

VISION PAPER

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Effective Public Service through Mentor Leadership

Vision: A university that is always anchored on excellence to continuously and effectively deliver relevant and reliable services that upholds the plight of fishers and residents of coastal communities

Background and context for this application for the UPV Chancellorship

The University of the Philippines (UP) is tasked to lead in setting standards and initiating innovations in teaching, research, and faculty development, and maintaining Centers of Excellence. It is expected to serve as a graduate and research university, leading in public service, and serving as a regional and global university. UP is mandated to provide and promote for employees equal and capability-building opportunities covering areas open only for a national university. As a constituent unit of UP, the University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV) must also perform all these tasks.

UPV was originally conceived to become the country's premier institution for fisheries and marine science education and research. In 1979 it was granted full autonomy for this broad mandate through Executive Order 628. The task of developing human resources through education and generating knowledge through research was given to the whole UPV, although the College of Fisheries (now the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences) was, at that time, identified as the flagship college. There is, therefore, no reason for any UPV constituent to stay idly by or not participate in promoting these ideals. All of us need to be fully engaged for UPV.

This call for a new UPV Chancellor is not really about who will end up taking the helm of the university; it is more about the type of leadership that UPV should have to better serve Philippine society and the community through its mandates. It is about pursuing and sustaining the vision put forth by our pioneering leaders in merging two very broad disciplines: one dealing with the ecosystems (marine science); and another (collectively called fisheries), which deals with all kinds of human activities related to harvesting, culture, processing, and marketing of living resources from these ecosystem. All of us at UPV must appreciate this vision, creatively adhere to it, and willingly uphold it for UP and for all Filipinos. This is the context of the following vision for UPV.

Mentor Leadership to accelerate diffusion of positive change to society

A leader needs to look beyond the horizon so that, from a given vantage point, everything else in between falls within view; he/she must also take a long-term view so that pursuits that leave lasting footprints will be given priority. Taking these perspectives will address all that are near and dear. In an academic setting such as UPV, this will require pursuits - beyond publications, promotions, and PBB - and solutions that will truly address the ills of society and shall endear UPV to everyone it is engaged with. This is what mentor leadership is all about.

First introduced by Tony Dungy, mentor leadership prioritizes people and seeks to add value to their lives; aims for things or memories that last; and showcases passion, perseverance, and good performance for other people to emulate. Mentor leadership can be learned and can be replicated to breed a corps of mentor leaders from all sectors who may effectively deliver public service. This is the brand of volunteerism particularly suited for the Philippines' archipelagic setting and is the kind of leadership that is envisioned for and shall be promoted in UPV for the next three years and beyond.

Prioritizing Team UPV as we build on past and current progressive strides

UPV has implemented various large-scale programs with international and national partners. The challenge for most of them though has always been their sustainability beyond their implementation periods. This issue can be easily resolved, in my view, if UPV's interests are given top priority over all our professional and personal interests, a conclusion learned by implementing outputs of a strategic planning exercise in 2012 whose fruits we have been reaping until now. We placed then more premium on

'fisheries and aquatic sciences' as a broad and common mandate to promote inclusiveness for all UPV stakeholders over the flagship concept. We need to sustain the concept of Team UPV with all faculty, students, staff, and alumni to further strengthen the university. Just as we readily share the benefits of our engagements, all of us must take joy in spreading and promoting the brand '*UP ating mahal*.'

During that same planning workshop, UPV's role was clearly defined with the adopted core values of Service, Excellence, Integrity, Nationalism, and Environmental Stewardship, whose acronym SEINE is symbolically apt as it refers to a surrounding net. It also clearly identified the fishers and residents of coastal communities as the sector that UPV is mandated to uphold. Not many realize it, but anyone working along UPV's mandate with these core values would already be complying with many of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals espoused by the United Nations. Undoubtedly, we have already beaten all declared targets by several folds as early as 2014, making great strides in catching up with what was lost in the past three decades especially in disciplines related to the arts. We have conducted several cycles of the *Suguidanon* Conference and have introduced *Patib-ong* (an international conference on intangible heritage), which we are spinning take global stage again next year.

Strengthening Academic programs

Prioritizing UPV's interests should make it possible to combine the strengths of academic units to form new programs that will further uplift UPV nationally and globally. Without trying to impede on-going initiatives done independently at the academic unit level, implementing a shared, inter-unit, multi-campus biology-related and research-enabled PhD programs, using an acceptable delivery platform like PhD by Research should be considered within the next three years.

