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The Official Newsletter of the
UPLB College of Arts and Sciences

Vol. 23 No. 3 | Special Issue [UPLB Loyalty Day 2021]



ISSN 0118-1998



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www.cas.uplb.edu.ph



CAS ALUMNI HONORED AT THE 103RD UPLB LOYALTY DAY



Seven CAS alumni awardees are among this year's honorees for the 103rd UPLB Loyalty Day celebration. Dr. Lemnuel V. Aragonés and Dr. Gabriel O. Romero, who both earned their degrees from the IBS, were recipients of the Outstanding UPLB Alumni Awards.

Receiving the CAS Distinguished Alumni Awards are Dr. Shirley Agrupis, Dr. Jonalou SJ Labor, Dr. Arvin C. Marbibí, Dr. Elmer Jose A. Maceda, and Dr. Vera Marjorie E. Velasco.

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CINTERLABS hosts its first ACRES

The Computational Interdisciplinary Research Labs (CINTERLABS) held its first virtual Applied Computational Sciences Research Symposium (ACRES 2021) last September 24. The goal of the event is to bring the researchers and students together from the broad field of applied computational sciences. The symposium was headed by Prof. Jaime M. Samaniego as the Organizing Committee Chair and Dr. Maria Art Antonette D. Clariño as the Program Committee Chair. Both of them are from the Institute of Computer Science (ICS).

The first plenary speaker was Dr. Ricardo del Rosario

who delivered a talk on computational biology. He is a Senior Computational Biologist at Stanley Center for Psychiatric Research at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. He obtained his PhD in Applied Mathematics from North Carolina State University. He

is also a former Associate Professor at the Department of Mathematics, University of the Philippines Diliman. The second plenary speaker was Dr. Rafaelita Albada who talked about the National Artificial Intelligence Roadmap and Industry 4.0 in the Philippines.

She is the Undersecretary for Competitiveness and Innovation of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Dr. Albada leads the DTI's initiative for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and digital transformation.

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Panelists and participants during the Applied Computational Sciences Research Symposium (ACRES) 2021

IMSP holds its first webinar on Advanced Functional Materials and their Applications



Speakers and organizers during the AFMat2021 webinar

In Mathematics, Physics and Engineering, new concepts and methods have helped produce research that translates into significant technological innovations. – Dr. Editha C Jose

Featuring experts from the Philippines and across the globe, the Institute of Mathematical Sciences and Physics (IMSP) hosted its first Advanced Functional Materials and

their Applications 2021 (AFMat2021) Webinar last September 27, 2021. These advanced functional materials refer to an emerging group of materials or composite that are engineered to enhance native properties and functions.

The webinar started with a welcome message and opening remarks from Dean Maribel L. Dionisio-Sese and Director Editha C. Jose, respectively. They highlighted the diversity of applications of advanced functional materials in different disciplines such as agriculture, technology, health, environment, and sustainability.

The first speaker was Dr. Mary Donabelle L. Balela,

an Associate Professor at the Department of Mining, Metallurgical and Materials Engineering (DMMME) at the University of the Philippines (UP). She talked about various kapok sorbents to target various types of pollutants which she and her team developed. Their initial findings showed promising results that are suitable in water treatment facilities.

This was followed by the discussion of Dr. Jey-R S. Ventura, an Associate Professor at College of Agricultural Engineering and Agro-Industrial Technology here in UPLB. He presented the country's current achievements on polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHAs) research.

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Dr. Paller leads IBS as New Director



Dr. Vachel Gay V. Paller, a professor of parasite ecology and public health under the Animal Biology Division (ABD), is the newly elected Director of the Institute of Biological Sciences (IBS), effective from July 27, 2021 to July 27, 2024.

Dr. Paller obtained her BS and MS Zoology degree from University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in 1991 and 1997, respectively. She finished her Doctor of Science degree in Medical Sciences, in Kobe University in Japan. She started her career in IBS in 1991 immediately after graduating from her BS degree. She served as IBS Deputy Director from April 2010 to May 2012 and Head of the Animal Biology Division from June 2015 to May 2018.

Being an excellent teacher, researcher, and public servant for 30 years is a testament to Dr. Paller's notable commitment in IBS. Her love for research

grew when she started her graduate studies. As a teacher, her passion for science and research influenced her students not only in the field of science, but also in values, which makes her a good role model to her students and mentees. She eventually developed her love for public service when she started conducting research in UPLB. "Research is nothing unless the results trickle down to the masses. You need to have a goal in your life and a purposeful living in your career. This will give you the inspiration, energy, and joy of doing things despite the challenges that may come," Dr. Paller said.

Dr. Paller has brought honor

and distinction not only to IBS but the whole UPLB for having demonstrated excellence in instruction, research, and public service. Her most recent accolades include 2020 CAS Outstanding Researcher, UPLB Outstanding Teacher in Biological Sciences in 2016, and UPLB-Alumni Association Outstanding Alumni Award for Biology in 2014. She was also named UP Scientist III in 2017 for her active participation in the local and international scientific community and numerous published original research articles, book chapters, monographs, and manuals.

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Dr. Liza N. Comia reappointed as INSTAT's Director



Last 26 August 2021, the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) warmly welcomed Dr. Liza Comia for another term as its director. The search process was facilitated by an ad hoc committee appointed by Chancellor Jose Camacho, Jr. The committee was led by Dr. Rico Ancog, Dean of the School of Environmental Science and Management. As the sole nominee received by the committee, Dr. Comia took the challenge

and withstood the rigorous selection process.

Dr. Comia served her first term as INSTAT director from 2018 to 2021. During this period, she has made significant contributions to instruction, research, and extension programs of the institute. Among these are the implementation of the revised BS Statistics curriculum in outcome-based format, pre-establishment of the Professional Master's in Statistics, increase in the number of INSTAT's publications and research projects, and conduct of various trainings and symposia such as "Data Science for Official Statistics using R Software" in collaboration with Young Statisticians of the International Statistics Institute. For the past three years, INSTAT witnessed a vast expansion of its network

among local and international institutions. The pandemic proved to be a challenge but this did not hamper Dr. Comia in ensuring that INSTAT has fulfilled its mandate.

For her second term, Dr. Comia aims to future-proof INSTAT in consonance with the goals of future-proofing UPLB and CAS. Specifically, she envisions INSTAT as a center of excellence in statistics, significantly contributing to nation-building through its globally competitive graduates, relevant research, and sound practice of the statistics profession. She also sees INSTAT providing a responsive and innovative curriculum in statistics.

For this vision to come to fruition, Dr. Comia set key goals in her strategic plan. For curriculum and

instruction, she intends to improve the teaching and learning environment at INSTAT, prepare students for professional careers, and ensure the wellness of faculty, staff, and students in the remote learning set-up. For research and extension, she will lead in identifying areas where the institute can contribute to the development of new statistical methods. She also aims to utilize INSTAT's strength for the advancement of science and technology and innovation through interdisciplinary research, within and outside UPLB.

Building on the learnings from her previous term, Dr. Comia is very much affirmative that INSTAT will be able to fulfill its vision-mission under her leadership for the next three years.

