

MMSU Chronicle



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MMSU to launch flexible learning hub

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MMSU to launch flexible learning hub

By JOHN VINCENT B. TORIBIO

The Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) is working out a flexible learning hub (FLH) to facilitate the university’s shift to the New Normal academic environment.

MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis has started to expedite the development of university facilities in line with the creation of an FLH.

“In order to really survive as an academic institution from the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have to fast track the work banking on the power of the virtual environment.” she said.

Conferring with a team of academic experts on May 7, Dr. Agrupis presented the plan to establish the MMSU Flexible Learning Hub with state-of-the-art facilities that shall essentially cater to the university’s academic mandate as it faces the pandemic.

“With this FLH, the University aims to be in the frontline in re-shaping the tools, resources, technologies and infrastructure to responsibly resolve the challenges in instruction amid the crisis,” she added.



Dr. Agrupis said that only about 20 percent of the country’s state universities and colleges (SUCs) are able to handle virtual learning, noting that this is based on the results of the survey conducted by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

“Because MMSU is cited as one of the few schools which currently have virtual learning technologies, we should accelerate the advancement of our

facilities to cater not only to our constituents, but also to other schools which may need our assistance,” she said.

The MMSU president said that the hub is designed to be a station where teachers can virtually meet their classes, work on their instructional materials and resources, and record instructional videos and audios, among other things.

(See next page)



(FLH...from previous page)

Once operational, the hub will also become a haven for students to connect to a fast-speed internet connectivity, use facilities to access resources and materials, have convenient discussion spaces, and cubicles for individual work.

The team that spearheads the establishment of the hub, headed by Dr. Marivic M. Alimbuyuguen, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), is currently finalizing the plan for the main centers and versatile centers of the hub.

In addition, while the creation of the FLH targets to cater the technological needs of the university Language Center as it handles English programs among foreign students every year, the hub will be a strategic place for meetings and training workshops. Also, the university Distance Learning Program (DLP) will be facilitated in the said hub.

“The FLH shall further strengthen the ability of MMSU to widen the scope of the DLP,” Agrupis said, adding that it would also address the requirements of the University of Arizona (UA) to have MMSU as its micro-campus.

Last month, the UA in the United States has started exploring the possible application of a micro-campus model in the University in order to work out a joint venture of offering UA’s credit online courses with an MMSU on-campus experience.

In this set-up, students shall maintain their full student status at MMSU while enrolled in for-credit UA courses.

Through this program, first year students at MMSU will be given an opportunity to earn up to two years of direct undergraduate credits from UA.

Aspiring students shall take UA’s admission procedures with these requirements — demonstration of English proficiency and a general weighted average of 2.5 in high school.

“Because a state-of-the-art facility in MMSU is needed where students can interact with UA’s lecturers, the establishment of the Flexible Learning Hub is strategic,” Agrupis explained.



The facility will also be used to attend to the other foreign partner institutions of the University.

As of now, the University uses the MMSU Virtual Learning Environment (mVLE) for instruction.

For years now, a number of faculty members use the platform in handling their classes. In this line, faculty training was conducted this month by the university Information and Technology Center (ITC) to reinforce the full use of the mVLE by the faculty members.

In response to the concerns of some students who have limited media access, Agrupis assured that “the University will compassionately respond to this need by looking for ways on how to equip students with their needed resources.”

Currently, the half of the second floor of the University Library is ready to home the needed facilities for the flexible learning hub.

The hub will include virtual rooms, video and audio recording bays, discussion rooms, faculty and student lounges, and computer cubicles.

Dr. Alimbuyuguen, FLH team leader, said “the group will work very hard for the sustainability of this project.” 

MMSU recalibrates to face new normal

MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis highlighted how the university is recalibrating its ways to face the challenges of the 'New Normal' brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a media forum dubbed *Taripnong iti MMSU* held at the university Function Hall last May 4, Dr. Agrupis said MMSU has remained responsive in re-shaping its operations as an academic institution and in helping the government to fight the crisis.

Under the New Normal academic environment, Dr. Agrupis said the university is in the right track of implementing flexible learning among its students, noting that "it is the best instructional strategy to ensure that MMSU still achieves its mission to develop virtuous human capital despite being prevented to meet the learners in person."

Flexible learning involves a combination of instructional strategies – online and offline, synchronous and asynchronous – which teachers can use to make sure that students still gain knowledge and develop competencies despite not meeting their students in person. This includes accessing websites with interactive content, use of chat rooms and discussion boards, teleconferencing or videoconferencing, videos, reading knowledge resources (e-books) and audio-resources, among others.

With the extension of the second semester of the academic year 2019-2020, "flexible learning as MMSU's instructional design is being practiced starting last May 4 until the end of the semester on June 3," she said. In extension, said format will be used for the mid-year term.

When asked if MMSU is ready for such essential shift in instruction, Agrupis said "at first we were not sure if we were ready, especially in line with the university's academic mandate, but we found ways to know by conducting surveys; with this, MMSU is not 'zero' in facing this situation."

She exclaimed that the results of the rapid survey among the faculty and students fed the university guidelines on the teaching and learning set up.

Clustering students with respect to their media access and use, the university determined students who have gadgets and access to stable internet connection (Cluster A), who have gadgets but with intermittent connection (Cluster B), and who have no single gadget and no access to the internet (Cluster C).

"We wish to coordinate with the local government units in coming up with an arrangement where they could provide the students, especially those who comprise the Cluster C, with a study area and a good internet access in their locality," Agrupis said.

Noting that, while this idea is yet to be explored, she assured that the faculty will exert extra effort to facilitate the learning of those who belong to cluster C. "Utmost consideration will be observed," she added.

Consequently, Agrupis said that when students would have no way to cope with the academic work, they would be given an 'In Progress' mark at the end of the semester. This will allow them to work on the requirements for a year.

"Students really need to recalibrate their study habits so they could be one with MMSU in fighting this situation," she stressed.

Dr. Prima Fe R. Franco, vice president for academic affairs, reiterated that faculty members will continue to capitalize on what they have started in the second semester and utilize strategies that best suit their learners.

Saranay: MMSU's contribution to the government

During the forum, President Agrupis also shared the initiatives of the University in line with the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act (RA 11469) to combat the effects of the coronavirus.