Marine Biology is probably the best starting point because UPV is currently strongest in this field in addition to fisheries. This program may include the CAS Division of Biological Sciences, all CFOS institutes, UPVTC-Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and, perhaps, supported by UPV's collaboration with SEAFDEC-AQD. Engagements like this not only promote better operational and financial efficiencies but also support various societal needs: feed new knowledge to support activities of conservation advocates working for NGOs; support field workers in the fisheries industry including aquaculture; and enable social scientists who normally evaluate impacts of introduced interventions to society, among many others. Similar arrangements may be entertained for disciplines related to the arts like Inter-disciplinary Cultural Studies (see below).

There are many ongoing initiatives to support the economic and political integration of ASEAN Region nations that UPV constituents must actively participate in. However, there should be similar initiatives to address the concerns of the fisheries sector because illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing done within any one ASEAN country's boundaries can compromise the capacity of these resources to sustain common needs for food security. Thus, we are pursuing the groundwork to bid to host an ASEAN Centre for Fisheries at the main campus in Miagao to promote and strengthen science-based formulation of national and region-wide fisheries policies that seek to relieve fishing pressures on long dwindled resources. Having this center will boost UPV's participation, through CFOS, as a founding member of the International Linkage Programme (ILP) and will enable UPV to match its academic peers in the ASEAN and Pacific region. This will provide UPV with the institutional high ground to provide mentor leadership to Philippine fisheries institutions and HEIs or SUCs partners that will also allow all UPV academic units to coordinate their programs aligned to UPV's mandate. The foregoing examples are only two possible arrangements that may be imitated for other disciplines. More can be pursued and initiated over the next 3 years.

Integrating UPV's operations to support a common agenda

All process innovations introduced since 2012 allow different levels of mentoring arrangements and give UPV constituents varied opportunities to collaborate together. Following UPV's Expanded Institutional Research Mentoring Initiative (IRMI), more synergy teams shall be formed to support research and creative work projects/programs that will sustain regular entry of graduate students - the bedrock of new products, services, or even companies - who can really help boost the generation of new knowledge - or provide inputs to support science-based policies. We, therefore, need to set the stage for all UPV constituents to sing in harmony with one orchestra, while allowing for excellent performers to play solo, duet, trio, or quartet - so to speak - so that UP can serve the public more effectively with greater impact.

This was how we supported our venerable Professor Emeritus Dr. Alicia Magos's 25 years of unselfish efforts in collaborating and engaging with the indigenous peoples of Panay. Currently, **UNESCO's List of**

Intangible Heritage has only two entries from the Philippines, and the Visayas region is not represented; elevating the Epics of Panay as part of this list would channel global focus on the Philippines and UPV. Therefore, as we continue to implement or review and revise policies that work, new ones shall be introduced to address current and emerging issues. A good number of UPV constituents are now part of Team UPV, but additional process innovations including intensified integration of GE courses to encourage and regularly practice critical thinking are necessary to draw more of us onboard.

Introducing THIS IS IT! Program

To encourage more participation to Team UPV, a proposal entitled The Hub for Institutional Synergy, Integration, Sustainability, and Impact Transfer (or THIS IS IT!)¹ Program for Agri-Fisheries in the Philippines was co-developed with a group of UPV scientists and submitted to DOS for funding. This unifying program shall be pursued as it seeks to address not just the disconnect between UP and the rest of society but it also provides the framework to help UPV's institutional partners translate impacts to society – elements that are still missing in UPV for more effective delivery of public/extension service to the public and private sectors.

The overall goal of THIS IS IT! Program is streamlining and integrating operations within UPV through its different offices. This novel initiative will bring UPV to a different level as it would promote financial sustainability; maximize productivity; maintain quality standard; and translate research towards creating products, services, and policies that may eventually serve as platforms for sustaining economic activity throughout the country especially in the fisheries sector and in the countryside. Therefore, it shall be fundamentally anchored on excellence – benchmarked preferably against the best in the world - without which promotion for institutional synergy, integration, and sustainability would never be attained. This is the reason the Office of Continuing Education and Pahinungod should be transferred to the main campus in Miag-ao, and for the strong push for the first 3 years of the College of Management to transfer to Miag-ao.

