people are called geniuses at best, workaholics at worst. In social media, we see them *everywhere*—from celebrities to influencers, your "most likely to succeed" classmate from Junior High, or your golden cousin that your mother can't stop talking about.

But while most of us mere mortals are left wondering where this power is coming from, we actually forget that we too, have moments like this. From that one time we opened up too many side accounts to run, took up that freelance job we didn't really need, to the time we took on way too many responsibilities because we couldn't let our colleagues down. We've all been there before, having tasted this power for ourselves. This is because one's productivity can actually be boosted with just a simple praise and recognition, especially if we have an audience.

However, this is exactly where the grind drives us to work more even if we do not need to. While the random bursts of productivity are welcome, keeping up with the hustle culture compels us to constantly work even in our sleep, has become toxic.

The hustle culture has been a rising trend in social media recently,

where people post their journeys to success. In the midst of quarantine, it helped people secure a living, while others were able to work out "side-hustles" to better spend their time with. On the other hand, it could also lead us to excessive work, exhaustion, and an eventual burnout—all for the sake of pleasing a nameless audience.

### The downside of hustle culture

There are instances where you'll miss out on some things in life, like that social event you are looking forward to or that hang out with your friends, all disregarded because of being caught up with all the work that you need to do. Things that are valuable to you were sacrificed as well. In the end, the only excuse you can give them are variations of "I'm sorry, *busy lang talaga*" or "next time, promise".

There is a huge difference between a person who works hard enough because they love the work that they do, and a person who is compelled to work as if it is a competition. Having a little bit of competition is not a bad thing, as it actually helps us focus on our goals and keep us on our toes. Rather than having the drive of achieving our meaningful goals, the hustle can go toxic if our goal is rewired to "out-hustle" others. Some of us might not even be aware of it, but every time we see someone hitting another milestone in social media, we hear that little voice that says: *I can do better*. Or faster. Maybe you'll be out to do something that hasn't been done before, and one

day you'll leave that very post eating the dust, because if they can't do it like you do, then maybe, they just didn't hustle enough.

When we strive for something, it's only natural that we do the hustle until we reach the end goal. We tend to associate productivity with working hard, because according to society, an excessively busy person is bound to be successful in the long run. Society then frames productivity as an expectation of building something great during the process, at least for self-improvement. Add in some encouraging sparkles, and we have hustle culture setting up unsustainable expectations. It tells you to keep going because "the hustle never stops". You lose yourself in the hustle instead of the actual process, which includes time, failures, and rest in the equation.

Developing a better and healthy lifestyle, discovering yourself, and improving a new skill are significant indicators of productivity. But we must also understand that all of these can be achieved in the right time. With the pandemic still ongoing, we must all be mindful of our healthcare and survival. Taking control with ourselves is something we should practice as well. Because being busy all the time does not mean that you are really being productive.

### Healthy productivity is the key

Quarantine has given us the chance to create new healthy habits along with the span of time we have to ourselves. Despite the toxicity, the hustle culture trend can also be interpreted correctly if we manage our productivity in a balanced way. Being trapped in a race is not the most efficient way for us to reach our goals in achieving healthy productivity. As much as possible, we should not define the "hustle" as something to be hurriedly done. Remind yourself of being a tortoise riding on a skateboard while the hare runs throughout

the race. This is to keep in mind to *work smarter*, not harder.

To focus on the most important tasks first in order to cultivate deep work, you can start little by little according to your pace. You should be able to manage your energy as well to avoid multitasking. Most people get amazed with hustlers who are able to multitask because they get the job done immediately. But little do they know that our brains are wired to focus on doing things one thing at a time, not at the same time.

This is not the time to compare our own hustles to others because it will always be never enough. We must learn to focus on the hustle that's best familiar to us and that matches our own pace. No matter how persistently we try to maintain the standards of hustle with society, it will only drain us until there is no energy left. Remember, all the hustle you pour out into should be worth your time and efforts nonetheless, it is useless to be in a loop of burnout.

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As a famous Britney Spears song once said, toxicity is "a poison paradise" that you can easily get addicted to, so we must take care each time we slip under the bouts of productivity.

Keeping up with the hustle is meant for promoting positivity despite a pandemic, but living in the constant hustle without looking out for yourself is where we draw the line. Many people are encouraging productivity nowadays and yet it is a must to acknowledge whether it is healthy or toxic. The hustle culture trend is poorly noticed when toxicity hits too much. Therefore, we must strive to foster another culture, not only to celebrate hard work but also to enforce reasonable boundaries as a part of it.

### PRODUCTIVITY FAST FACTS



A 2019 survey by staffing agency Accountemps found that the most productive day of the week is Tuesday.



Peretz Lavie's study on ultradian rhythm suggests that longer 90-minute productive sessions, followed by a 15-minute short break sync more closely with our natural energy cycle.



Listening to music while doing work can increase productivity, according to 71 percent of the people surveyed by Robert Half.



Drinking enough water can increase productivity by 14%, according to the findings of a 2013 study by University of East London.

# It's not you. It's the productivity guilt.

Why we feel guilty for being unproductive

by Azreil Nathanielle Nuestro | Graphic Art by Rachelle Ann Calaustro

**It can be quite draining at times to see how many tasks are left unmarked in our to-do lists, especially after a particularly busy day. We tend to beat ourselves up by demanding too much despite our limitations, all in the name of pleasing our inner perfectionist. But while there's nothing wrong with wanting to accomplish things as it was written, there's still much to contemplate about our own expectations, and the guilt that follows for not being able to meet them.**

## What is productivity guilt?

As you're reading this right now, you might have a long list of things you need to do running through your head. May it be finishing schoolworks, doing household chores, managing your family's business or your side hustle, and attending to whatever pressing matter at this moment. Most likely, you won't finish every task on your list today, which can lead you to worry that you're not doing the best you can—the first telltale sign of productivity guilt.

For those unfamiliar with the term, productivity guilt is this constant nagging voice in the back of our minds telling us that we should be doing more, otherwise we become "lazy slackers" who will never reach our goals.

It's a broken record on a loop, an irritating voice inside your head that tells you to finish everything today or you'll end up with double the tasks for tomorrow. At first, you'll think it will help you shift your mood into something better. But as time goes by, listening to this voice inside your head could eventually become an unhealthy obsession.

And if guilt isn't enough, it treads along with its best friend shame. Although the two are different, they become related to each other in the essence of productivity guilt. As Art Markman stated in their Harvard Business Review article *You're Never Going to Be "Caught Up" at Work. Stop Feeling Guilty About It*, guilt is regarded as an internally committed behavior in psychology. Shame, on the other hand, makes you feel like you're a bad person, especially when what you did was publicly known.

To put it in better context, picture a routine inside your head that you faithfully follow. It can be a simple morning workout, a study session, or a gardening activity that needs to be done no matter what. It begins with a first missed session, followed by a second. Then a third. After a few times of missing it, you'll feel like a quitter or a failure even if you have a perfectly valid reason for missing out.

## Finding the root of the problem

More than a matter of missed routines and unfinished tasks, productivity guilt also settles in whenever we think that we're not doing enough with the time that we have. We usually strive for that unrealistic standard of perfection, and once we fail to achieve that goal, we suffer from extreme disappointment while burning ourselves out. burns us out and it disappoints us too much.

Heidi Grant, the director of research and development for Americas Learning at Ernst and Young said that we get highly optimistic as we enter the day filled with the anticipation of getting things done according to plan, but in reality, that's not how it always works. Instead, she added said that that we must learn how to control our own expectations.

Additionally, according to Julie de Azevedo Hanks, Ph.D., a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) of Wasatch Family Therapy, "We link our behaviour, our performance, our productivity, with our self-worth." So when we're being less productive, we don't just feel like we're doing something wrong—we believe that something is wrong with ourselves.



## Progress over perfection

"Comparison is the thief of joy," the late American President Theodore Roosevelt once said. We often compare ourselves to other people, particularly those who we consider very successful in life. Whether they be a businessperson, an artist, a musician, or even some of our peers who seem to have their lives perfectly put-together.

Sometimes, we even think that we need to be on the same level as they are in order to be successful. But just like perfection, comparison will only lead us into a place of anger and jealousy.

When we compare ourselves to others, we only see the highlight reels featuring their victories. We don't see their failures and sacrifices as we have seen the end results already, and deny ourselves the same liberty of making mistakes.

All of us are works in progress, each moving forward in our own paces. What we consider a small step could already be a big step for others, and vice versa. Faced with different choices to make, progress varies for every one of us, which makes it all the more important to define our own.

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We live in a world where the only constant thing is change that comes with growth. As we strive to be efficient and productive, we must bear in mind that our only competition is ourselves. At the end of the day, progress is what matters the most, whether big or small.

# Surviving the odds

How does work-life balance play in the online setup

by Elaine Aznar | Art by Juliana Octavo

**The work we typically know is the traditional eight to nine hours of a job in a work building, just as students have always associated school with academics. For so long, "work" is easily defined and separated because work is a place we go to, a place to focus and be productive. Meanwhile, we can easily "go back" to our lives the moment we go home to our families, shrugging off today's stress by lounging on the couch with some chips and a good movie.**

The line between work and life used to be so simple. In order to harmonize both, we employed work-life balance to equally prioritize the demands of our career and personal life, effectively setting boundaries between the two. However, the pandemic completely changed this dynamic, causing the place for work and rest to become one. Now, keeping work-life balance becomes a challenge as we try to juggle what little time we have between working and learning from home, along with fulfilling our responsibilities within the household such as doing chores and helping out in the family.

## Weighing the odds

As our workplace and learning area shifts to our homes, our productivity could also be at stake as we encounter different kinds of challenges in order to work from home successfully. According to an article published online by Mark Philipps titled *A Place for Learning: The Physical Environment of Classrooms*, the use of a physical classroom is a big factor to consider in order to make the students much more motivated in learning. The classroom equates to an "environment that supports positive interaction" which empowers the students in the process. This is why online classes had been difficult: along the sudden shift came necessary adjustments required to keep up with the others, such as an organized and sound-proof space so we can focus on learning.

Moreover, our country is still lacking in terms of internet connectivity, which is a crucial factor in surviving online classes. According to Ookla's Speedtest Global Index as of September 2020, the average download speed for fixed broadband in the Philippines remains a staggering 26.08 megabits per second, which is much slower compared to 226.60 in Singapore, 175.22 in Thailand and 138.66 in China respectively.

Students are also easily distracted either by different noises that can be heard inside or outside their homes as they work, like the chorus of barking dogs in the background or the purring engines of the cars passing by. There is also the temptation to do other things such as texting and browsing

social media while attending an online synchronous class or doing schoolworks, which results in procrastination. So many factors impede our time for learning, compromising our studies and prevent us from submitting our requirements on time.

Compared to the time when we could focus and work productively in a physical office or classroom, we are now free to do anything inside our homes, without being supervised by either our bosses or professors. Given the new setup, it's harder than to imagine work and life carefully balanced, even more so to actually achieve it.

## The balancing act

At times, the heavy load of work can make us feel like we're robots, as we wake up and spend most of our time in front of a computer right until the moment we sleep. During these moments, we must remember that we are humans who have human needs -- such as taking breaks in-between our work and study sessions. Liyab, an e-learning startup focused on helping Generation Z Filipinos in their transition to working life and adulthood, gives some techniques tested by professionals in order to boost productivity and proper time management, which includes:

### 1. The Pomodoro Technique

It is a popular time management method since it was created in the 1980's by Francesco Cirillo. This is to set your working time to 25 minutes, divided by 5 minute breaks. Those 5 minute intervals are called pomodoros and after four of them, you will have a 15-20 minutes break. Pomodoro Technique aims to make you focus and be driven by a sense of urgency, without thinking that you have all day or tomorrow to finish your work.

### 2. Eat the Frog

Introduced by Brian Tracy, this method is designed to help in terms of setting priorities on how to prioritize tasks, while focusing on your objectives along with leveled-

up productivity and time management. It is done by figuring out the most important yet difficult task to be done within the day and doing it first among your other tasks. If the "frog" or the hardest task is done first, then your day will be so much lighter ahead.

### 3. Time Blocking

A technique done by dividing your dedicated work day into parts, and setting a task to be done in each time meant for a specific part. This technique will be a great help in order to be more focused on a specific task within the time dedicated for it.

## Keeping the balance

As we adjust to the new working environment as best as we can, we must always remember that everyone has their own lives and problems to deal with, and that not everyone has the same privilege that allows them to accomplish tasks. In short, we are not in the same boat even though we face the same ocean, and some of us are simply blessed with better boats to tread the rough waters.

Aside from privilege, there are also people who tend to do what they love instead of finding love or interest in what they are doing. This results in either having unaccomplished tasks or being drowned at work, making work-life balance even more unattainable. According to Marcus Buckingham and Ashley Goodall in their

article, *Work-life balance is a Myth. Do this instead* on Time Magazine, the concept of balancing work and life will not be much of a help, as we can't always do only what we love. However, we can always find love in what we do, resulting in a more productive outlook.

"Our goal should be to, little by little, week by week, intentionally imbalance all aspects of our work toward the former and away from the latter," the article states. Additionally, there's also the challenge of finding resources that used to be available in our school and physical workplace. At school, we have the computer laboratory and library to aid us in our schoolwork. But with online learning, we are forced to survive through our own means, may it be finding the right equipment or the right environment for working.

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The concept of work-life balance remains elusive as ever, with most of us focused on simply surviving the odds stacked against us. However, this is exactly why we should learn to set our boundaries, as work and life should be accomplished at a different time in order to allow ourselves to breathe. After all, we are still humans and we should prioritize ourselves to function well, be healthy, and survive the challenges by keeping our life and productivity in harmony even in the online setup.





## The average Lasallians' starter pack

10 things you wish you had for online classes

by **Lean Jane Pantorilla** | Graphic Art by **Bernice Obias**

If you think that a will to live is all you need for online classes, then obviously you've never attended one before. One year after the onset of the pandemic that had us face an unfamiliar setup, The HERALDO FILIPINO lists down some of the things you wish you had before you started online classes, from the golden artifacts of last-minute speedruns of assessments, to the fundamental necessities of survival like laptops.

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### 1 A stable internet connection that acts like it

*Product description:* The secret tier in the Hierarchy of Needs. It connects you with people who also have the same product, and allows you to call a friend in times of need, may it be assessments, group projects, or emotional support. Non-refundable. Volatile at its worst, barely hanging on at its best. Not available for upgrade as Super-Fast-Godlike-Internet-Connection™ remains unavailable in the Philippines.