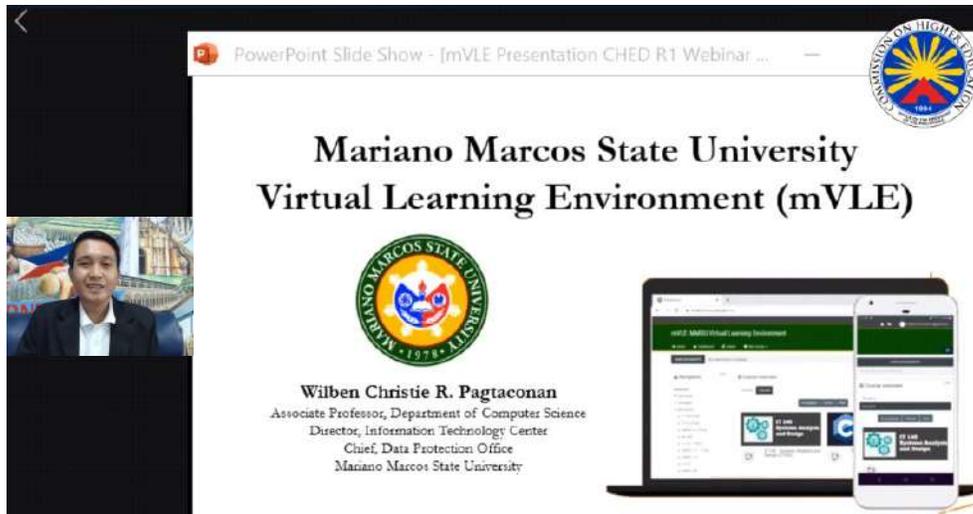
"As an institution that operates with government fund, MMSU continues to

(See 'New Normal'...page 6)



MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis (middle) announces in a media forum that the university is recalibrating its ways to face the challenges of the New Normal academic environment. With her (from L-R) are University Vice President for Academic Affairs Prima Fe R. Franco and University Student Affairs and Services Director Elizabeth Marfel F. Gagni.

mVLE featured in webinar



Prof. Wilben Christie R. Pagtaconan, ITC director, presents the MMSU virtual learning environment in a webinar series by the Commission on Higher Education.

He demonstrated the various functions of the mVLE like uploading of class resources (handouts, PowerPoint materials, and audio-visual presentations), administering examinations, and creating assignments, among others.

He also shared that, like MMSU, HEIs must first assess the existing infrastructure and the current skills of employees to set up a virtual learning environment for teaching.

“We have to consider the needs in creating our VLEs, which includes the evaluation of technical limitations,” Pagtaconan stressed. He also assured the participants that the mVLE abides by the Data Privacy Act of the country.

MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis congratulated Pagtaconan and his team for taking charge of the implementation, development and employment of the MMSU’s virtual platform and facilities, and thanked all the participants who showed appreciation and commendation to the University’s advancements.

Currently, faculty and students access their mVLE accounts for teaching and learning purposes. It is one among the other online platforms that teachers employ in their classes.

Moreover, the University provides free wi-fi access to its students and employees.

The mVLE presentation in the webinar has reached 17,000 views, more than 1,100 likes and around 200 shares already.

By **JOHN VINCENT B. TORIBIO**

The Mariano Marcos State University Virtual Learning Environment (mVLE) was featured in a Webinar Series last May 21 by the Commission on Higher Education – Regional Office in Region 1 (CHEDRO-1).

The Webinar highlighted the University’s newest version of its learning management system, which is a transition from traditional to technology-mediated instruction amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prof. Wilben Christie R. Pagtaconan, director of the university’s Information Technology Center (ITC), presented in the webinar, taking pride of the university’s aggressive actions to address the needs for flexible learning.

“The mVLE 2.0 has really gone a long way now that we are using Moodle 3.8 as the VLE. Having added more functions, we have become more responsive to change with respect to our mandate for education,” he said.

During his presentation, Pagtaconan crystallized that MMSU has started with the use of mVLE since 2013 when it was still on Moodle 1.7.

“Even when COVID-19 was not yet around, the University has already started developing this virtual program to assist in the teaching-learning process,” he added.

With around 1,000 online attendees from all over the country, Prof. Pagtaconan shared mVLE’s implementation framework, its features, and how it has been sustained.

Faculty members of the Mariano Marcos State University were trained on the use of the MMSU Virtual Learning Environment (MVLE), an online platform for instruction designed by the university Information and Technology Center (ITC), on May 11-15.

Four simultaneous training sessions were facilitated by the ITC and faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), College of Engineering (COE), and College of Industrial Technology (CIT).

MMSU trains faculty on virtual learning tool

MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis said that “the capacity-building activity is one step to forward MMSU to becoming premier in virtual learning.”

Prof. Wilben Christie Pagtaconan, ITC director, guaranteed that the protocols by the Department of

Health (DOH), like wearing of face masks and social distancing, were strictly observed during the training.

MMSU has started rolling out the works for the establishment of the MVLE and Training Center (MVLETC) on the second floor of the University Library.

NBERIC cited for innovative service



MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis (left) leads the university's National Bioenergy and Innovation Center (NBERIC) in producing and rationing alcohol to communities and agencies in north Luzon.

By REYNALDO E. ANDRES

When an institution does a good thing or two, its accomplishments might escape unnoticed. But when it continuously does good, its efforts are surely recognized.

This happened to the National BioEnergy Research and Innovation Center (NBERIC) of the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) when it received the *Gantimpala Agad Award* from the Civil Service Commission (CSC) for its innovative service during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

The CSC award cited the research agency for its initiative and innovation efforts in helping the government address the dwindling supply of 70 percent alcohol in Ilocos Norte in order to fight the spread of the dreaded Coronavirus disease.

What is so unique was the way MMSU-NBERIC received the award. No ceremonies nor photo opportunities. It just received it via electronic mail from the CSC, which sent it to MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis last May 19.

Although it came 12 days after the date indicated in the citation, it arrived just in time when the MMSU-NBERIC is again preparing for a “second wave” activity of producing 70 percent alcohol, and personal protective equipment (PPE) for its frontliners and those in the province.

The CSC *Gantimpala Agad Award*, which is under the agency’s *Aksyon Agad Para sa Taumbayan Program*, is a quick response program to address problems and issues that confront the various sectors of society.

In the citation signed by CSC Regional Director Hedy Jose B. Lardizabal, it states that “this initiative of MMSU-NBERIC, under the leadership of Dr. Agrupis, is highly commendable,” emphasizing that the MMSU research agency “is greatly recognized by the CSC for having demonstrated responsive, accessible, courteous, and effective public service especially in this time of public health crisis.”