THIS IS IT! Program stresses the need to form synergy teams involving UPV faculty and researchers from the arts, sciences, and business disciplines, collaborating on with peers from other universities. THIS IS IT! Program demands more seamless and harmonized integration among offices within UPV. It requires the mobilization of communications and artists groups to regularly and effectively communicate - in simple and understandable language – the initiatives, interventions, and breakthroughs of UPV to its target audiences and policy makers to generate and capture feedback that will further support research initiatives. The Program calls for the re-launching of *UPV's Paaralang Dagat (Para sa Bayan)* as a platform for disseminating information, requiring trained REPS and staff to participate in monitoring performance; it uses lessons learned from case projects to improve internal policies.

This program shall be consistent with UPV's Expanded IRMI, which pursues a strategy that promote equitable institutional and regional development that the country needs today. With THIS IS IT! Program, an old proposal for setting up UPV's Graduate School shall be revived. The expanded participation within UPV will give all constituents the sense of co-ownership for UPV's engagements needed to promote behavioral change, including how we view seemingly menial matters like cleanliness and landscaping within the university, as well as interventions that will generate better actual and **social** return on investments for UPV's future endeavors.

Deepening Engagements with UPV's FACES

THIS IS IT! becomes even more relevant when implemented parallel with the newly proposed UPV's Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences Community Engagement Strategy (UPV's FACES). This program partly seeks to overcome UP constituents' tendency to 'research and run', long observed by our rural community partners and keeps putting the university's image in a bad light. UPV's FACES really integrates research and creative work with public/extension service by allowing researchers not just to translate research results through effective communication strategy, but also develops and improves researchers' critical thinking that is necessary to feed succeeding rounds of research activities. Fielding of synergy teams will diversify UPV's FACES, which, in turn, shall be designed to leave good and lasting images of UPV to our partners; the number of implementing cycles for UPV's FACES will also deepen UPV's engagements with the public.

¹ Phase 1 for this proposal is under evaluation by DOST.

Protecting niches

UPV Tacloban College (UPVTC) is probably the only campus in the entire UP System that continuously experiences the harshest impacts posed by nature to humankind. Rather than merely react to these natural events, the college must capitalize on this geographic 'advantage' that no other UP CU can match and be known as the center for climate impact and disaster resiliency studies. Consistent with the ideals of mentor leadership and learning from our experience with UPV Cebu College, the whole UPV community should maintain its nurturing spirit and use this as a platform for supporting UPVTC's bid to become the 9th full-fledged constituent university of the UP System. UPVTC constituents, meanwhile, need to overcome differences in developing this unique academic niche to eventually become the institutional mentor throughout Region 8.

However, even before spinning off UPVTC into full autonomy, there is enough room for all UPV academic units to pursue relevant joint programs that may eventually benefit Regions 6 and 8 after the separation like implementing a common inter-disciplinary PhD program on Marine Biodiversity will provide UPV scientists to explore the depths of Sulu Sea and the birthplace of Mindanao Current that are still largely unexplored for new species of marine life. This will further strengthen the Philippines' identifying mark as the 'center of the center of marine biodiversity'. This strategy will certainly spark further collaborations with potential international partners. For this purpose, UPV can build on ongoing engagements with Japan's Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN) and several Japanese universities, which run until 2020, and CFOS's on-going ILP. Bolstered by the recently signed MOU with the National Museum, the collaboration may also be used to attract James Cook University and other ASEAN universities, considering that the distribution of marine organisms, especially fish, generally extends throughout the region and across the West and Central Pacific Ocean.

Following the same grain, similar initiatives may be pursued in other areas where UPV's mandates allow us to deliver world-class performance. Possible programs include:

- 1) Establishment of a Swimming Academy as UPVTC's major public service vehicle to mitigate life threatening impacts of extreme climate events like Typhoon Yolanda, and respond and contribute to Tacloban City's Climate Change and Resiliency Initiatives;
- 2) Partnership with institutions abroad to develop a rich talent pool for springboard diving from the fishers' families who form part of the country's neglected poor with the goal of capturing the first Olympics medal in this event within 4 years, and at least an Olympics gold medal in 8 years; and
- 3) Partner with the alumni and the private sector to support synchronized swimming as a staging ground for merging scientific and artistic talent and skills.

Expanding Horizons across the Philippine archipelago through synergy and collaborations

Banding together various synergy teams will foster stronger collaborations that will allow UPV or UP to showcase its stature as a national university and a global university. The elements are now in place for introducing an interdisciplinary MA or PhD in Cultural Studies program, especially in the light of so many culture and heritage events already spearheaded by UPV during the past 5 years, and shall be pursued within 3 years. This program may group together disciplines like history, literature, communications, political science, community development, sociology, and other related fields in the humanities and the arts, that are not only challenged in terms of low student enrolment but whose faculty are seemingly lost as to what creative work or research can be done within the context of UPV's mandate. This program will benefit from the recently established collaboration with the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (IHCAP). It also fits well with current and planned programs to maintain and preserve the heritage value of our campus in Iloilo City; it also provides the bases for other programs in the creative arts, including holding of exhibits and performances of national artists, especially in Region 8 which is still challenged by the lingering effects of Typhoon Yolanda.