■ **LC Aguila & MJL Relente**

Prof. Rowena Cardenas takes the reins as new DHK Chair



Known to most UPLB constituents as “Ma’am/ Coach Wena”, Prof. Cardenas is a true embodiment of the department she leads. Tucked under her belt is more than forty years of passionate and energetic teaching experience while also figuring in significant health and fitness related extension programs and publications.

A product of UP Diliman’s College of Human Kinetics in both Bachelor and Master in Physical Education, Prof. Cardenas is no stranger to administrative positions. She was already a former DHK Chair from January 2000 to March 2004. She

also figured prominently in interior sports administration positions such as Co-chair of the UPLB Sports and Recreation Committee, Varsity Sports Coordinator and Building Administrator of DHK. She had also made her mark as a prominent constituent of the sports community of the region as UPLB Sports Director in the STRASUC and SCUAA/ PASUC National Olympic Games.

As she takes the lead anew, Prof Cardenas’ main goal is to future-proof DHK. Her objectives prioritize the fortification of the Instruction program through the institution of degree programs, uplifting

the faculty profile through research and function advancement undertakings, and to improve and renovate the physical teaching-learning support facilities. The UPLB community is not far behind as extensive community programs are planned for the upkeep of general health and wellness despite these pandemic times. The competitive spirit of the university is also awakened by the initiative to ensure participation of the UPLB varsity in several virtual competitions.

Truly, things are looking bright for DHK’s future with Prof Cardenas at the helm.

■ **MA Salangsang**

The Department of Human Kinetics welcomes and proudly announces the stewardship of Prof. Rowena Cardenas as department Chair. Prof. Cardenas was effectively appointed to the said position last July 5, 2021.

CINTERLABS hosts... from Page 2

Researchers and students from different fields of computational sciences attended the event via Zoom. The event was also live-streamed through the ITC Facebook page. Overall, there were nine oral presentations and three scientific posters on applied computational sciences. ACRES 2021 welcomes research papers from the fields of Agricultural and Environmental Informatics,

Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, Computational Algebra and Geometry, Computational Physics, Human-Computer Interaction, Mathematical Modeling and Simulation, Statistical Computing and Data Science, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Combinatorial Algorithms and Optimization, Computational Chemistry, Drone and Robot Modelling, Image, Audio and Video

Processing, Parallel and Distributed Computing and other allied fields.

True to its goal, the event ended with the researchers being able to exchange contact information for the possibility of interdisciplinary collaboration. CINTERLABS is one of the interdisciplinary studies centers of the University. This center is composed of faculties and research staff from

Institute of Biological Sciences, Institute of Chemistry, Institute of Computer Science, Institute of Statistics, Institute of Mathematical Science and Physics, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Extension, and Philippine Genome Center - Agriculture.

■ **AC Guiam**

Samahang Pisika ng Pilipinas
Physics Society of the Philippines

Institute of Mathematical Sciences and Physics
University of the Philippines Los Baños

Physics Education Workshop

Tracker Video Analysis for Classical Mechanics Experiments

Speaker:

Mr. Arvin Lester Jusi
Assistant Professor
University of the Philippines Los Baños

September 25, 2021
10:00 – 11:30 AM (GMT+8)
Via **zoom**

Registration is **FREE!**

IMSP and SPP conduct Physics Education Workshop

The Samahang Pisika ng Pilipinas (SPP), in collaboration with the Institute of Mathematical Sciences and Physics (IMSP), conducted an online Physics Education Workshop on Tracker Video Analysis for Classical Mechanics Experiments last September 25, 2021.

Dr. Eduardo C. Cuansing Jr., President of SPP and a professor in IMSP, formally started the program in which he introduced SPP as an organization and emphasized that one of its missions is to work for the continuous upgrading

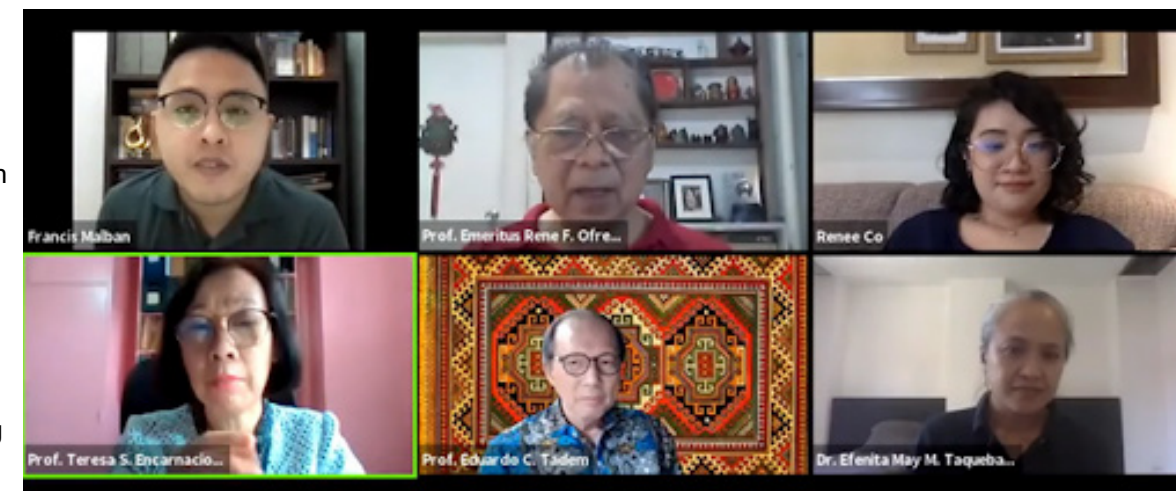
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UP commemorates Days of Remembrance with “Dambana ng Gunita” webinars

The University of the Philippines (UP) marked the 49th year since Martial Law was declared by Pres. Ferdinand Marcos with five days of webinars on the proclamation’s long-term effects.

This year’s Days of Remembrance were themed “Dambana ng Gunita: Mga Batayang Katotohanan at Aral ng Batas Militar.” The webinars were primarily streamed by TVUP in Youtube, and were also shared in Facebook. It ran from September 20 to 24, 2021. In 2018, UP President Danilo L. Concepcion had signed Proclamation No. 1, setting September 21 of every year as UP Day of Remembrance, during which events were to be held to “commemorate UP’s contribution in the nation’s struggle against dictatorship and tyranny.”

A sub-theme also marked each day of the webinars.



The panelists for the fourth day of the Dambana ng Gunita webinars answering some questions on the state of the Philippine economy during the Martial Law period

Day One (September 20, 2021) revolved around “Marcos Mythmaking and Deception.” Speakers for the event were Dr. Ramon Guillermo (UP Diliman-Center for International Studies), Dr. Roderick Javar (UP Los Baños-Department of Social Sciences), Dr. Ricardo Jose (UP Diliman-Department of History), Dr. Carlos Tatel (UP Diliman-Department of Anthropology), Mr. Miguel Paolo Reyes (UP Diliman Third World Studies

Center) and Dr. Gerard Lico (UP Diliman College of Architecture). The speakers dissected the questionable claims about the ostensible achievements of Ferdinand Marcos prior to and during his presidency.