### 2 A laptop/PC you can rely on

*Product description:* A staple item for every student that comes in various brands and sizes. It may include several viruses from too many downloaded torrents, folders filled with too many videos, questionable gif collections, and other inexplicable files that are mostly used for entertainment. It has

the tendency to break down in crucial moments, with higher probability on instances that User Lasallian is about to submit an assessment on the Schoolbook when the deadline is in ten minutes or less. It loathes Microsoft (MS) Teams and any video conferencing platform. It lags as much as possible to make sure you get the hint that it probably hates you. It's once believed to be sentient after sabotaging so many students in the middle of group reports and synchronous classes.

### 3 A bottle of water in case of emergencies

*Product description:* While it may not be automatically refillable, it will accompany you in your darkest hours that keeps you hydrated and replenish lost tears. However, it does not cure and solve the cause of such crying. Can evolve into juice, coffee, tea or whatever questionable substance you wish to ingest to fuel you. Will not be responsible for what happens next, especially when it has the tendency to spill on product number #2.

### 4 A warm blanket for cuddle weather

*Product description:* It will keep the cold away but it cannot warm your aching heart. Not meant to be substituted for the warmth of another human being. Best paired with morning classes and a-student-who-just-pulled-an-all-nighter. It may smell somewhere between fragrant detergent to someone who hasn't taken a bath in days, but it will retain its warmth provided that it is wrapped around a still-breathing person.

### 5 An alarm for those Schoolbook drills

*Product description:* It's most effective for the record-breaking attempts of turning in assessments at 11:59 PM as it wakes you right up when your failing grades couldn't. Other user product reviews may indicate initial dislike for its sound, but it's proven effective for conditioning the mind and

the body to get you going, provided that you avoid hitting the snooze button for the umpteenth time. Also great for those who have mastered the Pomodoro Technique, and reminding those with consecutive classes.

### 6 A trusty notepad

*Product description:* It will help you list down the things you didn't do, but it won't help you do them. Other user product reviews indicate that it has a tendency to look smug when filled-up, and taunting when left blank. Some comments say that it's the other way around. It's once believed to be sentient after some notes magically disappear when User Lasallian looks for them.

### 7 The Streamer™ lighting equipment

*Product description:* You might have good lighting for online classes with this product, but it brings no guarantees to brighten up your future. It does, however, come in handy for video projects and webinars, especially during times when quality makes the difference. It will make you see the Light when the modules you have yet to study couldn't. May also serve as part-time study lamps when you should've gone to bed hours ago and still need to cram some lessons despite the whole household declaring lights out.

### 8 A traffic cone for safety measures

*Product description:* Limited stock. It is used to stop family members from passing by during online meetings, making User Lasallian's video screen look like a scene from a pirated movie. Will also stop pets provided that the available product version is big enough, but it will not stop your angry mother from barging in and asking why you didn't do the dishes. Chances of effectiveness are also reduced when faced with children running towards you at high speeds.

### 9 A multi-purpose remote control

*Product description:* Limited stock. It will turn down the volume of the television so you could focus during synchronous classes, but it will not stop the chorus of barking dogs outside. Will pause the movie but not the chaos around you. Will turn the television on but not your will to live. Not advisable to be used on Schoolbook timers and towards your classmates when they talk in MS Teams. It does, however, provide some semblance of control in our hectic lives, and serve as a brief reminder people are not machines that can simply slow down or pick up the pace at any given time.

### 10 A hero (a.k.a Your Guardian Angel)

*Product description:* Rare product. Probably not you. Will remind you of the synchronous meeting you forgot, and even sends the link as a bonus. Will look out for you better than a significant other, and provide moral support when you need it. Will be the first to know when your name isn't on the attendance list and ask why you couldn't attend the synchronous class. Will tell the professor when you have internet connection problems, and may sometimes even answer for you. Someone we didn't deserve but still graces us with their blessing of a presence.

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Considering how the average Lasallain gets a total of who knows how many assessments per day, it shouldn't come as a surprise that it takes more than ten magic items to get through the semester — much less a year. We all carry different baggage, some with more excess than others, and some with room to spare. Even so, may we never forget to pack some compassion and empathy with us as we try to get through these trying times — oh, and don't forget the glasses. You know, for *privilege check*.

### Tabula rasa

Maria Victoria Busine  
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The numbers in your grades do not measure and dictate you. It does not define your worth, your capabilities, and your potential as a person. This is a hard pill to swallow for most people, but for someone like me who discovered early on how heavy others' expectations are (and how they are closely tied to good grades), it takes time to swallow that pill, and even longer time for us to completely accept it.

In the confusing world that is college, I dare say that I still try my best to live up to it. However, I am also coming to terms with the fact that attempting to churn out a good grade in each subject is not where it all ends.

Now the question is: if that golden *kwatro* that we wish for is not the end of it all, then what is?

Somewhere along the pursuit of the perfect grade, we forgot the one thing that truly matters: learning for the sake of learning.

At times, I can't help but feel like grades tell us that the lessons we learn in school is something bounded by the numbers. For years I have done my best to break free from this mentality, but there are moments where I tend to attach my worth to the grades I get.

According to a study about self-esteem by psychologist Jennifer Crocker, PhD, we tend to view our worth based on how we perform in our academics. The findings show how 80% of the college freshmen in the survey based their self-worth on academic competence more than other factors like family support, appearance, and doing better than others.

We have been told early on about how the grades matter, that these numbers dictate whether you pass or fail. They're not wrong, as it is exactly what happens in our society today. However, this line of thought makes it seem like it's more about getting through rather than

## Grades ≠ Worth

learning, that the sum of your knowledge is only as good as the standards you meet, and the requirements you comply to. More than the weight of disappointment, it becomes a personal attack to our capabilities, reducing our efforts to mere strokes in a paper.

Additionally, Joseph Holtgreive writes in an article *Too Smart to Fail?*, "If students believe

**The *kwatro* you get in a subject does not indicate everything that you are.**

that how they perform at one moment in time exposes the limits of their potential rather than serving merely as a snapshot of where they are in the process of growing their abilities, feelings

of struggle and uncertainty become threatening rather than an opportunity to grow."

No one can deny the gratification of reaping the fruits of your labor, that rewarding feeling that achievements can give you. However, I find myself asking if it's worth it in the long run. It might sound like an existential question, but there are times that I question whether all that hard work and effort is for something bigger or just centered in my own world where I aim for the next achievement as an equivalent to all that I will ever come to be.

At times, we forget that our worth cannot be quantified by grades. The lessons we can learn inside the classroom cannot always be measured by the rubrics that our performance is evaluated on.

The *kwatro* you get in a subject does not indicate everything that you are. Your worth as a person is something that you can define for yourself beyond the value that we put in these numbers.

# Yet another crisis: The scarcity of willpower

by Kelsey Telo

It's normal to experience a slump in productivity. Occasional loss of motivation is a fact of life, taking its turn like day and night. The question of how to be more efficient has existed long before, and it's a matter that transcends the grand debate on who's the lazier generation.

Now in a remote setup, you may find it harder to pull yourself up and stay in front of the computer to finish your tasks. Some days, you might find yourself in a loop of doom, unable to get out of bed. In a pandemic, the slump could become a cross, and everyone's already got a lot to bear.

In this scenario, you are fighting other enemies aside from the virus: distractions, doom, and deadlines. In worse cases, even dread is an enemy.

Now that your workplace is in the same sphere of the internet where you find an abundant source of distractions, staying focused may not be as simple as turning off your phone. Besides, the mind of an average person wanders 47 percent of the time, according to a Harvard study. You don't need extensive maladaptive daydreaming to consider yourself afloat in your own universe, as the mind already flies off on its own half of the time. You can be doing the one thing you need to do, but the mind is already on to something else.

It's just the way life goes for humans.

Then comes the lockdown, where for sure the mind is much deeper into its own inner workings. The question is: how do you tap into our own stream of consciousness, to just, for the love of God, finish that one task?

## The mind is hard to train, but it's possible

When you try to keep track of obligations in your

head, you create "open loops" that destroy the concept of boundaries of time and in return gives you anxiety. This becomes a difficult cycle to weather through and reduces your ability to think effectively altogether, says American productivity consultant David Allen.

The way he puts it, there's a way to develop the power of clearing your mind and sharpening your focus. In fact, he founded *Getting Things Done*, an online productivity course that started with a book and has grown into a network of people riding the tide. You see, it's a real thing.

Allen explains what he describes as "mind like water", which is "a mental and emotional state in which your head is clear, able to create and respond freely, unencumbered with distractions and split focus."

He argues that if you could avoid worrying about what you were supposed to be doing, you could focus more on what you were actually doing.

Another way to see it is that the road to productivity nirvana isn't a matter of time management, but of *attention management*, or "the art of focusing on getting things done for the right reasons, in the right places and at the right moments," as per organizational psychologist Adam Grant.

"If you're trying to be more productive, don't analyze how you spend your time. Pay attention to what consumes your attention," Grant writes. This method suggests not to completely abandon your distractions, but to simply be mindful of the timing of these distractions.

## Learn to reward yourself over small wins

Learning is a dynamic act where you move from point A to point B. The concept of "one step at a time" may be overused and cliché, but when you have 10 assessments due until midnight and you've got five hours left, you're more likely to pass by turning it one by one, than all at once. Sometimes, you get lost in the grand scheme of things as

you drown in the pile of deadlines, which leads to feeling like resigning to fate is the only way out.

And if pacing your work isn't enough for a solution, maybe it's time to reinvent your sense of efficacy by assigning rewards to certain tasks and fostering a sense of delayed gratification. This could be in the form of feedback, where you finish your work for the sake of positive reinforcement. Whether it's the "golden kwatw", Schoolbook badges, or your professor's comments, you could use all these and more to jumpstart the productivity train. But in case these hacks still don't reinforce performance, you also can try assigning milestones for yourself.

For example, if you set a goal yourself to finish this number of tasks at a certain time and succeed, you get to watch an hour of Netflix. This way, you responsibly reward yourself with a break, accomplish what's needed, and discover the power of little joys.

It's the small things after all, really.

In the book *The Progress Principle*, authors Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer share that "of all the things that can boost emotions, motivation, and perceptions during a workday, the single most important is making progress in meaningful work."

The sense of progress activates your will, and the more often you feel that you reap what we sow, the more likely you are to push through. Progress trackers can help you too, like planners or organizers that can keep you accountable and guard your work habits. At the end of the day, your set of work ethics can anchor you in a setup like this.

## The liberty of online learning is a double-edged sword

There's an element of truth in saying that remote learning is liberating. There's no professor lurking behind you when answering a quiz, no peer pressure, and no figure of authority to police your deadlines—which are ironically also

the problem. It doesn't help that you don't see your friends, especially if you've come to realize during isolation that your favorite part of the class is the people you're with.

At this point, if you still haven't yet: accept that these aren't normal times. The era of pretension is over. Even in the post-vaccine world, society will still endure the effects of its recent collapse. It will take years to process the life we lived during the pandemic, and it'll take some more to actually recover from it. So abandon the rut and move forward—this is hard-hitting advice, one that stings, but it's one that you possibly need, especially if you know at the back of your mind that you're actually capable anyway.

On the other hand, these strange times are telling that it's okay and even more efficient to revert to simpler ways. For both teachers and students, consciously causing any drama that complicates another person's life is counterproductive. There's pre-text and context of collective struggle that we share, and if you choose to be another form of unnecessary hardship, that isn't a phenomenon but a problem of your own.

Expedite the process. Cut the red tapes. Be of service to the convenience of others if you can. It may not be much but it can be the greatest thing you can do especially if you consider that it's already tough out there.

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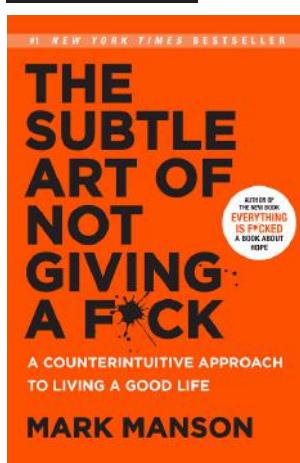
Between now and the last time you were in the classroom, there had been countless runs of apocalyptic events, but then again, you're still expected to deliver to your duties just like the rest of the world. This is indeed a time of survival, and it's just right that you are in survival mode.

There's no manual to this, but it will help if you rewire your mindset to keep you going: whatever floats your boat, whatever fuels your engine, whatever the source of your willpower. This is the sign you're looking for. Do your job.

## (( THE HF RADAR ))

by Adriel Jerome Toledo, Elaine Aznar, and Elaine Belen

### BOOK



#### The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck: An unusual guide to self-improvement

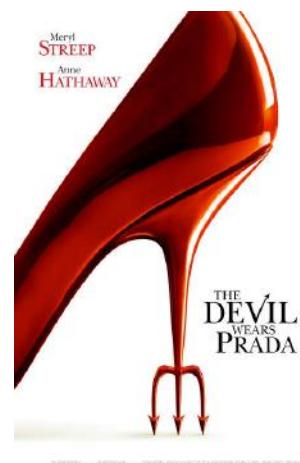
Being positive is the last thing we want to be in a time of pandemic, so as the saying goes. Where some would be more inclined to look for a silver lining, there is nothing wrong with being able to look at a problem in the eye and admit that it's tough—and that some problems, no matter how big they seem, are just not ours to begin with.

*The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck: A Counterintuitive Approach to Living a Good Life* is a 2016 self-help book that aims to break the norm of mindless positivity, including realistic advice on how we deal with different problems. Inspired by author Mark Manson's personal experiences, he elaborates on happiness, suffering, and where we fit in everyday's constant mix of problems, offering fresh insights on life's harshest and simplest truths. The book gained a lot of interest with its unique and straightforward approach, providing comfort through unfiltered honesty and occasional use of profanities.

Manson's approach to living a good life subverts everything we know in today's society, beginning from the way we categorize failure and success by focusing on how life's challenges give more meaning to it. He presents the idea of productively using available time and energy on what we can control like our morals or outlook instead of dwelling on things we cannot such as popularity or wealth. The existence of negativity in our lives is also highlighted by Manson, and how we can simply not avoid it despite our best efforts to live completely stress-free. Happiness, he explains, is not an end point, but a constant work in progress. For a self-improvement book, Manson provides a lot of hard pills to swallow, but one that is sure to help in the long run as we come to terms with our own struggles.