“The MMSU, through the NBERIC was the first state college and university in the Ilocos region that developed a technology that ferments

(See next page)

(‘New Normal’...from page 4)

do its best in combatting COVID-19,” she said.

Asked what she thinks is the best contribution of the University, she said it is the continued production and distribution of Nipahol, a 70 percent ethyl alcohol from fermented nipa sap produced by the National Bioenergy Research and Innovation Center (NBERIC) of the university.

After re-focusing the decade-long research of the University on bio-ethanol, NBERIC was able to produce more than 4,200 liters. These were given to various organizations and agencies in north Luzon, including the hospitals serving as COVID-19 centers.

Aside from this, Dr. Agrupis said that the University have launched the Plant, Plant, Plant activity to enable the University constituents grow vegetables amid the crisis *(See story in next page)*.

Other development efforts presented during the forum were the production and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (face masks and lab gowns), food rationing to front-liners and donation drives from different organizations and units in the university.

Dr. Elizabeth Marfel Gagni, director of the Office for Student Affairs and Services (OSAS) also presented that the Oplan SAWAR (Students’ Activities, Whereabouts and Recourse) has helped stranded students with weekly relief goods and cash allowance.

She added that an online psychosocial support and counseling is being provided for them and they have also ferried the students to their home places through the Oplan PARUBBUAT program. *(See story in page 8)*.

Meanwhile, President Agrupis recognized the power of the media in helping, not only to disseminate information, but also in the pursuit of educational institutions in the country.



Univ launches Plant, Plant, Plant program

By REYNALDO E. ANDRES

Officials of the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) have designated parts of the school's crop production area for the "Plant, Plant, Plant" program to ensure there would be enough food supply during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) health crisis.

A ceremonial planting activity dubbed "Pangontra iti Epekto ti Covid-19: Agmulatayo," was held on May 6 at the College of Agriculture, Food and Sustainable Development (CAFSD) that serves as a model farm for faculty, students, and villagers near the MMSU campus, and a ready source of organically-grown products.

"This 'Plant, Plant, Plant' program is implemented not only in the Batac City campus, but also in campuses of MMSU where the general community quarantine is being enforced," said MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis, who led the planting of six varieties of crops such as tomato, eggplant, pepper, okra, pole sitao, and patola (sponge gourd).

"We are happy to implement this activity that is being advocated by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, though the Department of Agriculture (DA) in order to increase the university's food adequacy level during this COVID-19 pandemic," Agrupis said.

She said the activity also aimed to raise awareness on the importance of



MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis (left photo) and other university officials launch the Plant, Plant, Plant program at a farm west of the College of Agriculture, Food and Sustainable Development.

planting vegetables and other crops for a ready supply of organic foods that would help boost the immune system.

Last April 27 and 29, the university distributed rice and vegetable seeds to 1,000 families in various towns of Ilocos Norte who are affected by the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ). (See story on page 15).

This initiative was part of the Science-based Emergency Assistance Project being implemented by the MMSU's research and extension directorates and funded by the Philippine Council for Agriculture,

Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PCAARRD).

Earlier, Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar reiterated the government's commitment to providing adequate, accessible and affordable food for every Filipino family through the "Plant, Plant, Plant" program, which is the DA's centerpiece initiative to ensure sustained food production and availability, food accessibility and affordability amid the threats of COVID-19.

After the activity, Agrupis assured the MMSU community that there is enough food supply from various university food production projects based on the current rice inventory in its palay warehouse, and livestock inventory in the poultry and piggery projects.

"In our poultry project, we have enough supply of native chickens towards the lean months," she said, adding that the fruit-bearing trees such as mango and duhat, are also major sources of additional income of farm employees.

(NBERIC...from previous page)

inexpensive and indigenous raw materials — such as nipa sap, coconut sap, and molasses — in order to produce 70 percent alcohol, which is called Nipahol," it added, noting that "since March 14, the MMSU-NBERIC continuously supplied free Nipahol to hospitals, national government agencies, banks, MMSU constituents, and communities in Ilocos Norte."

"May this gesture of appreciation inspire the whole

MMSU family to continue deliver quality service to our *mamamayan*," the citation reads.

"I am overwhelmed by the recognition," Agrupis beamed, noting that it's not the award that matters but "our concerted efforts of working together for the service of our fellowmen."

To date, the MMSU-NBERIC already rationed more than 4,200 liters of alcohol to communities and agencies in north Luzon.



Stranded students in Ilocos Norte back to their homes



MMSU students who were stranded in their dormitories due to the lockdown imposed in the province travel back to their homes through the university's Oplan PARUBBUAT program.

By REYNALDO E. ANDRES

Krystle Candice Palay, a fifth-year BS Chemical Engineering student of the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) here, woke up early on Saturday morning.

She was excited as she carried her bags to the bus that was waiting outside. After two months of longing to see her family in Isabela, the day has finally come.

Krystle was one of the 15 students who comprised the first batch ferried by the MMSU bus in going to their homes in Cagayan and Isabela.

They were among the more than 100 university students who were locked down in boarding houses and dormitories in Ilocos Norte during the government-imposed Luzon-wide community quarantine since March 15.

Although she wanted to beat the deadline, Krystle didn't make it home before that date.

Last Saturday, however, she was one of those who were brought safely to the boundary of Cagayan and Ilocos Norte through the university's Oplan PARUBBUAT, or the Program to Accompany and Return University Brothers/Sisters to their Beloved Utmost Abodes thru Travel Provisions).

"I am greatly thankful to the university and its officials because we, the stranded

students, really feel its Saranay (compassion) program during this time of crisis," Krystle said.

She said for a student like her, she cannot reciprocate the weekly food rationing and provision of cash allowance, online psycho-social

support, and now, the free ride going back home.

Aside from the 15 MMSU students, a stranded student of the Divine Word College of Laoag was also assisted by the university and joined the group of those who went home to Cagayan.

The program is implemented by the Institutional Student Programs and Scholarships (ISPS) unit of the Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS).

"You see, the office considers the welfare and emotional well-being of the students as our top priority, that is, to reunite them with their families, which is very vital during this COVID-19 pandemic crisis," said Prof. Milagros Barruga, ISPS chief.

Barruga said the student welfare unit, led by Dr. Geraldene Pascual, coordinated with the provincial governments and local government units (LGUs) of Cagayan and Isabela so that the student would be picked up by vehicles of LGUs to ferry them directly to their homes.