Day Two (September 21) revolved around the theme “Hindi Mapayapa sa Panahon ng Batas Militar.” Speakers for this day were historian Ferdinand Llanes, political science faculty and former chief peace

negotiator Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, Islamic Studies professor Julkipli Wadi, Mr. Francisco Lara, and Social Work and Community Development professor Emmanuel Luna. They discussed the various forms of repression and violence that affected Filipinos during Martial Law: demolitions and sonas / “arbitrary arrests of suspicious-looking persons” in urban poor areas, restrictions to the right to

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Dr. Paller leads... from Page 3

While being a Director of IBS, Dr. Paller is still committed to performing her duties as a researcher. At present, she serves as leader of two research programs, “ZooTRIP: Zoonotic transmission of intestinal parasites: Implications for control and elimination” and “Seven Lakes Assessment and Monitoring Program: Strategies toward a Sustainable Lake Ecosystems (7 LAMPs)”, both involving detection and control of parasites with public health and socio-

economic importance.

Her future plans in IBS include shaping the future of IBS in instruction, research, and public service through a review of the BS Biology curriculum to realize a program that is more cohesive, relevant, and at pace with the rapidly growing demands of various stakeholders; pursuing collaborative and organized efforts in conducting research; and establishing the OPEN IBS program focused on widening access to education, providing

digital opportunities and venue for discussion to communities, and providing technical assistance to higher educational institutions (HEIs) and other agencies.

“Challenges in performing function as IBS Director include the bulk of work that include the nitty gritty of administration, troubleshooting, and attaining my mission and vision that include modernization of facilities, improvement of curriculum, streamlining of protocols in

the institute, and generation of funds from alumni and other stakeholders. It is really a service, and service is courage. I have to be mindful of my health, draw inspiration from prayers, family and friends, and constituents. These are all important to regain my strength and to be able to face another day of challenges because as an administrator, everyday is a challenge,” Dr. Paller said.

■ **JG Campang**

The Outstanding UPLB Alumni Awardees



Dr. Lemnuel V. Aragon is this year's recipient of the Outstanding UPLB Alumni Award for his

valuable contributions to marine mammal research and conservation and environmental science. He is a founding member of the Philobioscientia, The UPLB Life Sciences Society and was a former UPLB faculty where he taught Animal Ecology and Marine Mammalogy.

In 2001, he was awarded the Outstanding Young Scientist for Marine Zoology by NAST of DOST because of his contributions to dugong

and sea turtle research. He helped organize the Philippine Marine Mammal Stranding Network Inc (PMMSN) in 2005, and later developed the Marine Mammal Research and Stranding Laboratory in 2014 at the Institute of Environmental Sciences & Meteorology (IESM) in UP Diliman where he is currently a professor. He has worked on small cetaceans in Tañon Strait and dugongs in Calawit Island, Busuanga.

He is also a member of key organizations such as the

Sirenian Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, and has served as the President of the Philippine Environmental Science Association from 2016 to 2019, and President of the Asian Marine Mammal Stranding Network (AMMSN). Dr. Aragon has combined science and policy work in his dedication to advance the conservation and protection of marine mammals and various marine ecosystems in the country.

■ **MEB Aurellado**



Dr. Gabriel O. Romero is Outstanding UPLB Alumnus Awardee for his noteworthy contributions

to the field of genetic resources conservation and crop biotechnology. Dr. Romero received his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology in 1983 and proceeded to take his master's degree in genetics in 1989.

His research on rice genetics during his time at the Philippine Rice Research Institute led to the development of rice elite lines that are highly resistant to insect pests and diseases for yield stability.

He is a champion for biotech corn product development and stewardship and an outspoken advocate of biotechnology and the seed industry. His campaign with the government on imposing refuge requirements for commercial Bt corn stewardship has been effective in controlling corn borers, which resulted in 400,000 corn farmers to sustainably reap the benefits from Bt corn.

A dynamic leader in the plant science community, Dr. Romero has fostered

partnerships with government and various stakeholders in food and nutrition security. With his astute leadership and unwavering dedication as a crop biotechnologist, Dr. Romero continues to be an innovator in plant breeding among researchers and policy makers.

■ **MEB Aurellado**

CAS Distinguished Alumni Awardees



Dr. Shirley C. Agrupis is the recipient of the UPLB CAS Distinguished Alumna Award for her noteworthy achievements and meritorious performance as an administrator and researcher. In 1985, Dr. Agrupis finished BS Biology (cum laude) in Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) where she became the president in 2017.

She obtained her MS (Botany) degree in UPLB under the supervision of Dr. Norma O. Aguilar in 1992. Prior to becoming the president of MMSU, she also held other administrative positions in the university including the Director

for External Affairs and Partnerships and Director for Planning and External Affairs. As the president of MMSU, she directed the university toward international recognition as a QS Stars-rated, ISO-certified institution, and Level IV State University.

As an outstanding researcher, she was named by the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) as one of the finalists for the Dioscoro L. Umali Outstanding Science Administrator Award.

The awards that she has received include the William D. Dar Research Leadership Award by the Philippine Association of Research Managers, the Lingkod Bayan Award by the Civil Service Commission of Region I, and the Most Outstanding Ilocano 2019.

■ **AL Rayos**



Dr. Arvin C. Marbibi is awarded the UPLB CAS Distinguished Alumnus Award for his remarkable and excellent service as a medical doctor, public servant, and educator. During his fruitful years in UPLB as a BS Zoology student, he joined the academic organization UPLB Philobioscientia, and the Lisieux Music Ministry. Dr. Marbibi went on to become a duly professional physician and has been dedicated to public health service for more than 20 years. He is a faculty member of the Philippine Association of Diabetes Educators and speaker in various diabetes conferences and symposia. His vast knowledge in the field of biological science has helped him handle several public health programs including Dengue,

Tuberculosis, HIV, and other tropical diseases.

Dr. Marbibi is the Top Active Consultant in the Department of Internal Medicine in Pope John Paul 2 Hospital and Medical Center, a DOH accredited tertiary hospital in Las Piñas City that has admitted numerous COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic. He is also currently facilitating the construction of the city's COVID-19 Molecular Laboratory. As the current Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Disease Program Manager of the Las Piñas City Health Office, Dr. Marbibi has been assigned as the head of the Isolation Unit of the Local Inter-Agency Task Force in Las Pinas City and designated as Facility Administrator of LIGTAS sa LAS PINAS, the first LGU-initiated COVID-19 Community Isolation Unit in the National Capital Region last May 2020.

Dr. Marbibi is an exemplary modern hero, a true health work frontliner, bravely risking his life in the battlefield during the current public health crisis.

■ **MEB Aurellado**



Dr. Elmer Jose A. Meceda is 2021 UPLB CAS Distinguished Alumnus Awardee for his outstanding contributions in the field of medical and neurosurgical education, research, and training.

A former UPLB Student Council vice chair in 1990-1991 and campus heartthrob, Dr. Meceda is now a renowned neurosurgeon and endoscopic spine specialist. His most compelling achievements are developing and performing slipped disc surgery through the mouth, a novel feat that has gained the world's attention.