As Manson writes, "In the short amount of time between here and there, you have a limited amount of f\*cks to give. Very few, in fact. And if you go around giving a f\*ck about everything and everyone without conscious thought or choice—well, then you're going to get f\*cked."

### MOVIE



#### The Devil Wears Prada and the price of excellence

Adapted from Lauren Weisberger's novel of the same name, comedy-drama film *The Devil Wears Prada* glimpses into the culture of the fashion industry, and the experiences of the people behind the glossy pages of every noteworthy fashion magazine. Directed by David Frankel, the story follows fresh graduate Andrea "Andy" Sachs (Anne Hathaway) landing a job as a junior personal assistant to *Runway* Magazine's editor in chief, Miranda Priestly (Meryl Streep), who's known for expecting nothing less than perfection from anyone she works with.

Andy's ignorance of the fashion world puts her on the spot almost instantly, making her the target of Miranda's ire. But instead of resigning, we see Andy's transformation along the way, from the change in her sense of style to meeting every single one of Miranda's almost impossible demands.

However, at one point in the story, Andy's work-life balance hits the rocks. She begins to outperform her co-assistant, but her relationship with the people in her life starts to dwindle as they do not understand the demands that the job entails.

This is *The Devil Wears Prada*'s price for greatness, as there are times that overworking might be an obstacle to maintaining or establishing a relationship. Miranda sees a great deal of herself in Andy, in the way that Andy always chooses to get ahead of others. However, despite all the hardships she went through under Miranda's mentorship, Andy still chooses to break free from *Runway* in the end, walking away from Miranda's footsteps.

On the other hand, Miranda's senior assistant and Andy's co-worker Emily Charlton (Emily Blunt) devotes herself to her job, going as far as overstretching her work hours, and working even when she's sick. Emily's world revolves around her wish to travel to Paris and attend the glamorous parties of the fashion world, all while dressed to the nines.

"Thank God it's Friday" does not thrill her, she replies to Andy with a cold look, proving how weekends mean nothing for a workaholic like her. Devoting almost 24 hours and seven days at work, Emily finds herself an "incubus of a plague", as Miranda describes it. Contrary to Andy, Emily represents the fate of the overworking crowd: missed chances, compromised health, and regrets in the long run.

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More than a jab to our demanding bosses, *The Devil Wears Prada* makes us re-evaluate whether it is worth the effort in getting ahead at work, only to lose ourselves in the process of getting there. Whether we are Andy, Emily, or Miranda in our careers, the film raises a question that almost all of us achievers are afraid to ask: in paying the price for greatness, how much is too much?

### PODCAST



#### The process for emergence: A Kwik Brain podcast review

We've likened ourselves to many things throughout the quarantine, although a butterfly has yet to be one of them. After almost a year of huddling inside our homes, there's no reason to see why not; after all, just like butterflies, we may as well be reaching the end of the road or find ourselves at the brink of a great transformation. Jim Kwik, the founder of Kwik Learning, tackled the butterfly metaphor in the 21-minute podcast, providing a different perspective on our lives during isolation. He introduced *Kwik Brain* as "bite-sized brain hacks" for busy people who want to learn faster and achieve more.

Just like a caterpillar struggling inside a cocoon and taking the time to transform, *Kwik Brain*'s episode 172: *5 Things I'm Doing During COVID-19* introduces the Five C's we can develop while we are quarantined, namely: clarity, care, contribution, creativity, and capabilities.

Jim Kwik discusses how we can take this opportunity to clarify the most important things to us, such as taking advantage of the solitude for self-reflection, and how those we hold dear align with our values. He adds that you can have your *to-do* list and your *to-be* list, especially for those only starting to discover what kind of butterfly they are.

With care as the next C, Kwik highlights how self-care is not selfish, may it be physical or mental hygiene. The only challenge is that our brain is hardwired to focus on threats, fears, or anything that can hurt us. Similar to how social media works, our mind also follows an algorithm where multiple thoughts pop out because of one related idea. That is why people can control what they want to see, hear, or think.

The podcast also asks how you can contribute as Kwik believes that the antidote to fear lies in service and in giving. Through different opportunities, you can put your time, your talent, and your effort to make things a little better - like checking on a friend through a simple phone call. Being able to contribute our capabilities to survive is something that can lead us to discover our purpose in life.

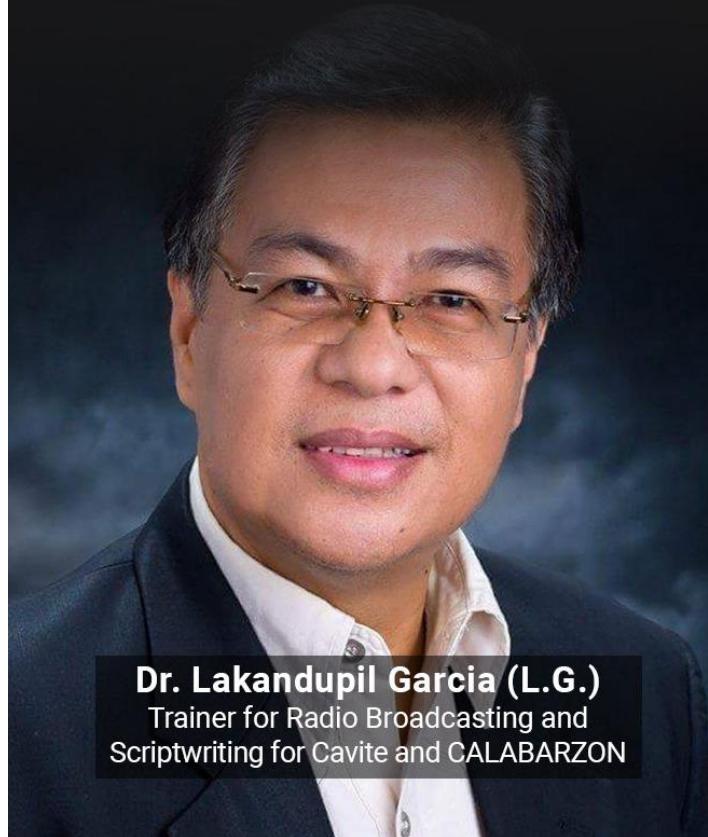
As the story goes of how William Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*, *Anthony* and *Cleopatra* during the Great Plague and how Isaac Newton came up with theorems about gravity and motion, the podcast tackles on how we can also be productive and creative even while at home. Kwik encourages that leveling up on what you have always wanted to learn can be a good start in expanding your mindset, motivation, methods, capabilities, and skills in order to meet your vision in life.

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While we may be impatient and we may sometimes feel like our growth is too slow, we must keep in mind that soon, it will all be worth the wait. As the saying goes, "good things take time". The result is never complete without going through the process, just as butterflies have to endure breaking down in order to break through. This is where people learn to stand up again, stronger and more beautiful than ever, even after isolation. In order to transform into something better, we need to take our time developing inside our cocoons, until the time we can emerge as a full-fledged butterfly.

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

# The fight for press freedom



**Dr. Lakandupil Garcia (L.G.)**  
Trainer for Radio Broadcasting and  
Scriptwriting for Cavite and CALABARZON



**Ms. Camille Elemia (C.E.)**  
Senior Multimedia Reporter, Rappler



**Mr. John Clifford Sibayan (J.S.)**  
Chief Creative Officer, Squeeze.PH

To say that journalists stand at the frontlines is an understatement; in the fight for truth-telling and fearless reportage, we are the last defense, right down to our final word. This is why, in a time where misinformation, fake news, and red-tagging runs rampant, The HERALDO FILIPINO gathered perspectives from those involved in the field of media and journalism to tackle media objectivity and bias, the prevalence of red-tagging, what it means to be a journalist and a defender of press freedom in these trying times --when we are needed the most.

#### The war on critics: battling oppressors of the truth

A fundamental role of the media is to disseminate information to the public, which is very crucial in this time of pandemic. However, the past few months also saw the rise of red-tagging, mostly from journalists and campus journalists doing their job. What are your thoughts on this?

C.E: I think one way to fight this is for the media to unite and to continuously report the red-tagging so those in power would know they, too, are being watched. It is also important that we continue to speak up. The best way to assert our right to free speech is to speak what's on our mind.

J.S: The rise of red-tagging among the ranks of journalists and campus journalists is a manifestation of how reactionary our government is in its true nature. Red-tagging is not just a simple intimidation but also a threat to the lives of the people. Red-tagging is actually a "warning shot" to further state violence and sends a chilling effect on the media in general.

Information dissemination has evolved from merely stating hard facts and transcribing into fact-checking and contextualization of data. The role of media is not just to disseminate information, but to rather refunel information and statements with proper context to give our audience a full picture based on facts and truth.

Media in general should never be an echo chamber of false narratives. Quoting statements that promote disinformation and misinformation are reckless and a form of disservice to media consumers. Media giants, institutions, and alternative media must be biased only for truth and for the people.

L.G: The government will definitely deny this, but red tagging is a notorious way of making life miserable for the members of the press. It is like changing the very words in their respective IDs, from PRESS to PRESSED. Imagine being tagged as somewhat "enemies of freedom" in a country that is notable for being a defender of democracy. At the end of the day, the purpose of which is what we call the "chilling effect" on these media people.

The war on drugs also sparked another war termed by many as the "war on critics" where media frontliners along with progressive citizens were threatened. What are your thoughts on this?

C.E: The war on drugs has laid the groundwork for attacking critics. It was just the messaging that shifted, depending on the goal of the administration.

At first it was the war on drugs, they imprisoned Sen. De Lima and attacked the opposition. Next, they attacked the media doing critical reporting on the bloody campaign. A few years later, the messaging transitioned to anti-communism. Now, it's red-tagging critics.

To emphasize, adhering to communism is not a crime. It's taking up arms vs the government that is illegal. The military has always fought insurgency - it's their job. But they haven't stooped this low, until now. It's only now that they're blatantly spewing lies left and right and on national media. Fake lists, fake accusations... all with multi-billion intel funds.

J.S: Despotic regimes never learn from history. Silencing and killing dissent will not resolve the root

cause of the perennial problem of our society, it will rather create more dissenters and revolutionaries in different forms. Always remember that, "Walang malibang paglaban, may malibang kaya tayo lumalaban."

L.G: This government obviously is not open to criticism, but the president himself keeps on criticizing his political opponents, number one of which is the Vice President. War on drugs is the number one reason why many of us elected Duterte as President. He is therefore responsible for whatever will happen but definitely we anticipate the so-called immediate eradication of the menace. His six months has turned to almost six years now but as of this writing, his PIDEA has just exchanged bullets against his PNP because of the "SELL-BUST" controversy. Now, can we expect a worse scenario? Fearless forecast, yes.

What are your thoughts on the laws that govern our country's press? Do you think press freedom is really being protected by the law?

C.E: We have laws aimed to protect the press, yes. It's even in the Constitution, but in a country with weak institutions like ours, what's crucial is the implementation. Laws are weaponized against the media and critics (and to be fair/frank, past presidents/govts have done this as well).

One of the laws being used vs journalists is libel. It has to be decriminalized. I long for the day when institutions are bigger than the person sitting in Malacañang.

J.S: Up until now, our government categorizes "libel" as a criminal act and no guaranteed support and protection for media practitioners and workers are in place. This hinders

**"Continue to speak up not just for yourself but for those who couldn't find their voice. Your community, and most especially your country, needs you - especially now!"**

media practitioners in fearlessly delivering their mandate to expose wrongdoings.

Also, the government inaction in solving media killings in the country is actually deafening. This is symptomatic and a disservice. Inaction means normalizing the culture of impunity. Justice delayed, is justice denied as they say.

Our campaign for press freedom starts on how we engage people in pushing for a bill that supports media workers' rights, and protection. The balance of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary procedures is the necessary mechanism in pressuring our government in asserting our rights for the freedom of the press. While we see the merit of legislative measures as a protective gear for our media people, we must also assert that normalization

of media intimidations and killings has no place in our society and these acts should not be tolerated.

L.G: The answer is obvious, NO. We don't need to listen to the President. Just listen to his spokesperson. Observe how he treats the media. If you happen to see him relax and calm, that is when during the turn of his favorite male reporter from GMA 7. Aside from him, I just watched yesterday the press conference of both the PNP and PIDEA. I hate the way this General Director Villanueva responded to the queries of the press. What I hate most was when he told the group to "just wait for the result of their own investigation" before writing anything about the incident.

#### The importance of press freedom in the Philippines

What do you think is the most concerning issue of press freedom in the Philippines nowadays?

C.E: Right now, I think the most pressing concerns of the media are the pandemic (due to obvious reasons such as economic impact and lack of access) and a government/president hell bent on destroying the 4th estate.

J.S: Media killings, media intimidation, and the culture of impunity are the most concerning issues of press freedom in the Philippines putting it on the list of the most dangerous places for media workers and media practitioners in the world. You should not be killed and not be intimidated because of telling the truth. Despotic regimes are afraid of information that dispute lies and deception and to protect their interests they also use legislative measures against the media by labelling libel as a criminal act.

Cyber or not, libel has become a weapon to silence an individual or an organization. Legal measures that are supposed to afford the people their assurance of civil liberties are the same machinery that these politicians are concocting to escape criticism. These people are allergic to transparency and the concept of public accountability.

L.G: The "fourth estate", the watchdog, the voice of the people – the media, is no longer included in the vocabulary of this government, next to the word, Vice President.

As one of the most notable events in 2020, the ABS-CBN Shutdown on May 5 garnered various reactions from both media and public, with the hashtag #DefendPressFreedom trending and many institutions taking up its call. Do you think that the ABS-CBN Shutdown is an issue of press freedom? Why or why not?

C.E: The ABS-CBN shutdown, no matter how hard they try to twist it, is an issue of press freedom that has a significant impact on Filipinos. Shutting down the nation's biggest network in the middle of a pandemic leaves an information gap that nobody else can fill. And the real-life consequence of this was evident during the two typhoons that hit Luzon. And over a President's hurt feelings. The Constitution states no law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech. But Duterte was able to skirt that freely, with the help of his allies in Congress who have long emboldened him. Yes there were no laws passed vs free speech, but the whole government machinery was used vs media.

This is not to say ABS-CBN is perfect because it's not. No media organization is perfect - much like democracy. But media is critical in society as its roles are to inform the public, investigate abuses, hold power to account, and help fill in the gaps of government, among others.

