




MARIANO MARCOS STATE UNIVERSITY

2024 MMSU Stakeholder's Forum
MMSU@46: strengthening a Culture of ACHIEVEment
MMSU Teatro Ilocandia
City of Batac, Ilocos Norte
January 24, 2024

MMSU initiates and participates in cross-sectoral SDG dialogues. On January 24, 2024, it conducted its Stakeholders' Forum, which gathers government and non-government organizations, the MMSU community, and private entities. It aimed to increase public awareness of its role, services, and initiatives that serve as an avenue to understand the needs and perspectives of stakeholders.

Aligned with the 46th Foundation Anniversary theme: "MMSU@46: Strengthening a Culture of ACHIEVEment", the Stakeholder's Forum was intended to engender collaborative discussion and knowledge exchange on effectiveness, challenges, and opportunities that will guide MMSU in achieving its vision of becoming a premier university by 2028. It provided a unique opportunity to explore and reflect on diverse perspectives from resource persons/experts (reactors) - opportunities for collaboration (SDG 17); improving MMSU's quality of education (SDG 4); and gender sensitivity and culture inclusivity (SDG 5 and SDG 16).

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSIONS

- I. Title of Activity: 2024 STAKEHOLDERS’ FORUM
“MMSU@46: Strengthening a Culture of ACHIEVEment”
- II. Venue / Date: MMSU Teatro Ilocandia, City of Batac, Ilocos Norte
January 24, 2024
- III. Context / Rationale

For 46 years, MMSU has carved a path of excellence. The public has witnessed its institutional transformation as a comprehensive university in addressing the educational needs of the Ilokano youth into a resounding globally recognized higher education institution in Northern Luzon. MMSU has gained increasing recognition with its academic standards and commitment to student success, evidenced by its outstanding performance in licensure examinations. Its academics pursue creative research activities to solve pressing problems. Its extension programs continue to reach out to people and communities to capacitate them and harness their potentials, not just as beneficiaries but also instruments for inclusive development.

The University’s adoption of a Quality Management System (QMS) has further strengthened its resolve to provide quality service to its stakeholders. As stipulated in its statement of policy, MMSU continues to adopt a QMS that empowers its stakeholders and addresses their evolving needs and aspirations. MMSU practices the three-pronged approach: (a) providing adequate venues for engagement; (b) communicating in clear language; and (c) collaborating with other sectors.¹ The stakeholders’ awareness of the University’s initiatives would help (re-)calibrate its actions to be responsive to the needs of the community and to global challenges. The dialogue, in the form of the Annual Stakeholders’ Forum, is conducted regularly to create an active and open communication between MMSU and its stakeholders, particularly to:


- 1) Raise awareness and build support for the University’s strategic plan;
- 2) Foster collaboration and engagement between MMSU and its stakeholders;
- 3) Identify potential partnerships and resources to support the implementation of plans;
- 4) Encourage an open exchange of ideas, practices and experiences, and challenges in building a more gender-sensitive and culturally inclusive campus environment; and
- 5) Gather feedback and insights from stakeholders that will enrich the formulation of the annual operational plans of the University, as implementation mechanism of the strategic plan.

IV. Objectives

Aligned with the 46th Foundation Anniversary theme: “MMSU@46: Strengthening a Culture of ACHIEVEment”, the Stakeholders’ Forum was intended **to engender collaborative discussion and knowledge exchange on effective practices, challenges, and opportunities that will guide MMSU in achieving its vision of becoming a premier university by 2028**. It provided a unique opportunity **to explore and reflect on diverse perspectives from resource persons/experts (reactors)**, focusing on the following discussion points:

- 1) How do you see MMSU towards achieving its vision of becoming a premier university in 2028? What makes a premier university, and where does MMSU stand?

