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MMSU produces alcohol vs. COVID-19

By REYNALDO E. ANDRES

The “Asukal Mo, Alcohol Mo” program of the National Bioenergy Research and Innovation Center of the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU-NBERIC) is gaining headway in producing ethanol in response to the limited supply of ethyl alcohol in the province as a precautionary measure to fight Covid-19.

MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis, leader of the NBERIC program, said on March 18 through the bio-ethanol technology project of MMSU-NBERIC, the university system “is trying to help mitigate the spread of Covid-19 in Ilocos Norte by partnering with all local government units (LGUs).

“In this partnership, when the LGUs supply us with molasses for the production of ethanol, we can also teach them to produce the product using our technology,” she added.

Dr. Agrupis said since the day when ethyl alcohol started to dwindle in the market due to panic buying by some sectors, she, too, started to tap the expertise of the NBERIC staff and some former medical students of the MMSU College of Medicine to help produce ethanol.

During the multi-sectoral meeting at the Ilocos Norte Capitol on March 16, the non-availability of alcohol supply in



MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis (sitting) leads the NBERIC team in producing alcohol out of nipa sap. This is the university's way of helping the province mitigate the spread of COVID-19

the market was one of the problems raised by the provincial officials.

Dr. Agrupis positively responded by showcasing the current facility of MMSU that can produce ethanol from any form of sugar.

One of the facilities is a fully electric distiller powered by a Hybrid Solar Technology, which primarily utilizes solar power.

The distiller can process 150 liters of fermented sugar solution and can produce 12 liters of 95 percent ethanol within four to six hours of operation. The 95 percent ethanol will undergo blending to produce a 70 percent concentration of alcohol.

Aside from the fully electric distiller, MMSU has also three sets of village-scale

distillers which are all operational and uses firewood for its furnace. These distillers have a capacity of 850, 200, and 150 liters.

Further, MMSU also developed a semi-automatic lab-scale distiller with a capacity of 10 liters intended for optimizing and testing of formulated protocols.

“But while we want to meet the alcohol supply of the whole province, we only produce and ration the people as much volume as we can,” she said.

On March 20, two representatives from each of the 23 towns and two cities of the province came and get their first ration of 20 liters of ethyl alcohol and, as they get their ration, they will be taught how to prepare the molasses and ferment these into ethanol. *(See story on page 3)*



Ilocos Norte LGUs, churches get alcohol ration from MMSU



She and Ilocos Norte Governor Matthew Marcos Manotoc led the staff of the NBERIC in distributing the product in one of the center's offices, which was witnessed by personnel of the Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center in this city.

Manotoc said he was happy because through this, "we can help our front-liners in the province who do their job to mitigate the spread of the deadly virus."

"So far, we want to maximize the production of alcohol at NBERIC trying to look further how we can support this effort in terms of the raw material it needs, especially molasses," he said.

Agrupis is confident the university would continue its more than 10 years of research and development activity of producing bio-ethanol from different sugar sources, such as sweet sorghum, sugarcane, coconut sap and, most recently, nipa.

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the university has been redirecting its efforts to help address the dwindling supply of 70-percent ethyl alcohol in Ilocos Norte, which is being used as a disinfectant and antiseptic to help stop the spread of the disease. -- (by R.E. Andres) 🌱

Representatives of the 21 municipalities, two cities, and 30 churches in Ilocos Norte each received their first 20 liters of alcohol ration, courtesy of the MMSU-NBERIC on March 20 and 23.

This is to help their front-liners contain the spread of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19).

The volume would be distributed to personnel who deliver basic services to their constituents, MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis said.

Some 1,400 liters of 70-percent ethyl alcohol from nipa sap were given to various sectors in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Cagayan, and Kalinga, from the start of the government-imposed enhanced community quarantine throughout Luzon on March 16.

"We may not supply the alcohol needs of all sectors in the province, but at least this development effort will augment the dwindling supply of the product," Agrupis said.

Experts belie reports of *lambanog* as disinfectant

Experts from the National Bio-Energy Research and Innovation Center (NBERIC) in MMSU expressed disgust on a news report that *lambanog* can be an alternate disinfectant in the wake of the nationwide COVID-19 scare, saying that such report is confusing.

MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis particularly assailed the a news from Inquirer, saying that it will "further confuse the general public and would definitely complicate the COVID 19 pandemic."

The Inquirer report that carried the headline on March 14, "No more rubbing alcohol? 'Lambanog' to the rescue," reported that with "rubbing alcohol having

disappeared from store shelves as a result of public panic over COVID-19, some health authorities in Quezon province are convinced that the local coconut-based liquor, *lambanog*, could very well suffice." It even quoted Dr. Grace Santiago, Quezon health officer, who apparently told town officials in Lucena City in an emergency meeting with barangay and local health workers on March 12.

"For scientific clarification, alcohol proof and alcohol concentration are two different concepts" Agrupis said, clarifying that 90 proof is only equivalent to 45 percent ethanol concentration.