J.S: ABS-CBN shutdown is an issue of press freedom. Closing and silencing one of the biggest echo chambers of information in the country sends a chilling effect to both the mainstream and alternative

media. The current government's iteration of this old trick tells us that Duterte is consistent with the legacy of impunity and injustice.

Make no mistake--this illustration of a select historical tale on media history is neither a blanket glorification of the media organizations nor mindless praise of the media's role in society--mainstream media organizations are far from being perfect. Some of them have their own cut of bad and biased practices and poor editorial judgment in a sense, but these are not sufficient grounds for launching an all-out war against the press which aims to harass reportorial staff and publishers and shut down an entire media company, for political gain.

**"Our call is loud and clear: the government should leave media organizations alone and stop stifling the people's right to public information from a free press."**

L.G: Of course! ABS-CBN is a media giant and undeniably a great influencer to the minds of the Filipino. The President, with the help of his cohorts, served as executioners. The nation watched the whole process. No concrete evidence, worse top government agencies, including the BIR and the DOJ explicitly gave their findings, but still the well-composed and early written (maybe months earlier) decision prevailed. Same with the Rappler CEO Maria Ressa. Once this President dislikes anyone, only God knows what will happen

In the same vein, conviction of Rappler CEO Maria Ressa on Wilfredo Keng cyber-libel case called for the press to #HoldtheLine and #DefendPressFreedom. What are your thoughts on this? Do you also consider this an issue of press freedom? Why or why not?

C.E: Yes. The whole machinery of the government is being used to attack and threaten the media. The article was published in 2012, before the Cybercrime Law was enacted. At the time, Rappler was already raising concerns about the law - precisely because of what's happening now, among others. Journalists and civil society saw this coming, in a way.

J.S: The present case of Rappler is a way to discipline and subsume editorial entities to the whims of the incumbent, elected officials. The country's Cybercrime Act of 2012, including its cyber libel provision, has been put to a litmus test through this case. What the court verdict initially pinned down is no less than a TIME's person of the year in the soul of Ressa and Rappler as her media affiliation. That verdict, of course, sided with Keng, a private businessman with almost 40 years of gameplay in the industry.

In an attempt to distance the palace from the press freedom issue, pro-administration supporters say that the case is not politically motivated arguing that it was filed by a private individual. This claim could have become more convincing had the president not made express pronouncements that vilify critics, even if these are unaffiliated, independent reporters who are plainly doing their jobs to report governmental affairs to the people.

The article in legal question was written in 2012, prior to the passage of the then-and-till-now controversial

Cybercrime Act, with minor typographical correction entry in 2014, which the RTC deemed as a republication; therefore, for them, it is a case that falls within the penalties provided for under the Cybercrime act. The case was filed in 2017, with progress in 2019.

Sadly, libel and its cyber counterpart have become counterproductive and a form of weapon against press people – writers, editors, and publishers. For fear of closure, or possible legal cases which will cost a huge amount of money, some of them may bow down to the repressive acts of the present regime.

With courts and prosecutors interpreting and enforcing laws on the grounds of legal technicalities, a climate of fear has been ushered in by the government and its allies. Clearly, this is a judgment that extends the chilling effect not only to the press people but also to the private social media users. The government can now say to every individual: "you have been warned but you still resisted. Now, face this jail time. You could have listened to us and obey instead."

Instead of heeding the long-standing calls for the decriminalization of libel and imposition of fines in terms of monetary penalties, courts are given the authority, based on the facts of the case, to rule on the conviction of either fine or imprisonment or both. Though this can be appealed up to the Supreme Court, legal battles are time, energy, and financially consuming and draining. Media organizations can now experience attending libel hearings more often than doing media coverage.

#### A deeper dive into objectivity and bias

*There are varying perspectives about the media within our country, especially on how the media should present news. A common phrase used by the public is "biased" to refer to the companies, if not the reporters/writers. What are your thoughts on this?*

C.E: The government's online propaganda, echoed by its officers on national media, have made this possible. Just because they don't agree with what you report on, they'll call you biased or bayaran. But journalists should just go on and continue doing their jobs. It's also a further push/motivation for journalists to ensure that their stories will stand scrutiny. This is also an effect of polarization on social media. People no longer have patience for differing opinions - which is dangerous for a democracy.

J.S: We must draw the sharpest line that we are biased for truth and the people. We must also be aware of the difference between misinformation and disinformation. In reality, we are clouded with various media and different perspectives especially online. In such a way, it creates alternative reality. This condition intensifies political polarization in our society.

Disinformation are information that is deliberately false with the intent to deceive the audience.

In the case of a "biased" label of certain groups of people mostly online, we must analyze what kind of media or information they are consuming for them to come up with such arguments. Targeted online campaign, algorithm, social media tech involvement is another story to tell.

In the name of biased truth, tireless persuasion is a must.

**"Why do we write? For whom should we write? How should we write? If we, as watchdogs, really do our job, we must write the truth for the people that they may know the things that ordinary people can't"**

L.G: May I quote the tagline of the two most famous media organizations of the land. The Kapuso said, "Walang kinikiligan, walang pinoprotektahan, serbisyon totoo lang!" It seems this amplifies the spirit of objective journalism. Until the Kapamilya made a counter cry, "Panig sa katotohanan, panig sa bayan!" There you go! Why do we write? For whom should we write? How should we write? If we, as watchdogs, really do our job, we must write the truth for the people that they may know the things that ordinary people can't.

*What are your thoughts on media objectivity and bias?*

C.E: Objectivity for me is needed, as it helps the public be well-informed to make their own judgment and decision. But I also believe truth is objective. For me, we shouldn't give false equivalence to lies and truths. We shouldn't juxtapose the falsehoods with facts just so we appear "balanced". Especially now, when social media is skewed towards disinformation, it's really important for journalists to call out a lie and not help in spreading it.

As for bias, I've long subscribed to the idea that human beings have biases. I think for me journalists should not try to remove/destroy it but to manage it. Bias is actually what helps drive an investigative story, because we know what's right and not, what's illegal and not, what's inhumane/unjust and not. Genocide is genocide, extrajudicial killings are extrajudicial killings. They're wrong, period. But journalists should always check themselves and their biases. It helps to be critical of one's self so we can serve the public better.

J.S: Objective reportage is one of the common and most abused tools for media practitioners and also for some

campus journalists. This is the "safest way" of delivering information and data. However in the age of information and disinformation, stating straight facts and lifting quotes from prominent institutions and personalities in the name of being objective is somewhat dangerous because it lacks context and it can be subject for different interpretation. Plain delivery of reportage and merely transcribing it without fact-checking is reckless and irresponsible.

As Sally Claire says in journalism, "If someone says it's raining and another person says it's dry. It's not your job to quote them both. Your job is to look out the f\*cking window and find out which is true."

#### The Anti-Terrorism Law and threats towards media

*On July 3 last year, the Anti-Terrorism Bill was signed into law, earning various reactions on its implications and provisions. Do you think this new law will affect how the press and media fulfill its duty? Why or why not?*

C.E: It is meant to scare journalists and stifle dissent. Just like libel, this has the potential to become the next most overused tool of the government versus journalists.

J.S: Our call is loud and clear: the government should leave media organizations alone and stop

stifling the people's right to public information from a free press. The Anti-Terrorism Bill (ATB) gives a free pass for human-rights violations legitimizing warrantless arrests, extended detentions, the crackdown on critics, and prolonged surveillance of civilians.

President Rodrigo Duterte is no different from his elected predecessor-tyrants. His political maneuvering by certifying the Anti-Terrorism Bill as urgent amid the ongoing pandemic reveals his true self-serving colors and governance and policy priorities.

The railroading of the bill in both chambers of our Congress is equally appalling. Majority of the representatives and senators who voted in favor of the bill have clearly shelved and entombed legislative independence. Like dogs subservient to its master, the legislative branch willfully succumbed to the highly politicized encroachment of the executive when what they could have chosen as an appropriate response is to assert the Congress' equal standing and powers and affirm the right of the people to free speech and expression as enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

Its swift passage in the lower house to avoid a bicameral conference and further scrutiny of the bill's provisions speaks volumes on how influential this administration is in waving the big stick in the House of Representatives where most of the bills emanate.

L.G: Again, definitely yes. Salient features of the law are sugar coated so as to make it appear that there will be

justice. Again, there will be. But justice should be present from the very first segment of any circumstance. If from the very start, you are already being considered a terrorist, could you expect a positive and humane treatment?

*What do the threats on press freedom and attacks on the media mean for campus journalism?*

C.E: It's meant to scare campus journalists. If the attacks could happen to veteran journalists, what's to stop the same thing from happening to the youth? But I think I am seeing the opposite, in that campus journalists are more vocal and critical. And that gives me hope and inspiration.

J.S: The same thing, a chilling effect, an extended one – warning future journalists of sure danger way ahead of being in the field.

L.G: In Filipino, we have a saying, "Ang sakit ng kalingkigan (small finger) ay sakit ng buong katawan." Any campus journalist will think twice, thrice or even more if they will pursue professional journalism if they see such planned threats to any member of the media. If the professionals are being chilled, naturally the young, the would-be prolific writers of the future may definitely be in the freezer.

#### The call to brave the odds

*What would be your message for all campus journalists and aspiring media practitioners amid the attacks on the media and press freedom?*

C.E: Just continue to hold the line. Continue reporting/writing about your community, whether it's an investigation, it's about culture, education, lifestyle, policies. Be well-informed, too. Continue to speak up not just for yourself but for those who couldn't find their voice. Your community, and most especially your country, needs you - especially now.

J.S: We believe in the freedom of the press, speech, and expression, as enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the highest law of the land. As active members of alternative media, we must choose to stand tooth and claw against any and all forms of attacks that would effectively silence dissent and limit the media's role as a social critic.

Our collective voices matter and let us make these voices be heard through solid actions and solidarity. #DefendPressFreedom #EndImpunity

L.G: Give me a job that has no danger in your life. Give me a profession that does not entail total responsibility. Give me a good person, bearer of truth, defender of freedom who is not in danger upon exercising his principle. Even our Lord Jesus Christ suffered death because he spoke of truth, justice and salvation. Do you really want to be a journalist? Then, write and be ready for all of these.

## HF REACT



**Following the talks on obtaining vaccines against the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the country now faces the threat of the new United Kingdom (UK) variant as of January 13. With the entrance of the new COVID-19 variant in the country, we ask you: what are your thoughts on the country's healthcare response against COVID-19?**

UK variant

vaccines

COVID-19 response

Philippine healthcare

...



**Name: Joana Bugarin**  
College: CLAC  
CYS: Second year AB Communication

The healthcare response of the country to the pandemic, in simple words, is utterly and completely lacking. Our government officials barely give our healthcare workers the protection, priority and salary that they deserve for keeping the country alive, and instead focuses on the military as though guns and fear will solve the pandemic crisis. They need to stop prioritizing themselves and care for the people more.



**Name: Jean Camille**  
College: COED  
CYS: Second year Bachelor of Secondary Education

Hindi appreciated ng government ang sacrifices na ginagawa nila, at kahit na alam nating sila ang may pinaka mas nakakaalam sa mga dapat gawin para matulungan ang lahat, sila pa ang hindi pinapriority pagdating sa needs nila



**Name: Beatriz Anne Llantada**  
College: CEAT  
CYS: Second year Multimedia Arts

They only prioritize the privileged people than the people who needs immediate help when it comes to having test results like swab test and rapid test for COVID-19.



**Name: Karl Rose Gapol**  
College: CEAT  
CYS: Second Year Multimedia Arts

In my opinion, the healthcare response of the country is poor. According to DOH, the target date for herd immunity is by 2023, which means the country will go back to normal only by then. That target is not beneficial for the Filipinos. As of last year millions of Filipinos have lost their source of income and have been financially suffering ever since. The "ayudas" from the government and other organizations are not enough to last by 2023. Some places did not even receive any. The country is suffering economically, Filipinos are facing poverty more, and as time goes by our debts are increasing. More funds are allocated for the military instead of the health sector. The PhilHealth scandal was also disappointing [but not really surprising].



**Name: Shane Picson**  
College: CLAC  
CYS: Second year AB Communication

I wanna be blunt as possible for this one: It's been horrendous. As reported by CNN and Rappler, global assessments and surveys show that the Philippines rank among the lowest when it comes to comprehension in Math, Science and Reading. The proof of that is highly evident among the most important individuals in charge of the country's COVID-19 response. The DOH, particularly Francisco Duque III, has been undeniably incompetent. The fact that he favors political favorability over the well-being of the entire country shows how incapable he is in his position. Let's also not forget that he failed to procure the better proven Pfizer vaccines for the country when he had the chance because he didn't get the correct paperwork and requirements done at the right time forcing the country to settle for the less effective Sinovac Vaccines manufactured by China. The government's priorities have just been out of whack. Politicians are boneheads as usual and everything has a chance to get worse because our leaders are just not fit to be leaders in the first place.





Sampaguita  
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"Be silent, be happy, and just stay out of it." It is safe to assume a great portion of you heard these words before. I bet you even read it in a tone you're personally familiar with. A string of words that heavily downplays your abilities; your rights. The reason? They say it's for the best if you do not speak up so you won't experience the consequences of fighting back. But in a climate where tyranny is as evident as seeing it on our television screens, it's about time we face the fact, being silent leads to complacency, and it leads people into obliviously siding with the oppressor instead of fighting for our rights and genuine liberation.

I write this at a time where a certain controversy is circulating the interwebs. Liza Soberano, a well-known TV actress, attended one of the educational discussions led by the young women's rights group, Gabriela Youth, as a guest speaker. There, she talks about the untold abuse women and children suffer through under the pandemic. Since Gabriela Youth is a group that is correlated with the problems she wanted to address, it's understandable why she opted to be part of said discussion.

However, a string of relentless red-tagging was made against her by various online entities, better known as "trolls" after the virtual event. They made awfully shrewd remarks against the actress, marking her as a terrorist despite simply speaking her truth about the mistreatment of women and the need for standing up against it.

Adding fuel to the fire is the statement made by the police themselves, stating that Liza should be "careful" of who she associates with, implying as if joining movements and asserting your rights has harmful penalties in the eyes of the law. Luckily, this generation is slowly but surely breaking away from conforming to such antics. Many fans, activists, and celebrities openly showed their support with Liza against these notorious claims, hence the #YesToRedLipstick trend with both women and men sporting luscious, raging red lipstick to combat the macho-fascist claims against truth-tellers.