¹ A strategy advocated by the national government as articulated in the Updated Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 (<https://pdp.neda.gov.ph/updated-pdp-2017-2022/>)

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- 2) What are the opportunities for collaboration, especially in your sectors, that will complement the efforts of MMSU in making the broader leap towards becoming a premier university by 2028 and onwards?
- 3) Amidst all the initiatives and achievements, gender sensitivity and culture inclusivity are significant concerns that need to be discussed and addressed. Despite imperatives arising from international agreements and national laws and policies, there are still gaps in the way we respond to these concerns. What are the common issues and gaps, and how can MMSU better address these? What concrete action steps can MMSU implement?

V. Mechanics of Implementation


The 2024 Stakeholders’ Forum was initially proposed as a stand-alone activity as in the past. However, during the general meeting of working committees for the 46th Foundation Anniversary Celebration on January 2, it was suggested that the accomplishments of the University, as reported through the President’s State of the University Address (SOUA) should serve as the take-off point for the reactors.

Hence, with the University President’s and other committee members’ concurrence to the suggestion, the Stakeholders’ Forum was redesigned to take place after the delivery of the SOUA, which highlights the University’s milestones in 2023, and ways forward. The SOUA set the stage for the reactors in formulating their feedback and insights, which they conveyed during the forum. The forum adopted an interactive dialogue or conversational approach (talk show format) through a face to face set up and livestreaming via MMSU FB page.

The following resource speakers/experts representing various sectors were invited to provide their perspectives and insights in response to the abovementioned discussion points:


- **Higher education priorities, especially internationalization**
Dr. Christine N. Ferrer
Regional Director, Commission on Higher Education – Regional Office (RO) 1
- **Socio-economic development, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**
Ms. Irene B. Ubungen
Assistant Regional Director, National Economic and Development Authority – RO1
- **Local development, local government perspective**
Mayor Joefrey P. Saguid
Municipality of Dingras
President, League of Mayors of the Philippines - Ilocos Norte Chapter

In the absence of Mayor Saguid, **Counsellor Bismark Angelo A. Quidang** of the City Government of Batac (CGB) kindly stepped in as resource speaker.
- **Industries, businesses, and investments**
Atty. Cherrie Grace P. Bareng-Asistin
President, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Ilocos Norte
- **Research, innovation, and rural and community development**
Dr. Armando Q. Ganal
MMSU Alumnus
Former Regional Director of the Department of Science and Technology – RO1
Chair, Sarrao Namnama Multi-Purpose Cooperative
- **Student perspective**
Ms. Karylle Anne M. Acosta
MMSU Student Regent

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Below is the program of activities for the convocation as joint event for the SOUA and Stakeholders’ Forum:

Time	Activity	Responsible Entity
Part I. State of the University Address		
1:00-3:30	Prayer	Dr. Marlina Lino
	Philippine National Anthem	AVP
	MMSU Hymn	AVP
	Welcome Remarks	Dr. Virgilio Julius P. Manzano, Jr. VP for Planning and Strategic Foresight
	Message from the CHED Chair	Dr. J. Prospero E. De Vera III
	Message from the Governor of Ilocos Norte	Gov. Matthew Marcos Manotoc
	Introduction of the University President	Prof. Emile Kathleen M. Aguilar University Secretary
	State of the University Address	Dr. Shirley C. Agrupis University President
	Intermission Number	Nasudi Cultural Troupe
	Introduction of the Keynote Speaker	Dr. Shirley C. Agrupis University President
	Message	Sec. Alfredo E. Pascual Department of Trade and Industry
	Photo Opportunity	
	Transition - Intermission Number/s	Nasudi Cultural Troupe
Part II. Stakeholders’ Forum (Talk Show Format) <i>Hosts/Moderators:</i> Prof. Emil James Tanagon Ms. Clarizza B. Tumenes		
3:45-5:00	Overview of the forum	Hosts
	Acknowledgment of Attendees and Reactors	Hosts
	Forum Proper	Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education priorities, especially internationalization • Socio-economic development, including the SDGs • Local government/development • Industries, business, and investment • Research, innovation, and rural and community development • Students
5:00-6:00	Synthesis	Dr. Marlowe U. Aquino Director for Planning
	Recognition of Partners and Reactors	
	Closing Remarks	Dr. Prima Fe R. Franco VP for Academic Affairs
	MMSU March	