He is a leader in the Academy of Filipino Neurosurgeons and several International Endoscopic Spine Surgery Societies. He serves as faculty to many international minimally invasive surgery courses and conferences even during these times that learning was mostly converted to virtual platforms.

He also participates in the training of future physicians and neurosurgeons in the country as a faculty of the UERMMMC College of Medicine, Department of Clinical Neurosciences.

Dr. Meceda credits his BS Zoology training and exposure to the realities of Philippine society in UPLB in driving him to become more persevering and innovative while being conscious of his social responsibilities.

■ **VG V Paller & MEB Aurellado**



Dr. Vera Marjorie E. Velasco is UPLB CAS Distinguished Alumna Awardee for her excellent contributions to plant science as well as the Filipino community.

She finished BS Biology in 2003 under the supervision of Dr. Merlyn S. Mendiolo (the former IBS director). Now the Senior Research Associate for Greenhouse Operations at University of Toronto Mississauga, Dr. Velasco pioneered research elucidating the mechanisms responsible for plant acclimation to phosphorus deficiency and simulations of future climate. These researches, published in

top-tier scientific journals, led to advancement of the knowledge of the scientific community, breeders, and forest managers.

She received the McMaster International Research Excellence Award in 2013 and Mitacs Globalink Research Award in 2019. Being dedicated in bringing together Filipinos in Canada in various fields of science and technology, she co-founded the Filipinos in Canada-Academics, Researchers and Scholars (FiCARS) association, a group of more than 60 Filipinos promoting research, fostering networks, providing mentorship opportunities to Filipino youth, and supporting organized Filipino groups. This year, the association was awarded the Philippine Consulates General Toronto Quincentennial Award, and Dr. Velasco was named Ontario's Community Champion.

■ **AL Rayos**

CAS Distinguished Alumni Awardees...



With two decades-long of outstanding leadership, continuous excellence in the academe, and commitment to national service, **Dr. Jonalou S.J. Labor** is honored CAS Distinguished Alumnus for Communication Research and Education this year.

Being at the forefront is an innate part of his leadership career. From the beginning, he had a stint as a theater actor and production manager while studying and teaching in UPLB. Later in his career, he would become a university administrator, associate professor, and a revered academic researcher. Dr. Labor is now the Special Assistant to the Vice President of Public Affairs at the UP System. He is currently in charge of helping the university maintain its relationships with the government and its external partners. Alongside that, he is also involved in the university's crisis response for being part of the UP System's Crisis Management Committee.

While being active as an administrator, Dr. Labor also spearheads as an educator-director in UP Diliman. He is

an associate professor at the Department of Communication Research at the UP College of Mass Communication (UP CMC) and a director at the Office of Research and Publications in the same college.

Dr. Labor holds a PhD in Communication from the University of the Philippines and earned his BA and MA degrees in Communication Arts in UP Los Baños. His vigor in leadership then began in UPLB, at the Department of Humanities where he had served as former head of the then Speech Communication and Performing Arts Division. At the UP CMC, Dr. Labor is a co-leader in the Filipino Communication Experience Laboratory. Also, as the director of the college's research and publication, he helps to ensure the excellence of the research outputs of his college. And under his belt, he spearheads the *Plaridel Journal*, an academic journal on communication, media, and society, with global recognition.

Outside UP, he has extended service internationally, being one of the awards committee members of the prestigious International Communication Association. He is also a member of two other international organizations namely the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) and the Asian Congress for Media and Communication (ACMC).

Dr. Labor has a record of outstanding research in the

areas of communication and technology, mediated LGBTQ+ realities, health communication, and risk/disaster communication that have been recognized in national and international paper conferences. Dr. Labor also has existing research commitments with the following: UP Diliman's National Service Training Program Office, UP Diliman's Office of the Field Activities, the UP System's Resiliency Institute and the city of Manila, the DOST Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, and the Union and Bloomberg.

UP and Beyond

Dr. Labor's expertise expands to the fields of communication research and education and social sciences. He handles research projects on these areas by conceptualizing, proposing, and publishing research works in various Scopus and WOS-indexed journals, and all these contributed to education and various institutions in the Philippines.

He has led the reformulation of the course offering of the National Service Training Program (NSTP) to UP Diliman and UP Pampanga colleges and units. He had worked together with the NSTP Council of UP Diliman to redesign the NSTP course to meet the remote learning standards during the pandemic.

In the national arena, Dr. Labor is a board member of the

Philippines Communication Society (PCS), a member of the Philippine Association for Communication and Media Researchers, Inc., and a life member of the Speech Communication Organization of the Philippines.

His invaluable contributions to educational innovations have helped education policies in various universities in the country. With his online learning designs he made for the UP CMC's undergraduate and graduate research courses, other universities in the National Capital Region were also able to adapt his works for their instructional design.

Dr. Labor's relentless commitment to communication research had pushed forward initiatives, together with his colleagues at the UP CMC Department of Communication Research, to create book chapters for communication research primer that will help social science teachers and students learn the basics of research during the pandemic.

Truly, Dr. Labor's twenty years of ingenious service not only paved ways for the various programs and systems within the university, but his contributions in the communication and social sciences scholarship extended beyond UP--a true outstanding alumnus that has had a great impact to the nation.

■ **A Estacio**

UPLB joins the realm of virtual tournaments

The competitive spirit rekindled as different home-grown teams join several competitions in the online platform. The University shall be represented in several Esports events wherein skill and strategy will be displayed in online games such as Mobile Legends, Valorant, League of Legends

and others. UPLB shall also figure in traditional sports particularly in the martial arts. These traditional sports such as Arnis, Karate and Taekwondo have found a niche in the virtual world as the display in form, rather than actual combat, is the basis of competition.

Makiling Esports for UPLB in the Valorant Games

Bannered by the Makiling Esports Varsity team, UPLB participated in the Asus ROG Alliance Cup S3 Valorant Tournament. This is on a nationwide scale and was participated in by notable colleges and universities. The

event was held last Aug 20, 2021 and was hosted by Acad Arena, a professional Esports organization which propagates the aspects of competition, streaming and commentating. Kyno Castillo, Clarence Delano, John Michael Valdez, Senen Zyril Tamargo, Edward

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UPLB's snail expert delivers Professorial Chair Lecture

Dr. Emmanuel Ryan de Chavez, an Associate Professor of the Animal Biology Division, Institute of Biological Sciences (IBS) delivered his Metro Manila Commission Professorial Chair Lecture entitled, "Probing beyond the shell: insights on the biodiversity, ecology, and conservation of terrestrial malacofauna of the Southern Luzon Island, Philippines" last September 6, 2021 via Zoom.

Dr. De Chavez is one of the country's leading experts on land snails, a group of

invertebrates that has long been ignored in the field of Philippine biodiversity and ecology until he decided to focus on them for his master's thesis in 2006. Dr. de Chavez' lecture encompasses nearly 15 years of malacological research work with his students in various tropical rainforests and karst ecosystems throughout Southern Luzon, including Mt. Makiling, Mt. Banahaw, Pamitinan Protected Landscape, and Masungi Georeserve.

