

116TH ARAW NG PAGTATAPOS

UP MANILA:

SALIGAN NG KAHAPON, GABAY NG
KASALUKUYAN, TANGLAW SA HINAHARAP

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UP Manila Celebrates 1263 C Honor Recipients as Future



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Graduates Including 682 Latin Leaders and Public Servants



The University of the Philippines Manila honored the academic achievements and service commitment of 1,264 graduates during its 116th Commencement Exercises, held on 22 July 2025 (Tuesday), 11:00 a.m. at the World Trade Center, Metro Manila. This year's theme, "UP Manila: Saligan ng Kahapon, Gabay ng Kasalukuyan, Tanglaw sa Hinaharap," reflected the University's enduring role in shaping servant-leaders rooted in history, grounded in present realities, and inspired to serve the nation's future.



682 of 1,263 Graduates Earn Latin Honors,

M a k i n g U p 5 4 %
o f t h e B a t c h

CUM LAUDE

429

MAGNA CUM LAUDE

244

SUMMA CUM LAUDE

9

Breakdown of Latin honors per term:

Midyear Term: 17 out of 166 completers
earned Latin honors

First Semester: 34 out of 186 graduates
received Latin honors

Second Semester: 631 out of 911
undergraduates
earned Latin honors

Honoring Service: Ugnayan ng Pahinungod Pinning Ceremony Recognizes Student and Faculty Volunteers

The following were recognized:

Faculty volunteers:

Dr. Catherine Swin-Santos,
Director, SHS-Tarlac

Prof. Jose Mateo Dela Cruz,
SHS-Tarlac

Asst. Prof. Marie Diane Monsada,
Department of Behavioral Sciences,
CAS

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

20

COLLEGE OF NURSING

15

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

1

COLLEGE OF ALLIED MEDICAL PROFESSIONS

1

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SCIENCES

2



NUMBER OF GRADUATES

PER COLLEGE



College of Arts and Sciences

441



College of Dentistry

41



College of Medicine

243



College of Pharmacy

91



School of Health and Sciences

128



College of Nursing

80



College of Public Health

127



College of Allied Medical Professions

91



National Teacher Training Center for the Health Professions

21



WATCH: Highlights of a Historic Day for UP Manila Class of 2025! Here's the Same Day Edit (SDE) Video of the UP Manila 116th Commencement Exercises



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MESSAGE OF THE CHANCELLOR

On behalf of the UP Manila community of scholars, I extend my warmest congratulations to you, graduating Class of 2025.

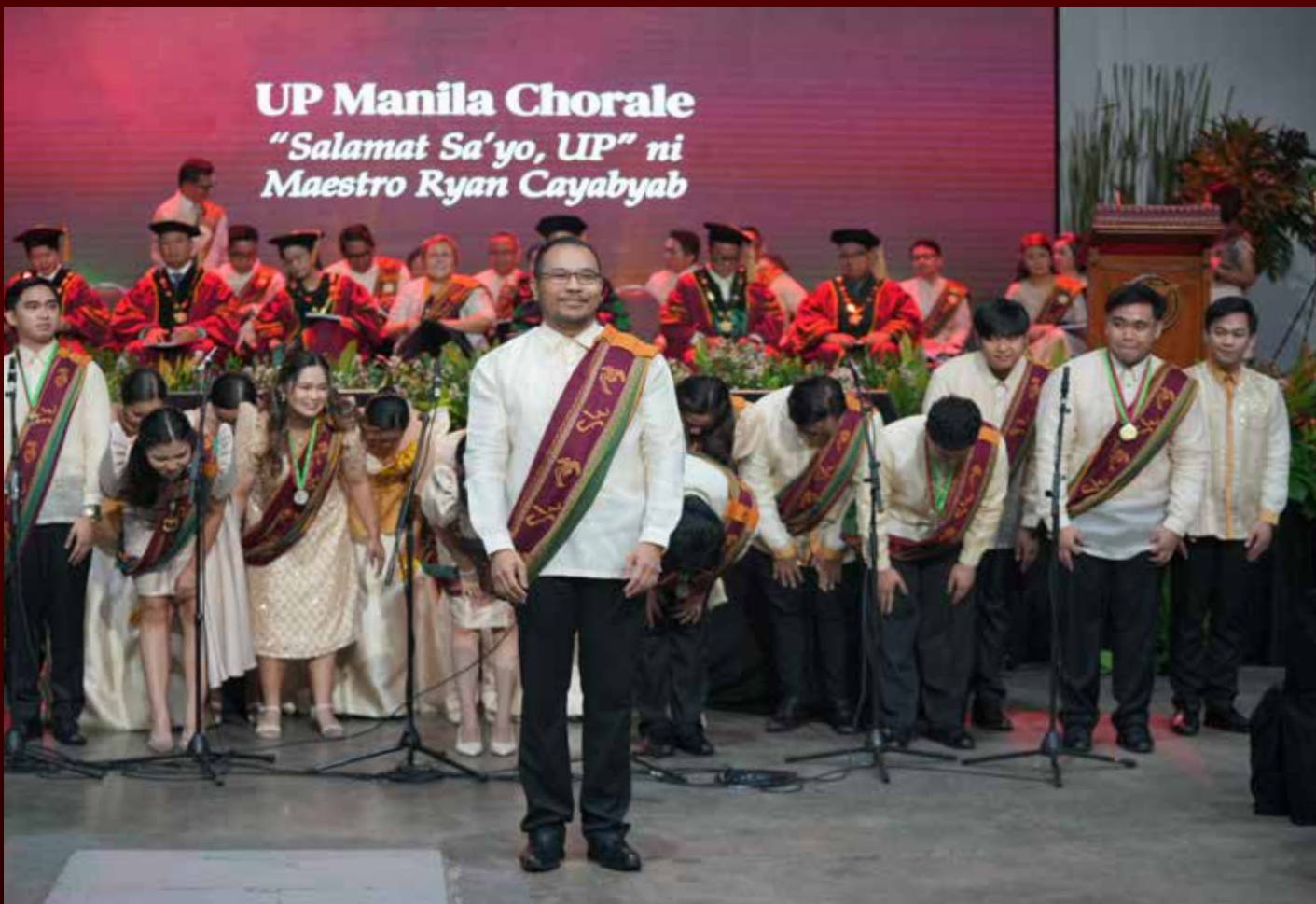
Saligan ng Kahapon — UP Manila was founded to address the urgent health needs of the Filipino people. Originally established in 1905 as the Philippine Medical School, and later becoming the University of the Philippines' Health Sciences Center, our alma mater has always had a clear purpose: to train health professionals who would serve and heal the nation. Over the decades, we have grown into a leading influence in health education, research, and public service. Our countrymen look up to us because we uphold a legacy built on compassion, scientific rigor, and an unyielding commitment to public health. As you graduate, you become part of this proud tradition — shaped by the same mission to care for and uplift the lives of our fellow Filipinos.

Gabay ng Kasalukuyan — We are honored to have been part of your journey. Your teachers, mentors, and parents walked with you every step of the way, providing knowledge, encouragement, and strength. I join you in expressing our gratitude to the faculty and staff. Many of them went beyond the call of duty to guide you. We honor your families, whose sacrifices sustained you through the years. And we must never forget the selfless contribution of every Filipino patient who welcomed you into their lives and treatment journey, becoming essential partners of a UP education.

Tanglaw sa Hinaharap — As you take your next steps beyond our campus, let the education and values you gained serve as your inner light. Let it illuminate your personal journey, and the many others you will meet. Whether you serve as a clinician, researcher, policymaker, educator, or community advocate, understand that your future is tied to the future of our country. Your wisdom, compassion, and leadership have the power to transform lives and help build a more just, inclusive, and healthier nation. Be that ray of hope our people need.

Always, *Iskolar ng Bayan*, **SERVE** the Filipino with **HONOR** and **EXCELLENCE**.

Dr. Michael L. Tee
Professor and Chancellor







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Dr. Bernadette Heizel D. Manapat-Reyes

Welcome Remarks

Sa ating pangunahing taga-pagsalita, Professor Emeritus Ma. Serena Diokno, sa mga kagalang-galang na miyembro ng lupon ng mga regente, na pinangungunahan ni Chairperson Shirley Agruppis,

Ang pangulo ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, Atty. Angelo Jimenez, kasama ng kanyang mga opisyal National Scientist Dr. Carmencita Padilla. Sa aming Tsanselor, Prof. Michael L. Tee, at ang kanyang mga opisyal. Mga minahamahal naming mga guro at staff sa UP Manila - isang magandang araw.

Sa labas, parang unos ang ulan at baha ngunit dito hindi matatawaran ang kasiyahan ng ating mga magsisipagtapos at kanilang mga mahal sa buhay. Sa inyong lahat, isang mas magandang araw. Sana po mabawi ng inyong kaligayahan ang lumbay ng panahon.

Palagi kong nakikita sa mga graduation posts ang katagang “malayo pa, pero malayo na.” Ngayong araw na ito, ipinagdiriwang natin ang layo na inyo nang naabot.

Alam naming mahirap ang inyong mga pinagdaanan mula pa sa simula – walang UPCAT, pabago-bagong systema ng online classes, limited onsite classes, blended classes at kung anu-ano pang flexible arrangements batay sa quarantine status. Siguro, kung may isang salita na maglalarawan sa inyong university journey, ito ay ang salitang “uncertainty”. Nagsimula kayo sa UP sa panahon na walang kasiguraduhan, at ngayon ay magtatapos sa

isang pagdiriwang na hanggang kaninang umaga ay hindi natin mawari kung matutuloy nga.

Pero nandito na kayo – nakapag-buo ng sablay mula sa mga hinabing kuwento ng inyong personal na kasaysayan. Kaya naman ang pagtitipong ito ay para sa bawa’t isa sa inyo. Marahil sa iba, ang pabubuo ng sablay ay naging madali o maalwan. Ngunit alam namin na sa marami, ang sablay ay gawa sa mga retaso ng pangarap na pilit pinagtahi-tahi ng pagod, ng puyat at ng luha.

Nakita naming ang inyong paghihirap.

Nakita namin kayo na ang problema ay kung aabot pa ang load para sa susunod na online class o kung makakapag-exam dahil walang katiyakan ang internet connection.

Nakita namin kayong nag-alala dahil walang kasiguraduhan kung may pamasaha ba para makapasok sa susunod na araw.

Nakita namin kayong nagtitiyaga sa noodles o kanin na may sabaw dahil tinitipid ang budget dahil walang kasiguraduhan kung kailan darating ang stipend o ang allowance.

Nakita naming ang hirap sa pagkawalay sa pamilya lalo na kung sa bawa’t buwan walang kasiguraduhan kung may pangbayad sa dorm.

Nakita namin ang pagtitiyagang pumasok sa night classes matapos ang isang buong araw ng trabaho, kahit alam na may naghihintay pang gawaing bahay pagkatapos ng klase.

Nakita namin kayong pagdikit-dikitin ang mga hibla ng inyong paghihirap upang mabuo ang inyong mga pangarap.

Isang kasiguraduhan ng mai-aalay naming sa inyo ngayong araw na ito – sa paglilipat ng inyong sablay mamaya, masasabi ninyo na malayo na. Malayo na. Sa inyong naabot, sana ay pagnilayan ninyo kung sino ba ang inyong



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Graphic Production and Design
UP Manila Office

mga naging saligan at gabay, at sana, bago matapos ang araw na ito, mayakap ninyo sila ng mahigpit, o masabi ninyo sa kanila ang inyong pasasalamat.

Huwag sana ninyong kalimutan ang mga taong inyong nakasalamuha sa loob at labas ng classroom, sa ospital or komunidad, na nag-ambag din sa pagyabong ng inyong kaalaman.

Mga magulang at minamahal ng aming mga graduates – maraming salamat sa pagtitiwala ninyo sa amin sa UP Manila upang maitawid ang inyong mga anak. Maraming salamat sa inyong pagpupunyagi upang sila’y masuportahan, maski minsan ang kapalit nito ay ang lungkot ng inyong pagkawalay. Marahil meron po sa inyo na bumitaw sa sariling pangarap para maisakatuparan ang pangarap ng mahal ninyo sa buhay. Tumayo po kayong lahat – ang araw na ito ay tagumpay ninyo din. Ang kanila pong diploma

ay diploma ninyo rin. Sa araw na ito, pinagbubuklod po kayong lahat ng isang bagay – kayo pong lahat ay may UP graduate na.

Sa aming minamahal na guro, maraming salamat sa walang humpay na adjustment para sa ating mga graduates. Nagsimula tayo sa online learning na walang katiyakan kung magiging effective ba ang ating mga ginagawa pero naitawid din natin sila. Maraming salamat sa inyong pang-unawa at dedikasyon.

Sa ating mga staff, maraming salamat sa inyong patuloy na paglilingkod sa ating mga mag-aaral, mula laboratory hanggang dito. Alam kong ilan sa inyo ay naging sandigan din nila. Salamat at kahit mahirap lumusong sa baha, narito kayo dahil kailangan nila kayo.

Gusto ko sanang sabihin na tapos na lahat ng mahirap pero alam nating lahat na hindi ito totoo. Magkakaroon pa din ng mga buhol ang hibla ng inyong mga kuwento. Sa mga pagkakataong mangyari ito, sana maalala ninyo na malayo na ang nakamit ninyo. Kayo na naghabi ng sablay na nasa balikat ninyo ngayon ay mas may kakayahan isakatuparan ang mas marami pang pangarap.

Nawa’y sa mas marami ninyo pang pangarap, maisama ninyo hindi lamang ang inyong mga mahal sa buhay, kundi pati na rin ang bayan.

Malayo ka na, iskolar ng bayan. Padayon sa malayo mo pang maaring abutin.





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John Paul S. Cristobal

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

Abot-abot.

Ito ang unang salitang Ilokano na natutuhan ko. Hindi “Agyaman nak!” o “Salamat!” Hindi rin “ragsak” na narinig na natin sa 2020 ABS-CBN Christmas ID. At hindi rin “ngarod” na kailan lamang ay naging sikat sa social media. Ang unang salitang Ilokano na natutuhan ko ay abot, o sa Filipino ay nangangahulugang butas.

Tuwing isinasama ako ni Nanay, ang aking Lola, sa bukid, hindi patag na lupa ang nilalakaran namin. Palagi kaming may nadadaanang mga *abot* o yung mga tuyong putik—mga butas na mula sa mga bakas ng paa na naiwan ng mga naunang naglakad sa sakahan.

Limang taon lamang ako noon. Tanda ko pa kung paano namin bagtasin ni Nanay ang malawak na bukid papunta sa kaniyang gulayan. “Tignan mo yung mga *abot*, yung mga butas,” sabi ni Nanay. Paalala ito na mag-ingat. Kapag naapakan kasi iyon, maaari kang matapilok. At dahil marami ang mga butas na ito, kalaunan, tinawag ko itong *abot-abot*.

Pero para sa akin, hindi lamang ito butas sa putik. Para itong tanda na may nauna na. May landas nang nilakaran—may dinaanan. At sa bawat abot na iniwasan ko, natututo akong mag-ingat. Natututo akong sumunod.

Nang pumunta ako sa Maynila, akala ko naiwan ko na ang bukid. Pero hindi pala. Iba lang ang itsura nito: mas maraming gusali, mas maraming ilaw, mas maraming posibilidad, pero marami rin palang *abot*. Ngunit sa pagkakataong ito, mas malalaki at mas malalalim ang mga butas.

Butas sa pagkatao.

Butas sa batas.

Butas sa sistema.

Ang mas nakakatakot pa ay ang mga *abot* na ito ay hindi natutuyo, kundi lalo pang lumalalim habang tumatagal. Hindi tulad ng putik sa bukid na dinaanan namin ni Nanay na tinuyo ng araw, ang mga butas dito ay tila pinapalalim ng kahirapan.

At sa buhay ko rito sa Maynila, hindi ko kasama si Nanay. Hindi ko alam kung saan dadaan at saan tatapak sa panibagong lugar na ito. Pero may naging gabay ako— ang mga aral na ikinintal sa akin ng UP Manila.

Ang kaibahan nga lang sa itinuro sa akin ng UP kumpara sa itinuro sa akin ni Nanay ay huwag ko raw iwasan ang mga *abot* na ito. Bagkus, turo ng UP sa akin na silipin, tapakan, punan, at tanungin: Bakit may butas? Bakit malalim ang butas? Bakit kailangang takpan ang butas?

Sa apat na taon kong nag-aral sa UP Manila, marami akong natutuhan. Kung sa probinsiya, lalabas ako na mga palay ang unang na bubungad sa paligid ko; sa UP Manila, lalabas ako ng CAS Gate o mga gate sa Pedro Gil na halo-halong eksena ang sasalubong— mga maglalako ng mga iba’t ibang produkto, mga nag-ra-rally, at mga pasyente ng PGH.

Hindi ako kabilang sa mga naunang pumasa ng UPCAT. Hindi ako napunta sa UP Diliman na siyang first choice ko. Pero dinala ako ng oportunidad sa UP Manila— kung saan sa halip na Sunken Garden, ang tanawin ko ay ang mga tindero’t tinderang araw-araw lumalaban para mabuhay, ang mga placard na humihiyaw ng katarungan, at ang mga mata ng mga pasyenteng nangangailangan. Dito, napagtanto kong may dahilan kung bakit sa UP Manila tayo ipinunta ng ating mga paa.

Itinuro sa atin ng UP Manila ang husay, dangal, at serbisyo. Ang motong ito ang naging gabay natin para tayo ay mas maging matatapang at matatalino. Mataas ang ekspektasyon sa atin ng bayan dahil hindi lang tayo basta nagtapos— tayo ay pinili, pinaglaanan, at pinagkatiwalaan. Minsan nakakatakot ang ekspektasyon na ganito. Pero kung tatanungin niyo ako kung ano ang mas nakakatakot? Ito yung lumabas sa unibersidad na walang konsensiya. Nakakatakot lumabas na may husay pero manhid. Nakakatakot lumabas nang may dangal pero walang pakialam. Nakakatakot ito dahil maraming mga kapwa natin ang nahihirapan at nagtitiis sa sobrang bulok na sistema.

Alam natin ang pakiramdam ng maghirap at magtiis. Dahil bilang mga mag-aaral, minsang natapilok na rin tayo sa ilang butas na ating nadaanan sa loob ng ating pamantasan. Iba't ibang uri ng paghihirap at pagtitiis ang ating naranasan. Ang ilang mag-aaral ng white colleges ay naghirap— naghirap magbayad ng multa dala ng pasakit ng RSA. Ang mga mag-aaral ng KAS ay nagtiis— nagtiis sa masikip na espasyo ng Rizal Hall. At kung mas mahaba pa ang daan, panigurado, marami ang hindi lang natapilok, kundi nalugmok sa mas malalim na butas.

At ito ang sagot sa tanong na bakit kailangang takpan ang butas. Kailangan nating takpan ang butas dahil alam natin kung gaano kahirap ang malaglag doon— at higit sa lahat, alam natin na hindi lahat ay may kakayahang makaahon.

Mga kapwa kong Iskolar ng Bayan, kailangan nating maging matatapang at mahusay, ngunit higit pa roon, kailangan nating maging makatao. Taong may malasakit. Taong may konsensiya.

Sa seremonyang ito ng ating pagtatapos na may temang, "Saligan ng Kahapon, Gabay ng Kasalukuyan, Tanglaw sa Hinaharap," ang ating mga iba't ibang bersiyon ng Nanay, ang ating mga guro, at silang mga nakita natin sa labas ng ating campus ang saligan ng ating kahapon. Sila ang mga paang nauna nang humakbang sa daan at ating sinundan. Salamat sa inyo.

Nais ko na ring kunin ang oportunidad na ito para pasalamatan ang aking mga mahal sa buhay. Salamat sa aking Papa Pulon. Hindi malaki ang kinikita mo, pero nabigyan mo pa rin kami ng maayos na buhay nina Jaztine at Prince. Bukod sa pag-aayos ng aircon, nagpasada ka pa ng tricycle, nag-alaga ng baboy, at nagpapatanim sa bukid. Papa, bilib ako sa diskarte at sipag mo. At kay mama naman, wala na akong ibang masasabi sa tiyaga at kabaitan mo. Maganda ka na nga, sobrang sipag at bait mo pa. Naks! Sa pamilya Salarzon at Cristobal; sa aking mga kaibigan— kay Crizia, Andrei, Borbs, Rea, Mycha, Jomel, Russel, Venz, at Honeyeth; sa aking mga kaklase sa PhilArts, lalo na kay Hya at Tine, maraming salamat sa suporta at tiwala na ibinigay niyo saakin. At kay Vem, salamat dahil naging kasama kita sa paglalakbay na ito, proud ako sayo palagi.

Ngayon, tayo na ang nasa kasalukuyan. Sana, sa bawat hakbang natin palabas ng unibersidad na ito, dala natin hindi lang ang pangalan ng UP sa ating mga diploma— kundi ang kamalayang may nakita at may naunawaan.

At kung tunay ngang may nakita at naunawaan tayo, hindi natin sila dapat iwan. Dapat, samahan natin sila at alamin pa ang kanilang mga istorya— sa laban nila para sa makataong sahod, sa karapatan sa edukasyon, sa maayos na serbisyong pangkalusugan, at sa panawagan ng hustisya. At alam niyo kung ano ang ating magiging tanglaw sa hinaharap? Ito ay isang lipunan na hindi na natin kailangang may maghirap at magtiis pa.

At ngayon, sa ating pagtatapos, tayo na ang bagong paa na huhulma ng landas. Sana ay hindi ito daan na may mga *abot* na delikado, kundi isang daan na malalakaran ng mga susunod nang walang pag-aalinlangan.

Agyaman nak, UP Manila!









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UP Dentistry Class of 2025 with a Perseverance

Text by Charmaine

Photos by Sarah Haze



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y Honors the a Message of Hope, , and Service

aine A. Lingdas

I Moces S. Pulumbarit



The University of the Philippines College of Dentistry (UPCD) honored the achievements of its graduating students in a heartfelt Recognition Ceremony held on July 17, 2025, at the UPCD Auditorium, UP Manila, with the theme "Paglaom: Bunga ng Pagsisikap, Binhi ng Serbisyong Makatao." Paglaom meaning hope, the event embodied both celebration and optimism for the future of Philippine oral health care.

This year, the College produced a total of forty-one graduates: thirty-seven Doctor of Dental Medicine, one Certificate of Proficiency in Orthodontics, and three Master of Science in Dentistry in Orthodontics.

"Ang pag-asang ito ang nagtulak sa inyong lahat upang kayo ay patuloy na nagsikap, lumaban, para marating ang araw na ito," said College of Dentistry Dean Dr. Michelle Sunico-Segarra in her opening remarks. She recognized the dedication and hard work of the 2025 graduates, noting that 19 of them are now licensed dentists, with one securing the third-highest spot in the recent dental licensure examination. She emphasized UP's consistent track record of excellence, highlighted by a 100% passing rate and top-performing examinees year after year.