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VI. Highlights

At the outset, Provincial Director of DTI Ilocos Norte, Ms. Amelia E. Galvez (on behalf of DTI Sec. Pascual) delivered a message, stating that the university has been a beacon of knowledge, innovation, and progress. Reflecting on the University's journey, it is important to appreciate the pivotal role of the academic sector in industry promotion, the transformative power of education and its profound impact in the development of individuals and society. MMSU has been at the forefront of nurturing intellects, fostering creativity, and preparing generations of students to meet the challenges of the ever-evolving global landscape


PD Galvez stressed the goal of cultivating a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, and practical problem-solving. In fostering collaboration, academic institutions should actively engage with industries through partnerships, research initiatives, and collaborative projects.

She further emphasized that the university should continue working together to promote industries by fostering a collaborative ecosystem. This ecosystem would involve the government, the academe, and industry working hand-in-hand. By doing so, we can harness the full potential of human ingenuity and drive change for many years to come.


Forum Proper

The discussions have been documented and synthesized with utmost care to preserve original intent/meaning. These are presented in the matrix below.


Resource Person / Sector	Perspectives / Insights
(Preliminary question from the hosts) How would you describe MMSU’s achievements? What is that one accomplishment or something from the [President’s SOUA] that is most interesting or had the most significant impact on you?	
Dr. Ferrer Higher education priorities, especially internationalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU’s achievements, which encompass all areas, are amazing. The University is highly regarded in terms of academic excellence and CHED desires that other SUCs will emulate MMSU. MMSU is generous in sharing its best practices with other HEIs. What makes a university stand out and prestigious is when it becomes inspiring and impactful for other universities. Even if we have many accomplishments but these only benefit us, these become useless. Sharing and generosity makes us powerful as an institution.
Ms. Ubungen Socio-economic development, SDGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU’s achievements are commendable. The formulation of the ACHIEVE 2.0 Strategic Plan to attain the University’s vision is a very significant output. Considering the accomplishments reported through the SOUA, MMSU is on the right path of becoming a premier university by 2028.
Counsellor Quidang Local development, local government perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU is an “ACHIEVER”. Having topnotcher students in licensure exams is a manifestation of good leadership and teamwork. Without good teamwork, said achievements would not have been possible. Batac, as the home of MMSU, is proud of the

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Resource Person / Sector	Perspectives / Insights
	achievements of MMSU and the CGB shares with these triumphs.
Atty. Bareng-Asistin <i>Industries, businesses, and investments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The university's achievements over the years are amazing and MMSU is on the right track toward its vision, inspiring a sense of pride among alumni (such as herself as an alumnus of MMSU LHS Laoag). MMSU is like the Emerald City at the end of the yellow brick road of the Wizard of Oz - emerald because it is green and yellow because it is gold. MMSU's alumni are proud to be holding high the green and gold. A truly premier university distinguishes itself by upholding its excellent traditions and striving for the best in every endeavor. “<i>Pangalan palang mapapa-wow ka na</i>”, with its graduates recognized as intelligent or smart and are hired on the spot, for they are believed to be competent and proficient workers.
Dr. Ganal <i>Research, innovation, and rural and community development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU's achievements are incredible. R&D is one of the predicaments of universities across regions. The lack of R&D is one of the reasons that universities get downgraded in SUC leveling. MMSU has responded to the need to develop a new breed of researchers, ensuring continuity as veterans retire. MMSU thus needs to harness funds that support both existing and new breed of researchers, with the commitment that research outcomes directly benefit the communities, particularly in rural areas. This aligns with the perspective of a DOST undersecretary who advocates for taking technology out of the university, translating it into practical applications that are accessible and usable by the people, thereby preventing government investments from going to waste. In her SOUA, the President has enunciated numerous technologies that MMSU has shared with the people/community, demonstrating that MMSU has overcome this predicament.
Ms. Acosta <i>Student perspective</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU's accomplishments are instrumental in fostering student development, exemplified by the expertise of faculty in producing topnotchers and critical infrastructure that support learning.
1) How do you see MMSU towards achieving its vision of becoming a premier university in 2028? What makes a premier university, and where does MMSU stand?	
Dr. Ferrer <i>Higher education priorities, especially internationalization</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU has been consistently doing its best across all the KRAs of SUC leveling and is well-positioned to obtain SUC Level V. One measure of a premier university is Academic Excellence, evidenced by: producing topnotchers and being included in the top performing schools; high employability rate; and superb performance in international rankings and assessment.