From the history of Philippine land snail research to his team's field surveys and laboratory experiments investigating the evolutionary pressures affecting land snail shells, Dr. De Chavez has found a remarkably diverse array of land snails, both big and small, in the country. Among the highlights of his lecture were his discovery of a new subspecies of microsnail, *Hypselostoma latispira masungiensis*, and his analysis of the effects of predation risk on the shape of land snail shells. Unfortunately, land snail

biodiversity in the Philippines, many species of which have yet to be described, may soon be threatened by various disturbances such as habitat destruction, overharvesting, and the spread of invasive species. Dr. De Chavez concludes with the need for more studies examining their biodiversity and conservation in other parts of the country. This event was attended by more than 300 online participants.

■ **MEB Aurellado**

LITE Program holds its first webinar

Attended by over a hundred participants on Zoom and over 600 participants in Facebook livestream, the LITE Program held its first webinar entitled: "enLITen: Webinar on Research Writing and Oral Research Presentation" last August 26, 2021. The webinar gave an in-depth discussion on how to organize the research writing process and how to effectively present research to a panelist or conference.

The College of Arts and Sciences Dean Maribel Dionisio-Sese welcomed the participants and urged them to make the most out of the webinar. She emphasized the link and importance between both research writing and oral research presentation. She also expressed her gratitude to the webinar speakers and the LITE Program Coordinator, Asst. Professor Kristine K. Adalla; LITE Assistant Coordinator, Asst. Professor Jerard Ancel Eusebio and the team behind enLITen for their work to make this public service possible.

To help researchers in the organization and process before starting a research, Asst. Professor Cheeno Marlo



Panelists and organizers during the LITE Program's webinar on research writing and oral research presentation

Sayuno, with his expertise on Communication, Research, and Children's Literature, presented "About Details That Tell the World We Are Not Invisible: Tips in Writing Compelling, Sophisticated, Rigorous, and Enlightening Research Work." Sir Cheeno Sayuno highlighted the importance of being open-minded when it comes to starting a research since there are different challenges along the way which might require sudden changes from the original plans.

The webinar continued to the second speaker, Asst.

Professor Katrina Anne Blanco, which she discussed the things to consider before an oral research presentation. Prof. Blanco, with more than a decade experience of teaching speech communication, emphasized the importance of preparation before presenting your research to a panel or to an audience. According to her, you should keep in mind that your presentation is a rare opportunity to share your ideas to your audience.

From the positive feedback of the participants, the LITE

Program team expresses their heartfelt gratitude to CAS Dean Maribel Dionisio-Sese, Assistant Professor Cheeno Sayuno and Assistant Professor Katrina Anne Blanco, and for all of enLITen's attendees for making the event possible and successful. The attendees and everyone interested can also look forward to future events from the LITE Program which will continue to aim for learners' enlightenment on relevant topics.

■ **A Enciso**

IMSP holds its first... from Page 2

This included production cost reduction and property improvement of PHA products, which were biopolymers with similar properties to conventional plastics.

Next, Dr. Hsiung Chou, a distinguished Professor of Department of Physics, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan, talked about a biosensor platform that utilizes Au nanoparticles as detection agent to react with the antigen of a disease in which he and his research team is currently developing. The detection was based on the change in electrical properties when the system absorbs biomolecules.

The fourth speaker is a member of a research unit of Optoelectronic Materials and Devices (UMDO) and is responsible for the Lowdim research line at the Materials Science Institute (ICMUV) of the University of Valencia, Spain. Dr. Juan F. Sanchez-Royo and his team showed that distinct properties of two-dimensional indium selenide (InSe) nanosheets present new opportunities for the development of modern heterojunctions and related devices. In their work, they concluded that InSe nanosheets were promising for 2D-based devices design because of its high electron mobility and its low density of defects.

Following Dr. Royo was Dr. Jessica Pauline C. Afalla, who is an Assistant Professor (University of Tsukuba) that worked on ultrafast spectroscopy of new generation semiconductors. She talked about the unique physics of Transition metal dichalcogenides (TMDs), and how ultrafast spectroscopy can be used to characterize these new generation semiconductors. One of Dr. Afalla's objective was to probe and understand how charge transport happens in TMDs. Currently, she's building a

terahertz spectroscopy set-up to further analyze excitonic processes in TMDs.

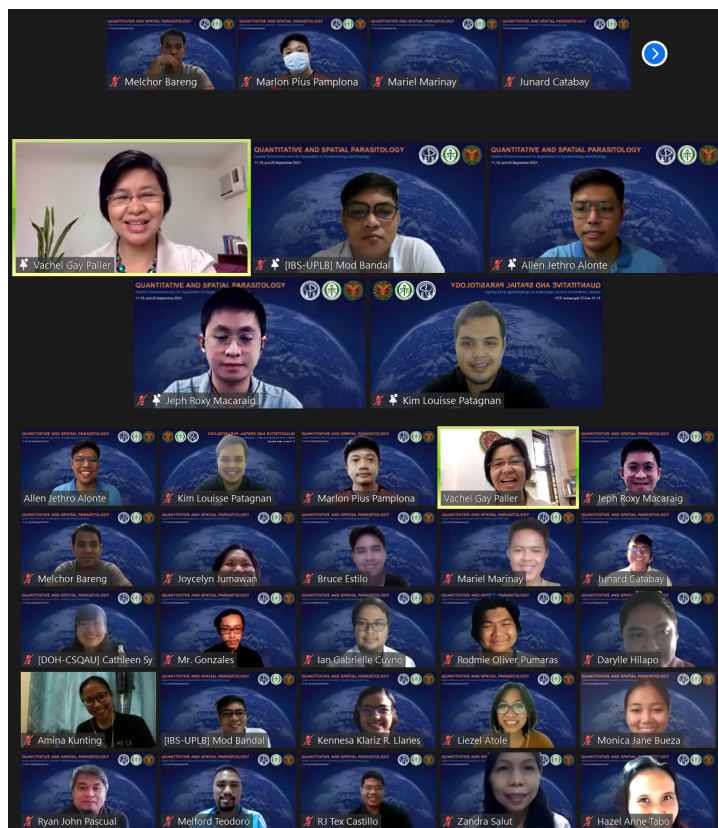
For the second to the last talk, Dr. Lilia M. Fernando discussed their work on plant growth-promoting bacteria (PGPB) to contribute to sustainability. Dr. Fernando is a biochemist who worked on phage and yeast-based technologies for agricultural applications during her postdoc studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She talked about PGBG and how it acted as a mini factory of plant growth regulators (PGR). Based on their study, their product can be used as a substitute for commercially available and synthetic growth regulators in the market.

The last speaker, Mr. Ronaniel Almeda, presented the equipment and analytical services offered by the UPLB Nanotechnology program. He is the current Laboratory Head of the UPLB Nanotechnology Analytical and Instrumentation Service Laboratory. Through coherent interdisciplinary collaboration, the program aimed to establish the UPLB Nanotechnology Center as the lead institution for education, research, and development in the fields of nanotechnology with applications in agriculture, forestry, and industry.