Dean Segarra reflected on the state of oral health in the country, pointing out that despite the numerous continuing dental education programs available, the rate of oral diseases in the Philippines remains alarmingly high

among the highest in the Southeast Asian region. She posed a critical question to the profession: while UPCD excels at serving their peers and advancing the field, does that necessarily translate to effectively serving the broader population?

"As graduates of the country's national university, makataong serbisyo—humane service—to help decrease the caries rate among our countrymen should be part of our mandate," she emphasized the values of public service that define a UP education in her message to the Class of 2025.

UP President Atty. Angelo A. Jimenez echoed the same sentiment. He emphasized the urgent need to strengthen oral health care in the country, pointing out that the recommended dentist-to-population ratio is 1:50,000, yet in 2023 the actual ratio was 1:59,099, based on data from DOH and LGU-employed dentists. He noted that around 80 million Filipinos suffer from dental caries, among the highest rates globally and acknowledged the persistent challenges, including limited access to services, the concentration of dental professionals in urban areas, and the migration of talent abroad. He also underscored the reality that many people only seek dental care when the pain becomes unbearable.

"Be the hope that serves communities with skill, compassion, and humility. Be the hope that fights for



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accessible, preventive, and quality oral health care not just in clinics, but in barangays and schools, and homes,” he said.

The event honored outstanding graduates who demonstrated excellence in various clinical disciplines:

Dr. Cassandra Lalaine Allunan – Natatanging Parangal sa Periodontics

Dr. Patricia Angelica Gloria – Natatanging Parangal sa Oral Surgery

Maria Therese Kirsten Rivera –
Natatanging Parangal sa Fixed Partial Prosthodontics
Natatanging Parangal sa Operative Dentistry
Natatanging Parangal sa Complete Dentures
Pagkilala sa Ondontolohiyang Pangkomunidad

Dr. Maria Samantha Tan – Natatanging Parangal sa Removable Partial Dentistry (RPD)

Representing the graduating class, Dr. Maria Samantha C. Tan delivered a heartfelt speech filled with gratitude and optimism. She reflected on the meaning of hope as a product of perseverance through adversity, particularly during the challenges of the pandemic and dental training. She emphasized that hope is not merely wishful thinking, but a conscious decision to keep going despite

uncertainty—and that unity among batchmates made this hope even more powerful. Acknowledging the realities of a broken healthcare system and the struggles faced by patients, she urged her fellow graduates to carry forward their UP education with compassion and a deep commitment to serve.

“Hope may not always be strong enough to outweigh the burdens of the real world. During those times, we must keep moving forward—not just out of hope, but out of necessity. We keep going because of the families and communities that depend on us. And now, we leave as graduates of the UP College of Dentistry—ready to share that hope with the world through our practice,” she said.

In her closing remarks, Dr. Marie Rossini Carmela T. Lachica, assistant professor, Department of Clinical Dental Health Sciences, underscored that a UP education is a gift funded by the Filipino public, and urged the new dentists to never forget their roots, to serve with conscience, and to always find their way back to the nation that raised them. She shared a powerful personal story from her time at PGH treating an indigent cancer patient who offered her last fifty pesos in gratitude.

“That patient changed me. She reminded me of the most important lesson UP has taught me—and that is to serve. Yes, we are dentists, but more importantly, we are *dentista para sa bayan*.”





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Dr. Maria Samantha C. Tan

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

To UP President Atty. Angelo Jimenez, our Chancellor, Dr. Michael Tee, our Dean, Dr. Michelle Segarra, our Vice Chancellors - Dr. Bernadette Heizel Reyes, Dr. Leslie Dalmacio, Dr. Jose Tecson III, Dr. Johanna Patricia Cañal, University Registrar Jean Flor Casauay, faculty, non-academic personnel, parents, and fellow graduates of the Class of 2025, good morning.

Before I go any further, I'd like to make a little disclaimer: I am a very emotional person. In fact the challenge for me today is to get through this speech without my eyes turning into a faucet. When I first learned that I had the honor of speaking before all of you today, it took me quite a while to figure out what I really wanted to say. It wasn't easy—there's just so much to reflect on, and even more to look forward to. But as I stand here now, looking out at my fellow batchmates, each of us about to take different paths into the future, one feeling rises above all the rest: a strong and undeniable sense of hope. So, let us first put hope into context. What exactly does it mean to us graduates?

I believe that hope is far more than just wishful thinking. Hope exists because of the decision to persevere in the midst of adversity.

It is not handed to us; rather, it is something we build for ourselves. Hope is the product of years of hard work, long nights, and yes, lots of tears, throughout our stay in the UP College of Dentistry.

Hope and Uncertainty

Hope walks hand in hand with uncertainty. While we yearn and strive towards success, the truth is—there's no guarantee we'll ever truly arrive at it. For all of us, the pandemic was a time of great uncertainty. The shift to online learning was undoubtedly one of the biggest challenges faced by students and teachers alike; from learning how to perform an access prep online, to setting up home laboratories.

For those who were in the clinics, clouds of doubt and confusion loomed overhead—because how could one gain proper clinical experience without seeing patients? Yet, here we stand today, the Graduating Class of 2025. We persevered through all the uncertainty that the pandemic brought because we had hope. We continued to work despite the mental, emotional, and physical struggles that those times brought because we had hope that slowly but surely, we were inching our way towards our goal. What lies ahead of each of us as we leave this school and enter the “real world” is still a path laden with hurdles and unpredictability, but it is this uncertainty that forces us to be hopeful.

Hope Compels us to Serve

However, what might prove to be even more difficult is staying hopeful when we know what the “real world” is truly like—when we have a patient who can't make it to their appointments “kasi walang pamasaha”, or who can't miss work because “no work, no pay,” or patients who would rather have all their teeth extracted because they don't have the money for root canals and proper restorations. This brings me to my next point— even when facing a broken healthcare system, abounding with corruption and misallocation of funds, we must remain hopeful; because without hope, what is the point? Hope is what shall propel us to do good work in the service of others. Hope does not stop with personal triumph; more than just hoping for success for ourselves, we hope and persevere for society—the family that supports us, the friends waiting to get free cleanings, and most importantly the community counting on us, expecting service no less than excellent.

Our UP education has prepared us to provide our community with service that goes beyond just fixing teeth; it is service charged with compassion and understanding.



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Hope Unites Us

But throughout my entire college experience, one of the most important realizations I've come to is that hope is rarely built alone; when shared, it becomes transformative and its impact is multiplied tenfold. Tough exams, patient cancellations, lack of chair time— were all challenges overcome with the help of our batchmates and friends. The recently concluded board exam season further strengthened this realization of mine. Each day spent studying together with my boards batchmates truly made me feel how we leaned on one another through our shared struggle.

I have learned that hope gives us strength, but it is unity that makes that hope powerful enough to overcome obstacles that are seemingly unsurmountable on our own.

Today, we celebrate hope that has been hard earned and well-deserved, and we acknowledge that it is now up to us to share this hope among each other and with others in our community.

Acknowledgement

Now, speaking of community, I think it's time we acknowledge the village that got us all to this point. Firstly, to the faculty and administration, who, just like us, weathered the pandemic, navigated through changes in curriculum, and faced various struggles unknown to us students. A special mention goes out to those teachers who left us with lessons that went far beyond the classroom, or clinics, for that matter, and helped shape our very character.

A huge thank you goes out to all our ayes and kuyas, who worked behind the scenes yet were of utmost importance during our stay at the college— Ate Rose who received our daily Zus coffee and dental material deliveries; to our kuyas who work in the lab and clinics, I cannot mention all your names, pero hindi talaga kami makakatapos ngayon kung hindi dahil sa tulong ninyo. Special mention to the Prostho and Resto kuyas, Kuya Joe, Alfred, Jon, and Melvin, dahil sa inyo, nag-graduate ako na hindi pa rin magaling mag-mount ng cast sa CD! Pero pwera biro, maraming salamat sa lahat ng tulong ninyo, sa mga usapan nating nakakagaan

ng loob, at sa mga meriendang laging nagpapasaya sa mga araw ko sa school. And of course, how could I have possibly gone through everyday life in dentistry school without the help of my friends— my O.G.'s: Pau, Kat, Karl, and the upper batch who wholeheartedly adopted us into their barkada— Mica, Cass, Mika, Aubs, Twina, Eids, Jen, and Alex. Our everyday lunches on the bleachers of the main lounge filled with rant sessions, chismisan, and sometimes tears were often the best parts of my days in school. Thank you for the friendship that I know will last long after we've all stepped out of the gates of UP.

To my 18 boards batchmates turned friends and now colleagues, I have never felt us more united in both struggle and spirit than during those six months. Thank you for the encouraging and supportive environment that we built together. Special mention to my tough six review-mates— isang anemic, isang walang gallbladder, isang walang appendix... Thank you for such good friendship I never expected to find during such a stressful time.

And of course to my Camello and Tan family, who supported me through every step of the way, thank you for all the prayers and for dealing with all my many many meltdowns. Believe it or not, I was never forced into dentistry— yes, I brought this upon myself willingly! To my parents, thank you for holding my hand through the pandemic uncertainty, all the frustrations, hardships, and unforeseen delays. I am so lucky to be your daughter. I hope I have made you

proud of the person I have become. To my one and only favorite sister, thank you for being a daily source of inspiration and laughter. Growing up was so much easier with someone like you to look up to. To Darren, who has been by my side since my very first visit to Sta Clara when I failed my resto practical exam all those years ago... finally magkakasweldo na ako, baka malilibre na kita minsan!

And lastly, to God, whose plans for us often go far beyond our understanding. Thank You Lord, because none of this would be possible without you.

I'll end this speech with a reminder to my batchmates that hope may not always be strong enough to outweigh the load of our "real world" struggles. During these times, we must remind ourselves to keep moving forward, not out of hope anymore, but out of necessity; we keep going because of the family and community that depend on us. When unavoidably dealt with injustice and unfairness, we must remind ourselves that we cannot hope for better things if we do not take action ourselves. We stand here today because of the hope that carried us through every challenge— and now, we leave as graduates of the UP College of Dentistry, ready to share that hope to the world through our practice.

Congratulations, Class of 2025!



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Dr. Marie Rossini Carmela T. Lachica

Closing Remarks

Sa ating mahal na Presidente at Panauhing Tagapagsalita, Atty. Angelo Jimenez, sa Kawani ng Unibersidad at Lupon ng mga Rehente. Atty. Roberto MJ Lara, at sa mga UP System Officials, Tsanselor Michael Tee, sa mga Bise-Tsanselor ng UP Manila at iba pang UP Manila officials, Dean Michelle Segarra at pamununan ng Kolehiyo ng Dentistri, mga kapwa ko guro ng kolehiyo, mga kawani, at higit sa lahat sa mga kinikilala ngayong umagang ito at sa kanilang mga mahal sa buhay, - isang maganda at mapagpalayang umaga po sa inyong lahat.

Ngayong umaga, natunghayan natin ang pagpaparangal sa mga magsisipagtapos mula sa Kolehiyo ng Dentistri —ang mga nagsumikap, nagpursige, at ngayon ay narito, nakangiti, may katunayan ng pagtatapos, at may dalang panibagong pag-asa.

Alam natin lahat na hindi madali ang kursong ito. Dentistry, especially in UP, is not for the faint of heart. Ang mga magsisipagtapos na ito ay dumaan sa maraming mga gabing walang tulog, napakaraming requirements, pagtanggig ng pasyente, pag papaulit-ulit ng gawain sa clinics at lahat ng bigat at pressure na kaakibat ng pasisikap gawing pinakamahusay ang bawat case discussion, pasta, linis, bunot at pustiso.

But despite all that—they made it. Guys, you made it! And what you have gained through this journey is not just a degree, you've earned something deeper: a sense of purpose.

The hardships that you went through—bunga ng pagsisikap—will now become the binhi ng serbisyong makatao.

Pahintulutan po ninyo ako na ibahagi ang aking sariling karanasan bilang isang bagong dentista, more than a

decade ago, na nawa'y kapulutan ng aral at magsilbing paalala para sa ating mga magsisipagtapos.

When I graduated, I was recruited to work in a prestigious, multi-specialty dental center—one that served the highest echelon of society. The clinic was equipped with the most advanced dental technology—far from the humble clinics we were trained in UP. Patients didn't ask about prices and they paid a premium for every service rendered. As a fresh graduate, I remember charging 5-figures for a tooth extraction – more than what I believed I deserved, and certainly, more than what my own brilliant teachers were charging at that time.

I remember being asked by patients, "Magaling ka ba? Saan ka ba graduate?" And with pride, I would answer, "Sa UP po." That answer, I realized, carried weight. It carried trust. It reassured. It impressed and sometimes, it was all the patient needed to proceed with treatment.

I fulfilled my two-year contract in that clinic, but something in me remained unsettled. I then went on to apply at the Hospital Dentistry Externship Program in UP-PGH. From high-end chairs and digital scanners, I returned to the basics. From patients who didn't blink at thousands of pesos worth of dental fees, I came back to indigent patients who had to secure guarantee letters from PCSO or DSWD just to be treated.

I have many PGH stories to share but let me tell you about this particular one. That day I was assigned on duty to treat medically compromised patients who would usually require dental clearance. These are patients with tumors or medical conditions that general practitioners would not regularly treat in their private clinics.

This particular patient I had was a female who came from a northern province, 9-10 hours away by bus. She told me she lined up at 2am just to make sure she will make it to the cut-off. My patient had cancer in the oropharyngeal area. May malaki po siyang bukol sa leeg and she needed dental clearance prior to radiation. At that time in PGH we would usually do oral prophylaxis, and extraction but we would refer patients for restorations either to private practice or back here to the college. Maybe because I was already 2 years in practice when I went to PGH, I worked

relatively faster than my peers. I would have excess time and what I would usually do is offer restoration or “pasta” to the patients. Yung materials po hinihingi ko po sa clinic ng mommy at daddy ko so there’s no extra charge for the patient.

So I asked my patient if she would consider doing 5 restorations needed so I can already provide her with a dental clearance the same day. The patient agreed. When I finished, I informed the patient, “Ma’am, natapos na po ang mga kailangan treatment” and I handed her dental clearance. The patient thanked me and ask how much she needed to pay for the restorations. I told her “Wala na po bayad ma’am. Sa akin naman po yung gamit at wala na po charge ang PGH.”

The patient was so grateful and insisted to pay for treatment. She opened her wallet and I could see the patient really did not have that much money in her. Probably just enough to pay for bus fare and might not even be enough for a decent meal on the way back home. She reached into her small wallet and offered me 50 pesos. She said, “Doc, kunin n’yo na po ‘to. Pasasalamat ko po sa inyo.”

I explained to her that her “thank you” was enough and that we were not allowed to receive any payment as this was against PGH policy. The patient was very insistent. She was even putting the money in the breast pocket of my scrubsuit. I was so touched with the gesture. I told the patient, “Okay na po ma’am, itago nyo na po yan. Pang bili din po ninyo yan ng pagkain pauwi. Mauuna na po ako may kukunin po ako sa labas.”. Honestly, wala po akong kukunin sa labas. I had to excuse myself dahil tutulo na po luha ko sa harap ng aking pasyente.

You see, at that time, I couldn’t believe how a patient who was poor, who needed money for her cancer treatment and came from a far province would insists on giving me 50 pesos to show her gratitude. It broke me... Because I knew she needed that money more than I did. I couldn’t help but cry in the extern room. When my friend saw me and asked, “What’s wrong?”. All I could say was, “Yung pasyente ko kasi... binibigyan ako ng 50 pesos.”

When I returned to the clinic, the patient had already left. - and the 50 pesos was on my bracket table. Iniwan po talaga nung pasyente yung pera. I couldn’t keep the money for myself so after duty, I went to the PGH chapel, prayed, and dropped the money in the offertory basket. Sabi ko kay Lord: “Grabe Ka, Lord. Pagkatapos Mo akong dalhin sa mga pinaka- mayayaman, dito Mo ako biglang hinatak pabalik ng PGH para makakilala ng mga pasyenteng ganito.” That day changed me. It reminded me of the most important lesson UP taught me: to serve.

Yes, We are dentists. But more importantly, we are mga Dentista para sa Bayan. And our education is a gift—

funded by the people, by the taxes of workers, vendors, farmers, fishermen and the public who believe that someone like you will one day serve them and give back. May you carry with you the same lesson I learned from my patient and that 50-peso bill. A reminder of humility, humanity, and heartfelt service.

Isabuhay ninyo ang karangalang dala ng pagiging taga-UP. Huwag kayong matakot umasenso. Wherever life takes you— whether to posh clinics or rural barangays, to operating rooms or private suites, hospital, government service, research, or abroad - huwag niyong kakalimutang lumingon sa inyong pinanggalingan. At kahit gaano kataas ang marating ninyo, bumalik pa rin kayo—sa sambayanang Pilipino, na siyang dahilan kung bakit kayo narito ngayon.

Bilang pangwakas, Ang pagkilalang ito ngayong umaga ay hindi manyayari at magiging matagumpay kung hindi dahil sa suporta at pagtatrabaho ng mga taong nasa likod nito. Nais ko pasalamatan kayong lahat.

1. To the UP System, under the leadership of President Angelo Jimenez, thank you for your continued support and commitment to honor, excellence, and public service across all UP campuses.
2. To the UP Manila administration, headed by Chancellor Michael Tee, thank you for ensuring that colleges like ours are equipped, empowered, and heard.
3. To the UP College of Dentistry administration, led by Dean Michelle Segarra, thank you for working hard in keeping the mission of UPCD to provide our students world-class dental education and training.
4. To the faculty, thank you for your dedication, patience, and many sacrifices in training the next generation of dentists—not just with skill, but with compassion and conscience.
5. To our administrative staff and personnel, maraming salamat sa inyong sipag, sa araw-araw na pagkalinga sa ating mga estudyante, at sa pagiging haligi ng ating araw-araw na operasyon.
6. To the Graduation Committee, headed by Dr. Joy Memorando-Wilson and Dr Monica Yniguez, thank you for organizing this meaningful and inspiring event. PAGLAOM is more than just a ceremony—it is a symbol of hope and new beginnings.
7. At higit sa lahat, sa mga magulang at mahal sa buhay ng ating mga nagtapos— thank you for your unwavering love, support, and belief in your children. Ang araw na ito ay bunga rin ng inyong sakripisyo.

Muli, sa ating mga kinilala ngayong araw—Maligayang pagbati!

Ang bayan ay naghihintay sa inyo. Paglingkuran ninyo ito nang buong puso.

Mabuhay kayo! Maraming Salamat at magandang umaga po sa ating lahat.





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UPCN Honors in Recognition R Courage, Grit, Hon

Text by Charm

Photos by L



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Class of 2025 Rites Celebrating onor, and Excellence

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The University of the Philippines Manila College of Nursing (UPCN) celebrated the achievements of its graduates during the 2025 Recognition Day held on July 18, 2025, at Cine Adarna, University of the Philippines Diliman. With the theme “Talaghay: Tapang at Tibay, Dangal at Husay,” the ceremony honored the academic accomplishments and unwavering commitment of nursing graduates to serve the Filipino people with compassion, competence, and integrity.

A total of 69 students with the degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing, with 39 earning the distinction of Cum Laude students were recognized. In addition, eight graduates completed the Master of Nursing Education program, while three graduates earned their degrees under the Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing program.

In her message, Dean Shiela Bonito reminded the graduates of their crucial role in the country's healthcare system. “Kilala ang mga Filipinong nurse sa buong mundo sa katangiang ito – mahusay na pagkalinga,” she said. “Ngunit bago pa man kayo kilalanin sa ibang bansa, kailangan muna kayo ng ating bayan — ng ating mga pamayanan, ng ating mga pasyente, at ng ating health system.”

The ceremony also featured former Commission on Audit Commissioner Heidi Mendoza as the guest of honor, who shared an inspiring message on public service

and integrity, drawing from her own experiences in government.

The event also recognized outstanding individuals for their exemplary contributions throughout their academic journey. Trisha Denise T. Siy received the Valedictorian Award, while Christian M. Gartalla was honored with the Leadership Award. The Community Involvement Award was given to Alamina D. Solaiman, and Jesse Cyrille C. Magno received the Best in Clinical Performance Award.

In her valedictory address, Trisha Denise T. Siy reflected on the collective journey of their batch, which began amid the uncertainty of the pandemic. She recalled how they navigated remote learning, clinical duties, and moments of self-doubt, yet continued to persevere. Siy highlighted the values that carried them through—tapang (courage) in facing the unknown, tibay (grit) in overcoming sleepless nights and imposter syndrome, and dangal (honor) in serving patients with compassion despite the challenges of the healthcare system. She also spoke about the setbacks some students faced, emphasizing that failure does not define them, but rather strengthens their character. “We are not defined by how we fall, but by how we rise,” she said. For Siy, husay (excellence) is not found in medals or grades, but in the quiet, consistent effort to do what is right—even when no one is watching.



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She added that as they step into the world beyond those halls, may they never forget: “The courage to begin in uncertainty. The resilience to brave challenges and keep going when it gets hard. The honor of serving with our whole selves. And the excellence of giving our best, even when it feels like it’s not enough.”

Christopher M. Padua delivered a speech on behalf of Class 2025 offering a heartfelt reflection on the shared journey of the nursing batch that began during the height of the pandemic. He recalled how their connections started online—through group chats, profile photos, and virtual discussions—and eventually deepened through real-world clinical and community experiences.

Padua traced their evolution from students learning with pillows and family members as mock patients at home, to confidently navigating the wards of PGH, communities in Cavite, and high-pressure hospital duties. He acknowledged the hardships—academic pressure, personal struggles, grief, self-doubt—and the strength found in camaraderie, compassion, and quiet endurance. He paid tribute to their instructors, peers, communities, and especially their families, whose unseen sacrifices made their success possible.

“Ngayon, malapit na nating makamit ang dalawang titik na pinangarap natin: RN. Pero higit sa anumang titulong iyon, natamo natin ang mas mahalaga: Pagkatao.

Malasakit. Tapang. At Puso,” he said, underscoring that beyond credentials, it is their humanity that defines them.

In his closing remarks, Asst. Prof. Earl Francis Sumile said that earning a bachelor’s degree marks a significant achievement that brings pride to the entire community. It reflects the effort, energy, and emotion students have poured into their journey—both within and beyond the esteemed walls of Sotejo Hall. Throughout this journey, they were fortunate to be guided not only by dedicated faculty, but also by the patients who became their teachers.

“Remember the shared lessons and use them to guide you in your next steps. Find time for prayer and trust God, our creator. Commit to our ideals of “Manus, Caput, and Cor”. Manus - Hands with a caring touch that builds people up. Caput - a mind that is sharp, scientific, and seeks the common good. Cor - a heart full of joy, courage, and kindness, willing to serve the people in ways above and beyond,” he added.