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Resource Person / Sector	Perspectives / Insights
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further, a premier university makes significant impact through its research, extension, and development projects. Receiving R&D grants is an indicator that MMSU is trusted to produce results. The challenge for MMSU is to be inspiring and impactful for other HEIs in the country. The immense impact of MMSU is already evident, with the numerous HEIs choosing MMSU as a destination for learning best practices.
Ms. Ubungen <i>Socio-economic development, SDGs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU’s strategies, as laid out in its Strategic Plan, are supportive of the thrusts and priorities of the Regional Development Plan of Region 1 and the SDGs. It is commendable as it explicitly details the specific development outcomes of the RDP and SDGs supported. It is also anchored on the AmBisyon Natin 2040 of a strongly rooted, comfortable, and secure life (<i>matatag, maginhawa, at panatag na buhay</i>). There has not been any other SUC plan with such alignment. If the Strategic Plan is implemented as intended, MMSU will be a premier university in the region, providing vital support for the attainment of the region’s socioeconomic development goals. To be a premier university, MMSU should be producing high quality outputs and services that satisfy the needs of its clients, particularly in Region 1, with these outputs meeting international standards.
Counsellor Quidang <i>Local development, local government perspective</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU has the capability and is on the verge of achieving its goal of becoming a premier university. This progress is steered by the quality of the university’s leadership, particularly one who consistently stands firm in the face of challenges and opposition (with reference to PSCA). A premier university is characterized by its dedication to serving humanity, which is what MMSU has been doing.
Atty. Bareng-Asistin <i>Industries, businesses, and investments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU should be able to maintain the high employability rate [of its graduates]; exceptional passing rates in licensure examinations; and positioning among the top performing schools in the country. These outcomes directly align with MMSU's mission of developing virtuous human capital. MMSU has made an indelible mark with its significant contributions to the community through researches; technological improvements and innovations; wisdom and knowledge imparted to farmers, stakeholders, businessmen and other people.
Dr. Ganal <i>Research, innovation, and rural and community development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU is already demonstrating the characteristics of a premier university, considering its extensive collaborations, networks and linkages with academic institutions locally and internationally; its ISO-accreditation relative to governance; and being a source of knowledge and information being cited by researchers from other academic institutions.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To further elevate its status, it is recommended that MMSU pursue recognition as a Philippine Quality Award (PQA) recipient and be able to produce scientists and academicians within the university.
Ms. Acosta <i>Student perspective</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU is on its way to becoming a premier university for producing not only intellectual students who excel professionally but also holistic individuals who make lasting positive impact on people’s lives. This can be attained by providing diverse opportunities for sports, culture, and arts development, allowing students to showcase their wide-ranging talents. The University’s academic excellence is evident with the high number of topnotchers in licensure examinations and the national and international recognition garnered by its students and faculty for their accomplishments. MMSU should continue building new infrastructure, facilities, and equipment to support learning, and research, development, and innovation (RDI). The University should also foster a vibrant research culture, prioritizing cutting-edge research and the publication of its own products and innovations for future benefit. MMSU should be able to [sustain and increase] its collaboration with various industries.
2) What are the opportunities for collaboration, especially in your sectors, that will complement the efforts of MMSU in making the broader leap towards becoming a premier university by 2028 and onwards?	
Dr. Ferrer <i>Higher education priorities, especially internationalization</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CHED Regional Office 1 and MMSU are partners in elevating the global positioning of HEIs in the region. This partnership envisions not only showcasing Region 1 to the world but also bringing [global perspectives and opportunities] to MMSU. MMSU plays a key role in empowering other HEIs in the region by serving as a leading example, demonstrating best practices. To this end, CHED Region 1 is actively fostering conversations and collaboration opportunities between MMSU and other HEIs. For 2024, MMSU is encouraged to submit more proposals that would qualify for financial support from CHED at the national level, with the purpose of helping other HEIs in the region.
Ms. Ubungen <i>Socio-economic development, SDGs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Region 1 Research and Development Agenda supports the implementation of the Region 1 Regional Development Plan, particularly for the modernization of agriculture and transformation of industries, specifically enhancing productivity and the competitiveness of products and services. MMSU's research can focus on developing technologies to make our products competitive and meet global standards, including organic fertilizers and pesticides that control pests and diseases in the region. The Region 1 RDP has laid down different strategies that will capacitate our human resources, particularly in mainstreaming gender, green, creative, and innovative