With over 183 participants, AFMat2021 received outpouring compliments due to the diverse interesting topics and speakers. The attendees were from various units and colleges of UP Los Baños. Educators and researchers from different universities, e.g. Isabela State University Cabagan Campus, Adamson University, and Central Mindanao University, attended as well. A closing remark was given by Asst. Prof. Marco Miguel P. Parel, the convenor of the webinar. The webinar lasted for three hours.

■ **GM Oca**

Parasitology Research Laboratory of IBS holds Short Course on Quantitative and Spatial Parasitology



Dr. Paller's lab and participants during the short course on parasitology

The Parasitology Research Laboratory of Institute of Biological Sciences (IBS) conducted an online short course titled "Quantitative and Spatial Parasitology: Spatial Dimensions and its Application in Epidemiology and Ecology" for teachers, ecologists, epidemiologists, environmental scientists, and researchers last September 1, 18, and 25, 2021.

To equip professionals, researchers, and students with the necessary knowledge and skills on spatial dimensions of parasitology and its application to ecology, the three-day short course consisted of two lectures from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM and a laboratory activity from 10:10 AM to 12:00 NN. The short course covered topics on implication of parasite

biodiversity to humans and environmental health and conservation, basic statistical techniques for parasitological data, application of GIS to ecological and parasitological interpretations, and socio-economic analysis for epidemiological studies.

The workshop garnered an overwhelming number of applications from sixty (60) individuals from various institutions but were shortlisted to twenty-three (23) accepted participants due to the hands-on nature of the short course. The accepted applicants were from Partido State University, Saint James School of Medicine, Southern Luzon State University, University of the Immaculate Conception, Bataan Peninsula

Cont'd on page 14

UP Commemorates... from Page 5

strike of workers, and effects to communities of conflicts in Mindanao and other parts of the country.

Day Three (September 22) focused on human rights violations that were committed during the period. In his keynote address, Prof. Roland Simbulan, a former political prisoner, honored the individuals who had dared to resist Martial Law. Rebutting denials of apologists, UP Cebu Sociology prof. Phoebe Zoe Sanchez enumerated the politically-related massacres that occurred during Marcos' presidency, before and during Martial Law. De La Salle University-Taft faculty Prof. Michael Charleston Chua discussed the various kinds of torture committed on suspected enemies of the government. The

dehumanization of these individuals was the aim of these acts, said Chua. Writer Bonifacio Ilagan shared about his ordeal as a prisoner during the Martial Law period. He also narrated the circumstances of the "Southern Tagalog 10," (one of which was his sister), some of whom are still considered as desaparecidos and still could not be found until now. Finally, anthropologist Bro. Carlito Gaspar, CSsR recounted his experiences in documenting human rights abuses during Martial Law in southern Mindanao and his three instances of being arrested during the period.

Day Four (September 23) had presenters dispelling myths about a so-called Golden Age in Philippine economy during that period.

Dr. Teresa Encarnacion-Tadem discussed the ascent of Pres. Marcos' "cronies" into the business scene during Martial Law. She also mentioned the dynamics between these "cronies" and Pres. Marcos' economic officials (also called technocrats), especially in the last five years of the regime. Meanwhile, Dr. Eduardo Tadem illustrated the displacement of small farmers by agribusiness enterprises. He then underscored the influence of the World Bank in the agricultural policies of Pres. Marcos' administration in the early 1980s. Anthropology professor Efenita Taqueban cited the resistance to the Chico Dam project, led by Butbut community leader Macli-ing Dulag, as an example of reactions of indigenous peoples in the

Philippines against economic development projects that could adversely affect them. Professor Emeritus Rene Ofreneo traced again the roots of our current overseas labor migration system to specific circumstances that occurred during the Martial Law period.

Day 5 (September 24) was about "Nagnakaw sa Kaban ng Bayan," focusing on the looting of the public coffers by the President, his family, and close associates as well as the resilience of political dynasties even after the EDSA Revolution of 1986. The speakers for this day were Dr. Belinda Aquino, Atty. Ruben Carranza, and Dr. Ronald U. Mendoza.

■ **RJ Asuncion**

UPRHS top students to peers: uphold Ruralite virtues, fight for a better tomorrow

In their commencement speeches, class valedictorians of UP Rural High School (UPRHS) Class of 2020 and 2021 used the podium to challenge their peers to embody the Ruralite principles of academic freedom and public service.

Leading a total of 93 honor students, Mary Elizabeth R. De Guzman, class valedictorian of Class of 2020, spoke of the context of their virtual commencement exercises which was postponed due to quarantine restrictions roughly four months since the government declared a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

"If this graduation has taken place a year ago, perhaps



Mary Elizabeth R. De Guzman

I would have concluded my speech with an anecdote about grades when academics seem like the only thing that was important in my world," she said.

Now a student of BS Molecular Biology and Biotechnology in UP Diliman,



Alexandra Hendrich P. Marco

De Guzman discussed how her struggles as a student in a competitive school environment has prepared her and her peers for what she deems as the systemic failure of the government. Amidst such failure, De Guzman said she recognizes how her peers

have managed to "rise to the occasion."

Conferred as graduates on July 30, 2020 by former College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Dean Felino P. Lansigan are 124 students who are now pursuing higher degrees through the remote learning modality.

Rising to the Occasion

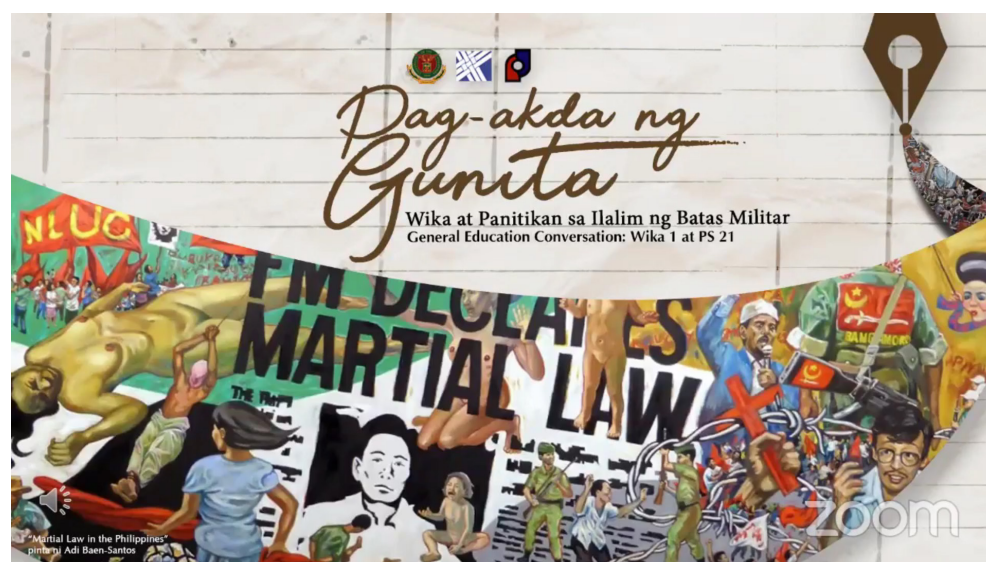
De Guzman was not just talking about how her peers have excelled in their chosen schools. Instead, she dedicated her speech to those who are actively involved in causes that are beyond academics.