The event reaffirmed UPCN’s commitment to nurturing excellence, leadership, and service in nursing education. It served as both a celebration and a formal send-off for the graduates as they prepare to enter or continue their professional journeys in local and global healthcare systems.



Trisha Denise T. Siy

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

To our esteemed guest speaker, Ms. Heidi L. Mendoza, the Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Manila, Dr. Michael L. Tee, Dean Sheila R. Bonito, the faculty and staff of the UP College of Nursing, beloved families, friends, guests, and of course, my fellow graduates, the UPCN Class of 2025, a blessed morning to you all.

We made it. How powerful and meaningful these words sound after everything we have been through.

Our journey for the past years has been paved with struggles and adversities, and for that, this is not just a celebration of achievement but of resilience, all of which would not have happened without the support of family, friends, and mentors alike.

First and foremost, to God Almighty, thank you for guiding us every step of the way, for being our constant in the chaos. You witnessed the silent battles no one else did, heard the unspoken prayers whispered in exhaustion and fear, and met us with comfort when we were at our lowest. You saw the hopes hidden deep in our hearts and gave us the strength to keep going, even when the way forward seemed unclear. Every hurdle we crossed, every moment of breakthrough, and every step of growth we've taken – all of it was only possible through Your grace. Thank You for writing this path for each of us and for carrying us through it all, especially when we didn't have the strength to walk it ourselves.

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to my parents and my sister for being my steadfast rock through it all. Thank you for your countless sacrifices over the years that you never asked to be recognized for – from the time spent driving me to the hospital those early mornings, for lending your ears to listen to my problems and sharing

words of advice, to your hands that wiped my tears and your hugs that comforted me. From you, I learned that success can only be achieved through discipline, commitment, and consistency. Yet, you never fail to shower me with compassion and encouragement in my darkest moments, being my biggest cheerleaders and making me feel safe, knowing you are always there to catch me when I fall. I stand here because of your unceasing belief and support, your inspiring example over the years, and your unwavering love. This achievement is dedicated to you.

To parents and family members here today, thank you for being our silent strength. Your support gave us courage, your faith in us made us feel like we are capable of conquering any challenge, and we would never have reached these milestones if not for you.

To our UPCN professors, instructors, and mentors, we are grateful for the lessons you have taught us, both inside and beyond the four walls of the classroom, for your patient guidance and tutelage, and yes, even for pushing us beyond our limits, teaching us not only how to think but how to care. Rest assured, we will endeavor to remember all these learnings and carry these values with us in our journey to being future nurse leaders the Filipino people need.

To my fellow graduates, I have seen how much we have come together as 69 of us learned to help one another, bring each other up, and stand as one, and it is truly what made the past five years so meaningful. Special mention to my Vital Nine who have stood by me since day one and who I couldn't be more thankful to be ending this chapter with. UPCN Class of 2025, thank you for the laughter that eased the tears, the shared struggles that lightened the burden, and the beautiful memories and lasting friendships I'll treasure forever, proving that you don't get through BS Nursing alone, but together.

Our batch started this new chapter of our lives under a veil of darkness. The pandemic stripped away the exciting experiences and rituals of normal college life – the chatter of lecture halls, the buzz of learning skills in person, and the warmth of striking new friendships face-to-face. In its place were screens, silence, and solitude.



Amidst these unprecedented times, courage was born not from certainty but from stepping into the unknown. When the world paused, we pressed on. Though afraid, we rose to the occasion. Though unsure, knowing success is not guaranteed, we showed up and faced these challenges head on. The pandemic reinforced that life is unpredictable, fragile, yet also so precious, and our choice to serve, to care, and to continue in spite of all that is the purest display of courage – tapang, our first act as light forged in darkness.

Even as we braved the new normal, new tests of our fortitude arose beyond four walls of the classroom. During OSCEs, first clinical duties, and in late-night sobs over unfinished nursing care plans we didn't even know if we were doing right, came new fears of imposter syndrome - Am I good enough? Do I belong here? Yet, despite the doubt, we persisted. This is tibay – grit. The kind that enabled us to stand before patients with trembling hands and still do what needed to be done. The kind that turned sleepless nights into mastery of skills, changed breakdowns into breakthroughs, and turned moments of difficulty into sweet milestones of our journey. We experienced the joy of mastering a skill during labs, the fulfillment of performing appropriate interventions that led to checking GOAL MET on the nursing care plan, and the unforgettable moment when the patient says thank you for all you've done – all of which made the struggles worth it. Strength of heart, formed not in ease, but in quiet endurance, was born from overcoming seemingly insurmountable challenges that didn't break us. Ultimately, it gave us the confidence to handle whatever future adversities we may face.

Nevertheless, the journey did not stop there. Then came third year, arguably the hardest crucible we had to face. Our frequent clinical and community rotations exposed us firsthand to the realities of our country's healthcare system – the scarcity of resources, the weight of human suffering, the perceptions and attitudes of the Filipino people towards health, and the quiet but constant undervaluing of nurses.

There were days when
empathy felt like a
burden, when we felt the
overwhelming weight of
responsibility we bear,
when the system felt too
broken to fix.

But beyond that, we learned that our uniforms are more than white fabric, but a symbol of dangal – honor. We show up not for applause, but to impact the lives of our patients. Not to be praised, but to be present. Even when no one sees, even when no one thanks us, we sought to do what is right, serving with compassion, care, and integrity above all, because our patients deserve nothing less.

A photograph of three young people, two men and one woman, wearing traditional UP Manila uniforms (tan shirts with maroon and gold sashes). They are all smiling and waving their hands towards the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

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For some of us, the journey included delays – repeating a rotation, retaking a course, and sitting with failure. These moments – our lowest of lows – felt heavy, even shameful, hurting our pride. They placed us at crossroads that tested our honor based on our response – do we resort to pointing fingers, placing blame, and wallowing in anger and bitterness at our situation...or do we accept these failures with grace, choosing to see them not as endings but as refinements of character.

Delays in life don't mean we are inferior or less than others. Setbacks don't diminish our worth; rather, they deepen our wisdom, helping us to become better versions of ourselves. We learned that we are not defined by how we fall, but by how we rise – just as the girl who was labelled a delayed student yesterday is now the person standing before you today, giving the valedictory speech, not in spite of her failures, but because of them, carrying newfound strength forged from her experiences.

As we finish this final year strong, the value of *husay* – excellence – is redefined in us, revealed not in medals, but in valuable moments. More than high grades or praises from our professors, excellence lies in consistently giving us our best in the most menial tasks even when no one is watching. To be excellent is not to be perfect, but to keep learning, to care deeply, and to never stop trying.

UPCN Class of 2025, as we graduate today, we do so as *Iskolars ng Bayan* – the nation's future nurse leaders trained by the Filipino people and for the Filipino people. Being mediocre is not enough, because we carry more than a degree, we carry a flame. As Florence Nightingale once

walked the halls of wounded soldiers, carrying a lamp in her hand that served as a light in the darkest of places, her legacy lives on in us. Now, we are tasked to shine that light into the world, bringing hope amidst chaos, suffering, and darkness.

We carry the light as we speak up for our patients even when we are silenced. We carry the light when we stay another hour just to hold our patient's hand. We carry the light when we choose integrity in a world that rewards shortcuts. We carry the light when we serve when the work is tiresome and thankless, not for recognition, but from conviction. We carry the light by going above and beyond for our patients, choosing compassion over convenience, kindness over comfort.

Even when the system is flawed. Even when the hours are long. Even when we are exhausted and unseen – still, we serve. This is the kind of light no storm can extinguish, the quiet burning at the core of the Filipino nurse.

So, as we step into the world beyond these halls, may we never forget: The courage to begin in uncertainty. The grit to keep going when it gets hard. The honor of serving with our whole selves. And, the excellence of giving our best, even when it feels like it's not enough.

To the UPCN Class of 2025 – *tuloy ang laban*! Let us carry this light beyond the night, into every ward, every community, every life we will ever touch. And when the world grows dark again, as it sometimes will, may we always be found still shining. *Padayon, mga nars ng bayan!*

To God be all the glory!





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Dean Sheila Bonito

Dean's Message

Ang tapang ay hindi laging maingay o palaban. Ito ay ang tahimik na determinasyon— ang araw-araw na maagang paggising para sa clinical or community duty, ang pagtatanggol sa kapakanan ng mga pasyente, at ang pagtanggap sa mga bagay na mahirap.

Magandang umaga sa ating paunhing pandagal, Hon. Heidi L. Mendoza, mga kagalang-galang na administrador sa pamumuno ni Chancellor Michael L. Tee, mga guro, magulang, at higit sa lahat — sa mga magsisipagtapos ngayong taon — isang taos-pusong pagbati at pagsaludo sa inyong lahat.

Ang araw na ito ay Araw ng Pagkilala sa Class 2025. At ang temang Talagha ay tunay na naaangkop sa karanasan ninyo. Ito ay pagkilala sa inyong katatagan, sa inyong tibay ng loob, at sa tapang ninyong humarap at tumindig sa gitna ng lahat ng pagsubok.

Sa gitna ng COVID-19, dumaan kayo sa maraming pagsubok upang maitaguyod ang inyong pag-aaral - mga gabing walang tulog, mabibigat na pagsusulit, mga matagal at mapanghamong duty. Maraming sandaling gusto ninyong sumuko. Ngunit narito kayo ngayon — may baong lakas ng loob na pinanday ng bawat hamon na inyong nalampasan. Hindi kayo bumitaw. Hindi kayo umurong. Nagpatuloy kayo.

Sa panahon ng krisis, ang salitang katatagan ay naging mas makabuluhan. Para sa isang nurse, ito ay hindi lamang ang kakayahang makabangon, kundi ang paninindigang humarap sa anumang pagsubok — hindi lamang para sa sarili, kundi para sa iba.

Ang tibay ng loob ay makikita sa paninindigan na magpatuloy, ang pananatiling kalmado sa harap ng kaguluhan, ang pagpupursige kahit pagod na, at ang patuloy na pag-aalaga kahit walang kapalit.

Kilala ang mga Filipinong nurse sa buong mundo sa katangiang ito – mahusay na pagkalinga. Ngunit bago pa man kayo kilalanin sa ibang bansa, kailangan muna kayo ng ating bayan — ng ating mga pamayanan, ng ating mga pasyente, at ng ating health system.

Sa mga magulang at pamilya — ang inyong sakripisyo ang ugat ng tagumpay na ito. Sa ating mga guro — ang inyong gabay ang nagtanim ng pundasyon.

At sa mga magsisipagtapos — tandaan ninyo ang araw na ito. Hindi lang para sa medalya o palakpakan, kundi bilang patunay na kaya ninyong humarap sa anumang pagsubok — at lumabas na mas matatag.

Binabati namin kayo, Batch 2025.

Maraming salamat, at mabuhay ang bagong henerasyon ng mga Iskonars!





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UP Manila SHS Ho First SHS-Wide R

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Honors Graduates in Recognition Rites

Maie A. Lingdas
of UP Manila SHS



The University of the Philippines Manila – School of Health Sciences (UPM-SHS) held its 2025 Recognition Rites on July 23 at Cine Adarna, UP Diliman, Quezon City, celebrating 94 graduates from its Midwifery, Nursing, and Medicine programs in a moving ceremony that highlighted academic achievement, community service, and the school's founding vision.

While 94 graduates were honored during the event, the full Class of 2025 comprises 128 graduates: 60 from the Diploma in Midwifery, 13 from the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and 21 from the Doctor of Medicine program. Notably, 34 midwifery graduates from the Tarlac campus were recognized in a separate campus-based ceremony.

Delivering the keynote address was Dr. Jaime Z. Galvez Tan, former Secretary of Health and one of the founding figures of the SHS. In a deeply personal and historical account, he recalled how, as early as 1974, discussions had already begun on establishing a medical school whose graduates would serve the Filipino people. At the time, more than 90 percent of UP College of Medicine graduates were leaving to practice abroad, particularly in the United States.

"Nais kong ipabatid sa inyo, mga nagtatapos ng midwifery, nursing, at medicine sa iba't ibang campus ng UPSHS, na ang dahilan ng pagkatatag ng paaralang ito ay upang magkaroon ng pagkakapatas-patas sa oportunidad—na ang bawat kabataang Pilipino, saan mang dako ng bansa, ay magkaroon ng pagkakataong makapasok sa UP at makapag-aral ng midwifery, nursing, at medisina," he said. He explained that SHS was created with the goal of equity is to provide equal opportunities to marginalized youth and produce not just health professionals, but servant-leaders who would uplift their own communities.

Dr. Galvez Tan also shared stories of students accepted into SHS despite having low scores in the former National

College Entrance Examination (NCEE). These students were chosen not for their academic rankings but for their deep commitment to return and serve. Today, many of them are doctors, nurses, and midwives embedded in their hometowns saving lives and strengthening local health systems.

"Graduates of the UPSHS, kayo ang may dala ng bandila ng kahusayan, kagalingan, at kaigihan ng kalusugan. Kayo rin ang nagtataguyod at magtataguyod ng pampayanang kalusugan, pakikiisa, pakikipagkapwa, pag-aalaga, pag-asikaso, mapagmahal, paghingi ng paumanhin, at pagbibigay ng pasasalamat," he said, emphasizing their role in making healthcare accessible, especially in linguistically and geographically underserved areas.

Also present was Hon. Jude A. Acidre, Representative of the Tingog Party-List, who delivered a message of solidarity. He praised UPSHS as a unique academic institution—"one that learns with its feet on the ground and its heart for the underserved." Hon. Acidre emphasized that true education begins by seeing the realities of the people, understanding their struggles, and responding through committed service. He called on the graduates to let their past shape their path, carry the belief of those who supported them, and stay true to their calling to serve the nation.

Awards and Recognitions

Several graduates were honored for excellence in academics, clinical work, community service, leadership, and research:

Diploma in Midwifery

- Academic Excellence: Ma. Khristle Dawn C. Ramano (Palo), Mae Amanda S. Apioten (Baler), Nicole Joyce P. Riparip (Tarlac)
- Best in Community Practicum: Scarlet Guia T. Adolfo (Palo), Aubrey N. Wailan (Baler), Renzo Luis Gallego (Tarlac)
- Best in Clinical Performance: Ma. Lyn A. Lange (Palo),

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Edmund T. Halipa (Baler), Jeanne Chloe Baluyot (Tarlac)
 • Leadership Award: Catherine Joy A. Macalos (Palo),
 Kenneth Ian S. Quezon (Baler), Izabella Jade P. Galvan
 (Tarlac)

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

- Academic Excellence: Jonathan C. Gatela Jr.
- Best in Community Practicum: Mary Grace C. Andres
- Best in Clinical Performance: Ruston Jake A. Capambi
- Leadership Award: Cedrick James A. Sabulao

Doctor of Medicine

- Academic Excellence / Best Clinical Intern: Hannah Grace D. Pugong
- Best Community Intern: Dolores G. Cullo
- Community Leadership Award: Raffy A. Baluso

The **Wakatsuki-Iwamura-Iha Awards**, given by the St. Augustine Sambali Fund Inc. in partnership with the Curion Rainbow Fund Japan, were also conferred. These awards recognized student dedication to community-based health care and came with certificates and cash incentives.

Other Special Awards

- Best in Community Health Research
 - Doctor of Medicine: Dolores G. Cullo, Rutchel R. Docena, Leikka B. Abayon
 - Nursing: Jonathan C. Gatela Jr., Mary Grace C. Andres, Myhen Grace B. Quebec
- EVHRDC 2024 Regional Health Research Symposium
 - 1st Place: TJ Ian Marie E. Lawas, Charmaine Grace G. Baldos, Dorothy Lucille V. Lominio
 - 2nd Place: Shiello C. Ofong, Daiserie Joy B. Duco, Jhea Allyza B. Quial
- Gawad Padayon sa Pamumuno (Student Council Leadership Award): Palo, Baler, Koronadal, and Tarlac campuses

Graduate's Message

Delivering the response on behalf of the graduates was Dr. Hannah Grace Pugong, a midwifery graduate now serving in the Department of Health's Doctors-to-the-Barrios program. Her speech offered a heartfelt reflection on growth, commitment, and purpose.

She recalled arriving at SHS Baler and being surprised by its humble facilities. "It was far from the university campus I envisioned," she admitted. But in time, she learned that true education lived not in classrooms but in communities: "The real lessons were taught in the barangay health stations, rural health units, hospitals and local communities. Our greatest teachers were the barangay councils, barangay health workers and nutrition scholars, the rural health midwives and nurses, the municipal health officers, the community people and surprisingly, local chief executives and leaders we have met throughout the endless community practicums."

Pugong acknowledged the persistent gaps in the public health system that many SHS students witnessed from their early training. Yet she expressed hope in small, meaningful wins and urged fellow graduates to find strength in their personal purpose: "May you find strength in reconnecting with your deepest whys. May adversity not sway reason and virtue. Rather, may adversity fuel even more reason to do more with integrity and excellence."

She concluded by challenging UP SHS to stay faithful to its core mission: "May [UP SHS] always have the heart to diligently teach its students, upholding the belief in universal educability; may it always have the ears to listen, applying the bottom-up approach in decision-making; and may it never lose sight of the genuine and beautiful purpose on which the UP School of Health Sciences is founded."



Rep. Jude Avorque Acidre

Solidarity Message

Magandang araw sa inyong lahat.

It is with a grateful and hopeful heart that I extend this message of solidarity to the UP Manila School of Health Sciences in Palo, Leyte, as you celebrate your 43rd Recognition Rites.

“Saligan ng Kahapon, Gabay ng Kasalukuyan, Tanglaw sa Hinaharap” — these words ring true not only as a theme, but as a lived reality in the story of UPSHS. For what is education, if not the bridge that connects the wisdom of our past, the service of our present, and the promise of our future?

UPSHS in Palo is not your typical academic institution. It is a school that learns with its feet on the ground and its heart for the underserved. Through an innovative learning structure and a support system that includes strong partnerships with local government units, it has created a model where learning doesn't end in the classroom but finds meaning in the barangay, the health center, the rural communities that need it most.

I still remember a Latin dictum I learned in high school: “Veni ut videam, video ut intellegam, intellego ut serviam.” I came to see, I saw to understand, I understood so that I may serve. That is exactly what UPSHS stands for education that is rooted in seeing the real conditions of our people, understanding their needs, and answering that call through service.

We in Eastern Visayas are deeply thankful for the privilege of hosting the UPSHS campus in Palo. It is not only a school, but a wellspring of hope, a place where dreams are nurtured, and communities are healed. And as your representative in Congress, I assure you: TINGOG Partylist will continue to stand in full support of the mission and vision of UPSHS. We will continue working to bring resources, recognition, and reforms that will sustain and strengthen your transformative work in the region and beyond.

To our students may your journey ahead be guided by the past that shaped you, the people who believed in you, and the purpose that called you to serve.

And to all of us let this be our shared mission: to continue building a country where education is not a privilege for the few, but a power that uplifts the many.

Let us keep serving not just with knowledge in our minds, but with love in our hearts. Mabuhay ang UPSHS! Mabuhay ang mga lingkod-bayan sa larangan ng kalusugan!





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Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan

Keynote Speaker

Ngayong taong ito ang bisperas na taon sa pagtatag ng Universidad ng Pilipinas, Paaralan ng Agham Kalusugan or mas kilala sa University of the Philippines School of Health Sciences.

Noong panahong yaon, mahigit 90 porsiyento ng mga graduates ng UP College of Medicine ay nasa America at ibang bansa. Ang tanong noon at ngayon : Nasaan ang mga Iskolar ng 8ayan ng naging doctor sa UP College of Medicine na naglilingkod sa Inang 8ayan.

Nais kong ipahatid sa inyo, mga nagtatapos ng midwifery, nursing at medicine sa iba't ibang campus ng UPSHS, na ang dahilan na pagkatatag ng UPSHS ay ang pagkakapatas patas ng pagkakaroon ng pagkakataon ang kabataang Pilipino makapasok sa UP at makapag-aral ng midwifery, nursing at medisina.

Mangilan-ngilan nga ba ang taga UP College of Medicine Manila noong dekada 70's at 80's, na taga-Samar, 8iliran 0 Leyte. Lalo na ang Tawi-Tawi, Sulu, 8asilan, Zamboanga Peninsula, Kalinga, Apayao, Abra, Aurora, Surigao at Agusan. Kung mayroon man ay mabibilang ng isang kamay at 0 di kaya hindu aabot ng 10 daliri.

**Hindi pagkakapantay-
pantay ang kailangan
kundi pagkakapatas-
patas, makatarungan at
pagkamakatao ng UP sa
mga mag-aaral ng medisina,
nursing at midwifery. Equity
not Equality!**

Pagkakapatas-patas na natanggap ni Nonita Racolcol, sa galing sa Surigao del Norte na makapasok ng UP. Kung noon, may NCEE 0 National College Entrance Examination. Mayroon na ring UP College Admission Tests or UPCAT noong panahon yon. Pero tiyak hindi makakapasa si Nonita Racolcol sa UPCAT.

Kung sa unang batch of UPSHS students na bilang ay 96, karamihan ay may NCEE score na 90 0 mataas pa, si Nonita ay 9 ang score. Malaking talakayan at debate ang nanagyari noong 1976. Tatanggapin ba si Nonita 0 pababalikin sa Surigao del Norte?

Nagpakatotoo ang UP Manila noon, Dahil sa pnnsipyo ng pagkakapatas-patas, makatarungan at pagkamakatao, nanaig ang panig. Ngunit nasubukan na ba nating sabihin "Salamat Pasyente! Salamat Nanay! Salamat Sanggol" ! Dahil sila ang nagturo sa atin kaya nakapagtapos kayo ng Midwifery, Nursing at Medicine.

Ang mga pasyente ay ang ating mga guro at titser din sa pagiging mga mabubuting health professionals. Isang kuwento ng Quality of Health Care sa mga Kalinga sa Cordillera. Sinamahan ko ang isang kaibigan doktor - si Doktor Buching isa Pasii, Kalinga-Apayao. Noong 1979 ay walang kalsada at tulay papunta Pasil. Alas 8 ng umaga nang kami ay nagsimulang mag hiking mula sa Bayan ng Lubuagan patungong Pasil. Dalawang bundok ang aakyat at dalawang ilog na walang tulay ang tatakahin papunta sa bayan ng Pasil. Sa ilog na rumaragagsa ang puting agos, kailangang magtapon ng lubid sa kabila na ilog na may sasalo, at sa lubid hahawak kami para hindi matangay ng agos ng malaking ilog. May isang bundok pa at may isang ilog pa. A las 5 na ng hapon, takip silim, ng kami ay dumating sa Pasil.

