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UPLB centers on innovation as it marks its 111th year

UPLB will banner work and output excellence at the celebration of the 111th anniversary of its Foundation Day on March 6 at Baker Hall.

The celebration, themed “Creativity, innovation, and technology” will not only honor outstanding personnel and a research program but will also showcase in an exhibit its champion and emerging technologies for commercialization.

Three teachers, five researchers, six administrative personnel, one extensionist, two artists, and a research program were selected as this year’s honorees in a search process administered by three awards committees.

They will be awarded formally at the Convocation and Awarding Ceremonies for the 2020 Outstanding Personnel and Programs at 2 PM on March 6.

Dr. Gonzalo Serafica, a science and technology innovation ecosystem builder will be the guest speaker during the convocation program.

Dr. Serafica is a technology commercialization and intellectual property consultant of UP and other reputable Philippine universities, as well as, an industry-university-government collaboration consultant for USAID-Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Development Program.

The exhibit, meanwhile, will give viewers a snapshot of UPLB’s champion and emerging technologies.

Five champion technologies that have recently been commercialized, with two already licensed to industry partners and three licensed to startup companies, will topbill the exhibit.

These are Sinta papaya, the first hybrid papaya in the Philippines; Microbial

Rennet from fungi, for coagulating milk in cheesemaking; Acticon, a biocontrol agent against *Fusarium oxysporum* TR4 or Panama wilt in Cavendish banana; Fruitect, a fruit coating used to extend the shelf life of agricultural produce; and Nutrio, a microbial-based foliar fertilizer for eggplants and sugarcane.

Five emerging technologies for commercialization will also be featured in the exhibit. These are Monascus Red, a colorant for cosmetics, food, and beverage extracted from *Monascus* fungi; Mykovam, a soil-based biological fertilizer; Phenofera, a phenolic powder derived from mango peel and seed wastes that can be used as an ingredient in personal care products; SARAI or “Smarter Approaches to Reinstantiate Agriculture as an Industry in the Philippines,” a suite of technologies used in crop forecasting and

monitoring for six priority crops, namely: rice, corn, banana, coconut, coffee, and cacao; and SNAP, a low-cost hydroponics system for vegetable production.

The exhibit will be open to the public from 8 to 11 AM and to the convocation program attendees in the afternoon on March 6.

The College of Agriculture and Food Science (CAFS) will also celebrate its foundation day anniversary on March 6.

UPLB traces its roots to CAFS, then known as the UP College of Agriculture that was established on March 6, 1909.

The CAFS celebration will be highlighted by a dialogue with Agriculture Secretary William Dar on March 3, 8:30 AM at SEARCA Drilon Hall. (Jessa Jael S. Arana)

OSA is now OVCSA

Sixty years after its creation, the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) makes a new milestone in serving the UPLB students after it was elevated into the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (OVCSA) upon the approval of the UP Board of Regents (BOR) at its 1350th meeting on Feb. 3, 2020.

Prior to this, the office was under the supervision of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

Elevating the office is necessary because to further promote the welfare of UPLB’s increasing student population, it needs to upscale its personnel, offer a broader scope of services, and upgrade its facilities.

OVCSA administers, provides, and oversees scholarships and financial assistance, mental health and psychological support, learning assistance and tutorials, student organizations, student discipline, and international relations.

Chancellor Fernando C. Sanchez Jr. appointed Atty. Eleno O. Peralta as officer-in-charge of OVCSA effective Feb. 4, pending his appointment by BOR as the vice chancellor.

Atty. Peralta, who holds a PhD in Forestry, is a faculty member at the College of Forestry and Natural Resources. (Juan Paolo A. Aquino)



The elevation of the Office of Student Affairs into the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs aims to further promote the welfare of UPLB’s increasing student population. (Photo by CVLabe)

GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR SERVICE

The 2020 Outstanding Administrative Personnel



DIMAPILIS

As a construction and maintenance foreman, **Felomino M. Dimapilis** supervises repair and maintenance personnel at the University Planning and Maintenance Office. But it is not surprising to also see him do the job of a driver, a carpenter, a mason, and a landscaping assistant.