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	<p>competencies. MMSU could play a big role in creating a labor market through the production of human resources who are resilient in the presence of crises. It could capacitate learners and students with gender, green, creative and innovative competencies through relevant trainings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extension services of the university could provide training in nature-based industries, such as production, food processing and furniture-making to help provide green jobs in the region, in support of our sustainable development. The university should align its training programs along the labor market so that it can produce the needed requirements of industries. Instead of just introducing new training programs, there should be a training needs assessment to determine the actual training requirements of the industries in the region so that the appropriate trainings or extension services could be provided. • With MMSU’s Sustainability and Futures Thinking Office, the University could provide trainings for other HEIs in the region or help them establish similar offices to support future-oriented work. • On revitalizing industries, MMSU should really be serious in coming up with the documentation of best practices to support the salt industry in the region. As endorsed by the Regional Development Council in 2023, MMSU will take the lead in documenting best practices, standardizing technology, and identifying potential sites in the Philippines as basis in scaling up salt production, and in revitalizing the salt making industry. This is one of the components of the Asin R&D Center being spearheaded by the Pangasinan State University. MMSU's significant contribution to the fulfillment of the objectives of this program is anticipated. • MMSU can refer to the Region 1 RDP for other priorities and strategies it can contribute to, with additional insights available from the NEDA Regional Office 1.
Counsellor Quidang <i>Local development, local government perspective</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In <u>Instruction</u>, while local government scholarships alleviate financial barriers for many aspiring students, MMSU's admission requirements, which tend to be restrictive, pose a greater challenge. This may be justifiable due to the limited resources and infrastructure of the University. Since it is the top-choice university in Ilocos Norte, MMSU may explore ways to increase the number of students admitted. • For <u>Research</u>: Majority of Batac's population are farmers, and MMSU's research outputs that contribute to reducing costs of farm input have been beneficial. However, ensuring the sustainable transfer of knowledge and skills to farmer partners or farmer organizations is a crucial area for improvement. It is concerning that some researchers tend to disengage after project completion, neglecting effective transfer of knowledge and skills to farmer partners/farmer organizations. This hinders their ability to sustain project gains. MMSU should seek to improve these collaborations.