Mga binibini at ginoo na nagtatapos ngayon sa UPSHS, mga guro at opisyal sa UP System at UP Manila, ang pagpapairal ng pagkakapatas-patas at pagiging makatarungan at pagkamakatao ang siya ring dahilan kung bakit si Dolphy Patosa na taga Surigao and Salome Dasig na taga Jiabong, Samar ay naging mga nurses na naglingkod at naglilingkod sa Samar. Gayin din si Amalia Manaog ng Capul Island, Northern Samar at si Antonio Tirazona ng Capoocan, Leyte at si Loreta Gutay ng Allen, Northern Samar. 0 si Dr Nemia Yebron Sangrano na taga Las Navas Northern Samar at Jaro at Dagami sa Leyte. At si Elsa Gunay na naging doctor sa Esperanza, Agusan del Sur. Si Lady Faith Juli ang kauna-unahang Blaan, isang tribu ng katutubong Pilipino sa Mindanao na naging nurse at midwife at si Apple Melecio at Sheryl Balco ang kauna-unahang mga midwives na Blaan sa Polomolok, South Cotabato.

Marami pang ibang graduates ng UPSHS ang gusto kong banggitin ngunit hindi sapat ang oras. Equity - para sa akin.

Sa kasalukuyang kalagayan ng Pilipinas, na kapag mahirap ka at nagkasakit ka, ay napakaraming balakid sa pag-abot at makamtan ang serbisyong kalusugan ; at kapag ikaw ay may salapi, halos garantisadong maaabot mo ang mga kailangang serbisyong pangkalusugan.

Equity- ang pagkakapatas-patas, makatarungan at makatao . Kaya kayong mga graduates ng UPSHS ay nandito ngayon dahil sa prinsipyo ng Equity. Naway dalhin ninyo rin ito sa inyong paglilingkod sa inyong mga bayan, municipality at probinsiya.

At sunod na mensahe ko sa inyo ay tungkol Quality of Health Care. Ang kahusayan, ang kagalingan at ang kaigihan ng ating paglilingkod sa kalusugan. Ito po ang tunay na Kahusayan, Kagalingan at Kaigihan kapag tayo ay naglilingkod sa aking kapwa, lalo na ang mga maralita, dukha, mga api, mga malalayo at mga mahihirap abutin.

Noong ako ay Clinical Clerk at Medical Intern sa UP-PGH, laging nag-uudyok sa aking isip ang salita ng ating Panginoon HesuKristo sa Ebanghelyo ni Mateo "Halika ! Sumunod ka sa akin."

"Come Follow Me" (Matthew 9:9). Noong dekada sitenta, pito sa sampung Pilipino ang namamatay na hindi man lang nakikita ng isang doktor, nars o midwife. Salak ko sanang maging sirujano pero sabi ko, para makapaglilingkod nang lubos sa bayan, nais ko maging ordinaryong doktor para sa ordinaryong Pilipino.

Ang paglilingkod sa mga malayong pamayanan lalo na sa Samar at Leyte ay nagbukas ng mga mata ko sa maraming katotohanan tungkol sa ating bansa.

Nakita ko kung papaano ang mga maralita'y nagsusumikap, nananaig mabuhay bawat araw; at kahit lahat na ng kanilang pakikibaka, nananatili pa rin sila sa kahirapan at lalong nalulugmok sa karukhaan.

Sabi ng iba "Tamad lang sila kaya hindi sila umuunlad." Ito po ay pekeng balita a fake news. Ang katotohanan ay ang mga maralita ay nalunod na sa kaapihan at kalupitan ng mga balangkas ng lipunan na marahas at mapang-apLHindi sila pinahihintulutan a hindi binibigyan ng makatarungang pagkakataong umuunlad, lumago a umakyat sa hagdan ng lipunan.

At bakit Samar at Leyte? Aka ay taga Maynila at laking Maynila, walang kinamulatan sa buhay ng magsasaka at mangingisda. Ang Samar at Leyte noong 1974-75 ang syang lugar sa Pilipinas na pinakawalang doktor sa kanayunan gaya ng Pastrana, Dulag, Sta Fe 0 Babatngon, sa mga isla tulad ng Daram, Zumaraga 0 Homonhon at Manikani at sa mga kabundukan gaya ng Matuguinao, Hipapad at Silvino Lobos.

Nagkataon naman ang naghahanda ang UP College of Medicine noong 1974-75 na magtatag ng isang kakaibang paaralan, ang step ladder curriculum na mula high school ay tutungtung muna bilang Community Health Worker, maglilingkod sa pinanggalingang bayan at pagkatapos magiging Midwife, at balik na muli sa sariling bayan at magiging Nars at balik-lingkod sa pinanggalingang bayan at tutungtung naman maging doctor at maging ganap ng Municipal Health Officer. At pinili ng Lupon ni Dean Florentino "Chuchi" Herrera na karapat dapat itayo ang UPSHS sa Rehiyon ng Samar at Leyte.

Itinakda ng Panginoon Diyos na nandoon ako sa Samar at Leyte ng itinatag ang UPSHS. Dahil nasa South Cotabato ako at ang Health Futures Foundation nang itinatag ang UPSHS Koronadal. At nasa Tarlac Province naman ako at ang Health Futures Foundation nang itinatag ang UPSHS Tarlac. Tunay na itinakda ng Panginoon. No accidents, all divine appointments, mga aral ng Kahusayan, Kagalingan at Kaigihan.

Una mula sa mga mamalakaya ng Isla ng Maripipi sa Biliran, Province. Nais kong gunitain, na pagdating ko sa Calbayog mula Maynila, lulan ako sa isang barko na may biyaheng 24 oras. Wala akong mga kaibigan sa Calbayog noon pero ako ay sinalubong ng Social Action Director ng Diocese of Calbayog. Pinatira ako sa Bishop's House at nakilala ang Obispo at napag-usapan na hindi pa handa ang Diocese of Calbayog para magsimula ng isang community-based health program. Nagtungo ako ng Tacloban - sa isang lubak lubak, putik-putikang kalsada papuntang Catbalogan. At mula Catbalogan sumakay ng ferry boat overnight to Tacloban, At kahit may San Juanico Bridge na noon, ay wala naman kalsada na maayos mula Catbalogan patungong Sta Rita, Samar kung saan natatapos/nagsisimula ang San Juanico Bridge.

Isang "culture shock" sa akin ang ferry boat na ang biyahe ay Catbalogan-Tacloban. Walang mga upuan, puro mga teheras na higaan (cots) na dikit-dikit para sa higit na 100 pasahero. Matutulog ka na hindi mo kilala kung sino ang katabi mo sa kanan or kaliwa; babae ba or lalake; bata ba 0 matanda. Kasama pa ang mga manok at biik na bitbit ng ilan sa ilalim ng mga teheras. Kaya ko kaya ito? Ganito pala ang buhay sa mga isla ng Bisayas kung ikaw ay magbiya-biyaheng ferry boat na pangmasa - papunta sa mga major island provinces ng Visayas at papuntang Northern Mindanao.

Nakatulog ba ako? Alas diyes ng gabi ang biyahe patungong Tacloban. Dahil pagod sa pinagdaanan

Calbayog-Catbalogan roadway, higa ka na lang, na walang sapin o walang kumot, at mahimbing naman ang tulog ko! Salamat sa Panginoong Diyos. Umaga na ang pagdating sa Tacloban.

Pumunta ako agad kay Dr Amparo Banzon, Regional Director ng DOH, at sabi ko "I want to go to the farthest place where there is no doctor." At ayun, sinabi sa akin ni Dra. Banzon, pumunta ka sa isla ng Maripipi. By the way, Dr Amparo Banzon was the first ever Director of the UPSHS when it opened in July 1976. Nabalitaan ko na ang Maripipi ay tinaguriang "Island of No Return." Very challenging indeed! Dahil binata ako, akala ko "Island of No Return" ay mabibighani ako ng isang dalaga sa isla, magpapakasal at hindi na makakabalik sa Maynila. Yon pala pagdating ko sa Maripipi, tuwing panahon ng habagat, kagaya ngayon, ay naglalakihan ang mga alon at mapangnib ang dagat sa mga nagbiya-biyahe kaya "Island of No Return".

Sa mga hindi pa nakakapunta sa Isla ng Maripipi, isa itong isla na isa sa pinakamaganda sa Pilipinas! Isang halos bilog na isla, may isang mataas na bundok na mala-Mayan Volcano ang hugis, hitik hitik ang puna ng niyog at may kagubatan pa na primary forest at ibat ibang klaseng beaches of white sand, or beaches of shining stones or beaches with coral reefs. Noong panahong yaon, walang kuryente, walang kalsadang umiikot sa isla, payak ang pamumuhay, maraming isda, maaming buko at buko juice, gata ng niyog at tuba!! At good exercise to walk and hike to reach each of the 10 barangays of Maripipi.

Mangingisda ang pangkaraniwang hanapbuhay ng marami sa Isla. "Go to the people, live with them, love them, know them, learn from them, start with what they know, build on what they have". Nangingisda sila sa gabi at tulog sa araw. Kaya papaano ko sila makikilala?

Eh di sumali ako sa kanilang pangingsda. Pinili ko ang mga pinaka-maralita na mamalakaya. Ibig sabihin, wala silang "motor" sa kanilang bangka. Ang kanilang sasakyan sa dagat ay "baroto" – isang munting bangka na isa or dalawa lang ang kasya. At sagwan-sagwan lamang o sa Waray - "bogsay bogsay kiling kiling guti-ay", Sampung maralitang mamalakaya sa sampung baroto ang sinamahan ko, sa isang madilim ng gabi. Naki-usap ako kay Mano Celso kung maari akong sumama sa kanyang baroto at saksihan ang kanilang pangingsda. Pumalaot ang sampung baroto at nang nasa gitna na kamu ng dagat, sila ang bumuo ng isang bilog (a circle) without anyone commanding them. It was but natural to form a circle for the ten fishers. Dahil mapayapa ang dagat at ang hangin ay katamtaman, naglabas ng maliit na kandila ang sampung mangingisda, sinindihan ang kandila, at inilagay sa mga maliit na bukas na kahon na gawa sa dahon ng saging at sabay-sabay nilang ipinalutang sa dagat. Pagkatapos naman, may mga bulaklak silang dala sa baroto at inihagis ng sabay sabay ang mga bulaklak sa dagat; at pagkatapos, may dala silang kanin at nilutong gulay, ipinatong ito sa dahon ng saging at ipinalutang sa dagat.

Ano kaya itong ginagawa ng mga mangingisda na Maripipi? Dahil ako ay taga Maynila, wala akong kamuang-muang sa mga gawain ng mga maliliit na mamalakaya sa isla. Tinanong ko ai Mano Celso kung ana ang ibig sabihin nito. Ang kandila daw ay ang paghingi ng kapatawaran sa Diyos na lumikha ng dagat - dahil gagambalain nila ang katahimikan ng dagat ng kanilang mga lambat. Ang mga bulaklak naman ay ang alay ng pag-ibig nila sa dagat na minamahal nila. At ang kanin at gulay ay alay nila bilang pasasalamat sa dagat na nagbibigay buhay sa kanila, Forgiveness! Love! Thanksgiving!. Pagpapatawad! Pagmamahalan! Pasasalamat! Mga diwa at laman ng puso ng mga maralitang mangingsda ng Maripipi. Nagpunta ako sa Maripipi para maipa-alala sa akin ng kailangan natin araw araw ang pagpapatawad, pagpapamahalan at pasasalamat.

Ang tanong ko sa aking sarili. Paano kaya kung ang mga dambulahang fishing boats o mga muro-ami fishers o mga dynamite fishers ay mag-papalutang ng kandila, maghahagis ng bulaklak at mag-aalay ng pagkain sa dagat? Marahil magiging mas maayos ang pangingsda, hindi masisira ang ilalim ng karagatan at laging sagana sa isda ang Pilipinas.

At kabundukan naman ng Matuguinao at San Jose de Panaogan sa Gandara, Samar ako naman sa sumama sa mga upland farmers para maranasan ang kanilang pamumuhay. Napansin ko na tuwing may puputulin silang mga palompon (shrubs) at mga talahib at damo, lagi silang nagbibikas ng "Pasayloi-i Pasaylo-i" nang paulit-ulit. Patawad po Patawad Po "

**Pagpapatawad!
Pagmamahal! Pasasalamat!
Forgiveness, Love and
Thanksgiving. Graduates of
the UPSHS, these are the
hallmarks of Good Quality
of Health Care!**

At bago sila magtanim ng palay, nag-aalay rin sila ng kanin at nilutong gulay sa kabukiran. In upland rice farming, the ricefields are dry and on slopes of the hills and mountains. Their method was they had a pointed stick that they pierce into the ground and then they place the palay seeds into each hole pierced by the stick. And each time they pierce the ground with those pointed sticks, they say "pasaylo-a pasaylo-i", Patawad patawad!

Ang tanong ko muli sa sarili ko Kung ang mga pumuputol ng puna sa gubat sa ating bansa ay nagdarasal muna,

humihingi ng tawad sa Panginoon at nag-aalay ng pagkain sa gubat, mauubos kaya ang ating mga puno sa kagubatan?

Silang mga midwives, nurses at doktor, humihingi ba tayo na kapatawaran sa mga pasyente natin tuwing maglalagay tayo ng suwero o tuwing kukuha tayo ng dugo o tatanggalin natin ang kanilang pananamit dahil manganganak na sila? Ginagambala natin ang katawan nila gaya din ng paggambala ng mga mangisngisda sa dagat o pagagambala ng mga magsasaka sa lupa - na lahat ng mga ito ay nilikha ng ating Panginoon Diyos. Are we good stewards of God's creation.

Nagpapakita ba tayo ng pagmamahal sa ating mga pasyente? pati na ang mga sanggol at mga bata sa pamamagitan ng magaganda at kaaya-ayang salita; hinahawakan ang kanilang mga kamay o braso? ipinaliliwanag nang maayos ang mga medisina at reseta, tinitiyak na lagi silang maayos ang kalagayan at kapakanan? at binibigyanng karampatang payo para sa pagpanatili ng kalusugan at kaginhawaan?

At tayo ba ay nagpapasalamat ba sa mga pasyente at mga ina at sanggol na ipinaanak natin? Karaniwan, nais natin marinig "Salamat po Doktor, Salamat po Nars, Salamat po Midwife." na tuluyang tanggapin si Nonita. Bawat nilalang ay maaring matututo, bigyan lamang ng pagkakataon. Every person is educable, just give her the opportunity.

At totoo nga ang nangyari, si Nonita ay pumasa, first time taker, sa National Midwifery Licensure Examinations. At lahat ng mga kaklase ni Nonita, 95 silang lahat, ay pumasa 100% sa National Midwifery Licensure Examinations. Matapos ang sampung taon mula noong nagtapos si

Nonita ng midwifery, dinalaw ko siya sa Surigao del Norte. Isa siya sa pinakamatagumpay na midwife sa buong Surigao. Halos lahat ata ng nanganak sa bayan niya ay pinaanak ni Nonita. Hindi lang siya matagumpay, siya ay sikat na sikat at umangat ang buhay niya at ng kanyang pamilya.

May sumalubong agad sa amin na Community Health Worker na nagsabi na may nilalagnat na matindi. Isang batang babae na labing apat na taong gulang at kung maarin ay agad agad naming tignan. Nagkuwento ang nanay, si Manang Cely, kung paano nagsimula ang sakit ni Amy na kanyang anak. Tiniyak namin na hindi malaria at ito ay isang trangkaso. May kaunting liwanag pa at kami ni Dr Buching ay ngangalap ng mga halamang gamot gaya ng tanglad at sambong. Nilaga ng Manang Cely at ibinigay sa batao In a while, the fever and chills were gone, the child perspired. We asked the mother to change her clothes and to give her more water for hydration. And give the decoction every 4 hours to ensure her recovery.

When we were about to leave, we opened the door and we were about to go down the stairs, and we were caught by surprise! Lo and behold, the house was now surrounded by six circles of people, men, women and children around the house, all seated on the ground, with bowed heads and in prayer, all silent. According to Manang Cely, it was the custom among the Kalinga, that when someone in the community is sick, they all are united in sympathy and prayer for the well being of a member of their tribe. The community noticed that Manang Cely did not join them for work in the ricefields that day and the community heard about the illness of Amy.

The typical Kalinga house is a one room house, circular, above the ground with at least 4 steps of stairs. All made of bamboo, nipa and cogon grass for roofing. Again with no one announcing it was time to go, each one stood one by one and returned to their homes that night.

Ito ang tunay na pakikipagkapwa. Tapat na pagpapakita ng pagkakaisa; bayanihan ng kalooban at pagpapagaling na galing sa pamayanan. Community Healing at its best!

Tanong ko muli sa sarili ko. Sa Kamaynilaan or mga siyudad ng Pilipinas, mayroon pa bang pakikipagkapwa at bayanihan ng loob? Kapag may sumigaw nang saklolo ang kapitbahay, tayo kaya sa tutugon sa pangangailangan? O magsasawalang kibo na lamang? Kakilala ba natin ang ating kapitbahay O ka barangay?

Community healing, solidarity of compassion and care, competency, love, forgiveness and thanksgiving. Nakikita pa ba natin ito sa mga hospital ng Pilipinas? Sa mga health center, birthing and lying in centers at barangay health stations sa ating kapaligiran?

Graduates of the UPSHS - kayo ang may dala ng bandila na kahusayan, kagalingan, kaigihan ng kalusugan. Kayo rin ang nagtataguyod at magtataguyod ng pampayanang

kalusugan, pakikiisa ng pakikipagkapwa, pag-alaga, pag-asikaso, mapagmahal, paghingi ng paumanhin, pagbibigay ng pasasalamat.

Aside from equity and quality of health care, graduates of the UPSHS are the bearers of access to health care in the Philippines today. You are made for service in your barangays, in your municipalities, in your provinces. Sa inyong lugar, pagbalik ninyo sa inyong bayan, madali nang abutin ang serbisyong kalusugan dahil nandyan na kayo. Madali nang lumapit ang kabarangay at kababayan at kawika ninyo. Tagumpay na may health professional na ang wika o salita ay ang wika o salita ng komunidad at pamayanan.

Noong 2010, ang Health Futures Foundation na aking pinamumunuan aynaatasan ng UNESCO, pumunta sa Polomolok dahil sobrnag taas ng mga namamatay n nanay at sanggol lao na sa mga katutubong Pilipino na tinatwag na Blaans. Sa among pananaliksik, natuklasan namin na sila ay echa-puera, discriminated, oppressed and marginalized by the majority of Polomolok who speak the Visayan languages, but never spoke Blaans.

To cut the long story short, the solution was to educate Blaans to be health workers. And just as when we selected our scholars, the UPSHS in Koronadal was established. So for the first time in history, there were two Blaans midwives and eventually another Blaans midwife proceeded to become a nurse. Health Futures Foundation raised funds to build a birthing center at the foot of Mt. Matutum, the sacred mountain of the Blaans. Together with the LGU, we inaugurated the Birthing Center and turned it over to the LGU with a team of a Blaans nurse and two Blaans midwives who rendered 24/7 maternal and child health care and sexual and reproductive health services to their fellow Blaans in 4 barangays. Since 2018, there has not been a Blaans mother who has died and no Blaans neonates have died since Blaans health workers started to serve Blaans mothers and children. As a health policy development, we have been recommending that native speakers of a population must serve their native speaking population to deliver accessible, quality and equitable health care.

We give praise to our gracious God for allowing all these circumstances to come together - the UPSHS Koronadal, the Blaans people of Polomolok, the Health Futures Foundation Inc and the Blaans nurse and two midwives to achieve excellent health care for indigenous peoples.

Ang tanong ko sa ating lahat. Matatamo ba natin ang Universal Health Care? Ang Pangkalahatang Kalusugan para sa mga Filipino, laic na ang mga nasa malalayong lugar, mga di napupuntahan, mga di pinapansin? I would like to leave you a message of love. Maari ito kung tayong lahat ay maglilingkod sa ating bayang Pilipinas at sa ating Panginoon.

In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Paul reminds us that "Love is patient, Love is kind, Love does not envy, Love does not

boast, Love is not proud, Love does not dishonor others, Love is not self-seeking, Love is not easily angered, Love keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the Truth. Love always protects, Love always trusts, Love always hopes, Love always perseveres." The challenge here is to change the word "love" with your name.

The warning is you cannot do it on your own. The only way to be patient, kind, forgiving, is when you have first received God's patience, kindness, and forgiveness that you are able to extend it to others.

Ultimately, the best model of a person who serves with love, forgiveness, and thanksgiving is Jesus Christ himself. Jesus came to serve, not to be served. After washing His disciples' feet, a kind of service that clearly shows His humble and servant heart, Jesus said in John 13:34-35, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

During my childhood, the best remembrance my father taught me was the Prayer of Generosity. This prayer is near and dear to my heart up to this day and this is my prayer for each one of you as well. Let us pray:

"Dearest Lord Jesus, teach me to be generous, teach me to serve You as I should; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, save that of knowing I am doing Your most holy will." To Graduates of the UPSHS, may the words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be etched in your hearts all the days of your lives.

Truly, Jesus Christ is The only Way, The only Truth, The only Life.

Mabuhay ang mga nagsipagtapos na midwifery, nursing at medicine at ang kanilang mga magulang at ang kanilang mga barangay at bayan. Mabuhay ang UP! Mabuhay ang UP School of Health Sciences!

Maraming salamat po!



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Hannah Grace Pugong

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

To our esteemed keynote speaker, Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan, to the chancellor of UP Manila, Dr. Michael Tee, to the Faculty regent, Professor Early Sol Gadong; to the hardworking chancellor's management team of UP Manila, to the Dean of UP SHS, Dean Charlie Labarda; our former Dean in UP SHS, Dr. Filedito Tandinco, Deans of other UP colleges, UP SHS' alumni President, Dr. Nemia Sangrano; college officials and faculty members of UP SHS; honorable guests, fellow students and graduates of UP SHS, to our families and loved ones who are here with us, magandang hapon po!

Today is a momentous occasion for the UP SHS. All campuses of SHS have come together for this first ever SHS-wide recognition rites where we are once again reminded of the beautiful purpose of the institution which has been a home for us. We're gathered here, in recognition of individual dreams that have finally come into fruition. We're gathered here in recognition of our families and loved ones who dreamt with us and believed in us. More importantly, however, we're gathered here in recognition of our local communities that committed us to the UP School of Health Sciences.

I still remember my first day in the UP School of Health Sciences Extension Campus in Baler, Aurora. The alone building of the campus stood among gravel, shrubs, coconut trees, and thick grass. It was far from the university campus that I envisioned to be studying in.

SHS Baler then only had four classrooms and few faculty members. That little campus and little community was sort of an introduction to the kind of training that SHS offers—not grand, nor appealing but one that is rooted in humility, purpose, and genuine community.