Meanwhile, in the Records Management Office at the basement of AG Samonte Hall, **Patricia M. Lunaria** safeguards confidential personnel documents just like how a professional records officer would, although her actual designation is that of an administrative aide.

They are only two of UPLB's civil servants who did not allow their positions to box them in. Their willingness to take on more tasks has enabled them to serve the university in greater capacities. Both are recipients of the 2020 **outstanding administrative personnel award** – Dimapilis for the **field supervisor** category, and Lunaria, for the **office personnel** category.



LUNARIA

The two are also excellent team players. Dimapilis is part of the group that installs physical arrangements for big campus events where he contributes his skills toward maximizing the use of materials and resources. Lunaria, for her part, willingly substitutes for her colleagues when they need to be absent, to ensure that there are no disruptions in their operations.

Likewise, **Edgardo dL. Reyes**, agricultural technician at the Institute of Plant Breeding, and **Resie L. Valderrama**, laboratory technician at the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, go the extra mile in serving UPLB. They are both being awarded as **outstanding technician/ craftsman**.

Reyes' efficiency in providing coordination and support in field and greenhouse experiments and Valderrama's competence in chemical laboratory procedures



REYES



VALDERRAMA

and protocols have contributed to the research and extension accomplishments of their offices.

Valderrama was part of the team that worked on the ISO certification of the Central Analytical Services Laboratory. Reyes visits his workplace even on weekends to look after the experiments.

Rounding up this year's administrative personnel awardees are University Health Service's **Dr. Jessie Imelda Foronda-Walde**, medical director, and **Bernardino dG. Melicio, Jr.**, nursing attendant, who, through their compassion and dedication, have helped treat patients, save lives, and protect the community.

With her visionary leadership, **Dr. Foronda-Walde, outstanding professional**, initiated mental health wellness programs, HIV clinic, extended health benefits for contractual workers, and a more organized referral system with the Philippine General Hospital, among



FORONDA-WALDE



MELICIO, JR.

others. She helped promote access to affordable health care for UPLB constituents and nearby communities.

Melicio, outstanding blue collar personnel, on the other hand, cheerfully extends nursing assistance to departments other than his own. In university activities, he is always there to provide medical services, covering for the work of 4-5 health professionals in some instances.

To make himself more effective in his work, Melicio participated in training courses on first aid, public safety, occupational health and safety, and waste management.

The 2020 Outstanding Administrative Personnel take the extra mile and work beyond the call of duty in their service to the university. (*Juan Paolo A. Aquino, Kristine E. Araguas, and Mark Jayson E. Gloria*)

PASSIONATE, PERSEVERING, AND PRAISEWORTHY

The 2020 Outstanding Teachers

They have unique stories to tell about their teaching profession, but their passion and perseverance have made them stand out from among their colleagues.

Dr. Dinah Pura T. Depositario and **Arlene C. Gutierrez** of the Department of Agribusiness Management and Entrepreneurship and **Dr. Ireneo L. Lit, Jr.** of the Institute of Biological Sciences lead the way in how effective mentoring should be, in the process earning for them the **outstanding teacher award**.

Dr. Depositario, who mentored the likes of Senator Migz Zubiri, GMA-7 Sr. Operations Manager Christine Cherry Floracruz, and UPOU Dean Primo Garcia during their student days, is consistently known for being a motivating teacher and adviser, competent department chair, a capable leader in entrepreneurship course development, book author, and an award-winning researcher.

She wears many hats as expected of a UP professor, but she remains faithful to her core as a teacher. Her



DEPOSITARIO

teaching style is innovative, her approach in teaching flexible and individualized, and her words, inspiring.

As a life-long learner herself, she introduced to UPLB new concepts that she had learned, such as multivariate analysis techniques from her Doctor of Business Administration (De La Salle University) and the Case for the Case Method from an international faculty visit grant (University of Michigan).

Dr. Depositario shares the same academic department with a fellow awardee, Arlene Gutierrez.



GUTIERREZ

At a young age and with a *magna cum laude* medal from UPLB and an MBA from the Asian Institute of Management, Gutierrez is much vaunted for subject matter mastery. Her eloquence and efficiency are sworn to by both her students at the bachelor's and master's levels. Yes, she is already a graduate faculty member at such a young age.