"My team at MMSU-NBERIC have been working on lambanog from

nipa and coconut sap as raw material for fuel grade ethanol. The truth is that lambanog has only ethanol concentration ranging from 35- 45 percent, which is equivalent to 70-90 proof," she said, as she challenged the Inquirer to conduct Google research on the difference between proof and purity, or the percentage concentration "to verify its report."

"Commercial rubbing alcohol is 70 percent ethanol, so the *lambanog* can never be classified as disinfectant," Agrupis said.

At NBERIC, MMSU experts have already developed a technology to distill *lambanog* and other fermented sugar to 95 percent ethanol concentration and are reconstituting it to 70 percent ethanol to equate its efficacy (with scientific data) with commercial 70 percent ethyl alcohol. -- (by R.E. Andres) 🌱

MMSU extends alcohol ration to neighboring provinces

By JOHN VINCENT B. TORIBIO



MMSU continues to provide rations of 70% ethyl alcohol to help communities in northern Luzon fight against COVID-19.

In addition to the continuous ration of alcohol to the various LGUs, banks, hospitals, and other agencies in Ilocos Norte, MMSU has also expanded its distribution to Ilocos Sur, Kalinga, and Apayao. Each of these provinces received 100 liters each on March 30.

Due to the ‘total lockdown’ imposed in Ilocos Norte, staff of the NBERIC turned over the alcohol to the recipients at the province’s boundaries.

“Our fight against COVID-19 knows no borders,” MMSU President and NBERIC Program Leader, Dr. Shirley Agrupis said. “As a public service university, we are in solidarity with the rest of the country, especially our fellow Ilokanos, as we stand against the disease,” she added.

On the same day, 100 liters of alcohol was given to the Philippine General Hospital through Dr. Cy

Bumanglag, MMSU high school alumnus and PGH resident doctor.

Also, the province of Cagayan, source of the nipa sap used as feedstock in the production of 70% Nipahol, also received 340 liters of alcohol.

Meanwhile, the university also rations alcohol and face masks to barangay checkpoints in the cities and municipalities where its campuses are located. Distribution has started in Batac and Laoag, and the university hopes to duplicate this activity in Paoay, Dingras, and Currimao.

To systematize alcohol rationing, Engr. Thomas Ubiña, NBERIC chief, has initiated the development of an online system that would also minimize physical contact between the production staff and the recipients.

The 70% alcohol is produced by NBERIC using MMSU’s proprietary fermentation and distillation technologies, while the masks are an output of the Garments Project based at the College of Industrial Technology. 🇵🇭

MMSU Bioethanol tech aids brgy in Pamplona town

By RYAN ROI B. DOMINGO

Alongside the University’s efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the first technology recipients of the MMSU Bioethanol technology are also on the move in producing alternative disinfectants out of bioethanol from nipa sap.

The Barangay Council of Cabaggan in Pamplona and the Cabaggan Women’s Association in Pamplona, Cagayan have recently distributed the locally-produced alternative disinfectants to around 189 households in their locality.

Barangay Captain Crisante Leño said that, to address the current shortage of alcohol supply in the locality, they decided to apply the MMSU Bioethanol technology utilizing nipa sap in producing a disinfectant.

Leño, however, shared that their current production is limited due to the scant supply of nipa as many plants died due to the recent flooding in Cagayan. Thus, they were only able to make use of their existing nipa sap reserve, only enough to supply the households in their barangay.

She also thanked MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis, the MMSU Bioethanol team, and their staff.

The MMSU Bioethanol Team shared said technology to the barangay through a funding from US Agency for International Development - Science, Technology, Research, and Innovation for Development (USAID-STRIDE), Department of Energy (DOE), Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), and Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) through Ethanol Producers Association of the Philippines - Bioethanol Research, Development and Extension (EPAP-BRDE) in 2014. 🇵🇭

MMSU launches food rationing program

By REYNALDO E. ANDRES

The Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) launched on March 26 its food rationing program to help its students and front-liners to cope with their basic demands in the light of the coronavirus crisis.

The activity, which is in line with its 'bayanihan' program, is focusing more of its 107 students who are stranded in nearby boarding houses and dormitories when the government imposed the Luzonwide lockdown and enhanced community quarantine last March 16.

'Bayanihan,' or the hale and hearty system of reciprocity program of the university, also intends to expand its coverage to health workers and other front-liners in Ilocos Norte.

The students who became the first batch beneficiaries of the program are those who come from Cagayan, Ilocos Sur, Apayao, Isabela, La Union, Pangasinan, Baguio City, Bulacan, Visayas, and Mindanao.

The activity was the result of recent online survey conducted by the university's Office of Student Affairs



dubbed Oplan SAWAR (Student Affairs, Whereabouts and Recourse) to determine the pressing needs of MMSU students locked in various apartments and boarding houses in the province.

"We found out that they badly need food, water and alcohol. That is why we immediately responded to meet their basic needs," said Dr. Elizabeth Marfel Gagni, MMSU's director for Student Affairs and Services, noting that the different colleges verified the result of the survey by calling the students through their cellphone numbers registered in the university.