Over the years in the School of Health Sciences, I understood that the real lessons weren't taught in the few four-walled classrooms the campus had. The real lessons were taught in the barangay health stations, rural health units, hospitals and local communities.

Our greatest teachers were the barangay councils, barangay health workers and nutrition scholars, the

rural health midwives and nurses, the municipal health officers, the community people and surprisingly, local chief executives and leaders we have met throughout the endless community practicums.

At the start of my SHS journey, I just wanted to become a good physician, or specifically, a good clinician and I would consider myself to be successful. After studying in SHS, I now understand that being a good clinician isn't enough.

I'd like to share an important lesson I learned from Professor Tandinco during one of our community internship sharing sessions. It goes like this: Our success as doctors will eventually depend on the strength of the health systems wherever we will find ourselves practicing. I carry that lesson with me now that I'm part of the Doctors-to-the Barrios program of the Department of Health.

While there are still numerous challenges in the public health system of our country, I still believe that our small

wins in the grassroots level can mean better health outcomes for an individual, a family, or a small community.

To my fellow SHS students and graduates, we have seen the many inadequacies in the public health system as early as our first quarter in school. Those can easily sway hearts of even that of the most passionate and most dedicated of all.

Genuine efforts may be like tiny voices that are lost in the void. However, I remain hopeful that wherever there is a just cause, our tiny voices can still create echoes of hope.

I remember the first commitment rites that I was part of. Former Dean Buddy Destura asked a question taken from a TV commercial of a known coffee brand. The question was: "Para kanino ka bumabangon?" To my fellow health workers, should you find yourself feel alone in times of adversity while doing the work God has bestowed upon you, may you find strength in reconnecting with your deepest whys. May adversity ngayon not sway reason and virtue. Rather, may adversity fuel even more reason to do more with integrity and excellence.

The UP SHS has been caring for quite a number of communities through the years. Most of its graduates have remained true to their commitment to stay and serve in the country. The SHS system has even expanded its doors to Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao communities through its extension campuses in Baler, Aurora; Tarlac; and Koronadal with the dream of bringing and championing community-based learning in the country and in the world.

Today, it is my sincere prayer that UP SHS will not forget to first take care of its own community, specifically its students. May it always have the heart to diligently teach its students, -upholding the belief in universal educability; may it always have the ears to listen applying the bottom-up approach in decision-making that the school teaches and fervently believes in; and may it never lose sight of the genuine and beautiful purpose on which the UP School of Health Sciences is founded upon no matter the amount of recognition and commendation it gets.

Padayon SHS! To God be all the glory!





UP Manila SHS Tarlac Honors 34 Midwifery Graduates in Recognition Rites

Text by Charmaine A. Lingdas

Photo courtesy of Medikritiko



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The University of the Philippines Manila School of Health Sciences (UPM SHS) Tarlac recognized 34 graduates of its second batch of Diploma in Midwifery program during its campus-wide recognition rites held at Diwa ng Tarlac, Romulo Boulevard, on August 4, 2025 as part of the ceremonial representation of the joint partnership between the University of the Philippines and the Provincial Government of Tarlac on establishing the UPM SHS Tarlac Campus. With the theme “Lakbay: Ang Pagtatapos ng mga Lingkod ng Agham at Kalusugan – Mga Bagong Bayaning Yayapos at Kakalinga sa Sambayanan,” the event celebrated the graduates’ journey as future frontline health workers.

Dr. Catherine Swin-Santos, Director of UPM SHS Tarlac, opened the program with a reminder of the core mission of the school. “Ang return service agreement po o ‘yong pagbabalik loob o serbisyo ng isang estudyante — ang puso ng misyon ng ating paaralan ng mga agham pangkalusugan. So, bilang magiging midwife at frontline health workers, tinatahak n’yo ang landas ng pag-aalaga sa buhay at kalusugan ng ating kababayan. Sa bawat pamamanata at pagtulong sa pinakamaliliit na tao sa komunidad, ipinapamuhay ninyo ang diwa ng public service na siyang pundasyon ng matatag na lipunan,” she emphasized.

Dr. Santos emphasized that the graduates are not only national scholars by virtue of studying at UP, but also scholars of their own communities, made possible through the support of their local governments. She reminded them that their role goes beyond delivering medical services; they are also expected to educate communities on proper nutrition, hygiene, and reproductive health. In their hands lies the hope for reducing maternal and neonatal mortality and improving the overall quality of life in every barangay.

UPM SHS alumna Dr. Claire Taguiling, now a primary health care doctor in Limay, Bataan, conveyed her message to the graduates and shared story how her community immersion in Leyte shaped her journey from midwife to doctor. “There were times when doors were literally shut in our faces as we went house to house offering healthy change,” she recalled.

Despite the difficulties, she said their training, struggles, and mentorship equipped them with the skills and compassion to serve effectively. “Let us remember that our roles go beyond our individual careers. We are part of a greater community committed to improving the health of our people. As we move forward, may we uphold the values of integrity, compassion, and excellence that were



instilled in us during our time at this institution," she said. "Together, we have the power to transform lives and create a healthier future for all."

Tarlac Governor Christian Tell Yap expressed full support for the graduates, acknowledging the vital role they will play in the province's health sector. "Kayo ang bunga ng matatag na pagtutulungan ng pamahalaan, paaralan, at komunidad. Kayo ang patunay na sa wastong edukasyon, tamang gabay, at pusong handang maglingkod, may kinabukasan ang sistemang pangkalusugan sa ating lalawigan," he said.

He also shared that the provincial government is working on reforms to convert local government hospitals into economic enterprises. Through these reforms, the province hopes to expand opportunities for new graduates to serve in their own communities by strengthening local health institutions. It is also expected to open more positions for midwives, nurses, and other health professionals within the public health workforce. In line with this, the provincial government looks forward to continued collaboration with UP Manila to increase the number of students and scholars who can be accommodated at the Tarlac campus.

Meanwhile, UP Manila School of Health Sciences Dean Dr. Charlie Labarda urged the graduates to stay true to their mission as scholars for the people. He highlighted the unique commitment of SHS graduates. "One of the things that we are proud of is that our graduates work

in the rural areas — kung saan walang nagse-serve, doon sila pinapadala. Our midwives are found in island municipalities, in the mountains. At kahit saan, hindi natatakot ang graduates ng SHS. Kasi, they are trained not only in the skills but also in the heart."

In a heartfelt keynote address, Tarlac City Mayor and former governor Hon. Susan A. Yap looked back on the vision that gave rise to the SHS Tarlac campus. "A dream that we started here in Tarlac — para mabigyan ng oportunidad ang ating mga kabataan na makamit ang isang edukasyon, high-level education from the most premier university in the country," she recalled. The idea was born out of a pressing question: "Paano ba madagdagan ang mga healthcare workers natin?" She noted the persistent shortage of health professionals in the province, especially those caring for the elderly and the sick.

"Pero ang UP po, noong lumapit ako sa kanila para magkaroon ng isang tambalan at kooperasyon para magtayo ng unibersidad dito, hindi po nagdalawang-isip at agarang tumugon sa ating hiling na magkaroon ng University of the Philippines dito sa ating lalawigan," she said, expressing her gratitude to UP Manila for the swift and steadfast partnership.

Addressing the graduates, she underscored the critical role they will play in strengthening the local health system: "Kaya kayo po, ang mga ating graduates ngayon in midwifery — once you are deployed sa iba't ibang



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mga rural health units natin — sana maibahagi natin ang tamang kaalaman sa pangkalusugan. And we become a strong and healthy community.”

Awardees

The ceremony also honored students who excelled in leadership, didactics, and service:

- Outstanding Student Leader: Izabella Jade B. Galvan
- Excellence in Campus Journalism: Paulina N. Pangan
- Excellence in Electoral Rights Participation: Leal Francis T. Mendoza
- Best in Community Practicum: Renzo Luis Gallego
- Best in Clinical Practicum: Jean Chloe Baluyut
- Best in Theory: Nicole Joyce Riparip

Service awards were also presented to student leaders from various campus organizations, including the Campus Student Council, Local Governance groups, Medkritiko (campus publication), and the SHS Tarlac Electoral Board. Additional recognition of Wakatsuki Imura Iha Awards and incentives were also given by the Office of the Dean, and the St. Augustine Sambali Fund Inc. to the recipients of the Outstanding Student Leader, Best in Clinical Practicum, Best in Theory and Best in Community Practicum Awards.

Another highlight of the afternoon came from student speaker Michela Apple Beltran, recognized as “Tinig at Diwa ng mga Iskolar Pampamayan”, whose reflection on bayanihan and the deeper meaning of the sablay left a lasting impact. “Kapag tayo ay nagkaisa’t nagtulungan

para sa ikabubuti ng ating pamayanan at sambayanan, tayo ay nagiging bayani—sa maliliit o malalaking sarili nating pamamaraan. Tayo ay mga bayani ng bayang nagba-bayanihan,” she said.

Beltran then talked about the sablay, the academic sash worn by graduates, particularly to the baybayin script embroidered on it. She shared that the word “U-Pa,” which appears on the sablay, has sparked debate. But for Beltran, “U-Pa” holds a deeper, symbolic meaning—especially for scholars in the health sciences.

Their education, she said, was made possible by the support of local governments and communities, who invested in them with the expectation that they would one day serve the people. She said that in turn, the graduates now carry the responsibility of paying that trust forward—by serving the community, especially those in the margins.

“Asahan po ninyong ibabalik namin ang karangalang ibinigay ninyo sa pamamagitan ng mahusay, bukal sa loob na pagbabalik-serbisyo,” she declared ready to return that trust by becoming compassionate, competent professionals dedicated to public service.

Wearing the sablay is not just a symbol of academic success, she added, but also of sacrifice and responsibility. The graduates carry with them not only their dreams and diplomas, but the weight of the people in their communities.









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UP Manila CAS Holds Rites, Honors Outs

Text by Charmaine

Photos by Evelyn



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ds 42nd Recognition standing Graduates

aine A. Lingdas

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The University of the Philippines Manila College of Arts and Sciences (UPM CAS) held its 42nd Recognition Day on July 20, 2025, at the University Theater in UP Diliman, celebrating the academic achievements of its graduates for Academic Year 2024–2025.

The event brought together faculty, administrators, families, and students to honor 441 graduates from various undergraduate and graduate programs, many of whom received Latin honors for academic excellence. In her welcome remarks, UPM CAS Dean Maria Teresa G. de Guzman reflected on this year's theme, "Iskolar ng Bayan: Buong Puso, Husay, at Dangal sa Paglilingkod sa Bawat Mamamayan." She underscored that the theme is not merely a slogan but a commitment each graduate carries forward.

"Buong puso, for giving your all not just to learn, but to understand, care, and serve; Husay, for striving for excellence even in the most difficult times; and Dangal, for upholding integrity, humility, and the values instilled in you by the University," she said.

She reminded the graduates, "Never forget—you are more than your degree. You are leaders. You are nation-builders. You are Iskolar ng Bayan."

UP Manila Chancellor Dr. Michael L. Tee extended his appreciation to the parents of the graduating class, recognizing their trust in the university to shape the next generation of public servants and national leaders. "Ang Unibersidad at ang sambayanang Pilipino ay taos-pusong nagpapasalamat sa inyo. Ipinagkatiwala ninyo sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas Manila ang inyong mga anak dahil naniniwala kayong may kakayahan ang pamantasan na hubugin sila bilang susunod na henerasyon ng mga lingkod-bayan at lider ng ating bansa—mga lider na huhubog sa kinabukasan ng Pilipinas," he said.

Guest speaker Dr. Michelle Aguilar Ong, a distinguished alumna, reminded graduates of the responsibilities that

come with their UP education. "Ang diploma ninyo ay hindi lamang patunay ng inyong talino kundi paalala na kayo ay Iskolar ng Bayan—na may tungkuling ibalik ang galing at kabutihan sa bayan," she said.

Graduates by Program

Department of Broadcast Communication

- BA Organizational Communication: 61 graduates (34 cum laude, 18 magna cum laude)
- BA Philippine Arts: 15 graduates (1 cum laude, 13 magna cum laude, 1 summa cum laude)

Department of Biology

- BS Biology: 57 graduates (29 cum laude, 17 magna cum laude)

Department of Behavioral Sciences

- BA Behavioral Sciences: 85 graduates (13 cum laude, 58 magna cum laude, 3 summa cum laude)

Department of Social Sciences

- BA Development Studies: 26 graduates (6 cum laude, 16 magna cum laude, 1 summa cum laude)
- BA Political Science: 49 graduates (14 cum laude, 29 magna cum laude, 1 summa cum laude)
- BA Social Science: 20 graduates (5 cum laude, 11 magna cum laude)

Department of Physical Sciences and Mathematics

- BS Applied Physics: 23 graduates (12 cum laude, 3 magna cum laude)
- BS Biochemistry: 32 graduates (16 cum laude, 5 magna cum laude, 1 summa cum laude)
- BS Computer Science: 34 graduates (14 cum laude, 5 magna cum laude)

Graduate Programs

- MA in Health Policy Studies: 7 graduates
- Master in Management (Business): 15 graduates
- Master in Educational Management: 5 graduates
- Master in Public Management: 8 graduates

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- MS in Health Informatics: 1 graduate
- MS in Applied Physics (Medical Physics): 3 graduates

Notably, the Department of Physical Sciences and Mathematics celebrated the first batch of graduates from its MS in Applied Physics (Medical Physics) program: Ma. Elizabeth M. Vidallon, Lance Eros Lewis E. Dadios, and Michael Angelo Gloria.

Special Awards and Recognitions

Several graduates received special awards for excellence in academics, leadership, service, and the arts:

- Outstanding Student: Claude Simon A. Naco
- Outstanding Student Leader: Claude Simon A. Naco
- Outstanding Student Artist: Juanito Alecz S. Laurenio
- Outstanding Student Researcher: Alexander Carlo Castro
- Outstanding Student Athlete: Hazel Faye A. Armada
- Best Thesis in Filipino: Arnel James Peralta
- Research on Manila Studies Award: Nica Marie Trance
- Public Service Award: Claude Simon A. Naco
- Research in Gender Studies Award: Carissa A. Rapsing

In recognition of exceptional undergraduate and graduate research, the Best Thesis award was conferred on the following students:

- Angie Coleen R. Besana – BA Organizational Communication
- Hannah G. Adorna – BA Philippine Arts
- Reian Princess J. Palentino & Judy Charmin Mae V. Ulep – BS Biology
- Jennyah Kathreece A. Gulaga – BA Behavioral Science
- Mika T. Regalado-Friles – MA in Health Policy Studies – Health Social Science
- Gerra Mae R. Reyes – BA Development Studies
- Roshe Sapin & Angeline Manato – BA Political Science
- Nica Marie Trance – BA Social Sciences – Area Studies
- John Carlos Mando – BS Applied Physics – Health Physics
- Michael Angelo V. Gloria – MS in Applied Physics –

Medical Physics

- Joseff Ian E. Silvederio – BS Biochemistry
- Erica Mae V. Antonio – BS Computer Science
- Kristine Jewel B. Malimban – BS Computer Science

Dean's Awards for Outstanding Research were also given in various categories:

- Arts and Humanities: Hannah G. Adorna
- Social Science and Behavioral Science: Rizza Victoria Pearl Dumotan
- Biological Sciences: Adrian Justine D. Lintag & Joan Abigayle O. Lopez; Sean Marco B. Campanilla & Lindsay Margaret A. De Guzman
- Physical and Computing Sciences: Claude Simon A. Naco

Recognition was also given to student assistants and student council leaders for their exemplary service.

Student Address

Delivering the response on behalf of the graduating class was Ms. Dominique Caceres, a BA Behavioral Sciences graduate and summa cum laude awardee. She emphasized how their education at UP Manila shaped their critical awareness of structural inequalities and the importance of grounding action in community realities.

"Dito ko mas nakita ang kahalagahan ng aktwal na paglubog sa komunidad. Hindi sapat na nakakulong lang tayo sa mga binabasa nating readings, o sa mga integrative papers na pinapasa natin. May mga bagay na hindi mo makikita sa isang sulyap lang—gaya ng mga kuwentong punô ng hiras, pangarap, tagumpay, at panawagan."

She urged her fellow graduates to approach service with humility, honor their struggles, and be patient with themselves as learning continues beyond graduation.

"Muli, mga iskolar ng bayan—buong puso, husay, at dangal na paglingkuran natin ang sambayanan."





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Ms. Dominique Caceres

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

Bago ko pormal na simulan ang aking talumpati, gusto kong pagnilayan nating lahat ang katanungang ito: Para sa inyo, ano ang ginhawa? Sabi ni Kuya Kulas, isang magsasakang nakakwentuhan ko noong ginagawa ko 'yung thesis ko sa aming probinsya, ang ginhawa ay makakamit sa pamamagitan ng pagsisikap, pagtitiyaga, at diskarte.

Ngayong nagbabaliktanaw ako sa ilang semestre na ginapang natin kasama ang ating mga pamilya at mga kaibigan, sa ilang araw ng pagsusunog ng kilay, sa pagbabalanse ng ibat't ibang bagay, hanggang sa matanggap natin 'yung email ng OCS na nagsasabing, "Kumpirmado! Ga-graduate tayo," at ngayong nandito tayong lahat, nagtitipon suot-suot ang ating mga pinakaaasam na sablay, napapatanong rin ako: Ito na ba 'yung sumakses?

Ang mga magulang ko po ay parehong guro. Ang tatay ko ay lumaki rin bilang isang magsasaka. Lunes hanggang Biyernes nasa paaralan siya. Samantalang pagsapit ng sabado at linggo, gigising pa rin siya nang maaga, tutungo sa sakahan upang magtanim. Madalas kinekwento niya sa amin kung gaano niya kamahal ang pagtanim sapagkat ito ay isang bagay na ipinamana sa kaniya ng kaniyang mga magulang- ang aking lolo at lola. Ang ganitong naratibo ay hindi nalalayo sa naging bahagi ng aking thesis, nagkaroon ako ng pagkakataon na makapanayam ang iba pang magsasaka sa amin. Sa tuwing tinatanong ko sila kung bibigyan sila ng pagkakataon na magpalit ng kabuhayan, ano ba ang pipiliin nila? Walang pag-aatubili, karamihan sa kanila ay sinabi na mahal nila ang pagsasaka—ang kanilang trabaho. Subalit dahil sa mga problema at pasakit na sinasalo ng kanilang sektor, ang magandang pamumuhay ay tila isang mailap na karanasan para sa kanila.

Dito ko mas napagtanto na kadalasan ang hirap piliin ng isang bagay lalo na kung walang sapat na oportunidad, boses at pantay na laban para harapin ang reyalidad.

Sa apat na taon o higit pang pamamalagi natin dito sa pamantasan, mayroon tayong kaniya-kaniyang bersyon ng pinagdaanang hirap. May ilan na may pasan na mas malaking responsibilidad, pilipit na binabalanse ang pag-aaral at pagtatrabaho— isinusuko ang oras ng pagpapahinga upang kahit papaano'y mapagaan ang

gastusin ng pamilya. May mga bagay ding tahimik nating nilalabanan, lingid sa mata ng karamihan. Maaaring naranasan niyo rin yung mapuyat hindi dahil sa pagrereview pero dahil punong puno ang isipan ng pagdududa at pagtatanong. May mga pagkakataon na ang hirap huminga pero kailangan magpatuloy dahil namulat tayo na ultimo yung paghinga ay isang pribiliheyo. Kasi wala namang time-out ang mundo.

Subalit sa papamalagi rin natin dito, tayo rin ay mas namulat. Sa gabay ng ating mga propesor, natutunan natin mas maging kritikal. Sinanay tayong magtanong at magsuri.

Mas naunaawan natin na ang bawat karanasan, gaano man ito kapersonal ay nakatali sa mas malawak at mas malalim na isyu.

Ito ay kadalasang salamin ng isang sistemang salat sa suporta, sistemang pumapabor sa iilan at mas nagpapalugmok sa tunay na mga nangangailangan.

Maaaring bago tayo pumasok sa kolehiyo minsan na nating niromanticize ito. Yung tipong tatambay sa tahimik na field, matiwasay na magbabasa sa ilalim ng puno, makikinig ng musika kasama ang ating mga kaibigan. Pero hindi ganito ang sitwasyon na dinatnan natin. Pagpasok pa lang sa mga klase, marami ang nanggagaling sa malalayong lugar, dinadanas at tinitis ang bulok na sistema ng transportasyon. Sa tuwing dumadaan tayo sa PGH nakikita natin ang masalimuot na sitwasyon ng ating pampublikong kalusugan. Sa bawat kanto marami tayong nakakasalubong na walang permanenteng tirahan-dumidiskarte para lang may maihaing pagkain sa kanilang mga pamilya. Sinusuong natin yung baha sa taft na perwisyo pa rin ilang henerasyon na ang nagdaan. Ang siyudad, ang maiingay na lansangan na ito ay naging isang malawak na silid aralan para sa atin- hindi ito kumportable,

pero sinasalamain nito ang reyalidad ng lipunan na nais nating mas mabigyan ng atensyon, boses at pagbabago.

Dito ko mas nakita ang kahalagan ng aktwal na paglubog sa komunidad. Hindi sapat na nakakulong lamang tayo sa mga readings na ibinibigay sa atin o di kaya naman sa mga integrative papers na sinusulat natin. Hindi sapat na parang lagi tayong nakatelescope, tinatanaw lamang ang paligid at sasabihing, gets naman.. O di kaya "okay na 'to" alam ko na kung ano ang magagawa ko. Kahit gaano kalinaw pa ang lente nito, Kahit gaano kadetalyado ang imaheng nakikita natin. Wala itong kakayahan na makinig at makilahok.

May mga bagay na hindi nakikita sa isang sulyap lang kagaya ng mga kwento ng hirap, pangarap, tagumpay at panawagan. Kakaibang pananaw ang makukuha natin sa oras na sila mismo ang nagsasalaysay ng kanilang mga kwento. Sa mga ganitong karanasan, samut-saring tanong ang maaaring umusbong. May ilan na hindi rin natin agad-agad masasagot. Subalit nagiging daan ito upang mas mapalalim ang ating pag-unawa.

Ang kakayahang makinig ay hindi naman nalilimita sa mga field immersions o kaya sa mga community engagements... Kahit yung simpleng pakikipagkwentuhan sa mga taong nakakasalubong o nakakasama natin. Nagsisimula ang kakayahang ito sa araw-araw nating ugnayan. Maging sa malalapit nating mga kaibigan at pamilya lagi tayong maglaan ng ligtas na espasyo para sa kanila.

Subalit huwag nating tingnan ang mga sarili natin na tila mga superheroes o tagapagligtas. Ika nga, sila ang eksperto ng kanilang buhay na karanasan. Sila ay may sariling kalakasan. Tungkulin natin na makinig, makiisa, mas mapangibabaw ang kanilang mga karapatan at maging katuwang sa isang makabuluhang pagkilos.