The intellectually engaging class discussions that she facilitates are backed by her actual practice as a consultant of academic institutions, banks, and companies, and quite recently, as associate dean of the College of Economics and Management.



LIT, JR.

This teacher's rise in academe is truly phenomenal. Dr. Ireneo Lit, Jr. served as a research and extension personnel for more than 20 years before he shifted to full-time teaching. His scientific productivity is unparalleled and his rise to full professorship in a matter of five years is meteoric.

Aside from ensuring a classroom setting that is engaging and supportive, Dr. Lit is also noted for promoting the culture of science and research in his experiential and discussion-based approach in teaching.

"I have always viewed university teaching as inseparable and inextricably connected with research. One always supports and fortifies the other and both are functionally linked with public service," said Dr. Lit, a UP Scientist III, a former director of the Museum of Natural History, and now the editor-in-chief of The Philippine Entomologist. (*Kristine E. Araguas, Mark Jayson E. Gloria, and Juan Paolo A. Aquino*)

CROP PROTECTORS, FOOD SECURITY HEROES

The 2020 Outstanding Research Team
and the 2020 Outstanding Extension Personnel



THE PLANT PATHOLOGY LABORATORY PERSONNEL OF THE INSTITUTE OF PLANT BREEDING

The saying “prevention is better than cure” perfectly applies not only to human health but also to that of plants, especially to crops where humans derive their food, nutrition, and livelihood. In UPLB, “plant doctors” together with their technical and support staff are always on their toes, preventing and curing crop diseases and infestations through advanced research and public information.

Two of them – one a 49-strong team, and the other, a seasoned scientist – have stood out this year for their long-term commitment to save crops from complete destruction.

The **Plant Pathology Laboratory (PPL) of the Institute of Plant Breeding**, recipient of the 2020 **outstanding research team** award, found a way to prevent the spread of the Bacterial Crown Rot (BCR) in papaya. By studying BCR’s causal organism called *Erwinia mallotivora*, they were able to identify its diversity, mode of transmission, survival, and epidemiology.

The team also made significant discoveries on other pathogens and developed technologies to overcome them. Their work helped make pepper resistant to the fungi *Colletotrichum acutatum sensu lato* and *Colletotrichum scovillei*; sugarcane against leaf scald-causing bacteria *Xanthomonas albilineans*; mango against anthracnose and stem-end rot; and banana against streak virus; to name a few.

For the past two years, PPL, currently being led by Scientist Fe Dela Cueva as program leader and Dr. Mark Angelo Balendres as laboratory head, has conducted close to 20 research projects and produced more than 50 publications, papers, and posters that inform the scientific community and the general public about their novel discoveries.

Educating people about plant diseases and their remedies is also at the core of the public service career of 2020 **outstanding extension personnel**, **Scientist Mario V. Navasero** of the National Crop Protection Center.

Scientist Navasero not only works at the forefront of biological and ecological studies of pests and beneficial arthropods, insect resistance, and integrated pest management. In times of crop infestation, he goes out of his laboratory to teach farmers on the most effective ways to combat them.

Who would forget the recent invasion of the coconut scale insect (“cocolisap”) in Zamboanga and other parts of the country? He and his team stood up to advocate the use of a biological control agent, the encyrtid parasitoid *Comperiella calauanica*, as a safer alternative to parasitize the cocolisap, leading to the latter’s non-reproduction and ultimate death. This strategy was, in fact, successfully adapted by the Department of Agriculture.

How about the outbreak of armyworm in onion in Ilocos Sur, Pangasinan, and Nueva



NAVASERO

Ecija? Scientist Navasero and his colleagues were also there to correct malpractices and misinformation. They enjoined the farmers to use an effective insecticide and resistance management program to save the onion industry in these provinces.