Gagni said the students were stranded in their dormitories because they decided to stay in order to have

better internet connectivity for the announced online mode of instruction.

"But when the online instruction were suspended, they got stuck in their apartments and there was no public transportation available," Gagni said, adding that she tapped the services of the University Student Council (USC) to provide fund for the basic survival kit (BSK), which contains rice, antimicrobial soap, potable drinking water, assorted vegetables, canned goods, and noodles.

The amount per kit, was P500 and is good for one week, but the USC is determined to shoulder the BSK of the 107 students for two weeks. 🇵🇭

Univ creates improvised face masks

By DANIEL P. TAPAOAN, JR.

Due to the dearth of commercial face masks in the market amid the coronavirus crisis, the MMSU College of Industrial Technology (CIT) takes lead in producing improvised face masks using table napkins and garter.

Professors Floribelle Javier and Gloria Torres of the CIT-Department of Garments Technology have started producing face masks last March 17 after the university administrative

council approved this initiative on March 16. Since then, the university officials have started to pitch in their contributions for the production of face masks.

"This is also our way of helping MMSU mitigate the current crisis that we are in, and we commit to do this while supply lasts," said Dr. Cesario Y. Pacis, CIT dean.

The CIT already submitted 400 face masks to the Office of the University President for centralized distribution to the university frontline workers and other constituents. 🇵🇭





Work from home scheme for gov't workers until quarantine is lifted

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) on March 16 said government agencies should adopt a work-from-home arrangement until the Luzon enhanced community quarantine due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is lifted.

Under Announcement No. 13, s. 2020 signed by CSC chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala, government agencies, except those agencies required to provide a skeleton workforce, “shall now be

limited to work from home...as part of the implementation of the strict home quarantine policy.”

Those exempted from the work-from-home arrangement include personnel of the Philippine National Police, the Armed Forces of the Philippine, the Philippine Coast Guard, health and emergency frontline services, border control and other critical services that need to ensure a skeleton workforce.

CSC issued the announcement following the Memorandum Circular issued on Monday and was signed by the Executive

Secretary by order of President Rodrigo Duterte which provides for the enhanced community quarantine over Luzon and further guidelines for the management of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) throughout the country.

The CSC said the work-from-home arrangement should be effective from March 17 to April 13, 2020 or “until such time the Enhanced Community Quarantine over Luzon has been lifted.” “Report on the work from home arrangement adopted by government agencies shall be submitted to the Civil Service Commission Regional Offices for records purposes,” the CSC’s announcement further read. (PR)

Australian envoy vows to support more scholars from Ilocos Norte

By REYNALDO E. ANDRES

Australian Ambassador to the Philippines Steven J. Robinson promised to continue supporting the Scholarship for Teacher Education Programs to Upgrade Teacher Quality in the Philippines (STEP UP), saying that such commitment will produce quality teachers in the country.

STEP UP is a scholarship campaign by the Philippine Business for Education (PBE), funded by the Australian Government, under the Basic Education Sector Transformation (BEST) program. It seeks to attract good-performing college graduates and professionals into the teaching profession by offering them competitive scholarship packages.

During the meeting at the MMSU Hostel on March 2, H.E. Robinson said that Australia has been working with the Philippines on education reform.

The Australian ambassador claimed that the STEP UP scholars already have significant advantage over the non-scholars “because they were vigorously

screened, trained, and mentored to step up as the best and the brightest teachers in the country.”

“I personally came here to see you at MMSU and listen to your successes,” Robinson said, emphasizing that “what you have done as scholars of PBE, with the help of the Australian Embassy here in the Philippines, was impressive.”

“It is especially important that we continue to produce quality teachers, given the challenges we face on education,” he added.

For her part, MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis thanked the Australian ambassador and his party for extending the support of the Australian government to the university. She assured that MMSU “values the trust and support of the Australian government.”

Dr. Agrupis also presented the teacher education program of the university, saying that through the years, “we have produced graduates who have not only become teachers in the

private and public schools, but are distinguished leaders in the field of education, some even becoming regional supervisors and district superintendents of the Department of Education around the country.

Dr. Agrupis said she hopes that MMSU can continue to nurture a strong relationship with the Australian Embassy by sending faculty and students to Australia on exchange programs, and by hosting Australian scholars as well.

Since 2015, there have been STEP UP scholars from MMSU. Twenty-five have completed the scholarship program, while four are still completing it.

Of this number, 19 are already employed as teachers while others have taken or are preparing for the licensure examinations.

These scholars personally thanked the Australian ambassador and his party for the profound impact that STEP UP has made in their academic and professional lives. -- *(with a report from DP Tapaoan, Jr.)* 🇵🇭



MMSU to tie-up with Texas consortium on PSM program

By DANIEL P. TAPAOAN, JR.

The Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) seeks to enhance its Professional Science Master's in Renewable Energy Engineering (PSM-REE) through its partnership with the Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC) in Texas, United States.