Ngayon gusto kong balikan muli yung sinabi ni Kuya Kulas, sabi niya ang ginhawa ay makakamit sa pamamagitan ng pagsisikap, pagtitiyaga at diskarte. Subalit sa ilang beses na pakikisalamuha at pakikipag-usap ko sa kanila at sa iba pa niyang kasamahang magsasaka, napagtanto ko na ang mga ito ay mga paraan lamang para sa kanila. At, dito ako naliwanagan sa aking pinal na punto.

Ito ay ang kahalagahan ng pagpursige ng isang mithiin na hiwalay sa ating mga sarili. Para sa mga magsasaka na tulad ni Kuya Kulas, ang ginhawa ay makakamit kapag nasa magandang kalagayan ang kanilang mga pamilya, kapag napagpapaaral nila ang kanilang mga anak, kapag nagbabayanihan sila sa bukid at sa kaalamang nakakapag-ambag sila sa hapag ng bawat Pamilyang Pilipino.

Marahil karamihan sa inyo, ay katulad ko rin na nangangamba dahil hindi pa sigurado sa kung anong

mangyayari ngayong tapos na ang buhay kolehiyo. Maraming pinto ang maaaring bumukas sa para sa atin. Maraming boses tayong makakasalamuha na maaaring gabayan o lihisin tayo sa ating mga layunin.

Sa prosesong ito, hindi dapat natin maging natatanging hangarin ang mga titutulong ididikit natin sa ating mga pangalan o di kaya nama'y sa mga parangal na maaari nating matanggap. Dahil ang mga katulad nito ay para lamang paghahabol sa hangin, kung ilalaan lamang natin ito sa isang layunin na para sa pansariling pakinabang.

Kaya naman gusto kong ibahagi sa ating magsisipagtapos at sa bawat iskolar ng bayan ang hamon na natutunan ko sa mga kwento nila Kuya Kulas. Sana makita, mapanghawakan at maipaglaban natin ang isang mithiin na higit pa sa ating mga sarili, ang kaginhawaan para sa mas nakararami.

Bago ako magtapos, gusto kong bigyan ng pagpupugay ang lahat ng taong nakasama natin. Sila ang isa mga dahilan ng ating pagpapatuloy at paglago

Unang unang sa lahat, palakpakan natin ang ating pamilya. Sila ang unang una na naniwala sa ating mga kakayahan, na para sa atin din pala ang mangarap. Maraming salamat po sa pagtataguyod at walang sawang pagsusuporta. Sa parents ko na baka umiiyak ngayon dahil di nila alam na magsasalita ako surprise, thank you for everything.

Sa ating mga kaibigan, na naging sandigan natin. Palakpakan natin sila! Maraming salamat sa walang sawang pakikinig at pakikiramay. Kay Bea, chelsa, kj, sam, josh, jorri, guia, harry, zoe at mga bebbies, thank you for being my home away from home.

Sa ating mga propesor. Isang pagpupugay sa lahat ng aral na ibinahagi niyo sa amin. Maraming salamat sa inyong paggabay at pagbibigay sa amin ng inspirasyon.

Siyempre, palakpakan natin ang ating mga sarili. We're finally here! Thank you for enduring, for continuing to show up, and for holding onto that hope. Huwag nating kalimutang bigyan din ng pasensya ang ating sarili. Nagtapos man tayo ng kolehiyo pero patuloy pa rin ang pagkatuto. Sa prosesong ito, maraming pagsubok at pagkakamali ang pwede nating pagdaanan. That's fine ! hese are not the opposite of progress but are vital part of the process.

Higit sa lahat, gusto kong ialay ang tagumpay na ito sa Maylikha. Sa inyo po ang lahat ng parangal at papuri.

Muli, Mga iskolar ng bayan, Buong Puso, Husay at Dangal na paglingkuran natin ang sambayanan! Lagi lagi para sa bayan! Maraming salamat po.





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UP CAMP Honors Class of 2025 in Recognition Ceremony Emphasizing Meaningful Service

Text by Charmaine A. Lingdas

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The University of the Philippines Manila College of Allied Medical Professions (CAMP) held its recognition ceremony, “Pagkilala 2025,” on July 21 at Cine Adarna, UP Diliman, with the theme “Paghayo Tungo sa Makabuluhang Paglilingkod.” The event celebrated the academic achievements of graduating students in occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech pathology, rehabilitation science, and clinical audiology.

In her opening remarks, CAMP Dean, Professor Esmerita Rotor, reflected on her personal journey likened to following the “beat of a different drummer,” inspired by a quote from Henry David Thoreau. Her own journey included entering UP, leaving a career in the US, and unexpectedly joining CAMP as a member of the faculty. Guided by her instincts, she found purpose and fulfillment in CAMP. Her message encouraged graduates to listen to their own calling and to trust their unique paths that may be uncertain but meaningful.

“This is my simple wish for you, CAMP Batch of 2025: that you hear the music—the drumbeat that leads to the path meant for you. It won’t be a paved road, that’s for sure. In following my own music, I found myself alone, lonely, uncertain, and unknowing. But it led me to a good place. As a graduate of UP, there will be expectations of you. At the very least: Honor, Excellence, and Service. Lean into these—you may just hear your music louder if you do.”

A Voice for Inclusion and Empowerment

The keynote speaker, Coach Obelia Lacanilao-Cutiongco, a speech communication specialist, delivered a moving

address that bridged personal advocacy with professional excellence. As a mother of a child with Down Syndrome, she shared her personal journey as a parent and advocate for children with disabilities. She spoke about founding a tutorial center and later, Espesyal Pinoy—a Filipino support group in Singapore—to build a caring, informed community for families like hers. She emphasized the importance of empathy, proper guidance, and early intervention through dedicated therapists who helped her daughter, Sandra, reach key developmental milestones. Returning to the Philippines, she continued her advocacy through awareness talks, free teacher training, and inclusive programs. She also highlighted the urgent need for more committed special education (SPED) teachers and therapists, especially given high turnover rates that negatively affect children’s stability and trust.

She went on to express her hope that the graduates would extend their reach—volunteering in community schools, outreach programs, organizations, and SPED institutions, and becoming speakers in career and awareness talks. Through their profession, she called on them to uplift others and build more inclusive, compassionate communities.

“May pangarap ako—na bawat isa sa inyo ay hindi lang basta magiging therapist, kundi magiging tagapagtayo ng mga komunidad na tunay na nagmamalasakit.”

She also envisioned a future where therapists are more widely recognized, where more students pursue



careers in CAMP, and where therapy services become more accessible. She dreamed of graduates becoming educators, center founders, and sector leaders—advancing inclusive education and support. She called for support for advocacies and policies that uphold the dignity and rights of children with special needs.

“Ang UP ay hindi lamang tungkol sa academic excellence. Ito ay tungkol sa serbisyo sa bayan, sa pagtulong sa kapwa, at sa pagbibigay ng pag-asa.” She ended her speech by urging the graduates to commit to being Filipino therapists who choose to care, to serve, and to stay.

Honoring Academic and Leadership Excellence

Chancellor Dr. Michael L. Tee formally recognized the candidates for graduation, affirming their successful completion of program requirements.

A total of **84 candidates for graduation from the undergraduate programs** were recognized this year:

30 from the Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy
30 from the Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy
24 from the Bachelor of Science in Speech Pathology
56 candidates for graduation were recognized with

Latin honors: (47 cum laude) 8 from BSOT, 21 from BSPT, 18 from BSSP, **(9 magna cum laude)** 7 from BSPT, 2 from BSSP

The college also recognized 8 candidates for graduation from its graduate programs: 5 from the Master of Physical Therapy, 2 from the Master of Rehabilitation Science – Speech Pathology, 1 from the Master of Clinical Audiology

Outstanding Student Clinicians

- Occupational Therapy: Alyana Clarisse Gutiérrez Ty
- Physical Therapy: Denabea Emry Rimando Catapang
- Speech Pathology: Karyl Dacuba Mariscal

Best Research Presentations were awarded to student teams for the following studies:

• Occupational Therapy

“Reading Participation of Community-dwelling Middle-aged Adults in Maragondon and Magallanes, Cavite Using the Filipino Inventory of Reading Occupations – Adult” Geneva Mae B. Israel, Ruthiema G. Rombaoa, Franzyn Rose P. Ramos, Khristine Marc D. Sandalo, Vincent John B. Ariola, and Moniera Nice T. Planas

• Physical Therapy

“Effects of Immersive Gamification Technology on Physical Function of People with Parkinson’s Disease: A Scoping Review” Martina Ysabel B. Arellano, Isabela Marie B. Evangelista, Mitchellet B. Rivera, Mark Justine B. Tanglaw, and Russell P. Ting

“Let’s HOP In: A Case Series on the Implementation of a Health Optimization Program for University Constituents”



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Denabea Emry R. Catapang, Adrienne S. Tibi, Erin Daphne C. Tiu, Raphael Jacob A. Uy, and Eurissa Louise L. Yutuc

• Speech Pathology

"Economic Costs of Communication Disorders in Children aged 3 to 6 years old in Visayas and Mindanao: Preliminary Results of a Cost-of-illness Study" Sofia Marie A. Fajardo, Hannah Mikaela G. Malayao, Jean Audrey C. Mejia, Anne Maurice B. Reyes, and Angelica Mae T. Rodolfo

Outstanding Student Clinician in Community-based Practice was awarded to Jose Enrico G. Dimailig who demonstrated exceptional commitment to community-based rehabilitation and inclusive programs serving underserved sectors.

Outstanding Student Leader Award was also given to Jose Enrico G. Dimailig for his exemplary leadership in various student organizations and health advocacy initiatives. He was recognized for leading outreach programs for children with cancer, promoting mental health awareness, and serving as president of the UP CAMP Association of Physical Therapy Students.

Student Response and Alumni Induction

Delivering the graduates' response was Rae Michelle Alamis Taray, magna cum laude from the Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy program, who reflected

on the varied reasons students pursued occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech pathology, or clinical audiology—family, personal experience, or the drive to make a difference. But beyond "why," she urged them to ask, "Para saan? Para kanino?" She honored their quiet struggles and daily perseverance, and recognized the support of parents, mentors, friends—and especially patients, whose resilience gave true meaning to the profession.

"Ngayong araw, tayo ay nagtipon-tipon hindi lamang upang ipagdiwang ang ating pagtatapos, kundi upang gunitain ang mga taon ng pagsisikap, pagkadapa at pagbangon, at higit sa lahat, ang ating paglago bilang mga taong handa nang maglingkod," she said.

As graduates take different paths, Taray reminded them that their duty goes beyond institutional walls. True service, she said, must be felt in places forgotten and unseen, where hope is most needed. She challenged her fellow scholars to use their knowledge to uplift, to disrupt injustice, and to serve not out of obligation, but out of love for country.

"Mula sa mga tahimik na sakripisyo at mga araw na pinili nating umusad kahit mabigat ang bawat hakbang, tayo ay ngayon hahayo nang nakataas ang kamao, matatag ang diwa, at handa ang pusong magsilbi para sa bayan. Mabuhay ang Batch 2025! Padayon sa mga bagong alagad ng makatao at makabuluhang paglilingkod!"





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Dean Esmerita Roceles Rotor

Welcome Remarks

Isang mapagpalayang hapon sa ating lahat! Sa ngalan ng kaguruan at administrative staff ng CAMP, nais ko batiin ang ating mga panauhin:

Unang una ay ang ating panauhing pandangal at tampok na tagapagsalita na si Ginang Obelia Lacanilao-Cutiongco. Maraming salamat sa pagtanggap niyo ng aming paanyaya.

Kasama natin ang mga opisyal ng UP Manila, na pinangungunahan ng ating Chancellor, Dr. Michael L. Tee.

Ang mga bise chancellor... Dr. Bernadette Heizel Reyes, vice chancellor for academic affairs, Dr. Johanna Patricia Cañal, VC for administration and finance, Dr. Les Michelle Dalmacio, VC for Research, at Dr. Jose Tecson the third, VC for Planning and Development.

Kasama din natin Ang University Registrar Prof. Jean Flor Casauay.

Nandito din ang mga dating dekana na sina Prof. Jocelyn Christina Marzan at Prof. Maria Eliza Aguila.

Nasa bulwagan din ang presidente ng CAMPAA, Mr. Joshua Manoharan

Higit at pinaka mahalagang panauhin natin sa hapon na ito, ay ang mga nag aruga, gumabay, nagtrabaho at bumuno para mapatapos ang mga iskolar ng bayan...ang mga nanay, tatay at iba pang kamaganak. Para sa inyo din po ang programang ito.

At siyempre, ang siyamna pu't isang mga graduates na ating bibigyan ng pagkilala para sa husay at galing na ipinakita nila bilang mag-aaral ng CAMP.

Kung inyong mamarapatin, napakaganda po ng salitang Pilipino pero hindi ko kayang sabihin ang aking tunay na saloobin kung ipagpapatuloy ko ito. Kaya pasensiya na, ako ay mag cocode switch!

Ginamit ko na ang mga "big words" ko sa Filipino,...I might do the language injustice if I keep on going...Allow me to give my message in English...

My high school, where I went to, is run by sisters/nuns and I'm quite fond of them. Earlier this year, one of the sisters passed away. She was a very strict nun, she didn't say much, she just gives you look that usually means..."Is this the best

you can do? Mia?"...and so I would go off doing things over again. I was really saddened by her passing because I was not able to say a proper goodbye and missed out on opportunities to sit and visit with her. So I attended a wake service just to reconnect with her and her memory. One the speakers brought up a quote that reminded her of Sr. Regivic, and it too resonated with me...and this I like to share with you.

The quote is from the book Walden by Henry David Thoreau. It goes...

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away."

These days I've often wondered how I came to be where I am now. Here standing before young, and some not too young...but ALL brilliant individuals.

How did I even deserve to be in your company?

While I am sure that there were divine interventions that happened in my lifetime for me to be here. I believe there were specific moments when I followed a different drummer.

The first drum beat was when I applied for and entered UP. I think it was my mother who planted the idea in my mind that the only school to enter is UP. Unlike in science high schools where some, or even most of you came from, where I studied, at that time (I don't know), UP was not a buzz word for College. I realized this too late when my friends and classmates were celebrating their acceptance to Dela Salle University! I didn't take the entrance exams for La Salled! And I started thinking, why didn't I? Why did I think UP was the only school to go to? Not one of my closest friends had intended to attend this university. One



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of them actually took the UPCAT...and unlike me, who qualified for a non-quota course (I think this is same like a DPWAS), my friend qualified for Industrial Engineering at the College of Engineering! But she did not enroll. And so, I stepped out of that loud and seemingly fun music my school friends were dancing to...and hesitatingly took a quiet and lonely walk by myself down the path towards UP.

That is of course,
without any regrets... UP
changed me. It changed
my perspective in life. It
opened up my world...
and I made new friends.

The second drumbeat was when I was working in the US. In the 80s and 90s therapists OTs and PtS had only two paths, take medicine or go to the US. Medicine was not for me. So off I went, followed the music and the crowd where everyone was headed. And I had fun, earning in dollars, shopping, feeling independent, paying my taxes, in short...adulting!

But then, my friends who I travelled with to go there started to do the next step to complete their migration...apply for a green card. That brought me to a screeching halt...

Do I really want this? Do I want to feel like an alien and stranger in this country all the time? Do I want to raise a family in this culture? At that time I didn't think that I would be raising a dog...but the questions remain. I didn't think that being Filipino was so important that I had to make that kind of a choice. So, once again, I stepped out of that loud music my roomies were listening to, I packed my bags, said my goodbyes, and flew home, uncertain of what kind of life I would have here.

My friends, they are all still there in Toms River, NJ, where I left them. Happy and content with life.

When I came back home I realized I had no plans on what I was going to do. So I started looking for a job. In those days there was no social media where you can scroll and check for job opportunities. You usually check the classified ads or literally knock on doors. Which I did...

So I went back to PGH where I used to work. And that's where I heard my third drum beat. By that time I didn't know anyone at the PT section anymore. So I walked down the hall and Anna Recto Legaspi, ARL to the OTs, was still the chief of the OT section. I said Hi and she was surprised to see me. Asked me what I was doing there? And I told

her I was looking for a job? And she gave me this quizzical look, like here? And said why don't you try if there is an opening in the college across the street. And typical of me, without thinking, and really just following the drum beat...I said ok. But I had no idea what I was getting into.

Our curriculum only taught us to be clinicians. There was no academic rotation or lectures on how to teach. Research was shoved down our throats just so we can finish school and I didn't want to do that. The only thing I know to do is to be a clinician. But I listened to Anna and crossed the street and knocked on Mam Fe's window (the SRE at that time). I asked if there was a job opening. She asked for my CV and I handed it over...

And here I am, 30 plus years later. In a space that continuously allows me to grow and thrive, doing work that brings me fulfillment and joy despite the daily struggles... of construction issues, money matters, developing a program from scratch...programs from scratch (es); and surrounded by people who motivate and inspire me to do the best I can at all times.

And so this is my simple wish for you, CAMP batch of 2025...

That you hear the music, the drumbeat that leads to a path that is meant for you. It will not be a paved road that is for sure... In following my music, I found myself, alone, lonely, uncertain and unknowing. But it led me to a good place.

As a graduate of UP, there will be expectations from you. At the very least...Honor, Excellence and Service.

Lean in on this...you may hear your music louder if you do. Excellence....You had the best education, you were mentored by the best teachers...you have it in you to be a game-changer to make our nation better, to improve Filipino lives. Honor...always practice with integrity...but soften this with humility, respect and a sincere intention to help.

Service...If you do hear your music however far away and measured, allow yourself to connect with people and build relationships. Life will be more meaningful and easier if and when you do this.

As I come to end this message, I prove how beautiful our language is...In English, one would say, "Congratulations and best of luck in all your endeavors!"

But in Filipino we say this with a sense of caring and a blessing that coats your entire person...it goes

Humayo kayo mga terapist at audiologist ng bayan, Pagpalain nawa kayo, Patungo sa makabuluhang paglilingkod.

Mabuhay kayo mga Iskolar ng CAMP Batch 2025! Para sa inyo ang programang ito!



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Coach Obelia Lacanilao-Cutiongco

Keynote Speaker

Chancellor Michael Tee, Dean Mia Rotor, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Bernadette Heizel Reyes, Vice Chancellor for Planning and Development Jose Tecson III, and Vice Chancellor for Research Leslie Michelle Dalmacio, mga propesor, mga magulang, mga kaibigan, at higit sa lahat, kayong mga bagong graduates- Magandang hapon at maligayang pagbati at taos-pusong congratulations!

Madalas, kapag may special needs na anak ang isang pamilya, may naririnig tayong mga sinasabi tulad ng: “Suwerte yan pag may anak kang ganyan.”

Ngunit ano nga ba ang ibig sabihin niyan? Anting-anting ba anak namin? O pampalubag-loob lang para sa amin/ na mga magulang na may mga challenges sa pagpapalaki ng mga children with special needs? Kadalasan, para sa akin, ito ay pawang unsolicited advice, na minsan ay offensive.

Noong 2000, tinayo ko ang ng DYNAMINDS tutorial center sa Marikina para tumulong sa mga batang nangangailangan ng gabay sa kanilang pag-aaral at pag may final examination. May studyante kaming may dyslexia, ADHD, at mga students with academic challenges. Dito ko nakita kung gaano kahalaga ang tamang gabay at malasakit sa pagtuturo. Naramdaman ko ang saya ng mga bata kapag sila ay nasa isang environment na puno ng pang-unawa at pag-aalaga. At sinabi ko sa mga teachers ko- Sana sa atin na lang ibigay ang mga batang may learning disability, dahil tayo ang pinaka makakaunawa sa kanila.

Noong taong 2004, biniyayaan kami ng Diyos ng isang isang anak na may Down Syndrome, si Sandra. At sa biyaya ng Panginoon, napaligiran kami ng magagaling na doktor at therapists. Kapatid ng asawa ko ang ikalawang geneticist sa Pilipinas—si Dra. Eva Cutiongco-Dela Paz, at agad kaming pinakilala sa tinitingalang Developmental Pediatrician, na si Dra. Alexis Reyes, kaya alam naming mag-asawa, na we were in good hands.

Sa tulong ng mga eksperto—pediatrician, neonatologist, cardiologist, ophthalmologist, endocrinologist at higit sa lahat, ng mga therapist na naging bahagi ng aming buhay, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist at Speech Therapist, naitawid namin ang mahahalagang milestones ni Sandra.

Sa loob ng isang taon at tatlong buwan, nakita namin ang mga munting tagumpay niya: nakalunok nang maayos si Sandra dahil kay Prof. Jake Isaac, nakapagsabi ng “Mama” noong walong buwan si Sandra dahil kay Teacher Abet, at nakatayo’t nakalakad siya ng umabot ng isang taon at tatlong buwan dahil kay Dean Marilie Ruiz Aguila. Maraming salamat muli sa inyo.

At dito ko napatunayan na- Oo, tama ang kasabihang SUWERTE YANG ANAK MO, dahil kami ay napaligiran at ginabayan ng mga pinakamahusay na doctor at mga therapists na naging bahagi ng aming journey in raising Sandra.

Noong taong 2005, lumipat kami sa Singapore, naghanap ako ng komunidad ng mga Pilipino – may UP Alumni Association in Singapore, may Filipino Leaders Association, Filipino Expat Wives, at sari-sari pang mga grupo, nguni’t wala ang hinahanap kong komunidad, yung para sa special needs community.

Noong 2006, dito ko itinayo, kasama ng guro at may-ari ng KIDS COVE Sped Center kung saan nag-aaral si Sandra, ang Espesyal Pinoy, a Filipino support group for families of children with special needs in Singapore. Noong 2016, may mahigit na 25 na Pamilya ang miyembro ng support group at patuloy pa silang dumadami.

Layunin naming pagtipunin ang lahat ng pamilyang Pilipino sa Singapore na may mga anak na may special needs. Nais naming makabuo ng isang komunidad na nagbibigay ng suporta sa isa’t isa, nagbabahagi ng mga karanasan, nagsasagawa ng mga impormatibong talakayan, at nagtutulungan sa pagpapalaganap ng kamalayan tungkol sa iba’t ibang kondisyon ng aming mga anak.

Bukas din kami na makipagtulungan sa mga therapists na handang ibahagi ang kanilang oras at talent upang maipabatid sa amin ang pinakabagong research and strategies na makakatulong sa progress ng aming mga anak. Hinihikayat namin ang mas malawak na komunidad na makilahok upang mas mapalalim ang pag-unawa, pagtanggap, at suporta para sa isang inklusibong lipunan.

Sa loob ng labing-isang taong pamamalagi namin sa Singapore, nagpatuloy pa rin ang therapy ni Sandra, sa iba't ibang mga lahi, at kadalasan, pag mga Pilipinang sped teachers at therapists, mas may tunay na pagkalinga. Ikanga nila, saan mang bahagi ng mundo, iba talaga pag Pilipino.