"I watched my batchmates take on leadership positions

Cont'd on page 12

DHum and DSS hold GE Conversation commemorating Martial Law

The Wika 1 and PS 21 courses from the Department of Humanities (DHum) and the Department of Social Sciences (DSS) held a GE Conversation webinar last September 27 about the significance of language, literature, and the arts in the time of Martial Law. The webinar, entitled “Pag-akda ng Gunita: Wika at Panitikan sa Ilalim ng Batas Militar,” featured four resource speakers who provided their insights on the different aspects of Martial Law, from its history to the roles of literature and art, language, and education in the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship.



The Department of Humanities and the Department of Social Sciences held a discussion on Martial Law through the lenses of history, literature, language, arts, and education

DHum Chairperson Dr. Leonora Fajutagana delivered the opening remarks and emphasized the importance of deep, critical, and substantial discourse in place of shallow and vulgar conversations which may also seek to distort the truth, a reality that continues to this day. She also explained

that each GE Conversation seeks to raise awareness and foster critical thinking especially in the age of (dis)information with rampant acts of revisionism and erasure.

Umalohokan, Inc. followed with a cultural presentation depicting the atrocities of

Martial Law, remembering its victims, and the struggle of the people.

Dr. Roderick Javar, of the DSS History Division, began the formal discussion by providing a historical context to Martial Law with his presentation entitled “Ang Batas Militar ni Marcos: Panimula at Pagpopook”. His four-part

talk tackled the definition of Martial Law, the path Marcos took to power in Malacañang until he placed the Philippines under military rule, the reasons and bases used by Marcos to issue Proclamation No. 1081,

Cont'd on page 14

UPRHS top students... from Page 11

in their orgs and student councils, start fundraisers to aid those in need because of the pandemic.... I watched as they work to fill the gap where the system fails its people.”

Meanwhile, Alexandra Hendrich P. Marco, class valedictorian of Class of 2021, expressed in her valedictory address how much she recognizes the immensity of her role as a Ruralite.

“I’m not here to tell you to look only at the bright side of things.... The merit that I have today is largely aided by the privileges that I have.” Alongside Marco, who is

now pursuing a BS Biology degree in UP Los Baños, are 92 honor students. After acknowledging a long list of people who have helped in her education, she also enumerated the marginalized causes that are “drowned out” and remained “unheeded” by those in power.

“Past all the brilliance of our success is the responsibility to aid those who are not as privileged as we are; to help those who didn’t and can’t make it as we did; to amplify the voices of our fellow students fighting for genuine academic freedom which today is being threatened away from us,” she said.

Facing Uncertainties

Marco leaves her batchmates with a challenge to face the uncertainty of our situation. “[Bravery] is not found in the absence of fear, but rather in its unmistakable presence,” she said, addressing 125 graduates of Class of 2021 conferred by CAS Dean Maribel L. Dionisio-Sese. They are the first batch to graduate from the UPRHS remote learning setup implemented in A.Y. 2020-2021.

Recognizing the anxiety of the times, Marco added, “Being afraid just means that you care for a cause and bravery is being able to

act for these causes despite being afraid. So I encourage you to never stop caring.”

The Senior High School Virtual Commencement Exercises of Class 2020 and 2021 lifted its theme from a line in the UPRHS Hymn: “karunungan ay laging malaya at laganap sa madla.” The pre-recorded ceremonies were broadcasted via Facebook and YouTube on August 27, 2021.

■ **JM Urrea**

IMSP and SPP conduct... from Page 4

of Physics education at all levels in the country. True to its goal, this webinar on physics education is created.

The speaker, Prof. Arvin Lester Jusi, an Assistant Professor in IMSP, first introduced Tracker, a video analysis and modeling tool, and its advantages over other application to conduct experiments involving classical mechanics. He

emphasized that Tracker, which is designed to be used in physics education, can be easily used during remote teaching and learning. The experiments featured are doable at home. He then illustrated how to use the said tool, how it can be used in online teaching and showed other features that can be helpful to the teachers and students. A practice exercise was also

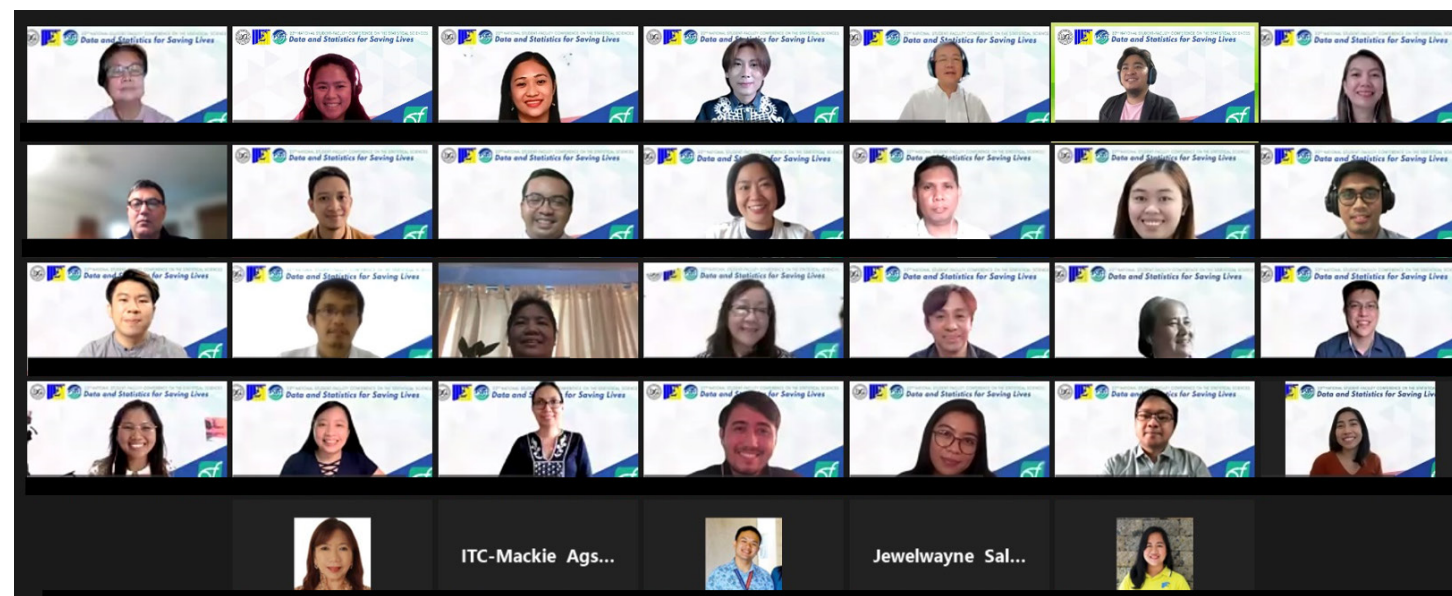
given to the participants to have a hands-on experience followed by an open forum.