In an online meeting on March 11, University President Shirley C. Agrupis and other university officials discussed with TIEC key personnel about the enhancement of the PSM-REE program.

“We really want to strengthen this program, and we are open to a joint degree offering with the universities in the United States that have strong programs in renewable energy,” Dr. Agrupis stressed.

While MMSU has the experts to handle the program, Dr. Agrupis believes that experts from other prestigious schools can help the university to teach the course better.

In response, Dr. D'andrea Weeks, TIEC's director of business development, promised to reach out to the consortium's member-universities regarding the enhancement of MMSU's PSM-REE program.



A first in the country, the PSM-REE is a two-year program of advanced professional training and managerial capability building in developing alternative energy for national self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and self-sustainability.

Aside from the enhancement of PSM-REE program, the MMSU team also expressed interest to collaborate with the TIEC in other areas, such as, the online Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), precision smart and food systems, disaster risk management, education and humanities,

educational psychology, early childhood and special needs education, mental health, indigenous studies and cultural education.

These were also welcomed by Dr. Weeks highlighting that TIEC desires to be as responsive as possible as the group ultimately desires the consortium to be fruitful and meaningful among all its members.

In July 2019, MMSU and TIEC signed an MOU which stipulates that the two institutions shall collaborate in five areas: joint conferences and research activities; exchange of academic materials and academic publications; exchange of faculty members for research lectures; exchange of students, faculty and staff for research study; and, development of capacity building programs.

The TIEC is a private non-profit organization that advances international partnerships, collaboration, and exchanges for 31 public universities across the state of Texas. Among the consortium's programs include Intensive English, Online Courses, Professional Development, and Educational Capacity Building.



Peace Corps to partner with MMSU on response program

By DANIEL P. TAPAOAN, JR.

An official of the Peace Corps Philippines visited the university on March 4 to discuss possible areas of collaboration in which the former could provide technical assistance.

In a meeting held at the university's FEM Hall conference room, Mr. Milosil E. Cruz, PC's response program coordinator, said the agency's response program aims to assist government institutions, state universities and colleges, and other local organizations on education, environment, and disaster risk reduction and management.

He added that the PC has skilled volunteers and experts who can be deployed in certain areas in the Philippines for seven months, which are different from its regular volunteers whose placements are in a two-year period.

The PC official also stressed that the university's support "is a key in forming relevant and significant



partnerships with the appropriate institutions." He further affirmed that MMSU can open two project areas for its main campus, and one each for the other campuses where the PC volunteers can assist.

In response, Dr. Carmelo J. Esteban, MMSU vice president for planning and development, welcomed the PC's response program. He also assured that the university will propose potential areas to the agency after

consulting the university administrative council.

The PC is an international volunteer service organization that promotes socio-economic progress and Philippine-American friendship. At present, 180 volunteers work alongside Filipino counterparts to teach students and train teachers, to strengthen organizations working with children, youth, and families at risk, and to assist communities in the management and conservation of coastal resources. 🌱

USAID-STRIDE to put up career center in MMSU

The Science, Technology, Research, and Innovation for Development (STRIDE) Project Team of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) plans to launch a career center in the MMSU main campus.

In a meeting held at the university's Student Affairs and Services (SAS) office on March 3, Mr. Jacob Maximin Thaddeus B. Taguinod, STRIDE's institutionalization specialist, said the STRIDE is supporting the creation of a career center in MMSU, which aims to help and guide college students get job after graduation.

"A career center basically supports student-career guidance to help them develop and sharpen their career plans, helps them to gain professionally relevant career experiences and, ultimately, helps them to get jobs," Taguinod said, emphasizing that one activity under this program is to invite industry partners (all over the country) so that there will be more job opportunities for upcoming graduates (this June).

"The first step to be considered is to hold series of job fairs during which employers visit the campus to recruit students who are about to graduate," he added

This program, according to Taguinod, is one of the ways by which STRIDE supports collaborative activities in the academe by providing the students efficient guidance and counseling throughout their studies and upon graduation.

Meanwhile, not only in the academe, STRIDE also supports policy improvements of the government to make research more effective, while providing mechanisms to improve strengthened industry-academe-government dialogue. It also supports strengthening university capacity in research management.

"Since our proposal was already approved by MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis, we expect to inaugurate an office for the CSC and we shall be in full swing helping undergraduate students," Taguinod said. 🌱

SCA presents univ milestones in nat'l forum

By JOHN VINCENT B. TORIBIO



MMSU President Shirley C. Agrupis presented the university's milestones on internationalization during a forum attended by other SUC presidents last March 4-5 in Raddison Blu, Cebu City.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) – International Affairs Section invited Dr. Agrupis to speak during the Capacity Development Workshop on Corporate Etiquette and International Protocol for SUC Presidents. Here, she shared MMSU's accomplishments in partnering with schools and agencies abroad to inspire other university presidents.

Particularly, she highlighted the success stories of the university in participating in the conferences and expos of the NAFSA: Association of International Educators. (NAFSA originally meant National Association of Foreign Student Advisers.)