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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In <u>Extension</u>: The CGB acknowledges the strong partnerships and substantial contributions of the extension programs of MMSU. The University could further reach to a wider range of beneficiaries, especially the farmers, transport groups, and low-income families in the community. In <u>Production</u>, MMSU, like other SUCs, faces the challenge of ensuring that its production, as linked to research and extension, is aligned with local community needs. MMSU should strengthen its production function to directly translate into concrete improvements in the lives of local community members.
Atty. Bareng-Asistin <i>Industries, businesses, and investments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU has become more visible and active in collaborating with the private sector and industries. MMSU can have more extensive collaboration in the three main future growth drivers: agriculture, tourism, and banking and finance. Collaborative efforts can address challenges in the province: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In <u>Agriculture</u>, the absence of dedicated trading centers or "bagsakan" forces farmers to sell perishable goods at low prices to middlemen who engage in pakyawan system. Our crops are being traded and resold outside the province, as seen with chili from Pasuquin, bangus fingerlings from Gabu (bought by Pangasinan), and tobacco from Pinili and Badoc (bought by Sinait). <p>Furthermore, Ilocos Norte lacks large-scale production, manufacturing, storage, and processing plants that could prolong the shelf-life of crops, like mango and dragon fruit. MMSU provides help though the utilization of its generated food preservation and manufacturing technologies, and various various commodities (bamboo, garlic, malunggay, oyster mushroom, sugarcane, rice, corn).</p> <p>MMSU can complement these efforts by leveraging its expertise in food preservation and manufacturing, using its own technologies and various commodities (bamboo, garlic, malunggay, oyster mushroom, sugarcane, rice, corn). Future collaboration should focus on identifying producers of commodities and commercializing innovative solutions to transform product surpluses into lucrative business opportunities.</p> ➤ For <u>Tourism</u>, establish/strengthen collaboration between MMSU-CBEA and the [Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry] member-partner, especially for providing on-the-job trainings in tourism, hospitality, and culinary fields. ➤ In <u>Banking and Finance</u>, the PCCI proposes establishing a Junior Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) within MMSU-CBEA. This initiative would expose students early on to the world of business, trade, and industry. As partners in PCCI projects, these students could actively participate in conducting talks and forums,

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	and mentoring MSMEs on simple bookkeeping, business startups, cash flow management, and financial literacy.
Dr. Ganal <i>Research, innovation, and rural and community development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU already has extensive partnerships and linkages with local and foreign academic institutions. Establishing collaborations with international research organizations with broad implementation scopes, such as the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), would be instrumental in making MMSU a premier university. MMSU should pursue membership in the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and produce [scientists and] academicians within its ranks. Provided that the University’s research projects are aligned with the National R&D Agenda, MMSU can access DOST’s funding. [To facilitate this,] the University can convene with experts from the agriculture, health, and industry sectors to review and refine its R&D agenda, ensuring clear alignment. Given MMSU's role as the base agency for the Ilocos Agriculture, Aquatic Resources Research and Development Consortium (ILAARRDEC), it possesses substantial human resources and established networks/linkages that serve as foundation for collaborative efforts.
Ms. Acosta <i>Student perspective</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For international engagement, MMSU could collaborate with international institutions/universities for the expansion of student exchange programs; participation in research projects, conferences and other academic activities; and partnerships to promote cultural diversity and global perspectives. Students can learn more from affiliating agencies/entities, which they will bring back here to our university because experience really is the best teacher. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CCIS could partner with technology companies, startups, and research institutes to establish innovation hubs on campus. Such collaboration can promote innovation challenger and technology-focused events to foster a culture of entrepreneurship among students. ➤ CHS could pursue initiatives promoting mental health awareness and counseling services, directly contributing to the overall well-being of the students. ➤ CTE and CAS could collaborate with cultural organizations, artists, and local institutions to enrich students' cultural experiences through events, exhibitions, and performances. Initiatives that highlight the importance of arts and culture in education (such as the Teatro Normal “Ang Unang Aswang”, which is part of this foundation anniversary celebration) should be supported. ➤ CAFSD could collaborate with environmental organizations and government agencies to champion sustainability initiatives on campus. This includes implementing eco-friendly practices, conducting