"We thank Governor Manuel Mamba of Cagayan and other LGUs for their very quick response and assistance to our PARUBBUAT program," Pascual said.

She assured that the students are now safely home with their families in Claveria, Sanchez Mira, Abulog, Pamplona, Gonzaga, Sta. Ana, Aparri, Tuguegarao (all in Cagayan), and Alicia, Isabela.

Jan Rich Guira, OSAS student development chief, said the program is part of the MMSU Saranay against COVID-19, the university's response to the health crisis.

Other initiatives include the distribution of nipahol (70 percent ethyl alcohol produced by the university), food rationing, and distribution of personal protective equipment (face masks and lab gown), among others.

He said each ferried student was provided with snacks, packed lunch, and a PHP500 cash allowance.

Also, OSAS, in coordination with the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte, has ferried four other students who went home to Ilocos Sur, La Union and Pangasinan last May 28. Moreover, three others were ferried to Rizal and Cavite, while, two were dropped off at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) as they travelled to their families in Surigao Del Norte and Negros Occidental. They, too, received travelling allowance from the Office. A bus of the provincial government was used for the south-bound travel.

Prof. Pascual assured that an authority to travel was issued by Camp Crame to the students. 



MMSU releases TES stipend to 103 college students

By REYNALDO E. ANDRES

Some 103 students from Laoag City and Vintar, Ilocos Norte who are enrolled in the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) have received on Thursday (May 21) their stipends from the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as the whole province copes with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

This was after the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has released on May 15 some P3.6 billion to cover the partial payment of TES stipends to students enrolled in 404 public and private higher education institutions for Academic Year 2019-2020.

The TES is a flagship social development program of the CHED which is used by students to pay their tuition and miscellaneous fees and other education expenses.

“The university has coordinated with the local government units (LGUs) in Ilocos Norte so that the grantees can immediately get their stipends following their respective LGU quarantine rules,” Dr. Elizabeth Marfel Gagni, director of MMSU’s Office for Student Affairs and Services (OSAS) said during a simple, yet systematic distribution of the stipends held at the university’s covered court.

Gagni said Vice Governor Cecilia Araneta Marcos and the Sangguniang Panlalawigan members coordinated with the LGUs for the provision of transportation of the students.

The TES is a government grants-in-aid program that was made possible through the enactment of Republic Act 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, a law that institutionalizes free tuition and exemption from other fees in state universities and colleges (SUCs), local



The University gives the stipend to the TES grantees at the university covered court.

universities and colleges (LUCs) in the Philippines.

Under the program, cash assistance amounting to P40,000 per school year is given to financially needy students in both public and private schools, as well as to those studying in municipalities and cities without public universities.

The CHED released the subsidy funds to TES grantees of the 51 state and local universities and colleges in the country amid the lockdown due to the Corona virus disease.

“I am very much thankful for the amount I received,” beamed Cecile Joy Luis, 20, of Brgy. San Matias in Laoag City and a BS Education student at the MMSU College of Teacher Education (CTE), adding that “this is a big help to me and to my parents who are beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)” of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Luis said her family’s P4,200 bi-monthly subsidy from the DSWD is not enough for their family since she and her four siblings are currently studying in high school and college.

Meanwhile, MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis advised the student-recipients to “use your stipends wisely, especially now that we are implementing the MMSU Virtual Learning Environment (mVLE) where students are under the “new normal” on flexible learning system by making use of all available online resources for a virtual education experience.

“I advise you to use part of your stipend to buy a gadget, such as tablet or laptop, so that you can cope with the new normal system of education,” Agrupis said, emphasizing that although we are experiencing this difficulty in this time of crisis, we will not allow this to hamper your education and learning habits.”

Saranay

against COVID-19

LATEST UPDATE

Saranay against COVID-19 is MMSU's multi-faceted program in response to the emerging needs of the community as we fight the coronavirus. Through our synergy, we make technologies work for the good of the people – our service sealed with love.



70% ETHYL ALCOHOL
National Bioenergy Research and Innovation Center (NBERIC)

4,232.50 Liters

Distributed to:

- ✓ LGUs in Regions 1, 2, and CAR
- ✓ Regional government offices in Region 1
- ✓ Hospitals and DOH Covid-19 centers in Regions 1, 2 & CAR
- ✓ Banks, churches, MMSU, and civic organizations in Ilocos Norte
- ✓ 4 major boundary checkpoints in Ilocos Norte (weekly)
- ✓ 106 checkpoints in the City of Batac (weekly)
- ✓ 50 checkpoints in Laoag City



FOOD RATION
to frontliners

Food Services and Security Services

2,695 food packs to **180** MMSU frontliners



OPLAN SAWAR

Student Affairs and Services

838 pax of relief goods to **139** stranded students



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

College of Industrial Technology

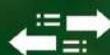
1,944 face masks and **25** lab gowns



MEDICAL SERVICES

Health and Wellness and College of Medicine

303 MMSU frontliners received free consultation and medicines



ACCOMMODATION and Mobility

Business Affairs and Motorpool



DOH Regional, RITM & Healthcare workers from MMMH&MC were given **Accommodation**



Transportation to MMSU and MMMH&MC frontliners



COUNSELING and Advisory

Strategic Communication, Student Affairs and Services, and College of Medicine

IEC distribution

Webinar by COM

Media and Information Materials

e-SALUN-AT Psychosocial support and online counseling to stranded students



DONATION DRIVE

Faculty, Alumni Relations, and Student Affairs and Services

Php 167,500.00

total cash amount collected for relief operations



In-kind Donations

LGU Batac, LGU Currimao, and Colleges in the University
Relief goods to stranded students

MMSU DOST Alumni
Food packs to 78 DOST scholars of MMSU

CBEA Alumni (Batch 1996)
Food Packs for 160 MMMH & MC frontliners

Alumni Relations Office and MMSU Federated Alumni Association Incorporated (FAAI)
Food packs to 45 frontliners of the City Government of Batac, Food packs to 117 MMSU stranded students, and Purchase of PPE for Quiling Sur checkpoint

Friends and batchmates abroad of Prof. Rowell Tagatac and Mr. Oliver Parbo
Food packs to 113 Stranded Students

CHS Alumni Association
Food packs to 220 MMMH & MC frontliners and Purchase of PPE (5000) for Security and Monitoring Services