These crop protectors are not only “doctors” in their own right. With farms and plantations rescued from enemies, they are food security heroes who deserve to be honored. (Mark Jayson E. Gloria)

INSPIRING CREATIVE PERFORMANCE AND DESIGN

The 2020 Outstanding Artists



DELA CRUZ

Much like how a magician may enthrall an audience before unfolding their *pièce de résistance*, this year’s **outstanding artists** – Assistant Professors **Jeremy Reuel N. Dela Cruz** and **Ryan Rodrigo P. Tayobong** – beguile the senses, their works acting as gateways to greater wonders.

The Department of Humanities attributes much of the buzz around their theater courses to Dela Cruz. Described as steady and reliable by his colleagues, Dela Cruz is behind many of the university’s successful events in his roles as director and member of the stage management team. From the

drawing board to the stage, he has shown his proficiency and creativity each step of the way.

As a faculty member, he goes beyond teaching concepts and finds time to demonstrate the beauty of kinetic expression and his learnings from abroad not just to students from UPLB, but also to those from the Philippine High School for the Arts and UP Diliman’s Center for International Studies.

His effectiveness as a mentor is illustrated by the heavy enlistment in his Theater Communication and History of Theater classes.

TAYOBONG

Institute of Crop Science’s Tayobong, on the other hand, unlocks the potential of plants as artistic medium in his various designs for events and exhibits.

Tayobong demonstrates perseverance and resourcefulness as he creates beautiful arrangements amidst the limitations of his chosen medium, using his skills and imagination to make their best features stand out.

His works take the stage, quite literally, as he designs them for important university occasions. His landscaping designs have won multiple awards for

the College of Agriculture and Food Science in best float derbies during UPLB’s Loyalty Day celebration.

He promotes the use of edible plants in landscaping to decorate urban areas. He eagerly shares this knowledge through workshops on edible landscaping, flower arrangement, and dish gardening.

As masters of their craft, these artists weave avenues for appreciating beauty into the university, invigorating the arts and inspiring others to create. (Jessa Jael S. Arana)



AGGANGAN



ALCASID



RAZAL



GEVAÑA



GENERAL

LEADING THROUGH INNOVATION

The 2020 Outstanding Researchers

Steve Jobs once said that “innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.”

If that is so, this year’s **outstanding researchers** – certified innovators – are leaders. They may not be found in an executive office, but they thrive in their own turf – laboratories, farms, and nature.

Scientist Nelly S. Aggangan of the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology is a seasoned leader, and **Carolyn E. Alcasid** of the Institute of Plant Breeding, a promising fresh entrant in agricultural research.

Scientist Aggangan, outstanding researcher (senior REPS), is known for her contributions in improving MYKOVAM, a soil-based biofertilizer for fruit trees, agricultural crops, reforestation species, and ornamentals that is widely used in the Philippines and other countries.

In one application, MYKOVAM can replace 60-85% of the recommended fertilizer requirements of a plant. It enhances the absorption of water and nutrients, improves soil properties, increases yield, and is highly applicable in organic farming.

Alcasid, outstanding researcher (junior REPS), is one of the co-developers of the first mango hybrid in the Philippines. She developed the first breeding block for mango breeding in the country and put together an efficient mango breeding plan to enhance the fruit’s competitiveness.

Her work led her to develop strategies in evaluating resistant pineapple varieties, making selection for breeding more efficient. This increased disease resistance in plants and subsequently, improved harvest, among others.

Meanwhile, three other researchers have led the way toward managing and understanding nature better, all motivated by the need to balance environmental protection and community needs.

Dr. Ramon A. Razal, outstanding researcher, senior faculty member-natural sciences, studies and promotes non-timber forest products (NTFPs), especially the use of bamboo, rattan, resins, and forest foods to prevent exploitation of trees and boost reforestation.

His projects promote the role of foresters in helping communities develop sustainable NTFP-based livelihoods, and push for making more quality bamboo available through the micropropagation of genetically verified superior species and inventory using remote sensing and mapping.

Dr. Razal was the president of the National Research Council of the Philippines in 2018-2019 and was reelected for another term from 2019 to 2020.

Dr. Razal, and a fellow awardee, **Dr. Dixon T. Gevaña, outstanding researcher, senior faculty member-social sciences**, both teach at the College of Forestry and Natural Resources.

