UPLB to build more infra projects in 2020

The PhP 67 million bridge across Malolos Creek from Victoria Ela Ave. (formerly Silangan St.) to the “new” Pili Drive and the new Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB) FT San Luis access road were recently opened to the public in ceremonies led by Public Works Secretary Mark Villar, UP President Danilo L. Concepcion, and Chancellor Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr.

The 60-meter 2-lane bridge not only has pedestrian lanes but also has a bicycle lane.

From Ela Ave, the bridge takes motorists to two new roads parallel to Pili Drive – a 2-lane vehicular road and a bicycle lane. More improvements will ramp up driving and pedestrian convenience in this area soon with the completion of pavements, as well as, improvement of the road from IRRI area to where Mahalus road begins.

Meanwhile, people going to Masaya and Tranca in Bay will find their travel time cut significantly with the new access road from IPB to FT San Luis in Masaya, Bay.

Thus, a motorist who needs to get to FT San Luis need not anymore pass through the Pasciano Rural and UP Rural High School areas.

Happening alongside this infrastructure development is the recent deployment of the Philippine National Railways of a UPLB-Tutuban train route.

POTENTIALS OF THE AREA

With these new developments, it is not farfetched to think that this area will become a major commuter hub and will provide easier access to UPLB.

This will help promote development and occupancy of UPLB’s 60 ha agronomic and 13 ha IT parks, increase post graduate enrollment, and enhance instruction, industry-academic linkages, and research collaboration with scientists from other universities. It will also help generate employment and livelihood for Los Baños and nearby communities.

UPLB has prepared well for these eventualities.

It revised its undergraduate curricular programs to conform to K-12 and outcomes-based education and institutionalized innovative postgraduate programs.

It also implemented programs to increase research productivity and aggressively pursued internationalization.

Moreover, UPLB is now on a building spree with infrastructure projects that have begun to sprout all over the campus.

INFRA DEVELOPMENT IN UPLB

This infrastructure program aims to provide an enabling environment, which, according to Chancellor Sanchez “is borne out of a big dream, an ambitious one to regain UPLB’s former glory.” But which he is determined to make a reality.

“No enabling environment would be complete without a solid infrastructure program that will support all of UPLB’s academic and research activities,” Chancellor Sanchez emphasized.

The “former glory” he referred to is the UPLB of the 1970s when it was “leaps and bounds ahead of its time.”

To capture this same success in UPLB in the 21st century, he aims to help transform the university into a globally competitive graduate and research university contributing to national development.

COMPLETED INFRA PROJECTS

UPLB has completed 32 infrastructure projects to date, amounting to PhP 539 million. Some of these projects were proposed or began construction during the administration of former Chancellors Rex Victor O. Cruz and Luis Rey I. Velasco.

Standing at the heart of the campus is the Rural Economic Development and Interdisciplinary Research Laboratories (REDREC), the College of Economics and Management (CEM), whose Phases 2 and 3 were completed under the current administration.

The Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Building Wing and the extension of Malacology Building, both at the Institute of Biological Sciences, are now finished.

CINTERLABS or the Computational Interdisciplinary Research Laboratories now occupies the roof deck of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Annex 2, which was converted into offices (Phase 1).

CAS could also now boast of two new state-of-the-art facilities: the UPLB Animation Studio and the Makiling Film Lab.

Phase 1 of the three-storey Mathematics Building at CAS, the Philippine Center for Tropical Forest Science (PHILTROP) at the College of Forestry and Natural Resources (CFNR), and the Technology Hub and One-Stop Shop beside the Baker Hall were completed, as well.

Public service has been boosted by new buildings; the Forts of Children with Exceptionalities Resource Center (FaCEs), a new extension program of the Department of Family and Family Development Studies of the College of Human Ecology; the Animal Probiotics Laboratory Annex Building; A Pilot Testing Plant for Protein Enriched Copra Meal Ingredient for Swine and Poultry (Phase 1) at BIOTECH; and the CFNR Mechanized Nursery.

ONGOING INFRA PROJECTS

UPLB is administering 14 on-going projects, worth PhP 704 million.

Two are for the Graduate School (GS) reflecting UPLB’s resolve to attain its vision of being a globally competitive graduate university. These are the GS International Student and Cultural Center Building and the GS Dormitory.

New and improved research and extension (R&E) facilities at CAFS have also started to take shape. These are the Landscape Horticulture Knowledge Center Building and the Orchids Laboratory. The list also includes the UPLB Controlled Environment Research Facility and the Tissue Culture Facility for Sustained Production of Disease-Free Planting Materials of Garlic, both at the Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB).