Future Fisheries Professionals Society
Relief goods to stranded students at CASAT

LGU Batac
Face masks and rice ration to stranded students

Students and Alumni of LHS-Batac and LHS-Laoag
Hygiene items to MMSU frontliners and food packs, face masks, and other basic needs to 70 households of selected barangays in Laoag City and Paoy

Mr. CJ Subaste
Washable Facemasks to MMSU frontliners

Faculty Members and Staff
Cash allowance to 14 Parubuat students



OTHER INITIATIVES

Research, Extension and Business Affairs



Plant, Plant, Plant at MMSU

1 hectare

 vegetable farm

Science-based Emergency Assistance in Response to COVID-19 Crisis in Ilocos Norte

1,033 total households assisted in **10** Ilocos Norte towns



PROGRAMS FOR STUDENT WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT

Student Affairs and Services



PROJECT WIFI
Ways to Innovate and Finish Internet/online requirements



OPLAN SALINONG
Free accommodation for graduating students

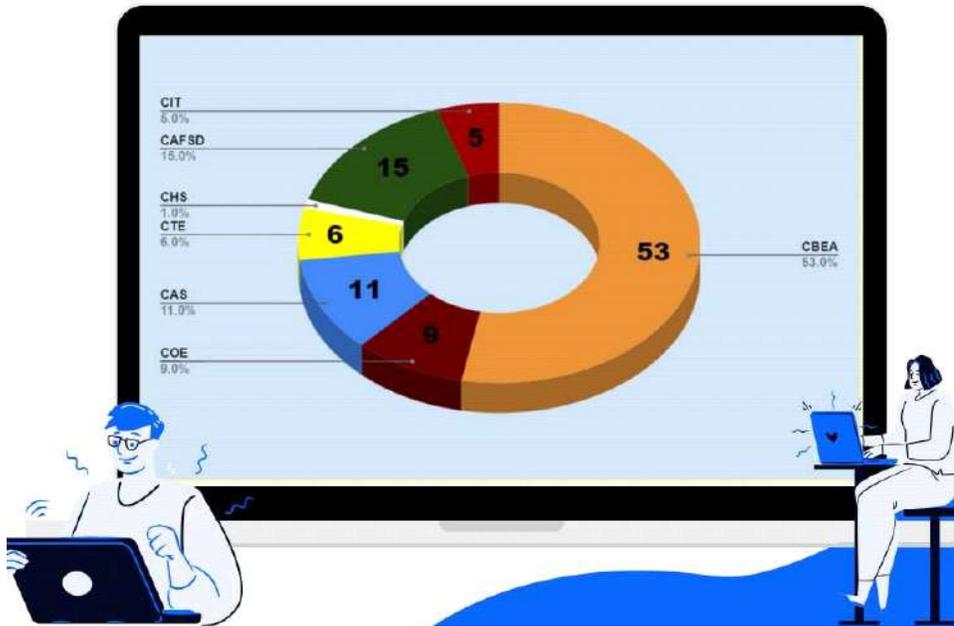


OPLAN PARUBBUAT
Program to Accompany and Return University Brothers / Sisters to their Beloved Utmost Abodes thru Travel Provisions

*The data in this infographic is reflected in the official Saranay against COVID-19 report submitted by the University to the Commission on Higher Education.

Groups give free e-load to students

"E-LOAD MO, E-LEARNING KO" BREAKDOWN OF BENEFICIARIES PER COLLEGE



Breakdown of beneficiaries of the 'E-load Mo, E-learning Ko' program from the different colleges of MMSU.

By DANIEL P. TAPAOAN, JR.

Various groups have initiated free e-load projects for MMSU students to help them cope with flexible learning.

A former president of the University Student Council (USC), one private and two academic groups addressed the load needs of some students by launching donation drives.

First, Pat Qutoriano, a former student regent, raised more than Php 15,000 through his online fund drive to provide free load to MMSU students. He aims to enable the recipients to access the internet and attend their online classes.

Currently serving as the Local Youth Development Officer of Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte, Qutoriano seeks to put up internet connections in different barangays in the said town. Likewise, he urges the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) chairpersons in Ilocos Norte to provide free internet access for the students of their respective barangays.

Second, a private group launched the *E-load Mo, E-learning Ko* project, an initiative that aims to share Php100 worth of load to the underprivileged university students.

The group raised Php10,000 for 100 students from the various colleges of MMSU last May 3.

Of this number, 53 were from the College of Business, Economics and Accountancy (CBEA); 15 from the College of Agriculture, Food and Sustainable Development (CAFSD); 11 from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS); nine from the College of Engineering (COE) six from the

College of Teacher Education (CTE); five from the College of Industrial Technology (CIT); and one from the College of Health Sciences (CHS).

The group also opened another 50 slots last May 7 and already shared free load to 32 MMSU students.

Lastly, the Department of Economics and the Economics Society of the CBEA initiated the Project Load for the BS Economics students.

Prof. Mishael Barrera, a faculty member of CBEA and proponent of the project, said the initiative came after learning that internet connection is one of the concerns of their students.

As of May 9, the team has raised Php19,000 via cash and load card donations. Most of the donors were alumni of the college. For the first batch, a total of 45 BS Economics students received Php100 worth of load. Prof. Barrera said that the remaining fund will be used to buy pocket or prepaid Wi-Fi for students who will be enrolled in the first semester of academic year 2020-2021.

All the groups are still looking for donations to help more students in the university.

MMSU is currently implementing flexible learning amid the pandemic crisis. This includes accessing websites with interactive content, use of chat rooms and discussion boards, teleconferencing or videoconferencing, videos, reading knowledge resources (e-books) and audio-resources, among others.



Fifty sets of pocket wi-fi were distributed to MMSU graduating students.

The university Chief for Student Development, Dr. Jan Rich A. Guira, said that the donation will help the students working on their theses to move forward despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Our office recognizes that thesis writing is one of the most difficult stages of tertiary education, thus, we hope to enable the students to have access resources online,” he said.

The Office for Students Affairs and Services (OSAS) will loan the pocket wi-fi to graduating students who are under the Cluster C (have no access to internet connection) and will facilitate the distribution of the gadget. Along with this is a Php250-worth of load for net surfing for the recipients.

The donation was spearheaded by the Dr. Guira who called up his family

OSAS chief initiates wi-fi donation for graduating students

and friends in the USA and Canada to help him raise the Php50,000 fund.