The president narrated her experiences, together with her teams, during the NAFSA 2018 and NAFSA 2019 Annual Conferences and Expos held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania last May 28 – June 1, 2018 and in

Washington, D.C. last May 26 – 31, 2019.

She presented that during the NAFSA 2018, they have met with then-potential partner institutions, signed memorandum of understanding with California State University and attended sessions and meetings arranged by the US Embassy and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The US academic trip also allowed the president to discuss possibilities for further research exchange programs, cooperation on bioprocessing, veterinary science and scholarships with various institutions.

Dr. Agrupis also stressed that even after the event, MMSU continued to link with its partners. She took pride in relaying the MOU forged with the University of California, Los Angeles which happened in MMSU. She also presented about the university's ventures with Kansas State University and the initial activities with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST – USA).

Meanwhile, she shared that during the NAFSA 2019, she led her team in various MOU signing with other

institutions: the NIST (Maryland, US Department of Commerce), Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC), International Language Academy (ILA) and Kansas State University. They also met with key personnel of the University of Maryland, Arizona State University and the US Department of Education.

She also featured about the endeavors of MMSU faculty with Tohoku Medical and Pharmaceutical University, Shizuoka University and Ashikaga University in Japan.

More so, she recognized the relentless efforts of the university's Office for External Linkages and Partnerships, led by its director, Dr. Mee Jay A. Domingo, in making all these possible.

Additionally, she presented MMSU's Framework in Strengthening Global Presence and Sustained Partnership to provide motivation to other SUCs who struggle to achieve similar goals– that, obstacles may be overcome with a sound and well-crafted university plan.

Lastly, she emphasized MMSU's vision to be a premier institution in a borderless society which fuels her desire to expand MMSU's global presence.

The workshop aimed to enable the SUC Presidents to build credibility and relationships with international partners, observe rules of international etiquette and cultural protocols, and enhance professionalism networking skills.

The workshop is a part of the program dubbed as Pathways to Opportunity: EducationUSA-CHED Speaker Series on Internationalization.

Present during the event were the officials of the CHED led by Chairman J. Prospero E. De Vera III, Commissioners Lilian A. De Las Llagas, Ronald L. Adamat, Perfecto A. Alibin, Aldrin A. Darilag, and Public Affairs Counselor- US Embassy in the Philippines Philip Roskamp. 

CAS prof conducts research in US



A graduate student and faculty member of the MMSU College of Arts and Sciences has been chosen to conduct research as a short-term scholar at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, Maryland in the United States.

The US Embassy in Manila said Jessica Asuncion would carry out research in the Biomolecular Measurement Division at NIST alongside Dr. Concepcion Remoroza, a Filipina research chemist.

A federal agency within the US Department of Commerce, NIST promotes innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science and standards to enhance citizens' quality of life and the bioeconomy.

"After my short-term research training at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, my goal is to go back home to the Philippines and share the knowledge and skills I have learned with my colleagues, students and local agencies through seminars and workshops," Asuncion said.

In 2019, a mission trip to the US by the CHED and the US Embassy in the Philippines EducationUSA office was designed to develop links between US and Philippine higher education institutions. This mission trip resulted in the said research scholarship.

Dr. Shirley C. Agrupis, MMSU president and a Fulbright alumna and an EducationUSA Philippines advisor, met with NIST representatives last year to discuss collaborations in advancing innovation in the biological sciences through technology.

Dr. Agrupis said aside from offering the highest standards of education, US universities and agencies promote quality cultural experiences, as well, which are vital in the holistic development of the students.

Meanwhile, the recently signed joint statement on US-Philippine Higher Education Cooperation has resulted in the intensified efforts of CHED and EducationUSA to support academic and cultural exchanges, capacity development of university officials and university collaborations.

According to the US Embassy, recent successful collaborations between Philippine and US universities included the New York Film Academy's master class on directing at the Ateneo de Manila University; a lecture at MMSU on ethanol expansion and climate change by Dr. Marcellus Caldas, assistant provost of international faculty collaboration at Kansas State University; and University of California Los Angeles graduate student-led training on anthropology at MMSU.

Also included were the Texas A&M University's visiting professor collaboration with MMSU on renewable energy engineering and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines' international conference on peace education and indigenous people's studies in partnership with Central Washington University. (PR) 🇵🇭

DOST taps 2 mentors for nat'l training

By NIÑA CHRISTELLE M. SUMINTAC
CTE Correspondent

The Department of Science and Technology - Science Education Institute (DOST-SEI) invited Prof. Aleli R. Martin and Dr. Estrella R. Pacis of the College of Teacher Education (CTE) to serve as trainers in the nationwide Training of Trainers Design Thinking for K-3 Science and Mathematics Teaching held at The Ritz Hotel at Garden Oases in Davao City last March 11-13.

Through its Project Science Teacher Academy for the Regions (STAR), Dr. Prof Martin and Dr. Pacis were joined by other trainers from Philippine Normal University, West Visayas State University, St. Louis University, Bicol University and the Science Education Institute.