Also in the works are the Animal Probiotics Laboratory Annex Building: A Pilot Testing Plant for Enriched Copra Meal Ingredient for Swine and Poultry (Phase 2) at BIOTECH and a new shed for the Agricultural Machinery Testing and Evaluation Center (AMTEC) at CEAT.

In CFNR, three canopy towers are being constructed at the Makiling Center for Mountain Ecosystems and seven at the Mt. Makiling Forest Reserve.

Meanwhile, the construction of the two-storey Senior High School Building Academic Wing (Phase I) of the UP Rural High School and the Crop Protection Wing of the Agriculture, Soils, and Horticulture Building, CAFS, is also underway.

Completing the line-up of on-going infrastructure projects is the rehabilitation of UPLB’s road network with asphalt overlaying and installation of more CCTVs for safety and security.

INFRA PROJECTS IN THE BIDDING STAGE

Meanwhile, it is only a matter of time before the university begins constructing 13 new infrastructure projects collectively amounting to PhP 256 million.

These are the Nanoscience and Technology Facility at the Physical Sciences Building of CAS; the Agricultural Bioprocess Division Building of CEAT; and the University Health Service (UHS) Building Extension (Phase I).

The second phases of both the Center for Agri-Fisheries and Biosystems Mechanization of CEAT and PHILTROP of CFNR, as well as the partial completion of the three-storey Mathematics Building of CAS are also in the bidding stage.

Other public works that are up for bidding are the Green Latrine Project, a state-of-the-art toilet that uses advanced technology; and the construction of overhead 13.8KV power distribution line.
INFRA PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE

Thirteen buildings that will add grandeur to the scenic campus already have their draft architectural and engineering designs (DAED).

First on the list is the UPLB Library and Knowledge Center to house library facilities, executive offices, the Interactive Learning Center, and the Information Technology Center. There will also be a new building for the Office of the University Registrar that will have communal classrooms.

Also in the works are the new headquarters of the School of Environmental Science and Management, which shall be built adjacent to the College of Public Affairs and Development; and two buildings for CEM, the Economics and Management Studies Center and the Agricultural and Economic Development Studies Center.

The alumni will not be left behind in the UPLB administration’s plans because a site has been identified for their future home. This will be near the IRRI side of Pili Drive.

Meanwhile, four R&E edifices will soon rise at the CAFS and BIOTECH compounds: the Food Processing Research and Development Center in IFST; the Dairy Production Building in the Dairy Training and Research Institute; the Philippine Genome Center for Agriculture and the new National Plant Genetic Resources Laboratory (NPGRL) Building in IPB; and the Microbial Bank in BIOTECH.

UPLB’s planners are also preparing the DAED for UPLB’s Sports Complex Facility, Sewage Treatment Plant, and renovated Operating Rooms at UHS.

RENOVATION PROJECTS

Aside from new edifices, facilities, and roads, the administration has also embarked on major renovation projects in the campus to rehabilitate and improve existing structures.

Twenty-nine of these renovation projects have been completed, worth PhP 136 million; five, valued at more than PhP 55 million, are on-going; 10 (PhP 108 million) are currently in the bidding stage; and one is in the pipeline.

Among the completed renovation and rehabilitation of structures are those of the Central Experiment Station, the NPGRL Building (Phase I), and the National Crop Protection Center’s (NCPC) Plant Health Clinic, including repainting of its facilities; the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics building at CEM; and the CFNR Canteen.

Two former buildings of NCPC have also been improved to house the units under CEAT’s Institute of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering: the former NCPC Laboratory Building for the Director’s Office and the former NCPC Old Building for the Land and Water Resources Division and Agrometeorology and Farm Structures Division.

The International House Guest House and the Central Store Room of the Supply
and Property Management Office were renovated; the DL Umali Hall rehabilitated and its seats replaced; and three offices at the AG Samonte Hall – Legal Office, Cashier’s Office, and Human Resources Development Office – have been improved.

Meanwhile, among those that are undergoing renovation and rehabilitation are three R&E facilities at CAFS, namely:

- NPGRL Quarantine Greenhouse at IPB
- Food Science Pilot Plant
- Fruit Crops Nursery Office and Laboratory

Now in the bidding stage are the rehabilitation of AMTEC in CEAT and the various research laboratories and training facilities at the College of Veterinary Medicine.

On top of these major infrastructure projects, UPLB has also completed the renovation of 344 small classrooms, worth more than PhP 43 million, and 179 comfort rooms, which cost more than PhP 44 million.