Suffice to say, their retaliation is expected since she has the influence and fame to organize these people in her defense, deliberate or not. Though, I cannot help but observe the difference when it comes to someone close to us. How we perceive them when we learn they participate in highly critical movements, and how a huge sum of the initial reactions are still tied to maligned, preconceived notions, pushing activists into keeping quiet. It must be said, this is in no way questioning the efforts done by her fans and other personalities in showbiz, it's only a critique on why is the inceptive thought so negative when we see ordinary people in mass demonstrations demanding justice. Some even call them "papansin", "salot", and of course, "terorista".

Questioning the system is nothing new to a country like ours.

By merely skimming through your grade-school history books, you will know how much the Filipino

people utilized political protests to amplify their needs whether it was for land reform, student tuition hikes, seeking justice, or all of the above.

It's not unheard of to feel the flame inside the confines of the *university*. In Jose F. Lacaba's *In Days of Quiet, Nights of Rage: The First Quarter Storm and Related Events*, he mentions that student participation in mobilizations has become the basis of political protests in the Philippines since the late 1960s.

### There is no certain school or social group that breeds activists, history breeds activists.

For clarity's sake, I personally believe there is no certain school or social group that breeds activists, history breeds activists. It's the way the government exploits our current status to enact state-violence that enables the mind to think more than what it's being fed to know. This is why we opt to learn from the poor, the farmers, the workers—those who were victims of the system's shortcomings. And through learning from them, we feel the need to surround ourselves with people who aspire the same goals as us. Grouping together to form a stronger, much larger unit to create change.

Mass movements weren't created overnight. It's a snowball effect from years upon years of cruelty and deceit from a system that continuously gaslights the people into thinking that we alone are the problem.

I know a short column is not enough to sway you into changing your beliefs on national democratic mass organizations, but I advise you to understand why such groups exist. I implore you to look into the enablers, the people in uniform that abuse their forces against the neglected, the ones who were elected in to power just to manipulate the narrative so it can favor them, or the person who administers unconstitutional killings to silence his critics and eliminate the poor. Once you spot them, you will understand why it's truly the time to band together and use our outside voices.

## Sa paglihis

By Shekynah Angelene Samadan

"Ano?" Ang tanong ko sa harapan ng kanyang mukha, "hindi ibig sabibin tapos na ang laban." Alam ko hindi dapat ako rito bababa. Pero, naalala ko naanaman e.

Oo na, papunta ako kasi sa Quiapo para maglakad-lakad. Kukumustahan sana ang mga nakalatag na mga baraha sa harap ng higanteng sanktuwaryo ng mga santo. Wala lang. Nais ko lang sanang magpalipas-oras. Pagdating ng Lunes, kailangan ko nang lumipad papuntang Saudi. Lilipad sa isang lugar na kakaiba at nakakatakot. Matutulog sa masikip na kuwarto kasama ang 12 na *boardmates*, magsasabihin ng mga pangarap, magpupuyat at magigising ng napaka-aga upang mag-alaga ng ibang pamilya, at magpalago ng ekonomiya ng ibang bansa. Kaya naman, nagbalak muna ulit ako magmumununi sa pamilyar na lugar bago sumabak sa panibagong digmaan.

*Makapag Ma Mon Luk* kaya? Napaisip ako. *Pagtapos, tamay lang sa Istan, no?* Nakakatawa lang, ang magmumununi ng pwedeng paggalaan nang para bang limpok-limpok na pera ang aking bitbit. Napangisi na lang ako nang patago sa aking palad. Siguro, mukha naanaman akong tanga na bumubungisngis mag-isa.

Sa medyo mapanghing pader, nagsindi muna ako ng sigarilyo bago pumara ng dyip. Amoy sauce ng shawarma rice naanaman ang aking hinling.

"Di bali, sinabi ko sa aking sarili, makakatikim naman ulit ako ng totoong shawarma next week. Sa kabusugan ng aking tiyan, ako'y napadighay habang nilalabas ko ang mapait na usok ng *Fortune*.

"O, Vito Cruz! Vito Cruz! La Salle! Divisoria! Quiapo! O, Quiapo!" Rinig ko ang sigaw ni kuyang barker sa may gawing kanan. Yung pa-Quiapo halos wala pa namang laman, at medyo mahaba-haba pa naman 'tong yosi ko. Maya-maya na ako sasakay.

Pinagmasdan ko ang mga buhay sa aking harap. Mga katawang palipat-lipat ng pwesto, 'di makuntento sa mga sarili nilang lugar. Isang manang na gusgusin, may dalang sanggol, balat nila'y kakulay na ang abo ng buong Buendia.

Sinundan ng aking mga mata ang kanyang mga hakbang, iniisa-isa niya ang mga nakapila sa LRT. Abot naanaman kasi hanggang sa may baba ang linya, natutuwa tuloy si manong na nagtitinda ng tokneneng. Mabilis niyang iniinit ang mga bilog na kahel sa sumasaway na mantika.

May nakalabit si manang grasa, naka-headphones at may berdeng *ID lace* na nakasabit sa kanyang leeg. Tumingin lang sa kanyang namamalimos na kamay ang lalaking makinis ang mukha. Nagkukunwaring walang naririnig, ige lang ang pagpindot sa selpon, para bang hindi tao ang manang na nanghihingi lang ng piso.

*Ilang bihit na lang siguro ito*, aking iniisip habang hinihigop ng aking mga labi ang puwert ng nag-iinit na yosi. Hawak na lang ng aking hintuturo at hinlalaki ang kaninang isang stik. Medyo nagmamadali na ang *barker*, medyo iba na rin ang timbre ng kanyang voices.

"O, Quiapo! Quiapo! Lima na lang para lumarga na!" Pinitik ko ang paupos na yosi at tsaka sumakay.

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Dikit-dikit na ang aming mga tuhod at bisig sa aking pag-upo. Kasama ko sa aking maikling lakbay ang mga matang nakabaling sa kanilang mga telefono. Habang kami ay nasa loob ng dyip at halos pinagtagpi-tagpi na ang aming mga gilid, nakahanap pa rin kami ng paraon upang manatili sa aming mga sariling bula.

Nakakatuwa isipin na, kung titingnan ng isang dayuhan ang pangayari, medyo kakaiba siya sa tipikal. Parang mga sardinas na nakakulong sa lata. Oo, may kaunting alinlangan siguro sa ating ulo dahil baka malikot ang kamay ng ating katabi o anuman, ngunit may pagkakataon talaga na alam mong sigurado ka sa iyong mga katabi. Mga kasa naong tahimik at naka-dungaw sa kanyang selpon, hinihintay ang kanilang sariling destinasyon.

Ibinaling ko na lamang ang aking tingin sa mga nagbabaaang mga paa. Sa labas ng bintana, kita ko naanaman ang pamilyar na ngisi ng isang matabang bubuyog.

Kaharap ko ang kanyang tindig, tila nagpapaligsihan kami. Pula pa naman ang ilaw. Nakahinto pa ang mga naglalakihang bus at *truck*. Nagyaya pa ng sakay ang ibang mga drayber ng dyip. Patuloy pa ang pagtawid ng mga paa na may kanya-kanyang dalang kape at miryenda. Sinigurado ko na minata ko na siya hangga't masunog na ang kanyang nakakaingganyong ngiti sa aking utak. Para hindi ko malimitan. Umarangkada na uli ang dyip, ngunit nasasagi pa rin sa aking pang-amoy ang katakam-takam na langhap ng *Chickenjoy* kahit kami'y nasa Pedro Gil na.

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Napahinto naman kami sa kahabaan ng UN. Ramdam ko sa aking itaas ang maingay na pagragsasa ng tren. Tuloy lang ang kanyang paggapan. Sa kalagitnaan ng trapiko, narinig ko ang kamusta ng isang Cebuano. Sa may gawing kanan, para bang ako'y gustong makita niya ulit. Ikutin ko raw muli ang parke at bumili ng kalamares. Samahan ko raw siyang bantayan ang 7107 na pulo sa may gawa-gawang lawa na dilaw na sa amag. O kaya naman, mabighani ulit sa taas at 'di makala-kalawang Kilometro Zero.

*Pagbalik na lang siguro.* Ipinasa ko sa hangin ang aking tugon. Naintindihan naman niya. Nakakalungkot nga lang, bakit yung doktor na nakaharap sa Manila Bay ay hindi nangangamusta? Hindi ba, pareho lang naman kaming lumaya sa panahon ng gera? Nagtago at nagpakahasa sa ibang lupulop ng mundo. Parehas tayong tatawagin na bayani pero parehas din hindi kayang manatili rito para lumaban. Sa takot siguro. Ayaw pa rin niya atang aminin iyon kaya hindi niya ako pinansin. Medyo hindi mapakali ang aking binti, at alam kong hindi ito dahil sa nangginginig at nag-iinit na lapag ng dyip. Para bang may nagsasabi sa aking bumaba na at komprontahan ang bugwit na doktor na iyon. Ngunit, ako'y naghunos-dili. Alam kong hindi rin naman niya ako papakinggan.

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Pagkalipas ng ilang pahinto-hintong kurong, kami na lang pala ni manong tsuper ang natitirang

kaluluwa sa loob ng mala-latang behikulo na ito. Ang nakasabit na rosaryo at ang tunog ng lungsod na lamang ang ingay na sumasagip sa pagkalunod sa nakalunod na katahimikan. Sa magaang andaran ni manong, maayos ang kanyang paghinto nang biglang namula ang ilaw sa *stoplight*. Ginawa niya itong tsansa upang maghakot ng mga bagong pasahero. Walang kaluluwa ang kumagat sa kanyang tawag. Sa harap kasi kami ng kabaong huminto. Sa *City Hall*.

"Kaunting lakad lang ito, makakamusta ko si Ka," aking ibinulong sa sarili habang pinagmamasdan ang mga maalikabok na tanawin. Alam ko hindi naman talaga kailangan. Kung alam niyang dadaan ako, siguro hindi rin ako papansin niyon katulad ng doktor sa Luneta. Baka punitin lang ako katulad ng isang sedula, o kaya naman ay sabihin na ako ay isang taksil. Duwag. Hindi mahal ang bansang pinanggalingan. Hindi mahal ang ina kung saang sinapupunan ako nanggaling. Hipokrito? Pwede rin.

"Para!" Biglang tapak si manong sa *break*.

"Anak ng—ano ba?! Aandar na! Dali, baba!" Galit na isinigaw ni manong sa akin habang ako'y madaliang bumaba sa kanyang dyip. Buti na lang walang sumakay habang nakapreno kami.

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Nakatingala. Laging ganito kapag kami'y magkikita. Taas ang aking kamao kung ako'y lalapit dati, sumisigaw at umiyyak. Nagwawagayaw ng bandera. Parang isang magiting na apo, susundan ang laban ng lolo para makamit ang tunay na paglaya. Ngunit ngayon, ang pamilyar na lang sa akin ay ang amoy kong nababalot ng yosi at ang aking mga pangarap na tila nabaon na sa aking isipan. Wala na ang bandanang pula sa aking noo. Ngayon, sumbrero ang nakaupo sa aking ulo habang ang aking kamay ay pagod na sa pag-iimpeke ng damit sa maleta.

Alam kong baba ng tingin mo sa aking ngayon Ka, pero ang alipayok na natitira sa aking puso ay kailanman 'di matutupok.

# Vacant seat

By Jacinth Banite

"Where is your seatmate?" This was the question used to break the dull atmosphere of our 7 AM class every Wednesday. An attendance sheet was placed on the creaky table, where the pen made a high-pitched click when a thumb pressed the tip. Preparing to answer the hanging inquiry, I recall clearing the agitation in my throat for my newest version of, "He's on the way, sir." Hoping it would convince him to wait, despite the monotonous tone.

It was less than ten minutes when the sound of a twisted door knob snatched the attention of every half-dead soul, curiosity dragging their gazes towards the back door. Their lips pulled in tight smirks as their eyes greeted you, almost fond of the way it conveys "there you are". The man's heavy voice in front reminded them about the unfolding discussion, and all eyes returned to the monitor hanging in the corner, back to the lesson.

As you walked to your chair, you stuttered words that sounded like a plea—"I'm here, Sir, I'm here," with a subtle rendition of "Sorry Sir, I'm late" added to it.

You didn't waste time with excuses anymore. You stopped caring whether he'll believe you or not.

The sound of your rapid breathing turned into a sigh as you took the vacant seat next to me, the chasm between us shrank into a small gap. Your trademark smell permeated the air as you settled down. *Mm!* That charming perfume we bought from the sale section in the supermarket, mixed with the smell of traffic jams and the rushing crowd from the busy street outside.

Our shoulders touched for the rest of the slow brew morning.

Despite its mundane moments, I loved Wednesdays...and I hated March for ruining them. Tiny spaces within jeepneys became empty highway roads as the panting wind hushed through deserted pavements, yearning for stamping feet and loud murmurs that vanished into the ear-splitting sound of isolation.

That third month of a dreadful year even changed the sound of your breath. They became more intense as time went by, but no longer do they come from hurrying towards your lectures. Whenever you tried to catch a break, you found yourself taking another deep inhale to keep up with the pace of your responsibilities.

Your lungs burning in a wild goose-chase with no end in sight. You fought your own battles like the rest of the world, but you

and I both know that yours is a little different. "A race only for the privileged, while the poor are left to suffer," in your own words. Face masks came to be our sole defense for the noxious rush of the crowds. Distance built walls between people's shoulders, while ours never touch anymore.

I despise how we are forced to turn our backs on yesterday's routine, but not as much as I hate how your words became strangers since our talk last August. You said you won't be late in class anymore, and I mourn for those Wednesdays when I get to be your willing hero.

"Where's your seatmate?" Asks the same Mister from old Wednesdays, his stern voice glitching through a bad internet connection, bringing me back to my reality. I respond towards my desktop screen, slumped on the creaky study table.

"He's not enrolled, Sir." my mouth craves the usual line — that in a while, you'll be here. I look at the vacant seat beside me, hoping to find that rusty screeching chair of yours. The air in my room aggravates when all I can see is an empty bed with a plain white sheet.