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	research on environmental issues, and other contributions to sustainable development projects.
3) Amidst all the initiatives and achievements, gender sensitivity and culture inclusivity are significant concerns that need to be discussed and addressed. Despite imperatives arising from international agreements and national laws and policies, there are still gaps in the way we respond to these concerns. What are the common issues and gaps, and how can MMSU better address these? What concrete action steps can MMSU implement?	
Dr. Ferrer <i>Higher education priorities, especially internationalization</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MMSU is knowledgeable of the indicators for successful gender and development, such as the number of women in under-represented programs, first-generation women, and policies for all gender, including transgender and the like. It is hoped that there are also specific innovative programs in addressing gender issues, such as policies and support measures for solo parents, and establishing maternal rooms and childminding centers for female faculty and staff who have recently given birth, like in other HEIs.For cultural inclusivity, MMSU can enhance its efforts by closely coordinating with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to align with relevant laws supporting IPs and cultural groups. It is also crucial to ensure that scholarships for IPs are available and accessible to students. <i>(On this note, the host/OSAS Director Tanagon added that MMSU's scholarship for IPs is in place, as well as the MMSU Advocates for Cultural Development, which is an organization of students from IP communities.)</i>
Ms. Ubungen <i>Socio-economic development, SDGs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any program on gender sensitivity and cultural inclusivity must be based on the real situations on the ground. There should be an honest-to-goodness assessment of the gender and cultural issues at hand. This should be the basis for formulating appropriate GAD agenda and specific programs.It is crucial to move beyond merely providing separate services for men and women or segregating them for different activities.MMSU can utilize established frameworks such as the gender analysis tool provided by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) [to systematically identify and address issues].During the implementation of programs/projects/activities, there should be conscious monitoring and evaluation to ascertain the attainment of objectives. It is essential to focus on outcome and impact indicators, as outputs alone may not fully reflect the actual issues being resolved. It is important to have outcome and impact indicators, as outputs do not necessarily reflect the issues being resolved.Regarding MMSU's SDG Dashboard, MMSU has an opportunity to expand its functionality to include indicators that are specifically applicable to the University to measure progress in attaining the objectives. This dashboard can then be shared with the public or University's stakeholders,

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	encouraging their contributions in developing/undertaking appropriate interventions.
Counsellor Quidang <i>Local development, local government perspective</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSU's colleges and departments have numerous programs that address gender issues, but there appears to be some duplication of efforts. These units should coordinate and synchronize their efforts for optimized allocation of resources and greater impact.
Atty. Bareng-Asistin <i>Industries, businesses, and investments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender sensitivity focuses on ensuring equitable standing for all individuals, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, in both their private and public lives. Conversely, cultural inclusivity emphasizes respecting and valuing all kinds of people, embracing differences in thought, sexual orientation, religion, and background. The main issue would always be gender discrimination. Discrimination persists affecting men, women, and the LGBTQ organizations (as observed being part of the ZONTA Club, an organization that deals with gender sensitivity). To address these concerns and implement concrete steps, MMSU, as an academic institution, can undertake several interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote mixed-gender collaboration in projects: Actively encourage male and female individuals to work together on projects, ensuring there are no delineations that foster or reinforce gender bias. Develop a gender-sensitive curriculum: Integrate diverse perspectives and experiences into lessons, ensuring all students see themselves as equals, regardless of their background, as reflected in learning materials. Provide gender-neutral facilities: Establish gender-neutral bathrooms and locker rooms to reduce gender-based discrimination and cultivate a more positive and supportive atmosphere for all students, addressing the long-standing issue of binary classification. Encourage diverse extracurricular activities: Ensure all extracurricular activities, including sports, journalism, and pageants, are open to all students of all ages and genders. Ensure equal pay for equal work: Uphold the principle of equal salary for equal work among all employees, without discrimination based on gender or industry type (e.g., male- or female-dominated fields). Foster a culture of active intervention against discrimination: Encourage all members of the university community to stand up against any form of harassment or discrimination, not just when they are the direct recipients, but also as spectators or observers. Prioritize education and empathy: The first step in gaining understanding and combating discrimination is to educate ourselves on gender issues, such as identity, equality, equity, and individual rights. This requires