At noong bumalik kami sa Pilipinas noong 2017, patuloy ang pagiging parent advocate ko. I was delivering awareness lectures promoting an inclusive society and the use of politically correct language/ to schools, companies, and organizations.

Nag-oorganiza ako ng mga activities para sa mga children with special needs. Nagko-conduct ako ng libreng teacher training lalo na sa mga public elementary school teachers, at taon-taon kong hinahandle ang English Proficiency Program ng mga sped teachers ng ILLC na school ni Sandra. Ito ang naging passion ko to give back to our country, dahil labing-11 taon kaming Nawala.

Bukod sa pagpasok ni Sandra sa Sped school, nireokemenda sa amin nag magdance therapy to address hertics at speech therapy para sa progress ng language skills niya.

Isang espesyal na pasasalamat kay Teacher Ellyn Chua na naging speech-language therapist ni Sandra mula July 18 last year isang taon na palay yun. Dahil sa inyo, naging mas expressive si Sandra at mas nagsusumikap siyang magsalita nang mas malinaw." Mula ng bumalik kami dito sa Pilipinas, napansin namin ang kakulangan ang mga SPED teachers at therapists sa mga paaralan at mabilis

ang turnover. Tuwing magpapalit ng mga teachers sa bagong school year, hahanapin ni Sandra ang mga guro at therapist niya nung nakaraang taon. Hindi madali para sa isang child with special needs ang mabilis at pabago-bago ng mga guro at therapist. Nahihirapang sila mag-adjust, at magtiwala sa ibang tao. Mas gusto nila, yung nakasanayan na nila.

Dahil dito, naisip ko, kailangan natin ng mas marami pang therapist na may puso at dedikasyon. Nais kong ibahagi sa inyo ang aking mga pangarap, di lamang para kay Sandra, kundi sa bawat isa sa inyo, at pasyente, na sa inyong kakayahan ay umaasa.

May pangarap ako na bawat isa sa inyo ay hindi lang magiging therapist, kundi tagapagtayo ng mga komunidad na tunay na nagmamalasakit.

May pangarap ako na palalawakin ninyo ang inyong naabot na mga taomaging volunteer sa mga paaralan ng inyong komunidad sa mga outreach programs mga organisasyon

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at SPED schools at maging mga tagapagsalita sa mga career talk at awareness talk.

Maraming salamat kina Teacher Ellyn at Teacher Lui sa pagpapaunlak sa aking support group na Espesyal Pinoy, nung sila ay naging speaker namin nung May 17 upang ibahagi ang kahalagahan ng occupational therapy at speech therapy sa bawat pamilyang may child with special needs. Ang kanilang expertise sa kani-kanilang larangan at ang kakayahang tugunan ang mga concerns ng ibang mga magulang na dumalo, ay isa sa mga highlights ng event na ito.

Pangarap ko rin na maging kilala ang inyong propesyon sa lipunan, mas dumami pa ang kukuha ng mga kurso sa CAMP, at makaalam ng inyong Serbisyo bilang mga therapist, para mas maraming tao ang makatanggap ng wastong suporta at interbensyon na kailangan nila.

May pangarap ako na mas marami pang magiging guro, mga magtatayo ng therapy center, at lider sa inyong larangan, upang ipamamulat ang kahalagahan ng inklusibong edukasyon at suporta.

May pangarap ako na ang mga may kaya sa ating bansa ay handang sumuporta sa mga adbokasiya, ibahagi ang kanilang mga biyaya sa mga paaralan at therapy centers, para sa mga kapos-palad, sa mga may special needs, at mga may sakit.

May pangarap ako na ang ating mga pinunong bayan ay isa-sa-alang-alang ang kapakanan ng bawat sektor ng lipunan, lalo na ang mga batang may special needs.

Nais kong dumating ang panahon na ang mga batas at poli-siyang kanilang isinusulong ay tunay na sumasalamain sa pangangailangan, dignidad, at karapatan ng special needs community.

May pangarap ako na darating ang panahon na walang batang maiiwan, walang matanda na makakalimutan, at walang taong mawawalan ng pag-asa dahil may isang Filipino therapist na dumating, nagmalasakit, tumulong, at hindi umalis ng ating bansa. At higit sa lahat...

May pangarap ako na maglilingkod kayo sa ating bayan, hindi lamang dahil sa tungkulin, kundi dahil sa pagmamahal sa ating Lipunan. Kaya mga bagong therapists ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, habang tinutupad ninyo ang inyong mga personal na pangarap, huwag ninyong kalimutan ang pangarap ng bayan para sa inyo. Ang U.P. ay hindi lamang tungkol sa academic excellence. Ito ay tungkol sa serbisyo sa bayan, sa pagtulong sa kapwa, at sa pagbibigay ng pag-asa. Sa bahaging ito, nais kong magsitayo ang lahat ng graduates at basahin natin ang nakikita ninyo sa ating screen. Sumunod kayo sa akin:

"Ipinagmamalaki kong ako ay nagtapos sa UP College of Allied Medical Professions. Naniniwala ako na makakagawa ako ng pagbabago sa buhay ng bawat Pilipinong nangangailangan ng aking kaalaman galing, at malasakit. Maglilingkod ako sa UP. Maglilingkod sa aking komunidad at Maglilingkod ako sa aking bayan ng may dangal, may malasakit, at may kahusayan. Dahil mahal ko ang UP at mahal ko ang aking Bayan."

Congratulations Graduates at mabuhay kayong lahat!





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Rae Michelle Alamis Taray

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

Sa ating mga ginagalang na panauhin, tsanselor ng UP Manila, Dr. Michael Tee; Bise Tsanselor para sa Administrasyon at Pinansiya, Dr. Johanna Patricia A. Cañal; Bise Tsanselor para sa Pagpapalano at Pagpapaunlad, Dr. Jose V. Tecson, III; Bise Tsanselor para sa Saliksik, Dr. Leslie Michelle M. Dalmacio; Bise Tsanselor para sa Gawaing Pang-akademiko, Dr. Bernadette Heizel D. Manapat-Reyes; sa dekanang kolehiyo, Prof. Esmerita Rotor; sa kalihim ng kolehiyo, Assoc. Prof. Yves Palad; sa pamunuan, kaguruan, at kawani ng CAMP; sa ating tampok na tagapagsalita, Gng. Obelia Lacanilao-Cutiongco; sa ating mga magulang, mga kamag-anak, mga kaibigan; at sa mga kapwa kong nagsipagtapos — isang taos-pusong pagbati at pagpupugay sa ating lahat!

Isa sa mga madalas itanong sa bawat isa sa atin ay, “Bakit ito ang pinili mong propesyon?”

Iba-iba siguro ang ating magiging sagot.

Marami ang nagkaroon ng lakas ng loob na tahakin ang daan na ito dahil sa inspirasyon mula sa kanilang mga mahal sa buhay, na naglakbay sa parehong landas.

Mayroong nakaranas ng mga pagsubok kung saan sila o ang kanilang kamag-anak ay nakatanggap ng serbisyong pang-rehabilitasyon, kaya nais nilang makatulong din sa kapwa sa ganoong paraan. Para sa ilan, ito ay daan patungo sa mas malawak na pangarap at oportunidad. Ang iba naman, tulad ko, ay nais gamitin ang kanilang interes sa agham bilang instrumento ng pagbabago. Baka mayroon din mga taong patuloy pang hinahanap ang sagot.

Pero sa puntong ito ay mayroon nang mas mahalagang katanungan — imbis na bakit, ang dapat na nating itanong ay, “Para saan? Para kanino?” At sa bawat isa sa atin, maaaring iba ulit ang magiging sagot.

Para sa ating mga sarili — sa mga sarili nating pangarap na muntik nang mabitawan, pero piniling ipaglaban hanggang dulo. Sa mga tagumpay na tahimik lang nating inipon at dahan-dahang binuo mula sa puyat, pagod, at mga gabing puno ng tanong at pag-aalinlangan. Mga tagumpay na walang kasamang palakpakan o klik ng kamera, pero may mga tunog na ikaw lamang ang nakarinig:

Tulad ng malalim na buntong-hininga matapos ang mahabang araw. Ang katahimikan sa loob ng kwarto habang binubura ang huling aytem sa iyong to-do list. Ang simpleng pag-pause ng isang recorded lecture dahil sa wakas ay naiintindihan mo na. Ang pagsara ng lahat ng tab sa iyong laptop. Ang pagpatay ng ilaw pagtapos ng walang hintong pag-aaral. Ang paggising nang walang alarm.

Pero bago natin narating ang mga sandaling ‘yon, dumaan muna tayo sa maraming pagsubok. Ang mga recorded lecture na tatlumpung minuto lang dapat, pero inabot ng dalawang oras.

Ang walang tigil na pag-type sa keyboard para tapusin ang sampung notes sa iisang gabi — isang notes na “okay,” at siyam na “okay na ‘to.” Ang mga tanong na halos araw-araw bumabalik: “Tama ba talaga ‘tong pinili ko?” “Kaya ko ba ‘to?” Ang malakas at paulit-ulit na pagbigkas ng lahat ng kailangang isaulo — mga pangalan ng muscles, nerves, at pati na rin ang pag-praktis mga linyang inihanda para sa OSCE tulad ng, “Hello po! Ako po ang magiging PT/OT/SP ninyo para sa araw na ito.”

Ang pagsandal ng ulo sa mesa para umidlip saglit, pero paggising ay umaga na pala. Ang pagtungga ng pangalawa, pangatlo, o pang-apat na baso ng kape. O higit pa.

Sa kabila ng lahat ng ito, hindi laging dumadating ang tagumpay sa oras na inaasahan natin. May mga nauna at may mga naantala, na bumalik para tapusin ang kanilang sinimulan. Iba-iba man ang bilis ng ating naging paglalakbay, pare-parehas tayong nandito ngayon.

Narating natin ang puntong ito dahil sa ating sipag at tiyaga, ngunit hindi natin nagawa ito nang mag-isa. Sa bawat hakbang ay may kasama tayong kamay na umaalalay, ilaw na tumatanglaw, at puso na sumasabay sa tibok ng atin. Sila rin ay maaaring maging sagot sa tanong na bitbit natin ngayon — “Para saan? Para kanino?”

Para sa ating sariling mga magulang, mga nagsilbing magulang, at mga kamag-anak na nag-sakripisyo upang dalhin tayo sa mga lugar na hindi nila narating. Ang bawat baon, paalala, o yakap na binibigay nila ay lagi't laging may kalakip na dasal. Maraming gabi ang lumipas na sila rin ay napuyat upang samahan tayo sa ating mga gawain o dahil sa pag-aalala habang tayo ay

malayo sa kanila. Sa bawat tagumpay, sila ang unang bumati at pumalakpak. Ang bawat halik sa noo at bulong ng "Kaya mo yan," ang naging sandigan natin sa bawat pagsubok.

Para sa ating mga guro, na walang-sawa ang paggabay at paniniwala sa atin. Sila ang naging ilaw sa ating daan. Sa kanila natin unang natutunan bigkasin ang wikang propesyonal, pero sila rin ay naging tagapaghatid ng mga mahalagang aral ng buhay. Itinuro nila hindi lamang kung ano ang dapat gawin, kundi kung paano ito gawin nang may puso.

Para sa ating mga kaibigan, na naging kanlungan sa gitna ng pagod. Sa paglipas ng taon, unti-unti silang naging tahanan sa mga panahong malayo tayo sa sarili nating bahay. Ang mga dating kakilala lang ay naging karamay sa lahat ng bigat at saya. Sila ang kasama nating mangarap — at sila rin ang kasama natin mag-break-down. Sila ay patunay na sa bawat yugto ng ating paglalakbay, hindi kailanman tayo naglakad nang mag-isa.

At higit sa lahat, para sa ating mga pasyente, na isa sa pinakamahalagang bahagi ng ating pagkatuto. Para sa tatay na gustong makabalik sa trabaho para maitaguyod muli ang kanyang pamilya. Para sa lolong tiniis ang ilang

oras na biyahe mula pa sa probinsya upang makapagpa-terapi. Para sa inang nais muling makapagsalita at magampanan ang mga gawaing-bahay matapos ang stroke. Para sa lolang gustong muling mabuhay ang kanyang mga apo.

Para sa mga komunidad na matagal nang hindi nakatatanggap ng atensiyong medikal. Para sa mga magulang na naghihintay at umaasang makatayo't makalakad nang mag-isa ang kanilang mga anak o mabanggit nila ang mga salitang mama at papa o nanay at tatay.

Sa bawat session na hinaayan nila tayong maging bahagi ng kanilang paggaling, ang ating mga pasyente mismo ang nagturo sa atin ng tunay na halaga ng ating propesyon. Sila ang dahilan kung bakit tayo nandito ngayon — may puso at paninindigan.

Ngayong araw, tayo ay nagtipon-tipon hindi lamang upang ipagdiwang ang ating pagtatapos, kundi upang gunitain ang mga taon ng pagsisikap, pagkadapa at pagbangon, at higit sa lahat, ang ating paglago bilang mga taong handa nang maglingkod. Sa nakaraang mga buwan ay nakita natin na hindi sapat ang teorya kung walang praktikal na aplikasyon. Sa bawat araw na ginugol natin sa mga klinika o ospital, natutunan nating harapin ang mga pasyente na may kanya-kanyang kwento at pangangailangan.

Minsan, puno ito ng mga hamon — mga sitwasyong hindi mababasa sa mga libro, kundi mga aral na matutunan mo lamang kung ito ay iyong naranasan. Dito natin naunawaan ang kahalagahan ng pagiging maparaan at malikhain sa paghanap ng mga solusyon. Dito natin naramdaman

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ang bigat ng responsibilidad bilang tagapangalaga ng kalusugan ng iba. Dito natin natutunan na ang paglilingkod ay hindi lamang isang tungkulin o isang pribilehiyo — ito rin ay isang napakalaking karangan.

Pagkatapos ng araw na ito, tayo ay magsisimula nang maghiwalay ng landas. Ang ilan sa atin ay tutungo sa mga ospital sa lungsod, ang iba naman ay sa mga probinsya. May ilan na papasok sa mga pribadong klinika, habang ang iba ay magpapatuloy ng kanilang pag-aaral. Mayroon din tatahak sa larangan ng pananaliksik, at ang ilan naman sa atin ay pipiliing magturo upang hubugin ang susunod na mga propesyonal ng bansa. Saan man tayo dalhin ng ating mga hakbang, bitbit natin ang iisang layunin: ang makapaglingkod nang buong-puso.

Ngunit hindi natatapos ang ating responsibilidad sa loob ng mga institusyong kinabibilangan natin. Sa labas ng mga silid na ito naghihintay ang mas malalaking hamon — mga suliraning bunga ng kawalan ng katarungan at hindi pagkakapantay-pantay. At sa mga panahong iyon, muli nating itanong, “Para saan? Para kanino?” Dito natin sisimulang ipaglaban ang makatao at makabuluhang paglilingkod. Ang tema natin ngayon ay hindi lamang isang paalala na ang ating paglalakbay ay hindi pa nagtatapos sa araw na ito. Ito ay isang panata na ang bawat hakbang natin paglabas ng kwartong ito ay magiging tugon sa tawag ng panahon.

Madalas tayo ay natutuksong manahimik at manatili sa komportableng sitwasyon at kinalalagyan natin, bingi sa panawagan ng pagbabago at sumusunod lamang sa agos. Pero huwag nating kalimutan na ang pag-aaral natin ay bunga ng mga sakripisyo ng mga taong ipinagkatiwala

ang kanilang kinabukasan sa atin. Ang pinakamagandang paraan upang pasalamatan sila ay ang paggamit ng ating kaalaman upang paglingkuran sila. Ang tunay na makabuluhang serbisyo ay hindi lamang nakikita — ito ay nararamdaman, lalo na sa mga lugar na hindi laging nasisikatan ng araw at hindi na nakararamdam na mayroon pang liwanag ang bukas. Kaya naman, bilang mga iskolar ng bayan sa larangan ng rehabilitasyon, tungkulin din natin bigyang-lakas ang mga sugatang bahagi ng lipunan. Gamitin natin ang ating mga natutunan hindi lamang upang tumindig para sa mga inaapi ng sistema, kundi para guluhin ang kumpiyansa ng mga nakikinabang dito. Gamitin natin ang paglilingkod bilang wika ng ating pagmamahal para sa ating bayan.

Mga kapwa kong nagsipagtapos, sa pagsasara ng kabanatang ito ng ating buhay, huwag natin ituring ito bilang katapusan. Ang entabladong ito, kung saan tayo tumanggap ng parangal at pagkilala, aysiya ring entablado kung saan tayo ay pinapalayang makapaglingkod sa mas malawak na mundo.

At sa bawat hakbang natin mula ngayon, dalhin natin ang tanong na magpapaalala ng ating layunin: “Para saan? Para kanino?”

Mula sa mga tahimik na sakripisyo at mga araw na pinili nating umusad kahit mabigat ang bawat hakbang, tayo ay ngayon hahayo nang nakataas ang kamao, matatag ang diwa, at handa ang pusong magsilbi para sa bayan.

Mabuhay ang Batch 2025! Padayon sa mga bagong alagad ng makatao at makabuluhang paglilingkod!







College of Public Health of 2025 at Recogn

Text by Charmaine
Photos by Anggulos S



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Health Honors Class Recognition Ceremony

aine A. Lingdas
Studios Photography



The University of the Philippines Manila College of Public Health (CPH) celebrated the achievements of its graduating class during the 2025 Recognition Ceremony held at the Cine Adarna Theater, University of the Philippines Film Institute, UP Diliman, Quezon City. With the theme “Paninindigan at Paglingap: Saligan ng Kahapon, Gabay ng Kasalukuyan, Tanglaw sa Hinaharap ng Pamublikong Kalusugan,” the event highlighted the enduring mission of public health.

In his message, Dean Fernando B. Garcia, Jr. emphasized, “Ang tema ay paalala sa atin. Ang ating misyon sa pampublikong kalusugan ay hindi nagtatapos sa apat na sulok ng classroom. Kasama dito ang ating kasaysayan, ang mga aral ng kahapon, ang mga hamon ng kasalukuyan—mula sa pandemya, climate change, One Health, hanggang sa mga isyung pampolitikal—at ang pagtanaw sa kinabukasan kung saan kayo na ang magiging lider, tagapag-ugnay, tagapagsalita, at tagapagtanggol ng kalusugan ng mamamayan.”

The event honored 127 graduates from various academic programs, including the Bachelor of Science in Public Health; Master of Arts in Health Policy Studies (Health Science); Master of Hospital Administration; Master of Occupational Health; Master of Public Health; Master of Science in Public Health; and Doctor of Public Health.

The ceremony also included the awarding of academic honors and special recognitions to outstanding graduates:

Academic Excellence

BS in Public Health – Aronne Joy C. Madrangca

Master of Hospital Administration – Maria Teresita B. Aspi
Master of Occupational Health – Doreen Marie T. Ramirez
Master of Public Health – France Louie R. Jutiz

Highest in Comprehensive Examination

Master of Hospital Administration – Maria Teresita B. Aspi
Master of Occupational Health – Marvee M. Quintos
Master of Public Health – France Louie R. Jutiz

Leadership Award – Raymond Louis C. Lista

Graduates’ responses were delivered by Aronne Joy C. Madrangca (BSPH) and Jannette D. Awisan (DrPH), who shared reflections on their journeys and the transformative impact of their education at CPH.

Aronne Joy C. Madrangca delivered a heartfelt and reflective speech that traced the journey of the BS Public Health Class of 2025 from uncertainty to triumph. Sharing her own story of initially not being accepted into UP but eventually earning her place, she highlighted the perseverance and shared experiences that shaped their four-year academic life, from grueling exams and lab work to the joy found in learning and camaraderie.

“For sure, we will not leave Lara Hall as the same person we used to be when we entered. We will not leave our college with just 152 units credited for our degree—we will leave Lara Hall with a sense of commitment to finish what we have started in our public health courses,” she said. Madrangca encouraged her fellow graduates to translate public health theories into real-world action, whether through research, community engagement, or future professions, reminding them that their mission



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does not require making headlines but rather quiet, consistent service.

Above all, she emphasized that the education they received is a privilege that must be used in service of the Filipino people with compassion, integrity, and humanity. "Not everyone is given the opportunity to study in UP. But that doesn't mean that when we leave UP, we leave as messiahs. I hope that we use this privilege well. I hope that we stay committed to why we wanted to enter the University in the first place. May these recognitions and merits not blind us but rather show us opportunities that only a few would dare to grab."

Representing the graduate students of the Class of 2025, Jannette D. Awisan delivered a moving and reflective speech marked by gratitude, humility, and a deep sense of mission. She opened by acknowledging the different stories and the different motivations that brought them back to school, but she believed they share a common, unspoken purpose: "we came back not merely in pursuit of titles or credentials, but because we were drawn by something deeper—a renewed sense of mission. We returned carrying questions, convictions, and a desire to grow—not only for ourselves, but for the people and communities we are called to serve."

Referencing the acronym L.E.A.P., she said their return to UP was a choice to "Live out their calling, Embrace challenges, Arise with purpose, and Persist through the process." Their journey, she said, was not only academic but transformative, forcing them into critically aware, ethically grounded, and socially responsive public health professionals.

She gave tribute to the many supporters who stood behind each graduate—mentors, staff, classmates, and family: "Behind every graduate is a village... No one gets here alone. This victory is as much theirs as it is ours."

She concluded with a call to action: "And now, as we step out from the halls that have shaped us, we carry more than just degrees—we carry a calling. To whom much is given, much is expected. The blessings we have received are not for us to keep. They are meant to be planted, nurtured, and multiplied in the service of others."

In her inspirational message, Dr. Paulyn Jean B. Rosell-Ubial, executive director of the Philippine Tuberculosis Society Inc., former secretary of the Department of Health, and adjunct professor at CPH, shared words of encouragement drawn from her extensive experience in public service. "What's important," she said, "is how you are able to create meaningful change and transform the lives of those around you." Acknowledging the challenges that lie ahead, she reminded the graduates, "It's not about how many times you fall, stumble, or face difficulties along the way—it's about how many times you rise, move forward, and stay hopeful in cultivating a beautiful garden of life."

In her closing remarks, College Secretary Dr. Evalyn A. Roxas, who also chaired the 2025 Recognition Ceremony Organizing Committee, expressed pride in the graduates and gratitude to the faculty, staff, and guests who contributed to the success of the event. "Nawa'y magsilbi itong makasaysayang wakas sa araw na puno ng pagkilala, ngunit higit sa lahat, magsilbing panimula sa mas makabuluhang paglilingkod."