“Our institute is enthusiastic with regard to hosting this webinar which is indeed timely and helpful for physics teachers nationwide,” said Dr. Editha Jose, the IMSP Director, as she thanked the organizers, headed by Dr. Ranziville Marianne Roxas-Villanueva, Chair of

the SPP Physics Education Committee, and the over 120 participants in the workshop. “We are faced with the challenge of delivering our laboratory courses and experiments effectively. As such, innovative and creative set-ups in teaching are needed,” she added.

■ **JCC Duero**

INSTAT, UPSS, PSRTI conduct 22nd National Student-Faculty Conference on the Statistical Sciences



Together For A Cause. Panelists and organizers during the 22nd National SFCON

Passion for statistics and data was certainly aflame during the 22nd National Student-Faculty Conference on the Statistical Sciences (SFCON) held last October 8-9, 2021. The event was jointly organized by the UPLB Institute of Statistics, UP School of Statistics, and Philippine Research and Training Institute. It was attended remotely by more than 300 participants from various academic, government and private institutions. The Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the crucial role of data and

statistics as foundation in government response. SFCON aimed to broaden understanding on the different uses of data and statistics with this year’s theme “Data and Statistics for Saving Lives.” This was further emphasized in the plenary talks given by esteemed statisticians: Dr. Lisa Grace S. Bersales, Mr. Joseph M. Addawe, and Dr. Ajay Tandon.

A total of 14 papers from undergraduate and graduate students were presented in the parallel sessions, with

eight participating in the Best Paper Competition. Rizza Mae P. Quezon, a graduate of BS Statistics from UPLB bagged the Best Paper Award (Undergraduate Category) with her paper titled “Exploring Levels of Employment Opportunities through Social and Economic Characteristics among Provinces and Highly Urbanized Cities (HUCs) in the Philippines”. For the Graduate Category, the Best Paper Award was given to the paper titled “First and Second-Level Agenda-Setting in the 2016

Philippine Presidential Elections: Granger Causality Time Series Analysis of ABS-CBN and GMA’s Facebook Influence on the Agendas of Rody Duterte, Mar Roxas, and Los Baños Group” by Miguel Victor T. Durian, Serlie Barroga-Jamias, and Garry Jay S. Montemayor of UPLB College of Development Communication, together with Girlie Nora A. Abrigo of UPLB Department of Social Sciences.

■ **KDR Alcaide & HM Remolacio**

DHUM and DSS hold... from Page 12

and the Philippine social conditions under Martial Law.

Multi-awarded Filipino writer and activist Mr. Bonifacio Ilagan, in his discussion entitled “Panitikang hindi Pagagapi”, traced the roots of ‘committed art’ and the ‘literature of resistance’ back to the First Quarter Storm (FQS) of the 1970s. He briefly discussed the effects of Martial Law and the people’s struggle from the viewpoint of writers and artists. He finally explained that the commitment of artists is to study society and history, examine the root causes of poverty, and effect social change to afford people opportunities for self-development to their fullest potential.

Prof. Michael Andrada, director of UP Sentro ng Wikang Filipino – Diliman, talked about language as ‘practical consciousness’ in his presentation entitled “21 Salita: Wika at Batas Militar”. He discussed that several words and terms emerged during Martial Law, forming a vocabulary reflective of social practice and the people’s struggle. Among them are the following: Marcos, Imelda, Hitler, diktador, pasista, tuta, bagong lipunan, KY, IBP, MKMP, tigres papel, kadre, hukbo, AOM, KKK, cultural revolution, pasabilis, LRP, PPS/CSC, hanay, and STR/STP.

Mr. Karlo Mongaya, from the UP Departamento ng Filipino at Panitikan ng Pilipinas, discussed the implications of the political and economic policies of Martial Law on the education sector in his talk entitled “Pasista at Neoliberal na atake sa Edukasyon sa ilalim ng Diktadurang Marcos”. He explained that the economic measures maintaining the dominance of the United States, such as trade

liberalization, deregulation, and privatization, were implemented in the Philippines and even spilled over in the education sector through the shift towards technical-vocational courses, the use of World Bank-funded textbooks, the deregulation of matriculation, as well as campus militarization. The strength of the student and teacher movements eventually resulted in significant concessions from the Marcos regime. These included the demilitarization of campuses, the reinstatement of student councils, the removal of censorship in campus journalism, and the recognition of the right to organize and join student organizations.

Ms. Marie Jopson Plopinio, a board trustee of the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation, a veteran of the Anti-Dictatorship People’s Movement, and the sister of Martial Law martyr Edgar Jopson, served as the reactor for the program. She introduced the Bantayog as a museum and research center studying the lives of people who struggled against the Marcos dictatorship and shared her thoughts on the open and the underground nature of mass movements. She also reminded the youth to let their love of the Filipino people prevail amidst anger against the spreading of lies and continued human rights violations.

Prof. Jonelle Marin, head of the DHum Dibisyon ng Wika, delivered the closing remarks and synthesized the presentations from the resource speakers. She emphasized the long road ahead in rectifying the systematic distortion of history which entails the need for courage and greater perseverance in facing these challenges.

■ **LG Reyes**

Parasitology Research... from Page 10

State University, University of the Philippines Los Baños, University of the Philippines Diliman, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Muntinlupa, Caraga State University, Department of Health Central Visayas, National Academy of Science and Technology, University of the Philippines Manila, Our Lady of Fatima University, Department of Health Philippines, and De La Salle University Dasmariñas.

Dr. Vachel Gay V. Paller, head of the Parasitology Research Laboratory, spearheaded the event as training coordinator. Members of the organizing team include Mr. Allen Jethro

I. Alonte as Assistant Training Coordinator and Mr. Modesto Z. Bandal Jr., Mr. Jeph Roxy M. Macaraig, and Mr. Kim Louise A. Patagnan as Training Staff.

“We really want the short course to be hands-on and with quality that’s why we are accepting only a few applicants. We are trying to offer it again next year, January or February, for the applicants that we were not able to accommodate this year, and we are excited about this,” Dr. Paller said.

■ **JG Campang**

UPLB joins the realm... from Page 8

Oña and Keanu Villanueva, all from the Institute of Computer Science and members of the Alliance of Gamers student organization, made up the team of Makiling Esports for this Valorant tournament.

Makiling Esports dropped a very exciting first match to the University of St. Lasalle Retikanos Esports to the score of 11-13. They redeemed themselves by besting the Butuan Based FSUU Boom Urians, 13-11. Unfortunately, Makiling Esports bowed out of their inaugural tournament as it lost to The Southern Knights of Letran Calamba, 13-4.

THE STRASUC Online Competitions

The Southern Tagalog Region Association of State Universities and Colleges shall hold the virtual rendition of their inter-collegiate games on December 6-10. UPLB will be competing in the Esport event of Mobile Legends and the traditional sport of Arnis (Anyo event). The Mobile Legends will be played in real time and shall be streamed live by the organizers. The Arnis competition on the other hand requires a pre-submitted video

before the actual date of the games. The pre-judged videos will be streamed during the tournament dates wherein the announcement of the podium finishers will follow.

■ **MA Salangsang**

cas accents

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