“Our family hopes to spread the spirit of bayanihan, that when the

students graduate, they could as well do the same to others,” Guira said. --by

JVB Toribio 



Dr. Jan Rich Guira, chief of university's student development unit (2nd from right), spearheads the donation of pocket wi-fi to graduating students. The Office of Student Affairs and Services also facilitates the distribution of the tools.

DevCom prof leads tablet, load donation for students



Prof. Emile Kathleen M. Aguilar (left photo) initiates donation of android tablets and load to DevCom students to enable them to cope with online classes.

Help continues to pour in for students who are facing the challenges of flexible learning.

A professor of the Department of Development Communication of the MMSU College of Agriculture, Food, and Sustainable Development (CAFSD) has initiated a donation drive for DevCom students to enable them to cope with online classes.

Prof. Emile Kathleen M. Aguilar, also the concurrent adviser of the Development Communicators’ Society (DevComSoc), started the initiative to provide android tablet and e-load for the students last May 21.

Aguilar said she started the donation because she understands that not all students have sufficient media access, thus, making online classes a big challenge for them.

Days after calling for sponsors, she was able to give android tablets to three DevCom students, sponsored by her cousin, Mr. Sonny Taylan, and a former DevCom faculty, Ms. Marilyn Fortenberry.

“I gave the tablets to deserving students. One of them borrows a laptop from her friends and climbs a tree to access signal to send in her class requirements,” narrated Aguilar.

Aside from giving android tablets, Aguilar also collected a total of Php 6,500 for the load donation, and gave Php100 load to each student.

She stressed that the initiative was made possible by the following donors: Ms. Ria Gaces Pasion-Balanag, Ms. Nataliza Llapitan, Prof. Herdy Yumul, Ms. Candy dela Cruz Soberano, Mr. Manny Morales, Ms. Dina Afaga, Ms. Chou Zen Wan (Ella Alibania), Ms. Lea Agbigay, and Mr. Gilbert Cacatian. She mused, “they, too, are heroes for our students at this difficult time.”

Meanwhile, the student-recipients thanked the DevCom professor and donors, saying that these will help them finish their requirements before the end of the school year. --by DP Tapaoan, Jr.



Univ gives accommodation to students doing thesis

By JOHN VINCENT B. TORIBIO

The Mariano Marcos State University is giving free accommodation to its students who are enrolled in the extended second semester of academic year 2019-2020 and are doing their theses as requirements for their graduation.

This move by the university administration is another form of assistance to graduating students during this COVID-19 pandemic crisis who may want to occupy the university's co-educational (Co-Ed) dormitories for free.

"Students currently enrolled in thesis writing during the extended second semester can apply for free accommodation services," said Prof. Milagros Barruga, chief of the Institutional Student Programs and Services (ISPS) unit of the Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS). She said that 145 qualified students will be accommodated.

Dubbed as Oplan Salinong, this compassionate assistance program will enable the students to continually work on their theses within the university premises during the implementation of the Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ) so that they will have an easier access to the university's stable internet connectivity and to the resources in the University Library



Maylyn C. Jerez, university's dorm manager (left), accommodates the students who are doing their theses as requirements for graduation. This form of assistance from the university allows the graduating students to occupy its dormitories for free.

System. Also, qualified students will be able to use university laboratory facilities.

In this program, rental fees for the dormitories are waived, but the attributable expenses incurred on the use of appliances that the students will bring in will be charged.

Barruga said the Oplan Salinong will prioritize the application of graduating students with limited gadgets and have very poor internet connectivity based on the rapid survey conducted by the University recently and have been verified by the OSAS.

"Those students whose theses that are experimental in nature shall be our priority," Barruga said, adding that they can use their own accounts and freely

use the internet connectivity service of the university, aside from strictly following the dormitories' rules and regulations for their own welfare and safety.

The Oplan Salinong (an Ilocano term for shelter) recognizes the difficulty of the students in pursuit to finish their theses amid this pandemic crisis, thus, this program is the university's proactive response to the shelter and safety needs of the students.

This is jointly implemented by the OSAS and Business Directorate, which oversees the university accommodation services.

Barruga assured that the project abides by government-imposed quarantine rules.

Currently, there are 25 graduating students who availed of the Oplan Salinong. However, there are other 29 graduating students who have existing contracts with the facility who may avail of the free rent for the months of April and May, as well.

Interested students may apply for accommodation by accomplishing the online form to be accessible through: <http://bitly.ws/8yqc>. Inquiries are also entertained through this mobile number: 09291645101. 



Graduating MMSU students stay in the COED dormitories to finish their requirements.

MMSU completes relief ops to IN families



Dr. Dionisio Bucao, university's chief of Garlic Research Center and project leader (in red orange shirt), and Dr. Aris Reynold V. Cajigal, extension director (in blue stripes polo), give the vegetable seeds to the beneficiaries of the MMSU's Science-based Emergency Assistance Project in response to COVID-19 crisis in Ilocos Norte.

By DANIEL P. TAPAOAN, JR.

The MMSU's Science-based Emergency Assistance Project in response to COVID-19 crisis in Ilocos Norte has already completed its relief distribution efforts to more than 1,000 families.

Implemented by the university research and extension directorates and

funded by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PCAARRD), the project has benefited 112 barangays in the towns of Solsona, Marcos, Banna, Paoay, Piddig, Pasuquin, Burgos, Vintar, Sarrat, and the City of Batac.

Ms. Mercy Gaño, chief of university's applied communication

section and one of the project leaders, said that each family received three kilos of rice and three packs of assorted vegetable seeds.

There were 100 recipients from each town, except in Banna, which had 133.

Gaño said the relief distribution started on the last week of April in Solsona, Marcos, and Banna. It continued on May 5 in Paoay; May 6 in Piddig, Pasuquin, and Burgos; May 11 in Vintar and Sarrat; and on May 12 in the City of Batac.

Aside from the families, about 100 selected MMSU staff have also received kilos of milled rice next week, Gaño added.

This project is an offshoot of the completed project of MMSU and the DOST-PCAARRD on Sustaining Crop Productivity in Climate Vulnerable Areas in Ilocos Norte through Science and Technology Community-based Farms (STCBF) on Climate-Resilient Production Technologies.

A significant amount of Php 363,444 was left when the project was completed in December 2019. Thus, the MMSU, through the approval of DOST-PCAARRD, has used the fund to buy milled rice and seeds for distribution to various communities in Ilocos Norte. 