# I was here

By Shekynah Angelene Samadan

The gates knew the sullen, deprived, 7 AM eyes  
they knew all of it by name, face, student number  
And all the riches combined. What intellect. How observant  
like the trees that tower over busy bodies  
Rushing towards the campus. I knew it all too, once. All over  
in iron-thin white uniform, green crisp pants  
Sweat-stained ID lace dangling on my neck

Lined nipa huts at the facade of the brave composer  
My black rubber shoes squeaked, exploring the uneven bricks for a  
Sidewalk. Just right there was *Manong Taho*, looking relaxed,  
Back reclined to his monoblock seat. There were cats, promiscuous  
As ever. They used to circle about, getting spoiled with scraps  
The hands that used to feed them now gone like their treats

Light, white doors with loose hinges and chipping wood  
Bougainvilles on a box, greying of dust and age  
With slight finesse. A bit unfazed. The room showed no sign of a body  
Roughly chipping wooden desks and chairs, the pale-shade walls knew  
Them all over and over. The petty secrets, dreams  
And failures. Nothing much now, though. Not anymore  
A pair of French, empty eyes followed my every linger, he recognizes my gaze

It was there, I remember  
boredom and doubts combined  
A desolate echo, once lively  
I was there, I just know it

# Kawalan

By Jacinth Banite

Puting tela, pader, at higaan  
Sa paligid ng daang libong himlayan  
Tahimik ang paglakad sa loob ng kulungan  
Ng kawal na nasa harapan ng digmaan

Walang bakal na armas, o makisig na porma  
Tanging mga maskara at espasyo ang sandata  
Nananatiling madilim ang mahabang gabi  
Madayang kalaban patuloy na nagkukubli

Mga bulong ng paalam ang tanging ingay  
Sumisigaw ang mga sugatang kataban  
Markado ng swero ang pulso, gaya ng luha sa unan  
Sa maalon na dibdib, pahigang linya ang lalatay

Ang mga tirahan ay nagsimulang manabik  
Sa rami ng beses na hindi ka dito bumalik,  
Hindi tiyak kung alin pa ba ang tunay na tahanan  
Sa parehas na loob, pag-iisa ang tangan

Bagong pagsibol ang patuloy pa ring nilalakbay  
Sa ilalim ng kawalan, pataas na hinihila ang bandila  
Bitbit sa likuran, kahariang binakuran ang malaya  
Sa labang ito, tila ang haring nasa loob ang tunay na kaaway

# Solus

By Shekynah Angelene Samadan

The floor knows every sweep of his feet at this point. It knows every tiring stomp and drag. He paces back and forth without a goal in mind, trying to make sense of what this place could be. With much confusion, his unruly limbs continue to step and step. Relentless. Three (four?) or maybe five hours now. He is trying to pick up any sound but only silence greeted him. Not a single echo from all his moving, even the breeze from his tremors remains unheard. He opens his mouth to bellow out his frustrations and yet, all he got in response is the immense drought of any resonance.

Nothing. Just four, gigantic walls, a ceiling, and in the middle of it all is but one pair of functioning lungs belonging to a man that can barely open his eyes. His spine hunched like the slump of a mountain while his mouth contained nothing but tongue and gums. Every part and crevasse of his body told a story and yet his current plane is as desolate as a bygone memory.

He occupies an empty space. Vast in a way that seems to stretch for miles, yet you can see the seams of a corner if you squint. The place is an abyss sucking out the tiniest wisp of a soul.

The underbelly of Satan, built to torment the once stagnant bodies that once waste their lives drowning themselves in the quiet, purposely avoiding Earth's benevolent destruction to escape into their illusion of peace. It is a room with no past nor future, as if God created a world but left it unfinished. He waits for Death to come knocking in his doorless dungeon while breathing in what he can assume is oxygen.

It is suffocating.

Defeat sinks deep into his bones. All he could do was kneel and bang the ground that carries his weight. A surge of fury from the annoying quiet disturbs the veins in his head that it has finally driven him feral. He does not know what came over him, but he finds himself scratching the floor with all his might.

Scratch after scratch, his breathing in rapids. His nose flaring from the exhaustion. And sure enough, there was blood. A sting at first before the gush. One scrape but not a trail of it from where he scratched. He sighs as the red, iron-scented liquid tracks down his bursting fingertips. It must be a relief to finally

see something different besides your body and these walls.

The floor remained as it was. Pristine. Devoid of any signs of a struggle. As if to spit in his hopelessness. He stays there kneeling for what seems like an eternity, his whole being embellished with embarrassment mixed with self-inflicted pain. Despite the fact that he is the only person in the room, he feels as if all eyes are on him, an invisible audience scrutinizing his theatrics. As much as he wants to bring his knees into his chest to completely shun the space that swallowed him, he froze. Stiff as a statue, basking in his dejection. And as he stays motionless, he hears laughter coming from the walls, the floor, and the ceiling. The cackling of non-existing mouths crescendoes in a sweet chorale as it digs through his skull.

It mocks him. It demeans him how he became the epicenter of amusement for these inert beings. However, he cannot find the energy to even shush them because right now, he craves what they are offering.

"Finally," he thought. "Noise."

## GAPS

By Jacinth Banite

7 AM sunlight peeking through the four layers of palm leaves, frowning at him as he opens his eyes. The bed creaks when he moves, placing the oblate pillows one on top of the other with a thin edge of a folded blanket in the middle. He always leaves without a wrinkle on the sheet.

Car engines yawn loudly as they pass along the gate of the apartment he hasn't paid for since August. White envelopes covered in soot piled up above the non-functioning refrigerator.

Two scoops of rice on his plate, five slices of *tocino* on the side. Toasted garlic compliments the coffee aroma, the savory meat suits its bitterness for a rushed breakfast meal.

He enjoys a 15-minute luxury time in the bathroom, staring at the symmetrical tiles on the floor which reminds him of his red and orange uniform. The breast pocket always gets wet as he puts it on with dripping hair. A final touch of a patched cap and an unfading smile completes his everyday outfit, making heads turn as he walks towards his 9 AM shift in a fast food chain a few blocks away.

The usual chicken and burgers are served twice more than yesterday. At least 20 random customers call him to take dirty dishes away from tables, most of them say thank you-

this makes him smile because usually, only a few even bother. He sees a couple waiting in line, fingers intertwined with one another. Alluring gazes fill the gap between them. The scene is very familiar, except the guy is not holding the same woman from yesterday. He throws a smirk to the floor he is mopping. *Finally, he thought, something new.*

The scent of his perfume mixes with the haze of his sweat. His shifts always end with the smell of deep fry oil sticking to his shirt.

Panting, he changes into a plain shirt by 5 PM. The afternoon breeze dries the sweat on his body as he runs toward the bakery shop on the same street. The skies are darker than usual, with swollen clouds blocking off the view of the sunset. He bakes 16 dozens of *pandesals* in exchange for a decent 300 peso bill along with his favorite beef *pares* he always take home for dinner. He walks back to his apartment with his jeans covered in bread flour.

The pack of five stray dogs in the dark alley is missing a member, he notices, as the rest greet him like always with their tails wagging.

He sits at the dining table around 9 PM, chewing while he

stretches his tense neck and throbbing shoulders. The familiar notification bell rings from his pocket. Four scratches on his phone screen blur the customer's request for a plumber tomorrow. He swallows the food, knuckles cracking, until fingers hover at the letters, typing a response. Hoping that by clicking send, the day will finally end.

His body collapses in bed as the rain outside suddenly pours hard. Eyes staring at the ceiling, counting its ridges amid the noise that disturbs the deafening emptiness.

He loves finding patterns even in the most random things. He has always been fascinated with how things are measured and aligned accordingly. How they are arranged, anticipating what comes next, certain for what comes after. But beyond the order and repetition, he looks for patterns so he can discern interruptions.

The 5-second pauses in between the drops on the floor coming from his leaking roof, the two-centimeter distance of the railings where the wind sneaks through the balcony, and the gap between the curtain fold hanging on the ajar window. He's fascinated with patterns but not as much as he loves needing the interval that breaks them apart: *space*. A pause in his manic yet monotonous days. A rest for his weary soul.



# Off-track but never off the track

Mark Igusquiza stays in shape amid pandemic fallout

by Christine Marie Romero



Photo by John Paul Gahid (contributor)

## SDO from page 28

Schools Athletic Association (PRISAA) league remained intact in the Accounting Office as "there is no communication yet whether they (PRISAA committee) will push through with what's pending as far as sports activities and events are concerned".

He also noted that the school did not charge any athletic fees to the AY 2020-2021 enrollees, and that the fund for the postponed Private Schools Athletic Association (PRISAA) league remained intact in the Accounting Office.

## SDO's re-establishment and future programs

As of press time, there is no discussion yet between the OSS and the former SDO directors, Casidsid and Gerry Sergio, regarding the plans to promote and

recover the sports program of DLSU-D as Reblora only recently sat as the OSS Dean position in October last year.

"We will be benchmarking with other schools in NCR (National Capital Region) and specially with our sister school, La Salle Taft, to gather information that would give us sufficient grounding on our plans and decisions for the resurrection of SDO...[and] to craft our new guideline and policies for our Sports Development Office in a new normal setup," Reblora mentioned.

On the topic of the office's re-establishment, Reblora assured that the school understood the importance of the SDO and that there would be recruitment of new varsity players when the situation permits.

**Causing significant disruption in almost all areas of life, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic made no exception to the sports industry, as various professional and amateur sports competitions were immediately put on hold following the outbreak. This may seem like a much needed hiatus for some, but for DLSU-D trackster Mark Anthony Igusquiza, being an athlete never really stopped as he shared the importance of keeping an athlete mindset and routine, even with the lack of sports events amid quarantine.**

## Raised by a legend

At a young age, Igusquiza already took a great liking to sports, and was even expected to follow in the footsteps of his father Anthony Igusquiza, a veteran boxer and 1994 Asian Games medalist. However, in a strange turn of events, young Igusquiza somehow found his comfort zone within the track and field, where he would soon grow as a full-fledged athlete.

He began joining athletic meets at Camp 7 Elementary School, Baguio City, where Igusquiza originally trained and competed in the throwing events. He did not hit the starting line of his current career until the Cordillera Administrative Region Athletic Association (CARAA) in 2012, when their team's sprinter was injured in the middle of the event, and Igusquiza was suddenly called to take charge in that sprint contest due to lack of players.

Being the risk-taker that he was, Igusquiza was able to climb up all the way to the Palarong Pambansa, where he was scouted by various high schools and universities. Among these, Igusquiza chose the University of Baguio to continue his studies while competing in the Palaro from Grade 8 to 11.

During those years, Igusquiza was able to join various contests such as Philippine National Games, Philippine National Open Athletics Championships and National MILO Marathon, adding to his long list of experiences and accomplishments.

But when asked about his achievements, the athlete simply recalled the values and lessons his father had given him, all of which helped him grow and thrive. "Lagi niyang sinasabi na gawin (ko ang) best ko, wagi madaling sumuko and manalig lang palagi," Igusquiza reminisced. "Pero yon (nga) lang, bindi nya na makikita mga magiging achievements ko and wala na rin yung sisigaw sa akin sa gilid (ng) stage or sa finish line ng 'sige lang, bira anak!' and wala na din yung magasabit sa akin ng medalya sa podium," the trackster added, talking about his father who recently passed away in 2020. But even if his father was no longer around physically, Mark Igusquiza guaranteed that he will still show and prove that he is capable of so much more.

## On becoming a DLSU-D trackster

"Dream school ko talaga ang La Salle, pero bindi ko ine-expect na sa La Salle-Dasma ako mapupunta," Igusquiza shared, admitting that he had three DLSU branches on his list of choices before, but did not include DLSU-D. It just so happened that his father and a Patriot coach were acquaintances, which influenced him to enter the University. Although it was beyond his expectation to study in DLSU-D, his fondness for it grew because of the people around him. "Napamahal na rin ako dito sa La Salle-Dasma," he said.

Igusquiza also described the Patriot tracksters as one of the best teams he ever had in athletics. "Minomotivate namin [ang] isa't isa at nandyan kami para sa isa't isa. Mas lalo akong nag-iimprove kasi yong teammate ko nage-excel so gagawin ko rin yung best ko kasi ginagawa rin ng teammates ko 'yung best nila," he said, emphasizing the team's connection.

The trackster's daily routine consisted of waking up as early as 4:00 AM to prepare, training until 7:30 AM and attending classes at 8:00 AM. With this discipline, he was able to represent the University in sprint events, bagging medals here and there without having to compromise his responsibilities as a student. "Yong banat oras na inilaan mo, may purpose. Labat ng ginagawa, may kapalit. Labat ng pagod, masusukian," Igusquiza believed.

## Rock bottom for sports community

His career as a trackster was only beginning to pick up momentum when it came to a sudden halt due to the pandemic. More than the disruption of their usual training, the impact of COVID-19 wreaked havoc on the sporting calendar, cancelling upcoming competitions and meets.

"Nakakapanibago," Igusquiza said. What hurts the Patriot more is the fact that their coaches are left without jobs, sharing that "Nung nalaman ko (ng wala na silang trabaho), napakabigat. Parang sila yong nanay at tatay namin na nag-guide sa amin (student-athletes)."

## The off-track hustle

"My daily schedule was pretty intense last year (but) during this pandemic, a lot of things have changed in my routine," the Patriot expressed. By this time, Igusquiza no longer has to wake up as early as 4:00 AM to train and prepare for competitions ahead. Nevertheless, he has never failed his role as a student-athlete to stay in shape and influence others to do so.

The Patriot would always allot two and a half hours as his training or workout time when there were no online classes. To him, it was necessary as an athlete to maintain their training even inside their own homes. "Kasi bindi natin alam pag pinabalik kami sa school baka maging pabilat kami pag back to zero ulit. Mas magandang tuluy-tuluy pa rin 'yong pagiging athletic at healthy," he explained.

As a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education (BPE) student, Igusquiza also wanted to advise his co-athletes of better ways to spend the quarantine. "Pinagsabihin ko (sila), 'athlete tayo, bindi dapat bisyo ang nakikita sa my day (Facebook story) mo. Dapat yong nage-exercise na lang para ma-motivate din 'yong iba (co-athletes & students).'" He was also firm with the idea that staying healthy is more important in this time of pandemic.

Aside from influencing others on health and staying fit, the Patriot never forgot his role as a teammate. Whenever his co-tracksters would reach out with concerns such as online classes, he would help as much as he can. He still stands as a *Kuya* to their rookies that whenever they encounter difficulties in the new mode of learning, the third-year trackster would motivate them.