Resource Person / Sector	Perspectives / Insights
	maintaining an open mind, suspending judgment, and developing empathy to better understand and respect others who may be facing more challenging journeys.
Ms. Acosta <i>Student perspective</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Issues arise with the student dress code, but colleges maintain discretion to implement their own rules. At times, there is a need to strictly implement the wearing of uniforms as training for the professional realm.As society is changing, MMSU must review and update its policies to ensure gender sensitivity and cultural inclusivity. This includes policies on admission, equal opportunities, and anti-discrimination measures. There is a need to establish a committee responsible for periodically reviewing and refining said policies.There is also a need to diversify representation in decision-making bodies, committees, and leadership roles to actively promote inclusion of diverse voices. This is essential for addressing any disparities in representation, ensuring fair and equal opportunities for all members of the university community (such as the previously mentioned MACD, which is composed of members from the IP community).

The forum concluded with a Synthesis delivered by Planning Director Marlowe U. Aquino.


Dr. Aquino expressed sincere gratitude for the presence and contributions of the panelists, who represented key sectors in society. He highlighted that the activity reflects MMSU's openness to feedback and collaborative growth. He noted four powerful, recurring words from the speakers that encapsulate MMSU's identity: *amazing*, *incredible*, *wow*, and *top-notch*. These words serve as both recognition and motivation for MMSU to continue delivering exceptional services and programs for its students and partner communities.

Dr. Aquino also provided a recap of the acknowledged strengths of MMSU, as drawn from the discussions held during the forum, as follows:

- 1) Tradition of Excellence – MMSU lives out an excellent academic tradition with continued room for improvement.
- 2) Mission-driven Service – MMSU is committed to working for its core cause: serving students, communities, and partners.
- 3) Research-oriented Culture – The university is nurturing a new breed of researchers who are also development workers.
- 4) Responsive and Impactful – MMSU is always ready and accessible, from the president down to students, showing strong internal coordination and responsiveness.
- 5) Preparedness and Unity – The university leadership and community demonstrate readiness and unity in responding to needs and challenges.

Dr. Marlowe recapitulated the suggestions and strategic directions shared by the panelists, which underscore opportunities for MMSU to enhance and sustain its excellence in alignment with its four-fold functions: instruction, research, extension, and production.

- 1) Education – to continue to champion education as the driving force, with focus areas in agriculture, tourism, and business.
- 2) Partnership Development – to strengthen local, national, and international collaborations to expand services and influence.

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- 3) Research Excellence – to promote researcher visibility and aim to build MMSU as a research university with global academic relevance.
- 4) Model of Internationalization and Localization – MMSU is encouraged to lead regional institutions by sharing best practices and forming collaborative models.
- 5) Holistic Engagement – to prioritize student development and community engagement in line with institutional functions.
- 6) Alignment with Regional and National Goals – R&D efforts should be tied to regional and national development agenda, positioning MMSU to tap funding and partnership opportunities from CHED, DOST, DA, and international stakeholders.
- 7) Human Capital Development – the goal is to produce graduates who are competitive and industry-ready, contributing meaningfully to various sectors.

Dr. Marlowe ended his synthesis by reinforcing MMSU’s role as a premier university, committed to modernizing not just agriculture and fisheries but all facets of education and development, ensuring that students and services are responsive to both local and global needs.

VII. Post-Activity Evaluation

The PD did not conduct the usual post-activity evaluation through survey forms given the nature and set-up of this year’s forum.

VIII. Appendices

Not applicable. The draft proposal for the 2024 Stakeholders’ Forum as presented during the general meeting of working committees was revised and translated into a briefer (as attachment to the invitation). As a joint SOUA-forum event, recording of attendance and documentation was undertaken by other committee/s-in-charge.

Prepared by

PLANNING DIRECTORATE STAFF
Date: 12 February 2024 *[Signature]*

Noted / Attested by

[Signature]
MARLOWE U. AQUINO
Director for Planning
Date: 12 Feb 2024