Dr. Pacis, college secretary, discussed the basics of *Design Thinking* and led the workshop for the stage *Ideate*. Meanwhile, the chief of Center for Teaching Excellence in the University, Prof. Martin headed the workshop on the stages *Prototype* and *Test*.

DOST-SEI selected seasoned professors around the country as trainers for other STAR trainers in preparation for the cascading of design thinking to K-3 teachers in all regions of the country.

The training aimed to introduce design thinking as a problem-solving approach which focuses on the user as the ultimate beneficiary and employing a five-stage process: *Empathize*, *Define*, *Ideate*, *Prototype* and *Test*.

The event was participated in by 40 STAR trainers from the different regions of Mindanao. 🇵🇭

Faculty, students continue to enjoy US-sponsored progs

By JOHN VINCENT B. TORIBIO

The faculty and students of the university continue to enjoy the programs of the Regional English Language Office (RELO) of the U.S. Department of State.

RELO provides programs and materials on English language teaching and learning to countries such as the Philippines. Other countries to which their services are offered are Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Brunei, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Island countries.

The said Office's American English E-Teacher Program facilitates certified online courses offered by various universities in the United States. Two of these are the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and professional development courses for teachers.

Recently, 38 education students, 31 English language students, a PhD Linguistics student and three faculty members of the university completed their course on Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Methodology.

This course which ran from January 27 – March 3 was provided by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

The TESOL methodology course is a facilitated training which is designed



Mr. Jerville Jake M. Cabansag (left), completed his AE E-Teacher Program during the Fall Term 2019. With him in the photo are Mr. Matthew Gleason, English Language Fellow (center), and Ms. Connie Chico, Cultural Affairs Specialist from the US Embassy (right).

for non-native English speaking teachers. It aims to equip the participants with the current methodologies in English instruction in various learning contexts.

Ms. Karla Auria Galeon, a teacher-participant from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), said that they “learned ways on how to create an effective and communicative language classroom by exploring the use of modern technologies in teaching English in the 21st century.”

The American English E-Teacher program also provides Self-Paced Teacher Training MOOCs and Self-Paced English Language Acquisition MOOCs.

Meanwhile, a graduate student of the university has also completed his AE E-

Teacher Program during the Fall Term 2019.

Nominated by the US Embassy, Mr. Jerville Jake Cabansag, completed his course on “Using Educational Technology in the English Language Classroom,” offered by the Iowa State University.

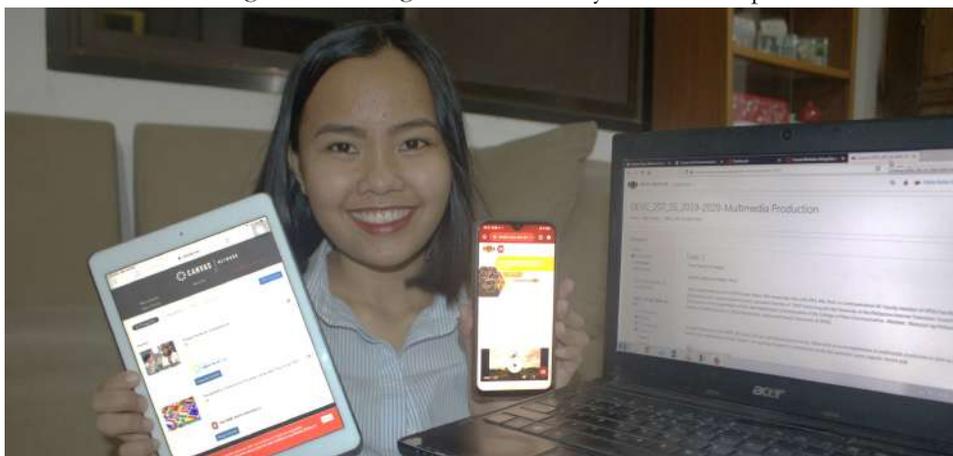
The eight-week course is geared to enhance the technological skills of English language teachers across the world through hands-on learning.

The course was administered by FHI 360, a non-profit human development Organization based in North Carolina.

“The course enabled me to improve English language instruction in my classes as I learned how to apply my learning on lesson planning, materials development, feedback and assessment,” Cabansag said.

He is the second accepted nominee to the said program. The first is Dr. Mee Jay A. Domingo, a CAS faculty, who completed another course last 2015.

The MOOC participants and Mr. Cabansag received their digital badges and certificates for their successful participation in their respective courses.



Ms Karla Auria Galeon, a teacher-participant of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), took the course on Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) methodology.

DOST, MMSU host nat'l research confab

By ARIS REYNOLD V. CAJIGAL
Contributor



The Department of Science and Technology - Science Education Institute (DOST-SEI) and the Mariano Marcos State University co-hosted the 6th National Research Conference in Science and Mathematics Education on March 5-6 at the Fort Ilocandia Resort Hotel, Laoag City.