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Igusquiza imparted that being an athlete is not all about competing against others. It is also about trying to be better as much as they can; it is about surpassing their own records; it is about being a compassionate teammate; and most importantly — it is about staying on the track with a vision in mind, against all odds.

# PE Department adjusts to distance learning; no swimming classes this semester

by Rose Kristine Amarillo

## As per Physical Education (PE) Department Chair Chona Manalo, no G-PHED003-Swimming was offered this first semester of the academic year (AY) 2020-2021 due to the inaccessibility of campus facilities and shift to distance learning.

As per Physical Education (PE) Department Chair Chona Manalo, no G-PHED003-Swimming was offered this first semester of the academic year (AY) 2020-2021 due to the inaccessibility of campus facilities and shift to distance learning.

Aside from the discontinuation of G-PHED003, they also encountered other problems such as the major adjustment on the mode of teaching, usage of Schoolbook, struggles in correcting the students' execution of strokes in activities, uncertainty in students' understanding of the attached videos in their lessons, and hindrances on communicating with some students with limited internet access.

"We are used to conducting our classes in a practical way. Now, we rely on using videos/lectures to make our lessons easier for the students to understand," Manalo said in an online interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO.

Before, they only used Schoolbook to make an announcement or post a lecture that was not discussed because of class suspension but now, they "have to fully utilize the use of this online platform for learning".

## PE Department's adjustments

Compared to distance learning, Manalo explained that face-to-face classes allow the faculty to immediately correct the execution of the students, give necessary advice on how they can improve their strokes on the spot, and allow students to quickly shadow or copy the execution of the faculty. Meanwhile, distance learning means that

students will have to wait for the feedback of the faculty about their submitted assessments online.

Coping with the new mode of learning, Manalo also shared how the PE Department started planning the implementation of changes for the new setup of PE classes this semester since the last week of July.

"Faculty members were grouped according to subject areas. They plotted their plans on how they will deliver the topic, what adjustments have to be made in certain areas of their subject. Like for PHED 004-Team Sports, since students will not be allowed to go outside or use any sports facilities, the group decided to change it to Physical Activities towards Health and Fitness, in which the students will not have a hard time in looking for equipment and will still result in Physical Fitness," Manalo added.

All in all, the PE Department offered three PE subjects this semester, namely: G-PHED001-Physical Fitness and Self Testing Activities, G-PHED002-Individual/Dual Sports/ Dance (Table Tennis, Arnis, Dance), and G-PHED004-Team Sports (Physical Activities towards Health and Fitness).

As the PE Department only had little interaction with the Schoolbook before, the faculty attended webinars and Dr. Mara Salibay's tutorial classes to improve their skills and knowledge on the use of Schoolbook, among other online applications. They also asked for help from the Center for Innovative Learning Programs (CILP) and the Religious Education (REED) Department whenever they encountered an unfamiliar area in the Schoolbook.

Noting the usefulness of video presentations and lectures in this new mode of learning, some of the faculty upload videos of them doing certain activities or strokes to serve as the students' reference since PE classes require more physical activities. Most of them also share links to videos, lectures and supplementary reading materials that will help the students to better understand the lessons.

Manalo introduced the procedures for giving lectures and assessments in the distance learning mode, mentioning that all lectures, announcements, quizzes and scheduled major exams (summative exams) are discussed and posted in the Schoolbook.

"Summative exams are practical exams for some areas where they need to submit a video presentation," she stated.

When asked about how they came up with their department's solution and adjustments, Manalo revealed that consultation was done per subject and that they sought guidance from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academics and Research (OVCAR) and their college dean.

Wanting the students to "be active", the factors that the PE Department considered are "what can we do to make sure that our students will still value their health [and] how can they still be fit and [at the same time] somehow get them away from their computer".

## Implementation and student concerns

"They (students) are learning on their own [and] they are interpreting the steps as they view it (video lectures). The lessons are the same but the delivery of it is the only difference," Manalo expressed the differences in the teaching style and learning process of the students in the new online setup.

In line with this, the department makes sure that the implemented changes will be effective by closely monitoring the performance of their students and providing constant feedback.

To ensure the effectiveness of the mentioned changes, they check and monitor the content of the PE Schoolbook classes, while synchronous classes are also recorded and submitted to the department. Being fully aware of the reports of PE professors not following the released Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the care-centered model, Manalo commented that, "Faculties are advised to read and re-visit the IRR. And if the same faculty will be reported still not following the IRR after repeated advice/talks/notices, necessary action will be taken."

As for the students who do not have sports equipment like table, paddle or racket for table tennis, Manalo said that "during their (PE classes) orientation [...] students were asked by the faculty about whether they have the equipment, enough space for their activity, or if there will be a problem". Through this, the faculty can adjust the activity accordingly for those who have no equipment. Moreover, to address the internet connection issues of some students, the PE Department opted to provide extensions to the assessment deadlines.

With all the changes under her department, Manalo admitted, "at first it is a bit overwhelming but all of us are doing our best to deliver our lessons the best way we can [...] faculty members put effort in creating and finding solutions for students to fully understand the lessons [so] students should put effort as well to learn from those resources."

As of press time, there is no released memorandum about PE classes evaluation yet.

# SPORTS REACT

## What is your favorite thing as a student-athlete?



Jhona Burce  
CRI31

Siguro po yung routine everyday yung papasok po ng 7am class hanggang hapon tapos po pag may vacant pahinga sa dorm bago magtraining tapos uuwi po ng pagod matutulog tapos repeat po papasok ng 7am and so on. Nakakamiss po yung nakasuporta yung mga kapatid mong athlete/teammates. Yung pamiliyang turingan kaya po mas lalo kang namomotivate magtraining. At syempre po yung maglalalo ka ng dala dala ang pangalan ng school at walang takot kung lalaban dahil alam mong di ka nagkulang sa paghaha sa kakayahang mo sa tulong ng mga taong nakapaligid sayo at syempre sa sarili mo."

"My favorite thing as a student athlete is our meeting or training routine which starts usually at the end of our classes. I definitely miss every part of being a varsity player. I miss my teammates, my friends and the memories we've made together while we are still seeing each other."



Carl Aldwin Carpiso  
MEET2



Angelika Marie B. Armillo  
CRI21

"Para sa'kin is yung bina-balance ko time sa class, schoolworks, trainings, games and syempre sa family. We managed our time in many ways kahit na weekends lalo na kung naka-dorm hindi enough yung time para sa family. [Being a] student-athlete brings a lot, maraming sacrifices and naging independent ako dahil sa pagiging student athlete ko. The memorable one, is yung cooperation and yung hard work na ginagawa namin para mag pay off lahat."

"My favorite thing as a student-athlete is waking up early thinking about what I will learn today from training. I have this quote to myself and every day I say it to myself that "My training may betray me, but I will never betray my training." I miss saying this to myself. Lastly, I really miss the team and my Coaches. It's sad because all of our commitment, dedication, and sacrifices are put to waste because of the pandemic."



Vincent Roi Y. Jomuad  
BTM33

"My favorite experience as a student-athlete is that every time I face hardship whenever I play, it only pushes me to continue my goals in life. I always give my best whenever I'm playing and because of the support of the DLSU-D, it gives me motivation to continue as a student and athlete. Even though there is a pandemic, the support of the DLSU-D continues. Experience is the best teacher. And, I'm honoured to be part of DLSU-D Patriots."



John Anthony Fernandico Palo  
ESE21

Julienne Margaux A. Andaya  
BTM24

"Being a student-athlete means so much more than just getting to do what I love every day. It provides me with so many opportunities that I never thought I would get to do. It has introduced me to some of the most important people in my life. The best part about all of it is it makes you feel like you have a home, you have a family and you are part of a community outside of your hometown. Also, my favorite thing about being a La Sallian student-athlete is being surrounded by people with the same moral values, mindset, and work ethic pushes me to be the best person I can be every day and I am forever grateful for that."

"Yung mga ka-team ko na kasama ko sa dorm-- yung pakikisama sa kanila, pakikitungo, sabay- sabay kaming pupunta sa oval, sabay sabay mahihirapan sa training. After that, sabay sabay kami kumain kahit zombie mode na kami maglakad, atsaka yung bonding with them for all these years na kasama ko sila. Nakakamiss din yung sabay sabay kame nag kakaroon ng struggles as student athlete regarding sa mga subject namin. Nando'n yung tulungan namin. Minsan may tampus han pero nagkaka-ayos naman din kami. Solid kame as a team para sa 'kin lalo na yung coach namin na pog, Coach Arnold Villarube aylabyu coach"



MelVictor DJ. Realgo III  
CRI41



Alton Gene Z. Sañez  
ARC33

Bryan Joshua Y. Lina  
BTM34

"My favorite thing is when we play games in the ULS, because playing in front of the Lasallian crowd gives me extra motivation to perform well."

"My favorite thing as a student-athlete is training after school hours to improve and release stress from school works."



Tristan Oliver S. Oliveros  
CEE32

"My favorite thing about being a student-athlete is having a family in the university, our swimming team. The competitions, the victories, the training are all memorable in my years of being a student athlete but the bond with my teammates and coaches will be the greatest thing an athlete would experience. They are my favorite because without them, there is no swimming team and there will be no joy, challenges between teammates, pressure because of the coach, the fun moments in competitions and travels. We are always there for each other. My teammates and coaches are part of my reason why I want to stay being part of the student athletes."



Francis Allen DR.  
Francisco  
CEE23

"My favorite thing as a student athlete is I can do both studying and playing to represent the school to compete to other schools. Also, by doing both things helps me to reach my dreams to do what you like and what you love."



Jenina Marie Oliveros  
BPE31

## SPORTS COMICS



# TIMEOUT: Pat Cuevas explores inner entrepreneur amid pandemic

Venturing the business world while off-the-court

by Hedrick Alcantara

**Being able to spot opportunities was one of the many skills volleyballer Patricia Cuevas honed through the years, not just as a volleyball player for DLSU-D, but also as a businesswoman in the making.**

With no games left to play and medals to seize due to the ongoing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, athletes continued to find ways on how to make themselves busy and keep their body moving. In an online interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO, third-year volleyballer Patricia Cuevas shared how the pandemic could be an opportunity to make use of her learned values as an athlete, bringing the rules of the game off-court, and into a budding business.

#### Minding their own business

Now with more time in her hands than she knew how to deal with, Cuevas was quick to adjust in isolation and find ways to turn setbacks into opportunity. Discussing business plans with her two-year partner, Louis Montes, the couple teamed up and eventually launched Tech Lab PH as their co-founded business amid pandemic.

Established early in July, the starting weeks of Tech Lab PH offered a variety of electronic products, mainly earphones, ipods, and other gadgets on-the-go. By the end of the year, Tech Lab PH was able to gain almost a thousand followers on its Facebook page, reaching customers nationwide.

"I didn't expect *na mag-boom* 'yung business because we just did it during this quarantine and *siempre may COVID-19* kaya baka 'onti customers," Cuevas said.

Hand in hand, the couple split their responsibilities, each taking their own role in the business. The volleyballer was assigned to oversee their sales and marketing, while her partner was responsible for the business operations.

Their online-based and delivery business did not just fill in their own pockets, but also produced enough funding to provide a stay-at-home job platform for resellers, making it an extended business.

"Being one of the resellers really helped me earn money during the pandemic. Around 15k *na 'yung nae-earn ko*," a post in Tech Lab PH's Facebook page writes.

Seeing their business grow had also given Cuevas and Montes more quality time as couples, building their relationship to be stronger than before.

"*Kasi* for the future *na talaga 'yung parang mga plans namin*," Cuevas remarked. Just like how they planned the business, the student-athlete-preneur hopes to make their relationship last.

#### Volleyball career on hold

Entering the beach volleyball arena could have been considered another milestone for Pat Cuevas' career, if it was not put on hold due to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The volleyballer's six months of training for the supposed provincial match this year was halted along with all DLSU-D sports programs and activities, leaving her thirst for beach volleyball unquenched.

"Parang Tuesday *ngayon, tapos 'yung* competition *sa Linggo na, tapos biglang nag-nationwide lockdown kinabukasan kaya nanghihuyang talaga ako*," Cuevas recalled.

Cuevas had also undergone routine change during isolation. Without rigid training, her week and month-long routine were compromised. But despite the worries of bringing back her physique, sustenance through self-paced training had been her key to keep herself prepared just in case a bubble event will commence.

Throughout the quarantine period, Cuevas was able to juggle her business working out, and attending online classes. Somewhere along the way, she also managed to pick up the hobby of exercising with jumping ropes, as it was not a time-consuming activity.

Relying on her self-paced training sessions while waiting for updates from their coaches became the norm during the indefinite period of staying off-court.

#### A Patriot at heart

Cuevas had always known she was meant to play for DLSU-D, despite the many challenges she faced along the way. A temporary halt on her beach volleyball career was only one of the bumps like the time she missed her first shot to join the Patriots back in Senior High.

"Gusto ko talaga mag-La Salle-Dasma. Kaso nya lang nung nawalan ako ng slot sa course ko, sa ibang school ako nag-enroll. And then nung college nag-try out ako uli, then, yon nabigyan na ako ng chance."

Her first year at the DLSU-D volleyball team was the hardest year. Being a new volleyballer, their seniors would often goad and put pressure on them as part of their process. But Cuevas understood that it was only natural for newcomers to undergo some tests to become better in the process.

True enough, Cuevas would eventually reap the fruits of her labor, as she was able to step into the national tournament of Private Schools Athletic Association



Photo by: Princess Angel B. Cuevas (contributor)

(PRISAA) last 2019 after claiming the championship seat in the regional and provincial level in which Cuevas helped the team to triumph.

#### Off the court

Outside the volleyball court and away from action-packed events, the sisterhood formed among Cuevas and her teammates was still present. They supported the online business of their captain ball and would not miss her success as first-in-line customers of Tech Lab PH.

"Kahit na hindi ko ine-expect na susupportahan nila ako kasi nasa quarantine pa tayo, [it] really gave me satisfaction to have them as customers," Cuevas marvelled.

Cuevas' mother, who was currently working abroad, had also been affected by the pandemic. However, by teaching her daughter how to be thrifty firsthand, the volleyballer was able to finance her own tuition fee for the semester, giving her mother one less thing to worry about.