There are other potentially game-changing initiatives that can put UPV in the national and global radar screens through collaborations, and the following examples are all open fields for UPV units to demonstrate mentor leadership without necessarily sacrificing the pursuit for excellence: 1) How can we collaborate with other SUCs/HEIs to speed up the process of addressing serious manpower gaps in the food industry of Region 6 and the country; 2) How can we harmoniously integrate disciplines dealing with food science, culinary arts, management and marketing, sociology, and communications to

collectively provide fisheries management interventions that will arrest or reduce the declining state of our resources; 3) How can we introduce livelihood generation programs based on citizen science that will fulfill the requirements of the requirements of DOLE, DSWD, TESDA, and LGUs; 4) What solutions, technology-enabled interventions can be provided to support the regulatory functions of DA-BFAR and the LGUs ; and 5) How can we creatively integrate health and wellness programs to address emerging and prevalent cases of lifestyle diseases among UPV staff and the marginalized poor? The last problem is worth emphasizing because **the incidence of cancer cases among employees at UPV's campus in Miag-ao is turning out to be over 5 times national levels**. Taken together, all these provide opportunities for every constituent to uphold UPV's common ideals.

Much of the foregoing proposals can be achieved by developing the master plan for FISHERIES/AQUATIC SCIENCE 4.0, which calls for UPV to ramp the use of technology like robotics, sensors, drones, and development of Artificial Intelligence applications to promote, among other things, more viable fisheries operations. The plan will surely support the aspirations of the Philippines in a competitive global arena. However, for local applications this shall be matched by a plan to support a tourism that puts a cap to the negative impacts of unbridled technological innovation by integrating more sustainable local ecological knowledge through culture and the arts.

Funding FISHERIES & AQUATIC SCIENCES 4.0

We are promoting inter-disciplinary programs because of available funding awaiting good proposals; with the growing experience of UPV's synergy teams, these programs provide opportunities for the university to spread the costs of implementing its own agenda, provided its investments are properly leveraged. To maximize benefits from these engagements plans and processes to implement all projects need to be harmonized. A review of 10% administrative costs is necessary; moreover, direct project costs must not be passed to the university. Regular operations of the university must not suffer for implementing externally-funded projects.

UPV must now also consider the best options regarding use of its real estate assets. For example, a portion of the property near the port area in Iloilo City should be considered as an alternative site for the aquarium earlier planned for JICA funding. Managing this facility is consistent with UPV's mandate and its commitment to use the property for educational purposes; change in site is also practical as it would attract people from Panay, Guimaras, and Negros. Having this facility will also allow UPV to sustain its advocacy for aquatic ecosystems health management while opening opportunities for its graduates, including further training. This aquarium would certainly sustain its own operations.

The aquarium itself will probably not be a viable proposition if it is treated by itself as a singular project. Therefore, partnerships with the private sector should be entertained and endorsed to develop other parts of the real estate property, like in Diliman. However, a large part of the expected proceeds from this engagement probably should be plowed back to expand the watershed in UPV Miag-ao Campus and the Sta. Elena campus of UPVTC, to sustain the development of core academic facilities for both campuses, while still allowing sufficient spaces for start-up companies of the university to showcase developed technologies. These proposals will really add value to the lives of all who will be affected by and will benefit from this potentially large-scale project.

We also need to continue harnessing our alumni, many of whom have vast networks, are well entrenched in many corporations throughout the world, and are just waiting for UPV to tap on them. A comprehensive strategy will be conducted immediately to explore where their assistance can be harnessed effectively to extend UPV's footprints in the global arena.

Concluding remarks

In summary, the mandates of UPV provide the unifying purpose that will hold the Philippines together as a nation. There is no need – in my view – to be sector-specific with this vision because as the High School Musical song goes, 'we are all in this together'. Therefore, let us all not miss the chance to be part of a corps of mentor leaders who will be deployed throughout the country and the world to be agents of change, to let UPV's image grow bigger, glow brighter, and radiate more warmly in the lives of people we will touch and transform for years to come.