Dr. Gevaña works at the forefront of coastal forestry and watershed governance research, combining the rigors of natural and social sciences to help communities conserve forests and adapt to climate change.

He is a pioneer of blue carbon studies to mitigate climate change

in the Philippines, working particularly on community-based mangrove management. His insights are indispensable in developing strategies to holistically manage and develop participatory- and science-based planning tools for watersheds.

Equally important to the quest for ecological balance are the efforts of Museum of Natural History’s **Dr. David Emmanuel M. General, outstanding researcher (junior REPS)**. An ant expert, he has identified 11 new species, contributing toward greater appreciation of biodiversity.

He developed field techniques for surveying nocturnal ground-foraging ants and sampling nocturnal arboreal ants. He also produced a generic guide to the ants of the Philippines. These innovations have helped researchers and students explore and understand the diversity of the said insect.

The trailblazing spirit of these outstanding researchers certainly help push the frontiers of science. (*John Glen S. Sarol, Jessa Jael S. Arana, and Mark Jayson E. Gloria*)

New Appointments



DR. NINA M. CADIZ

Director of the Academic Assessment and Development Unit effective Jan. 2, 2020-Jan. 1, 2023. Dr. Cadiz was the director of the Office of Student Affairs from 2015-2018 and of the Institute of Biological Sciences (IBS) from 2012-2015. She was at the helm of IBS when it earned the ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) certificate for BS Biology. In Jan. 2020, she finished the AUN-QA Training Course for Accomplishing Institutional Assessment (Tier 3) in Bangkok, Thailand.



DR. ROSELYN F. PAELMO

College Secretary of the College of Agriculture and Food Science effective Jan. 1, 2020-Dec. 31, 2022. Dr. Paelmo earned her PhD Forestry and MS Agronomy from UPLB. She has been a faculty member at the Institute of Crop Science since 2016 and prior to that, had been a researcher for more than 20 years at the Institute of Agroforestry, where she once headed its Research and Technology Development Division.



DR. BENJAMIN REUEL G. MARTE

College Secretary of the College of Veterinary Medicine effective Jan. 2, 2020-Nov. 27, 2022. Dr. Marte first held the same position in 2003-2011. He finished his Doctor and MS in Veterinary Medicine and is pursuing his PhD in Animal Science, all at UPLB. He has held nine professorial chair grants, the most recent being the Dianne Lieberman Professorial Chair.

Public Service

UPLB mobilizes expertise to help Taal eruption-affected areas

The eruption of Taal Volcano on Jan. 12 for the first time in 43 years rendered people homeless and their agricultural areas blanketed in ash and unproductive.

With this, UPLB units reached out to help and immediately mobilized personnel in areas where their expertise could provide relief and contribute to rehabilitation efforts.

In a bid to coordinate relief and assistance efforts and provide a platform by which expertise could easily be accessed by affected communities, Chancellor Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr. issued Administrative Order No. 039 on Jan. 20, 2020 creating the UPLB Task Force for Taal Volcano Disaster Response.

UPLB Task Force Taal is headed by Mr. Glenn S. Lubuguin, director of the Ugnayan ng Pahinungod and assistant to the vice chancellor for research and extension.

Through this task force, the College of Development Communication, the Office of Public Relations, and Ugnayan ng Pahinungod are

collaborating in the production of an internet radio program called TAALaman at BAYANihan.

TAALaman at BAYANihan, which is broadcasted on DZLB and UPLB Facebook on Mondays from 10 to 10:15 AM, features rehabilitation efforts and outreach activities of UPLB units in its TAALamin segment and conversations with UPLB scientists and researchers on relevant topics in its TAALakayin segment.

TAALaman at BAYANihan’s first episode premiered on Feb 3 and since then five episodes of the program had been broadcasted covering a range of topics from the impact of ashfall on agriculture and soil, animal welfare, geology and volcanology, and psychosocial welfare of people in the affected areas.

The program has so far featured resource persons from the College of Agriculture and Food Science, College of Veterinary Medicine, School of Environmental Science and Management, and the College of Human Ecology. (*Albert Geoffred B. Peralta*)