One consistent characteristic that Cuevas maintained from being a volleyball player to doing business amid pandemic was her ability to capitalize on discipline and

independence. Learning from her beach volleyball training enriched her reliability, a trait she also applied to her business. Additionally, the sense of responsibility as the captain ball taught her to be efficient when it comes to selling until she saw the product of her success.

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Playing sports had always been one of the Patriots' stress relievers, and not being able to go in-action had given our athletes a load of uncertainty. For Patricia Cuevas, doing business and stay-at-home workouts served as an alternative, if not another venture that could be as exhilarating and exciting as a volleyball match.

The athlete-slash-businesswoman's advice to Patriots whose sports careers mirrored her own uncertainty was to "plan and make action" in case they also want to explore new things and be productive at the same time.

As Cuevas worded: "*Kasi ano eh, wala namang mangyayari kung iwi-wish mo lang or ipe-pray mo lang yong isang bagay na 'to. Ang pinaka-magandang gawin is to take the action and take the risk, and yon nga sa experience ko, nakita ko yong outcome.*"



Pink Page

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"Naglalaro ng *volleyball*, bakla 'yan."  
"Bakit ka nagba-*basketball*, eh panlalaki 'yan?"  
"Kakalero mo, hindi ka na mukhang babae."

\*\*\*

Sa mahigit dalawang dekada ko na sa mundong ito, namuhay na akong nariyan ang mga nakaririnding katagang katulad nito. Simula sa aking pagkabata pa lamang ay pilit na akong pinaniniwala na may partikular na kasarian ang bawat isports na nakaayon sa paninigting ng lipunan.

Noong ako ay nasa elementarya, ninais kong sumali sa mga patimpalak sa larangan ng track and field. Naalala ko pa ang mga pagkakataong kinailangan kong isikreto ito sa kahabilanang ito, hindi pabor sa aking ina. Hindi niya ginusto ang kanyang anak na babae ay mabilid sa initian habang tumatakbo sa *oval*, gayundin ang marumiham ang aking katawan sa buhangin sa tuwing akyo' laban sa *high* at *long jump*. Hindi raw kasi ito ang "dapat" na ginagawa ng mga babae. Lalong hindi rin niya nagustuhan ang ideya ng kanyang balingkinitang anak na magkaroon daw ng malaking *muscles* sa binti bungo ng kaka-ensayo. Para bang mababawasan ang aking pagka-babae sa paglaro ng isport na ito.

Sa mga *PE classes* naman noong hayskul, matataandaang kadalasang hinahati ang klase sa laaki at babae. Ang mga laaki ay papalaruin ng *basketball*, habang ang mga babae naman ay tuturuang maglaro ng *volleyball*. Wala nang pagkakataon upang makapili ka kung ano ang iyong gustong gawin: sa

## Walang kasarian sa isports

mismong paghati ng grupo pa lamang ay hinusahan na kaagad ng nakasayang sistema na hindi kaya ng mga babae ang paglalaro ng *basketball*, at ikakababa ng moral ng mga laaki ang paglalaro ng *volleyball*.

Bukod pa ryan, marami na akong nakasalamuhang nakaranas ng diskriminasyon at panghuusga sa kasarian dahil lamang sa isport na kanilang kinahihiligan. Kabilang na rito ang kaibigan kong *homosexual* na nag-*try out* para sa isang sikat na pang-kolehiyong *athletic meet*. Gaano man siya kagaling ay may mga kuro-kurong para lamang sa mga ganap na laaki ito o para sa mga kayang "magpanggap" na isang ganap na laaki. Sa huli, hindi kaya ng kaibigan kong iyon ang nasabing hindi patas na sistema. Para bang isinasampal sa atin ang mga dapat at hindi dapat nating gawin base lamang sa ating kasarian.

Sa kabilang banda, nais kong bigyang-pansin ang ilan sa ating mga hinahangaang pambansang atleta. Una na rito si Hidilyn Diaz—ang kauna-unahang Pinay na nag-*uwi* ng medalya mula sa *Olympics* at patuloy na iwinawagayway ang bandila ng Pilipinas sa larangan ng isports. Ngunit, alam naman nating lahat na ang isport ni Diaz ay hindi nakasayang babae ang nagpapalaganap sa lipunang ating *kinalakihan—weightlifting*. Pangalawa, kilalang-kilala rin ngayon si Carlos Yulo simula nang magkamit ng iba't ibang parangal sa labas ng bansa habang nirerepresenta ang ating bayan. Ngunit, kabilahan sa nakararaming laaki, *passionate* si Yulo sa larangan ng *gymnastics*. Ganito rin ang pinaputunan ni Margielyn Didal, isang *multi-awarded* na Pilipinang *skateboarder*. Dagdag pa ryan, naipagmalaki rin ng ating *Men's National Volleyball Team* na bukod sa kababaihan.

may kakayanan din ang kalahakihang maingat ang *volleyball* sa bansa nang sila ay magkamit ng medalya sa nakaraang *Southeast Asian Games*. Katulad na lang din ito ng pagkamit ng kampeonato ng ating *Women's National Basketball Team* sa nabanggit na patimpalak.

### Tapos na ang mga panahong itinuturo sa atin simula sa ating pagkabata ang ideyang may larong panlalaki o pambabae lamang at ano pa mang kasarian.

Ilan lamang ito sa mga manlalaro at pagkakataong sinimulan at ipinapapatuloy na ibanderang isang mahalagang ideya—na ang isports ay walang pinipiling kasarian. Tapos na ang mga panahong itinuturo sa atin simula sa ating pagkabata ang ideyang may larong panlalaki ating kasarian.

Hindi nakababawas sa pagkakababae ang pagkakaroon ng malaking *muscles* sa binti, ang paghulas ng mga kolorete sa ating kasarian. Sabi nga ni Joe Vitale, kilala bilang ekspersto sa *Law of Attraction*, "You can have, do, or be anything you want."

at ang mga pagkakataong kinakailangang mawala ang *poise* sa ngalan ng pagkamit ng kampeonato. Sa kabilang banda, hindi rin nakababawas sa pagkakalalaki ang paglalaro ng *volleyball* o anumang isport, at ang pagpapakita ng matinding emosyon sa laro. Nagpapatunay lamang ang mga garitong bagay kung gaano katapang at ka-determinado ang mga atleta na handang isakripiso ang kung anuman upang makamit ang kanilang mga inaasam. Sa gayon, hindi na dapat namumuo sa atin ang takot na tahakin o subukan ang isport na nanaisin natin. Gayundin ay hindi na natin dapat ibigay ang takot na ito sa ibang tao dahil sa nakaamba nating panghuusga.

Ito ay madadalat rin natin sa labas ng isports. Hindi ba't alam na nating hindi totoo na ang kababaihan ay para lamang sa bahay o na ang kalahakihang lamang ang nararapat na tahakin ang kani-kanilang ninanais na *career*? Ang *gender stereotypes* na pilit na binubuo sa lipunan simula pa sa ating pagkabata ay nararapat lamang na kalimutan na sa lahat ng aspeto, kabilang na sa larangan ng isports.

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Kung may kakayanan si Hidilyn Diaz na magbuhut ng *barbell* na kasingbigat ng kayang buhatin ng mga kalahakihang, at kung kayang maging kasing *flexible* ni Carlos Yulo ang karamihan sa mga kababaihang *gymnasts*, pinapatanay lamang na walang sinunan ang dapat manghusga o pumigil sa mga bagay na gusto natin gawin dahil lamang sa ating kasarian. Sabi nga ni Joe Vitale, kilala bilang ekspersto sa *Law of Attraction*, "You can have, do, or be anything you want."



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**SHOOT YOUR SHOT.** (From left to right) Patriot Cagebelles alumni Khaterine Cantimbuhan, Cherlayne Cuyom, Irene Torregosa, and Mariel Campasa. Photos taken from 27th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) 2020, Private Schools Athletics Association's (PRISAA) - Provincials meet in 2017, and 8th United CALABARZON Collegiate League in 2014.

Graphic Art by **Rachelle Calaustro**

## Patriot cagebelles alumni join first WNBL Draft Combine

by **Christine Marie Romero**

Along with some notable names from the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) women's basketball, Patriot cagebelles alumni Mariel Campasa, Cherylane Cuyom, Irene Torregosa and Khaterine Cantimbuhan joined the first-ever Women's National Basketball League (WNBL) Draft Combine last December 12 to 13, at the Victoria Sports Tower in Quezon City.

A total of 115 ballers across the country including UAAP Most Valuable Players (MVPs) Monique Del Carmen and Maricu Bacaro, Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Khate Castillo and the former Patriot cagebelles underwent biometrics, agility, body composition testing, and shooting drills in the Draft Combine, for the chance to get drafted and play in the country's first professional basketball league for women.

Strict health and safety protocols approved by the Games and Amusements Board (GAB) were also implemented during the Combine.

Former DLSU-D cagebelles' team captain Campasa and Cuyom both shot an average of 58.3% field goal (FG) during the Combine, while Cantimbuhan and Torregosa had 8.3% and 50% FG, respectively.

Campasa also had a maximum vertical jump of 21 inches and a lane agility of 14.3 seconds while Cuyom had 19 inches and 15.31 seconds, as per the test. Along with them are Cantimbuhan who showed 23-inch max vertical jump and 15.15-second lane agility, and Torregosa with a record of 18 inches and 15.53 seconds in the two departments.

Having been able to show off her skills alongside her co-Patriot guards on the same batch of the combine, Cuyom said, "Nabawasan yung kaba [ko] kasi alam kong kasama ko yung teammates ko and 'ando'n yong pag support namin sa isa't isa."

The former Patriot also shared that even before the tryout, they would always motivate each other to have faith and to give their best shot.

In regards to their preparation before the Draft Combine, she added, "Tinutulungan pa rin kami ng mga PT (physical therapist) namin (DLSU-D women's

basketball team) through sending the exercise *na gagawin po namin every day.*"

On the other hand, Cuyom also shared that they were not satisfied with their Draft Combine performance, admitting the lack of conditioning training amid the pandemic.

"Ginawa naman din po namin yong best namin sa lahat ng drills... Nakakapagod talaga yong ibang drills pero kinaya naman," she reassured.

The WBNL draft results were later announced on February 23 via Facebook live, where Cuyom expressed her

disappointment in a follow-up interview by THE HERALDO FILIPINO. "Kasi sabi nila ibabase daw nila yung draft sa result ng mismong combine pero maraming draftee na di na-meet yung average na 50% pataas pero nakapasok. Pero happy naman ako kasi at least nabigyan ako ng chance na makasama sa Combine," she said.

When asked whether they still have plans on trying out for the upcoming seasons after not being drafted this year, Cuyom shared, "Siguro po meron pa naman. Pag nabigyan ulit ng chance grab lang ulit."

## OSS Dean clarifies concerns on SDO dissolution

by **Rose Kristine Amarillo**

Office of Student Services (OSS) Dean Domingo Reblora Jr. clarified that the pandemic was the main and only reason for the abolition of the Sports Development Office (SDO), and that it was discussed by the administration during the special term of the academic year (AY) 2019-2020.

"Since there will be no face-to-face classes and there will be no sports engagements [because of the pandemic], they (school administrators) decided to dissolve the SDO [...] there are no other issues that have led to the dissolution of the SDO as far as I am concerned," Reblora said in an online interview with The HERALDO FILIPINO.

Regarding the issue raised by the former DLSU-D representative for coaches and DLSU-D Volleyball Team Head Coach Vicente Carranza on former SDO Director John Casid sid not being consulted about the dissolution of SDO, Reblora said that personally, he was not aware if there was proper information distribution between the parties

involved. It is something he considers as a "gray area" because the parties had different opinions.

"From my own point of view, the decision during that time—to shelf the programs of SDO—is the best decision given the situation," Reblora commented, noting the decrease of enrollees.

Additionally, the OSS Dean disclosed the administration's panic just a week before the original deadline of the enrollment.

"We have to understand that the bread and butter of the school is the enrollees, that's why it (enrollment) was extended kasi very alarming yong turnout ng enrollees natin. Nag-peak lang siya (number of enrollees) after the extension so

kailangan ng school na mag-decide during those times. Minsan kasi hindi pwedeng hintayin mo muna like mag-September tsaka mag-decide. It would be too late," Reblora shared.

### Coaches and staff's situation

As per Reblora's explanation, the SDO faculty and staff were just assigned in the Materials Management and Ancillary Services Office (MAMASO) for the meantime, and were not forced to leave without pay. Meanwhile, the former SDO Director John Casid sid was brought back to the Student Welfare and Formation Office (SWAFO), which used to be his office before he was appointed as the SDO Director.

Mentioning that the coaches are the most affected ones in the situation, Reblora said, "they (coaches and trainers) are contractual so at the end of School Year (SY) 2019-2020, they were already notified that because the school will go online and because there will be a dissolution of SDO, they won't be rehired [next AY]."

Since the 17 coaching staff were not given a separation pay due to their status as nonpermanent employees, Casid sid and former OSS Dean Antonio Gutierrez Jr. convinced the Accounting Office to still give compensation to the coaches for their service during the special term of AY 2019-2020.

"The university will definitely need coaches once the situation will be back (sic) to normal but as far as 'will they (former coaching staff) be rehired?', that's something that we still have to evaluate. Kung nag-perform naman at

wala naman tayong problema sa attitude [at] sa performance, then we will rehire them. Pero doon sa mga hindi nag-perform, doon tayo magre-reflect if we have to rehire them or get somebody who can better coach the students," Reblora added.

### Student-athletes' scholarship

With the help of Casid sid and Gutierrez, the current student-athletes will still have scholarships this AY, but with a higher grade requirement as decided by the administration, going from 1.0 to 2.0.

"The top administration proved that the quota is 'decent and attainable' for the varsity because 'wala naman na sila (varsity) ngayong training [at] wala naman silang mga laro so they can focus on their studies,' Reblora explained.

As to the percentage of scholarship to be given per athlete for the first semester of AY 2020-2021, Reblora said that it was done the same as before—the coaches, together with the sports director and the OSS Dean, sit down together and discuss the percentage of scholarship to be given to a particular athlete.

He furthered, "Ang isang hindi pa nauupuan would be for the second semester. Would they follow the recommendation for these athletes during the start of first Semester 2020-2021 or will there be a new set of new criteria on how to grant scholarships like 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100%?" He also noted that the school did not charge any athletic fees to the AY 2020-2021 enrollees. On the other hand, the fund for the postponed Private