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) constantly finds ways to improve the implementation of its functions.

Last May 8, the Office for Planning and Development, headed by Vice President Carmelo J. Esteban, conducted a convergence workshop among the academic, research, extension, business, and science and technology (REBST) units of the University.

The activity aimed to create a workable framework on how to complement the key university functions to enhance the delivery of its services, thus, increasing stakeholders' satisfaction.

Officials create framework to converge univ functions

During the event, the participants identified the roles, responsibilities, boundaries and opportunities of their respective offices to clarify the gaps needed for the convergence model.

Conducted at the MMSU Function Hall, the workshop was participated in by the deans of the College of Food and Sustainable Development (CAFSD), College of Aquatic Sciences and Applied Technology (CASAT), and College of Industrial Technology (CIT); as well as the directors, chiefs, and report officers of the REBST directorates.

"To make this framework effective, we encourage communication

and coordination among the units," said Dr. Esteban, also the concurrent officer-in-charge of the office of the vice president for research, extension, and business. --by DP Tapaoan, Jr. 



Alumni donate relief packs for stranded students

By DANIEL P. TAPAOAN, JR.

Help for stranded MMSU students continued as a private group from Pagudpud and Bangui, Ilocos Norte turned over relief packs to the university's Office for Student Affairs and Services (OSAS).

Dr. Elizabeth Marfel F. Gagni, OSAS director, said the relief goods were given to the 110 MMSU students who have been staying in their dormitories in the City of Batac since the start of the Luzon-wide community quarantine.

The group, led by Cynthia Maria Lyka Carizal, a former MMSU student, donated packs of goods worth Php11,325. Each stranded student was given two packs of noodles, one canned good, biscuits, and one toothpaste, shampoo, and soap.

"The giving of the aid was part of our project dubbed as #LoveTheProvince, an initiative that intends to help those affected by the



A group composed of a MMSU alumni distributes goods to the stranded students.

COVID-19 pandemic in Ilocos Norte," Carizal said, adding that through the project, the group selects one barangay in every town of the province. In the City of Batac, the group decided to help the stranded MMSU students since almost all its members are studying in MMSU.

Members of this group are Kyla Garvida, Venedick Ramiscal, and Julius Alvis (all alumni); and Kimmy Ranganan and Francis Gamboa, MMSU graduating students. The group is still accepting financial and in-kind donations. 

CBEA Class '96 donates CCTV cameras to MMMH-MC

The MMSU College of Business, Economics and Accountancy (CBEA) Class of 1996 donated four units of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras to the Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center (MMMH-MC) on May 7.

Ms. Lenie Bayangos, one of the members of CBEA Batch '96 and the director of the university's business directorate, said the CCTV cameras worth Php6,000 will be used by healthcare workers monitor the suspect COVID-19 patients.

"This is our way of helping the medical frontliners," Bayangos said.

Received by Mr. James Marders, supervising administrative officer and head of materials management of the MMMH-MC, the CCTV

cameras were installed at the hospital's laboratory testing and COVID patient rooms.

Aside from the CCTV cameras, the CBEA Batch '96 also gave food packs to the MMMH-MC workers last April 14 and 23.

Meanwhile, the university has opened its Hostel and Mansion to accommodate the healthcare workers from the MMMH-MC. It also accommodated some officials from the Department of Health and World Health Organization.

The Medical Students' Association of the MMSU College of Medicine also launched a fund-raising drive and was able to donate face masks to the same hospital.

The university and the two groups are among the various sectors that are giving support to the MMMH-MC in its fight against the pandemic disease. 





By DANIEL P. TAPAOAN, JR.

A ‘New Normal’ student unleashes his creativity amid a pandemic.

This was proven by Jan Patrick Guittap, a first year Bachelor of Culture and Arts Education (BCAEd) student of the College of Teacher Education (CTE), after portraying MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis on a canvas using soil and water as materials.

Posted in his Facebook account on May 16, Guittap said that he chose Dr.

Creativity amid pandemic:

Student portrays MMSU president in soil painting

Agrupis as his subject because he believes that the latter is “a true-leader, an excellent researcher, and a mind-blowing New Normal president.”

The BCAEd student salutes the university president for leading the MMSU National Bioenergy and Innovation Center (NBERIC) in producing Nipahol (a 70% ethyl alcohol from fermented nipa sap) and rationing this to various agencies and communities in north Luzon.

“I looked at news reports and found an inspiration for my artwork from the news where MMSU was praised for producing alcohol amid this pandemic, and Dr. Shirley was featured on it,” he shared.

Admitting that he felt nervous and excited while he was doing the soil painting artwork for the first time, the student said he learned how to become resourceful and creative in these trying times.

With not enough painting materials at hand, Guittap resorted to using soil and water as his media, and cheesecloth as his canvas.

“I was walking through our house when my white shirt was stained by soil, hence, I realized that this is a good alternative,” he said.

“My simple and humble artwork is all about giving inspiration, hope, and motivation,” he mused.

Guittap is one of the MMSU students who are struggling in the current crisis. Despite this, he continues to find ways to be productive.

As of this writing, his post garnered 277 reactions, 43 comments, and 24 shares.

Meanwhile, Dr. Agrupis thanked the BCAEd student for portraying her in his artwork by sharing Guittap’s post and lauding him for his innovativeness amid the health crisis.

“I am touched and inspired by your ingenuity in overcoming challenges of this crisis,” Dr. Agrupis commented.

“You are an epitome of a New Normal student. Using soil, water, and canvas made you an amazing artist and teacher in the New Normal,” she added. 

Univ nurse produces face masks for frontliners

A side from being a medical service frontliner of the Mariano Marcos State University, Mr. Christian Jay L. Subaste also initiated another effort to help the university in its fight against the current health crisis.

Mr. Subaste, Nurse II of the MMSU Health and Wellness Services (HWS) in Laoag campus, has produced 200 washable face masks and were turned over to the HWS director, Dr. Leonisa Silvestre. One hundred thirty of which were given to security guards, medical service providers, and food service workers in Batac and Currimaog campuses on May 7. The remaining volume were given to the frontliners in

Laoag campus. The face masks have the shades of green and gold, the brand colors of MMSU.

An additional 30-yard cloth that was used in making the face mask was given by the Liberty Commercial in Batac City. --by DP Tapaoan, Jr. 