More than 360 graduate scholars, faculty and staff from the 16 member-universities of the National Consortium in Graduate Science and Mathematics Education (NCGSME) participated in the conference. Of this number, 53 were from MMSU.

This activity under the Capacity Building Program in Science and Mathematics Education was themed, “*Transdisciplinary STEM Education for Sustainable Development.*”

The activity showcased 124 technical oral and poster presentations of the graduate scholars. The topics were on science and mathematics pedagogy, ICT-based teaching and learning, community-oriented learning, professional development initiatives, and assessment.

Two of the MMSU scholars, James Verdadero and Clarence Castillo, both from the MAEd – Mathematics program, presented their

research papers in mathematics education.

DOST Secretary Fortunato Dela Peña inspired the scholars to maintain their interest in research to address the gaps in science and mathematics education. He further urged the scholars to focus on transdisciplinary teaching to prepare students for real-world challenges.

Meanwhile, Dr. Erwin F. Cadorna, president of the University of Northern Philippines, keynoted the event highlighting the interconnectedness of transdisciplinary research and socio-economic prosperity.

Plenary speakers were Dr. Jostette T. Biyo, director of DOST-SEI, and Dr. Jose V. Camacho, Jr., dean of the University of the Philippines – Los Baños Graduate School. Dr. Biyo stressed the need to focus on teaching critical STEM fields urgently needed in the country, while, Dr. Camacho discussed the policies, standards and guidelines in graduate education.

MMSU is one of the 16 consortium member-universities since 2014. As a member, MMSU continues to work with DOST-SEI in the implementation of the graduate scholarship program for science and mathematics teachers. 🇵🇭

PSM-NL Chapter holds regional convention

More than 200 teachers, professors, and students from various schools in Region I participated in the 20th Regional Convention and Scientific Meeting conducted by the Philippine Society for Microbiology Inc. – North Luzon (PSM-NL) Chapter held in MMSU last March 5-6.

In cooperation with the MMSU-Department of Biological Sciences, this year’s regional convention aimed to inform the community with the latest scientific information and findings in microbiology. It involved paper and poster presentations, product demonstration, research competition, quiz show and career awareness.

With the theme, “*Pannagkikinnayamet 2020: PSM-NL on the March toward Sustainable World thru Microbiology,*” the activity aimed to engage government and non-government organizations to attain the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. (The Ilokano term “*Pannagkikinnayamet*” means oneness or collaboration.)

The event was sponsored by the ESCO Philippines Inc., 3M Company, Procter and Gamble Co., Yakult Phil. Inc., ITS Science Phil., and Blue Sky Trading Co. Inc. 🇵🇭



6 brgys, 1 org get relief goods, financial assistance

At least six barangays and one civil organization in Cagayan who were victims of landslide received relief goods and financial assistance from the MMSU community.

Last March 4, two sacks of rice, 149 boxes of grocery items, 19 boxes of various clothes, and Php 42,000 cash were delivered to the affected families of Barangays Cabaggan and Sta. Cruz in Pamplona; Barangays Bisagu, Lanao, Navaggan, and Bangag in Aparri West; and, the 3K (Kalalakihan Kababaihan Kaakibat), a civic organization, in Brgy. Bangag.

The MMSU Office for Student Affairs and Services (OSAS) expedited the delivery of the goods based on President Shirley C. Agrupis' Memorandum No. 20-087 to make the university's post-disaster response timely and relevant.

OSAS Director Elizabeth Marfel F. Gagni said the collected cash and goods were immediately given to the identified



nipa bio-ethanol community in Aparri and Pamplona, which were affected by landslide on November 18, 2019.

The members of the nipa bio-ethanol team from the MMSU - National Bio-Energy Research and Innovation Center (NBERIC) headed by Engr. Thomas Ubiña, led the distribution of the goods. He was

joined by Jomari D. Mateo, executive secretary of the University Student Council and a 5th year BS Chemical Engineering student.

“This gesture (of the MMSU academic community) makes the recipients feel that they are one with us in spirit in times of crisis,” Dr. Gagni said. *(by RE Andres)*

Univ reaches IP communities

The university Registrar's office, in coordination with the OSAS, conducted outreach and career orientation activities among indigenous people communities in Ilocos Norte.

The activity aimed to introduce the programs of the university to students, to help them determine their degree programs when they enter college (which could lead them to their

respective careers in the future), and to provide them relevant information about the government's programs for quality education. The team went to seven different municipalities in the province to meet with Grade 10 and Grade 11 students.

Last February 21, the team conducted the event in Adams National High School, Dumalneg National High School and Lanao National High School (Bangui). In the

27th, Carasi National High School was involved in the program.

Lastly, in the 28th, students from Catagtaguen National High School (Banna), Caribquib National High School (Banna), Caestebanan National High School (Banna) and Banna Academy joined in the event held in Banna National High School. Also, in that day, Nueva Era National High School and Agripino P. Arzadon National High School (Nueva Era) were catered.