Big and small, these new and improved infrastructure and facilities are certain to provide the needed enabling environment for creativity and productivity among its constituents.

(Mark Jayson E. Gloria)

### NEW INFRASTRUCTURES (buildings, roads, bridges, other facilities)

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### RENOVATION PROJECTS (buildings and other facilities)

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### COMPLETED SMALL CLASSROOMS AND COMFORT ROOMS RENOVATION PROJECTS

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A visit to Canada and the United States by Chancellor Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr and Vice Chancellors Portia G. Lapitan (academic affairs) and Rex B. Demafelis (research and extension) from Nov. 25 to Dec. 16, 2019 is going to help build UPLB’s capacity in responding to transnational threats to food production such as African Swine Fever (ASF) and fall armyworm (FAW).

ASF is a fatal disease in pigs and wild boars that began to affect parts of the country in July 2019, resulting in the depopulation of close to 150,000 pigs in the latter part of the year. (FAO ASF: Asia update)

FAW is a lepidopteran pest that feeds in large numbers on plant leaves, stems, and reproductive parts of more than 350 plant species, including economically important crops such as maize, rice, sorghum, sugarcane, and wheat, as well as vegetables. (Invasive Species Compendium at cabi.org)

FAW has spread quickly from Central and Western Africa in 2016, India and Yemen in 2018, and to many parts of Asia, including China, Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, and Vietnam in 2019.

Plant and animal diseases such as ASF and FAW are threats to food security that UPLB is focusing on in order to contribute to national development.

It will be recalled that at UPLB’s strategic planning workshop in 2018, Chancellor Sanchez identified food security as a bigger challenge, thus he implored for UPLB units to embrace interdisciplinary collaborations and interactions and focus on the “one thing that will enable UPLB to contribute directly to national development - food security.”

In particular, the visit aimed to capacitate UPLB in anticipating, detecting and controlling, and preventing these plant and animal diseases affecting from the country.

**COLLABORATIVE MEETINGS IN CANADA**

At their first stop on Nov. 28, the UPLB delegation held discussions with a University of Toronto team led by Dr. Cynthia Go, academic director and full professor.

Joining the UPLB delegation were Philippine Consul General Orontes V. Castro and Consul Edwin Gil Mendoza who arranged an audience with Filipino postgraduate students in chemistry and molecular biology.

At the University of Guelph on Nov. 29, the UPLB delegation held a meeting with faculty members and officials, namely: Dr. Stuart McCook, professor at the Department of History; College of Arts; Dr. Rene Van Acker, dean of the Ontario Agricultural College and professor at the Department of Plant Agriculture; Dr. Lynne Mitchell, director of the Centre for International Programs; Dr. Beverly Hale, associate vice president for research; and Dr. Cate Dewey, associate vice president (Academic).

They also conducted a tour of the modern Elora Research Station-Dairy Facility of the said university.

A side visit to Ontario, Canada enabled the group to see a 2-Ha breeding farm for sweet potato for bioethanol production and its advanced facilities in wastewater treatment.

**SIGNING OF MOU AND COLLABORATIVE MEETINGS IN THE US**

On Dec. 4, the UPLB delegation signed an MOU with the University of Maryland (UMD) in the United States aiming to collaborate in research and instruction in agriculture, food and nutrition security agriculture, and in OneHealth.

For and on behalf of the UMD was Dr. Craig Beyrouty, dean and director of the Agricultural Experiment Station.

This was witnessed by Philippine Embassy officials, Consul General Rene Villa and Philippine Agriculture Attaché, Dr. Joy Javelosa.

The Philippine Embassy facilitated a meeting with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) on Dec. 5, which resulted in what Dr. Demafelis said is a “high probability for UPLB to undertake capacity building in training and control, provision of materials, and research collaboration in ASF.”

On Dec. 6, the UPLB delegation also made a courtesy call to Philippine Embassy officials in Washington DC headed by Philippine Ambassador Jose Manuel Romualdez.

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According to Dr. Demafelis, this resulted in discussions and commitments that expanded on and delved deeper into the areas of collaboration.

For instance, it helped secure and enhance the resources that the university is going to be able to tap from the USDA capacity building program.

Dr. Demafelis disclosed that what was originally focused on swine production in a 2018 visit to the USDA had been expanded to include ASF and FAW detection and control at this visit (in 2019).

With this, UPLB will conduct future linking visits and collaborative visits with Philippine Embassy officials’ involvement and assistance, Dr. Demafelis said. (Josephine M. Bo)