DAR validates MMSU land use suited for academic, R&D programs

By REYNALDO E. ANDRES

Officials of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in Ilocos Norte validated on May 27 some 191.06 hectares of experimental farms owned by the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) in compliance with Executive Order No. 75, which directs the agency to identify government-owned lands (GOL) that are not properly utilized.

The move was in accordance with the EO, signed by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte in February 15, 2019 that governs the identification, validation, segregation, transfer and distribution of all GOLs, devoted to or suitable for agriculture and which are no longer used for the purpose for which they have been acquired so that these will be distributed to qualified beneficiaries.

In a preliminary meeting held at the FEM Conference Hall, Engr. Vic M. Ines, Ilocos Norte Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer, said the validation is very crucial to determine whether MMSU lands are covered by the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of EO 75.

Ines said that the “DAR has formed teams to see if these landholdings are properly utilized for agricultural production purposes.”

Meanwhile, MMSU main campus in Batac City occupies 300 hectares intended for academic, research, extension, and production purposes. About 191.06 hectares of this are being used as experimental areas for the university and its six attached agencies — the Department of Agriculture (DA), Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Agricultural Training Institute (ATT), Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), and the Philippine Fiber Development Administration (PhilFIDA) — all established in the main campus.

In her presentation before the DAR officials, MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis said the total landholdings of



Officials of the Department of Agrarian Reform inspect the experimental farms owned by MMSU as part of the agency's validation of government-owned lands. Some university personnel assist the team in its effort.

MMSU are covered by Presidential Decree 1279 and that all these lands are being used to “qualify us to offer BS Agriculture, BS Forestry, and BA Agricultural Engineering courses.”

“You see, since I assumed the MMSU presidency, many new programs and projects are being implemented using these land areas to further our development efforts to benefit our stakeholders,” Dr. Agrupis said.

Dr. Agrupis said that one of these is the university’s Coordinated Agribusiness, Research, and Extension Strategies (CARES) program, which is aggressively being implemented to help farmers in two barangays cope with crop production crisis.

The CARES is a newly-established development program of MMSU that involved technology promotions, utilization, and transfer of modern farm technologies to farmers for increased productivity. It aims to share the latest production technologies developed by the university, and properly address the ever-increasing number of farmers cultivating the farms.

In just one year after its implementation, the university received a share of 26,621 kilos of fresh palay

from 88 farmers, an impressive production debut to help sustain Ilocos Norte’s sufficiency in rice.

“Aside from our agricultural development programs, we also share our landholdings to five government agencies such as the PCC (4.93 hectares), DA (3.90 hectares), NTA and PhilRice (10.01 hectares), and PhilFIDA (13.51 hectares),” the president said.

She emphasized that these 191.06 hectares that are undergoing validation are not enough considering the requirements of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) of 50 hectares each for our BSA, BSF, and BS Agricultural Engineering courses.

Knowing the importance of these efforts, Engr. Ines said that after the preparation of the total inventory of the coverable GOLs, final validation of the listed lands shall be undertaken by the DAR, in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the DA.

The DAR shall confirm the compliance of the coverable GOLs in an outlined criterion while the DA and the DENR shall ascertain their suitability for planting and for land classification and slope, respectively. 

WORK PLACE PREPAREDNESS

Reference: Association of Carriers and Equipment Lessors Inc. | Images Used: freepik.com | Layout by: Renzie Aguada

PREPARING FOR WORK



Avoid wearing jewelry, watch, or other non-essential accessories.



If you have long hair, tie it back.



Wear shorter sleeves, avoid neckties. Wear pants instead of skirts. Wear closed comfortable shoes.

USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

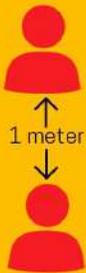


Avoid handshakes or touching surfaces frequently touched by other passengers.



Use the car's vents to bring fresh air instead of air conditioning.

WHEN IN PUBLIC



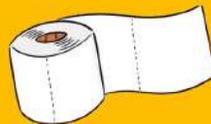
Avoid crowded places at least 1 meter away from others.



Always use a facemask or cover your mouth and nose with a cloth.



Use a face shield or goggles.



Use tissue, cloth or your sleeves to cover your cough and sneeze.



Discard used tissues in an enclosed bin.



Frequently wash hands for 20 seconds.



Use hand rub with at least 60% alcohol.

OFFICE ENTRANCE



Check temperature at main entrances using a no-touch thermometer.



Disinfect by soaking shoes.



Sanitize hands before and after using biometric scanners.

BEFORE LEAVING WORK



Change into clean clothes and shoes before leaving work.



Put dirty clothes and shoes into a bin or bag for soiled clothing.



Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after removing work clothes and before touching clean clothes.

WHILE AT THE WORKPLACE



Clean and disinfect work stations regularly.



Avoid sharing of office tools and equipment.



Instead of face-to-face meetings or events, consider online or teleconference.



Provide alternative work arrangements such as working hour shifts or work from home.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE HOME



Do not wear shoes from work into your home.



Wash hands after handling dirty clothes and shoes.



Wash clothes worn at work.



Shower before interacting with your family.



Disinfect your home regularly.

NOTEWORTHY LEADER IN TIME OF CRISIS

The Ilocos Times recognized **Dr. Shirley C. Agrupis** a noteworthy leader in time of crisis. Under her leadership, the Mariano Marcos State University:

- ✔ Produced and distributed over 4,000 liters of alcohol to LGUs, government offices, checkpoints, private institutions, and civic organizations. This move was later replicated by other state universities and colleges.
- ✔ Took care of 139 stranded students by regularly giving them food and other basic necessities, and also counseling.
- ✔ Provided accommodation to personnel of WHO, DOH, RITM, and MMMHMC.
- ✔ Employed a transparent and participatory approach in finalizing guidelines for post-ECQ MMSU operations. The university president directly talked to students in an online forum. A separate forum was also held for the faculty.
- ✔ Has, in the past years, developed and finetuned a Learning Management System called mVLE (MMSU Virtual Learning Environment). This will prove useful as we embrace the new normal. In this respect, MMSU is way ahead of most universities in the country.
- ✔ Is aggressively engaging the support of the private sector to help students who have very limited access to the Internet.



MMSU-NBERIC receives Gantimpala Agad Award from the Civil Service Commission for "having demonstrated responsive, accessible, courteous and effective public service especially in this time of public health crisis."

(See story in page 6)

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 Website: www.mmsu.edu.ph
 Email: mmsu.stratcom@gmail.com

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