More than 600 students and teachers joined in the activities. A plenty of this number come from the IP communities.

Prof. Henedine A. Aguinaldo, the director of the registrar's office, stated that the endeavor intended to contribute to MMSU's mission in making quality tertiary education accessible to all, particularly to the Ilokanos. She added that these kinds of work are in line with the implementation of the government's Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act of 2017 (Republic Act 10931). *(by JVB Toribio)*



MMSU's pickled egg is Best Ulam in expo

By **KIMBERLY S. MIGUEL**
Extension Correspondent



MMSU's Pickled Native Chicken Egg was adjudged as the *Best Ulam* during the first SUC Expo of the CHED held at the Activity Center of the Trinoma, Ayala Mall from March 9-11.

According to the judges, the university's pickled egg is the most innovative among the 15 entries for the Best Ulam category, giving a new light to the usually boiled or fried egg. Its enhanced taste, nutritional value and new way of presentation crystallized the products' innovativeness. "Simple but innovative," one of the commentators said.

It was prepared by the College of Industrial Technology headed by Dr. Cesario Pacis. It was along with other pickled products such as garlic, onion, and *buatsina* which were presented in the booth.

The product was prepared by the college's Food Technology Department. Presenters of the product were Dr. Teresita N. Pablo and Ms. Bella C. Gervacio, exhibitors of the MMSU booth.

"This award is a challenge for the university to produce and market new products that reflect our creativity and innovativeness as Ilokanos," Dr. Pablo, a CIT faculty said. 🇵🇭

The creator of the graphics 'Solid MMSU: Tulong-Tulong Tayo' (frontpage) is Ms. Maria Iesa Kristina A. Verzosa. A second year BS Biology student, Ieza was born with genetic illness called muscular dystrophy. Despite her condition, she is a consistent academic scholar and a talented visual artist - does painting, sketches, graphic designs, among others. She dreams to be a future geneticist, too.

One with the world, she celebrates Women's Month with the optimism that change would work for women fighting different battles. 🇵🇭



LES broadcasters win in NSPC

By **MARK IAN C. TAGAMI**
LES Correspondent

Seven student broadcasters from the MMSU Laboratory Elementary School – Laoag City emerged victorious in the recently concluded National Schools Press Conference (NSPC) held in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan on March 9-13.

The team bagged overall 4th place in Best Radio Production in the Radio Script Writing and Broadcasting event (English category).

Leading off their recognition is Jamhyla Eunice B. Salvador, a Grade 4 pupil, who was hailed as the 1st place Best News Presenter. Also, Macy

Queen C. Reyes, a Grade 6 pupil, was adjudged as 2nd place Best News Presenter and 6th place Best News Anchor. On the other hand, Kaixin Jervey A. Ventura, also a Grade 6 pupil, won 4th place in the Best Technical Application contest.

"It is really a great milestone for all of us that we were able to land a place in the biggest competition of campus journalists in the country," happily expressed by Salvador in an interview.

Meanwhile, the team was also recognized as 4th place awardee in Best Infomercial.

Other members of the team are Jeliennie May A. Arante, Jhairam Jade T. Vidad, Almira Faith A. Borromeo

and Jacob Miguel L. Flor, grades six and five pupils. Mr. Mark Ian C. Tagami served as the coach and trainer of the team.

Also, the LES Filipino radio broadcasting team composed of Thrixie Margret Reyes, Amiel Kyle Ancheta, Katrice Maye Ansagay, Florianne Felix, Rane Dion Mabuti, Sarah Grace Borromeo and Ava Lauren Quillope garnered 7th place in Best Script. Mr. Jay Mark A. Pornela was their coach.

"These achievements are a proof that we are one of the best in the country. I look forward for more opportunities for our pupils to further optimize their talents and potentials," said by Dr. Bert A. Gamiao, LES principal. He further said that, along quality instruction, talent development workshop will be developed to boost the skills of the learners. 🇵🇭

We salute all the women who make a change in our ongoing battle against COVID-19:

We salute all the women who courageously stand their ground on the frontline; those who passionately treat their patients; those who bravely govern their constituents; those who persistently find cure for the viral disease; those who unceasingly help in combatting its spread; those who strictly reinforce the law for peace and order; those who continually work from home to achieve their goals; those who devotedly work as part of the skeleton force; those who risk their lives to be of service to everyone; and, those at home, working remotely or looking after their families - in these trying times, we thank you for selflessly beaming your light. Let it shine as a source of strength and hope for your families and communities.

To the women who choose to stay at home, kudos to all of you for helping to flatten the curve.

To all the women who flood the heavens with prayers, MMSU salutes you!

...and to all the men who have also fought battles with and for us, we, women, thank you! We salute you for the respect you have always accorded us; and, in this time of crisis, we acknowledge your bravery and strength.

I am a woman.

We are the women of today.

We do not only want change to work for us.

We make a change!

Let us continue to make change work for women not only in times of crisis but may this critical situation compel us even more to work toward gender equality and equity, universal access to health care, and social justice.

Happy women's month!



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