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Aronne Joy C. Madrangca

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

Chancellor Michael L. Tee, Dean Fernando B. Garcia Jr., Dr. Paulyne Jean B. Rosell-Ubial, Vice Chancellors, distinguished guests, dear professors, fellow graduating students, friends, family, and to everyone who we wished to be here, magandang umaga po sa ating lahat.

A lot of us would probably joke that if there was an UPCAT back in 2020, we probably would not have been admitted to BSPH, let alone UP. I, for instance, never imagined that I would be the one delivering this speech in front of you all — it was not a green congratulations that greeted me on my UPCA portal four years ago, but a big red thank you. Yet here we are, from trading insects in PH177 and PCR tubes in PH199, we are finally trading goodbyes as we near the end of our four-year journey as BS Public Health students.

I still vividly remember back in first year second sem, crying over CHEM33 because of the third long exam and two quizzes scheduled just a week after the second exam. I was so excited to take our major courses and have face to face classes at Lara Hall because I thought that's where I'm good at and the courses are just a mixture of things that I love.

Thankfully, I did not cry throughout my BSPH journey. But that doesn't invalidate everyone here who experienced otherwise.

Just like how a B-cell is programmed to respond to a specific antigen, we all have our strengths that helped us push through in this program. Maybe I just found joy in every lecture and coursework in the College.

For sure, we will not leave Lara Hall as the same person we used to be when we entered. We will not leave our College

with just 152 units credited for our degree, we will leave Lara Hall with a sense of commitment to finish what we have started in our public health courses.

We did not just pass PH1, PH2, and so on, to learn about the fundamentals of public health and social determinants of health, but we finished these courses, hopefully, inspired to translate these theories into actions in our own ways — no matter how small for now. We are not immediately expected to make headlines in the public health community. But as the multipotent cells that we are emerging from our CPH lineage, may we mount a stronger anamnestic response towards issues and threats in public health all introduced and made realized to us during our stay in the College.

We did not just finish our hospital internships with completely filled out ticklers, we left our rotations with the harsh realization that as our society advances, more and more individuals with preventable illnesses would burden our healthcare system, hence the need for better health service delivery at the grassroots level.

More so, I hope that we did not finish our community internships without an eagerness to extend what public health initiatives have been set out in MagNaMarTe to more communities in the country, maybe starting in our own hometowns.

Lastly, for some of us, we did not just survive MICRO125. We learned that it's okay to be pyruvate. Maybe some of us have plans already set in stone after graduation, but for those who are still in crossroads, just like pyruvate, I hope that you are destined to be wherever the environmental conditions calls for. Whether you become acetate, lactate, or oxaloacetate, in public health, diversity and adaptability is essential. But whatever path you take, may it be in research, academe, community, or medicine, I hope that it is always rooted in service towards our countrymen for whom we are studying. Not everyone is given the opportunity to study in UP. But that doesn't mean that when we leave UP, we leave as messiahs.

I hope that we use this privilege well. I hope that we stay committed to why we wanted to enter the University in the first place. May these recognition and merits not blind us, but rather show us opportunities that only a few would dare to grab.

As the first batch of graduating UPCA students, may our Sablay be a testament that it is not our grades that lead

us to this moment but it is our grit, determination, fought silent battles, and hours of sleep sacrificed just to finish that one last trans that did. We earned our spot to be here.

May each thread in
our Sablay also remind
us of the people and
experiences that have
shaped us in the University.

To our professors and mentors outside the institution, thank you for your steadfast commitment in educating young minds. You have not failed to inspire the next set of public health leaders.

To our families (both nuclear and cytoplasmic), who may at some point have lend their arms just so we can practice our venipuncture skills, thank you for your support and belief in us especially at times when we think otherwise.

To my mama and papa, thank you for praying with me every time we have a long exam.

To my friends, (I really wish I could sit with you guys) thank you for showing me that there is more to life than getting high grades.

To our special studies group and advisers, thank you for allowing us to learn beyond what we are expected to. To M7 and Doc Fres, thank you for bearing with me.

To our laboratory technicians and aid, PhilCare staff, guards, and all other staff in CPH, we thank you for your service.

Lastly, all glory, praise, and honor are offered to the Lord for being faithful to His promise.

As we leave our beloved Lara Hall and UP tomorrow, I hope that whatever path of service we may take, may we never forget that honor and excellence must always be complemented with compassion. Behind all lab samples and health data that we analyze are [actual] people who seek not only our objective evaluations, but comfort above all. I hope that in everything that we do, may we always remember the Filipino people who have paid for our education. And as we return the state its investment, may we serve them in the most humane way possible.

Lagi't lagi, para sa bayan. Maraming salamat po.

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Jannette D. Awisan

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

To: Dr. Paulyn Jean B. Rosell-Ubial, Executive Director, Philippine Tuberculosis Society, Inc.

Dr. Michael L. Tee, Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Manila

Dr. Johanna Patricia A. Cañal, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Dr. Jose V. Tecson III, Vice Chancellor for Planning and Development

Dr. Leslie Michelle M. Dalmacio, Vice Chancellor for Research

Dr. Bernadette Heizel D. Manapat-Reyes, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Members of the Dean's Management Team

Department Chairs, Faculty, Officers, and Administrative Staff

Esteemed Guests, Parents, and Family Members

Fellow Candidates for Graduation

A grand and blessed day to all.

It is with deep gratitude and humble joy that I stand before you today, honored to represent the graduate students graduating class of 2025.

Each of us returned to school with different stories, different motivations. But I believe we share a common, unspoken purpose: we came back not merely in pursuit of titles or credentials, but because we were drawn by something deeper—a renewed sense of mission. We returned carrying questions, convictions, and a desire to grow—not only for ourselves, but for the people and communities we are called to serve.

We knew that returning to school would not make life easier, but we also knew it would make us stronger, more equipped, and more prepared to face the complex public health challenges of our country. We said yes because we believed that investing in ourselves is ultimately an investment in others. We chose this path because we believed in doing what we already do—better. We chose growth. We chose to be challenged. We came back to deepen our knowledge, sharpen our skills, and broaden our perspectives.

It is a mindset that is not always common, and sometimes, it is questioned, even by ourselves, especially during moments of exhaustion or doubt. Bakit nga ba kasi? Because deep down, we knew it was worth it. Because the people we serve deserve nothing less than our best. Wow naman, di ba?

LEAP-ing back into school at the University of the Philippines-Manila, College of Public Health was never an easy decision. Pwede namang iba na lang, 'di ba? The standards were high, the expectations even higher. And yet, we pressed on. Many of us were already juggling roles—sons and daughters, spouses, parents, and working professionals.

But even with all that,
we still chose this path.
We stretched ourselves
because we believed in a
greater purpose. Inilaban
natin—dahil pinili natin.

And in choosing to L.E.A.P., we chose to Live out our calling, Embrace the challenges, Arise with purpose, and Persist through the process.

Our journey was more than academic—it was transformative. We were shaped not only by lectures and laboratory work but also by the very challenges that demanded grit, collaboration, and courage. As we collected data, identified problems, wrote proposals, and defended ideas, we were not just complying with requirements—we were being formed into critically aware, ethically grounded, and socially responsive public health professionals. In every sleepless night and breakthrough moment, we were not just learning—we were becoming. Even our lowest points—the delays, the doubts, the near-burnouts—were not wasted. They taught us to rise, to endure, and to find grace in the struggle. They taught us gratitude, not only for success, but for the strength found



COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
University of the Philippines Manila
Division of Health Sciences
Department of Public Health, Nutrition & Community Health



2025

Araw ng Pagkilala

"Paninindigan at Paglingap:
Saligan ng Kahapon, Gabay ng Kasalukuyan,
Tanglaw sa Hinaharap
ng Pampublikong Kalusugan."



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in weakness, and the people who carried us when we could not carry ourselves.

Behind every graduate is a village—a group of steadfast supporters who encouraged us, believed in us, and sacrificed for us. No one gets here alone. This victory is as much theirs as it is ours. Sino-sino sila? they deserve our deepest pagpupugay.

First and always, we give glory to God, the source of all wisdom, strength, and grace. We thank Him not only for sustaining us, but for placing the right people beside us at just the right time.

To the University of the Philippines Manila, College of Public Health, thank you. To be part of this institution, known for excellence, integrity, and service, is a great privilege.

We entered Lara Hall with dreams and many doubts, but we were met with a community that nurtured our growth and believed in our potential.

To our professors and mentors, thank you for gifting us not only with knowledge but with wisdom, patience, and inspiration. You challenged us to think deeper, do better, and believe in ourselves. Your time, dedication, wisdom, and encouragement have left a lasting imprint on who we are and who we are becoming. Maraming salamat po sa PUSH—sa Pagtutulak, Udyok, Suporta, at Hasa kahit masakit.

To the laboratory staff, who accommodated our endless (and sometimes unreasonable) requests; to the librarians, who tolerated whispered discussions during crunch time; to the administrative staff, who guided us through last-minute paperwork with grace; to the maintenance personnel, who ensured we always had clean spaces to study, rest, or even sleep; and to the security staff, who greeted us with a quiet smile even when we were too preoccupied to respond—maraming, maraming salamat po. Your quiet contributions brought warmth and stability in the most chaotic seasons. Hindi kayo nawawala sa aming tagumpay.

To our fellow students, our companions in this shared journey—thank you. You turned pressure into laughter,

isolation into solidarity, and deadlines into shared victories. Salamat sa sabayang pagpupunyagi, sa tawanan sa gitna ng pagod, at sa pagkakaibigang hindi matutumbasan.

To our families, near and far, thank you for carrying the weight of our dreams alongside us. To the parents whose quiet prayers walked with us... to the spouses who picked up the responsibilities when we could not... to the sons and daughters who understood that mom or dad could not always be present—maraming salamat sa inyong pagtanggap, sa inyong pag-unawa, at higit sa lahat, sa inyong pagmamahal. This success is also yours.

To the many whose names may not be mentioned, but whose kindness and quiet service supported us along the way—salamat po. May our prayers of gratitude reach you, even where our words may fall short.

And now, as we step out from the halls that have shaped us, we carry more than just degrees—we carry a calling. To whom much is given, much is expected. The blessings we have received are not for us to keep. They are meant to be planted, nurtured, and multiplied in the service of others. We honor you—not just with words of thanks—but with lives of integrity, excellence, and compassion. Lives poured out in service, in humility, and in gratitude.

As we exit Lara Hall with uncertainty, we now again LEAP into new unknowns—this time, not empty-handed, but equipped. May we Listen to the needs of others, Engage with compassion and competence, Act with integrity and purpose, and Persist through challenges, always anchored in service. Again, we cannot do it alone. Please continue to pray for us as we begin our real-life practicum and return demonstration—not just in classrooms, but in communities, health centers, and the frontlines of our country.

To my fellow graduates—congratulations! This is not the end, but the beginning of a greater mission. May we move forward with courage and conviction.

Let us remember: the true measure of our success is not in the titles we earn, but in the lives we touch and the service we give.

In the words of a well-known prayer: “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.”

May we become instruments of healing, justice, and hope—especially in the places where we are most needed. Muli, maraming salamat, at mabuhay tayong lahat!





NTTCHP Holds 10th Corazon P. Gonzales

Text by Charmaine

Photos by Prof. Nemuel Fajutaga



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Recognition Rites and z Memorial Lecture

aine A. Lingdas
ana and Mr. Armando Cervantes





The University of the Philippines Manila National Teacher Training Center for the Health Professions (NTTCHP) honored its latest graduates during the 10th College Recognition Ceremony held on July 23, 2025, at the Manila Prince Hotel. The event was held in conjunction with the Corazon Paulino Gonzalez Memorial Lecture.

This year's celebration carried the theme of UP Manila's 116th Commencement Exercises, "UP Manila: Saligan ng Kahapon, Gabay ng Kasalukuyan, Tanglaw sa Hinaharap," reaffirming the university's role in shaping the future of health professions education through a transformative teacher training.

A total of 21 graduates were recognized from the following programs:

Doctor of Health Professions Education (DrHPed)
 Doctor of Philosophy in Health Sciences by Research (PhD by Research)
 Master of Arts in Health Professions Education (MAHPed)
 Master of Health Professions Education (MHPEd – old program)
 Master in Health Professions Education (MHPEd – Professional Track)

Four outstanding graduates were also conferred the Academic Excellence Awards for 2025:

Maria Teresita B. Dalusong (DrHPed)
 Janice Jill K. Lao (MAHPed)
 Marie Arlene Christine T. Valerio (MHPEd – old program)
 Ellen M. Palomares (MHPEd – Professional Track)

Dr. Erlyn A. Sana, Professor and former Dean of NTTCHP, delivered both the recognition message and the Corazon Paulino Gonzalez Memorial Lecture. In her talk, titled "Teacher Training: Systematic, Sequential, and Wider Attack," Dr. Sana revisited the 1986 WHO declaration made during the Geneva Convention on the establishment of the Inter-Regional Teacher Training Center (IRTTC). The declaration stated: 'The problem of teacher training for the health professions is of such magnitude and of such central importance to the world community that a systematic, sequential and wider attack must be launched without delay.'

This, she explained, underscored the urgent need for structured and strategic faculty development in health professions education—a vision that institutions like NTTCHP have carried forward since its founding in 1975 by Dr. Corazon Paulino Gonzalez.

Dr. Sana narrated how NTTCHP evolved from a modest office staffed by a single faculty member and one administrative staff into a nationally and internationally recognized center for health professions education. It now offers comprehensive master's and doctoral programs and holds the distinction of being the only National Teacher Training Center in the WHO network formally recognized as NTTCHP.

She shared that the Center now trains professionals across multiple health disciplines and institutions. "From 3 to 5 new students every semester, our student population grew to more than 200 this year, all distributed

into our three programs—from the two master's to the doctorate degrees," Dr. Sana said. She emphasized that NTTCHP graduates—her "trophyees"—are equipped to become effective health professions educators who design and implement outcome-based curricula, foster learning, conduct research, and lead educational reforms.

She discussed that initially dominated by medical faculty, HPed in the Philippines has evolved into a distinct academic discipline that operates at the interface of higher education and the health sciences. This year's graduates represent a wide range of professions, including 10 medical doctors, 5 nurses, 1 medical technologist, 2 dentists, and 3 allied health professionals such as occupational and physical therapists—reflecting the Center's growing reach and impact in transforming health professionals into educators.

"Thank you to all who persevered to finish this school year in time for my retirement," Dr. Sana said with gratitude. She also gave special recognition to the pioneering graduates of the MAHPed program, Maurice Lee Santos and Janice Jill Lao, who were among the first to complete the new master's track.

Citing health labor market analysis, Dr. Sana stressed that NTTCHP is actively contributing to the call for a systematic, sequential, and wider attack in teacher training. "If NTTCHP graduates do their job well—nurturing their students and helping them realize their full potential as health professionals—you can help prevent attrition in schools, support student success, and contribute to producing a new stock of human resources for health in 4, 5, 6, and 7 years," she said.

She also addressed the challenge of contributing to the full realization of the Universal Health Care (UHC) Act. "Let us approach this the outcome-based education (OBE) way by beginning with the ends in mind," she urged. "Our job as HPEducators is to intentionally design courses that help students internalize the principles of UHC as stipulated in RA 11223."

Dr. Sana emphasized that all health science schools are responsible for ensuring students become competent primary care providers, regardless of their degrees or levels of specialization, and that they embrace the primary health care approach. She added that students must understand how UHC functions within a health systems framework, where the six building blocks—(1) leadership and governance, (2) financing, (3) service delivery, (4) access to medicines, technologies, and vaccines, (5) information systems, and (6) health workforce—must work in synergy to create a responsive and efficient health system that does not impose financial hardship on the population.

She concluded by reinforcing the strategic importance of teacher training in addressing the global health workforce crisis, echoing WHO's original call. With commitment and clarity of purpose, she believes Filipino health professions educators can help bring UHC to life. Quoting a phrase from Former Dean Melflor Atienza, she ended her speech with a message of hope: "Habang may guro, may pag-asa."

Dr. Erlyn A. Sana

Keynote Speaker

Chancellor Tee, Vice-Chancellors Reyes, Tecson, Dalmacio, and Cañal, the trustees of the Dr. Corazon Paulino Gonzalez Memorial Foundation, alumni, members of the NTTCHP faculty and staff, graduates, families and friends, Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat.

Please allow me to explain why the program invitation says Inspirational Message and Dr. Corazon Paulino Gonzalez Memorial Lecture. The “inspirational message” is meant for me to send you, our new graduates to your respective workplaces, equipped with your newly-acquired professional competencies from NTTCHP. Customary for the college and the university to do is, after your years of formal socialization at NTTCHP, we honor you today with this program.

The latter is also a message that I have been tasked to deliver during the birth month of Dr. Corazon P. Gonzalez, NTTCHP's founding director and under whose name the memorial foundation comes from. I transferred to NTTCHP from UPLB in 1994 and did not have the opportunity to personally work with Dr. Gonzalez. She was NTTCHP director from 1975 to 1986. But since I am the foundation president and have officially retired, I become the most convenient CPG Memorial Lecturer.

You know I have recently retired and still recovering and resting from 46 years of work. I would also like to think that I am finding myself again (at 65 years old) so I asked Dean Betchay to just give me this chance to prepare for one speech in two occasions. Graduates, please do not think that your recognition today becomes less important. Your graduation is the reason we are gathered here today; the memorial lecture is a piggyback message because it is July, we immortalize the memory of our founding director, and we celebrate her too because she paved the way for all of us to be here today.

NTTCHP and Dr. Corazon Paulino Gonzalez

The United Nations was founded in 1945, soon after the end of the Second World War. Under its wing, the WHO was founded in 1948. WHO is “committed to build a world in which everyone can live healthy, productive lives; placing health at the centre of the global agenda; putting people first; and engaging countries and strengthening

partnerships.” Towards achieving this vision, WHO identified the central role of teachers and their training as health professions educators. WHO systematically worked on this through founding Inter Regional Teacher Training Centers, Regional Teacher Training Centers, and National Teacher Training Centers. The first IRTTC was established at the University of Chicago in Illinois Campus. From the programs conducted by this institution, we got to know the pioneers of initially medical education, and much later evolved into health professions education (HPed). I hope you can recall George Miller and his pyramid, Howard Barrows, the author of problem-based learning, standardized patients and simulated recall, and David Irby and his book “Educating Physicians: A Call for Reform of Medical School and Residency” among others. In establishing the Inter Regional Teacher Training Center (IRTTC) in 1969, WHO declared in the Geneva Convention that:

The problem of teacher training for the health professions is of such magnitude and of such central importance to the world community that a systematic, sequential and wider attack must be launched without delay.

I got the title of my message today from this quote. WHO operationalized this call by equipping regional education specialists at IRTTC, national educational leaders at the Regional Teacher Training Centers (RTTCs), and institutional practitioners through the NTTCs. Since 2020, you have been watching our official audio-visual



production during college programs and you know that Dr. Gonzalez, then a faculty of Physiology at the UPCM trained at RTTC in Sydney, Australia. She then eventually became the founding director of NTTC in UP Manila in 1975. NTTC in UP Manila changed its name into NTTCHP in 1978 and became the only NTTC in WHO's centers recognized as NTTCHP and offers degree programs in HPED, aside from the NTTC in the Seoul University College of Medicine.

UP Manila will publish soon a heritage book on NTTCHP and there is a chapter written by Ms. Arlyn VCD Romualdo entitled "The world calls, UP answers." As a key informant, I explained to Ms. Romualdo the call made by WHO to address the global crisis on human resources for health (HRH). After the war, the world needed health care workers and professionals to address global health problems. This demand can be met by the health sciences schools: the institutions representing the supply side of HRH.

The solution was systematic because the IRTTC trained health professions educators who have achieved the highest level of influence and respectability to lead at the regional level. The WHO divides the world into six regions namely the African Region, Region of the Americas consisting of North and South America, South East Asian Region, European Region, Eastern Mediterranean, and the Western Pacific Region where the Philippines belongs. From the 1960's to the 1970's faculty members who have achieved equal stature across the regions included Drs. Raja Bandaranayake and Ari Rotem of the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. They served as the pioneer HPED champions who fulfilled the function of the RTTC where the Philippines geographically belonged.

Those trained at RTTCs are considered national educational leaders. In the Philippines, two of the most prominent trainees included UPCM Physiology Professor Dr. Corazon P. Gonzalez and UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry Dr. Gilberto L. Gamez. After their training at RTTC, they lead their local institutions in training HPED teachers. The scheme of training was also sequential because as soon as the teachers are trained, they are challenged to train others and cause multiplier effect. It was considered a wider attack too because the training was conducted across the archipelago and in short-term programs compared to making them finish a formal degree. The goal was to immediately produce health professionals who can make lesson plans, effectively teach, construct valid examinations, and inspire future health professionals to teach the next generation of human resources for health; teacher training is identified here as the solution to make supply meet the demand for HRH.

NTTCHP started with just Dr. Gonzalez as the only full-time faculty, and Ms. Ester Pabalate as the only administrative staff. Their office was at Dr. Gonzalez's office at the UPCM Department of Physiology. She served as founding director from 1975 to 1986.

The health professions educators in the evolving landscapes influencing HPED and health care delivery system.

I consider the years that followed the leadership of Dr. Gonzalez a period of growth and development. The WHO, UP, and Dr. Gonzalez collectively planted the seed of HPED in the Philippines. Through our programs, we now see the branches growing and reproducing themselves just like you all, our graduates.

NTTCHP slowly but steadily built its niche. A lot of work was put into this, the founding faculty members and staff, the participants in all the short-term faculty development programs, and then from 1980-1981, students in the MHPEd. If deans of medical schools have difficulty recruiting faculty members who cannot be uprooted from their clinical practice, NTTCHP struggled to recruit students for the same reason. Our mantra in the early years, especially when I was College Secretary from 1994 to 2006, was to welcome all applicants, nurture and care for them so they become transformed HP Educators. From 3-5 new students every semester, our student population grew to more than 200 this year, all distributed into our 3 programs from the 2 masters to the doctorate degrees.

Initially dominated by medical faculty, HPED in the Philippines has evolved into being a distinct academic discipline that works at the interface of higher education and the health sciences, multi and inter professional collaboration, rests on the principles of adult learning or andragogy, and reinforced by information and communication technology (ICT) and now even artificial intelligence (AI). These features are very well captured by your profile now, our dear graduates. Syempre, bilang na bilang naming kayong lahat; I have called our graduates and alumni in many occasions "our trophies" as we are confident that in letting you go and as you take charge, you will make your own path as HPED influencers just like your predecessors.

This year's harvest is another record high for the college. So, who are our graduates for School Year 2024-2025:

1.) My source of pride and joy, 11 of you (out of 21) are my dissertation, thesis, and capstone advisees. Thank you all who persevered to finish this school year in time for my retirement. (1) Rod Charlie Delos Reyes is PhD by Research, (2) Maurice Lee Santos and (3) Janice Jill Lao are the first two graduates of the MAHPED degree program, then MHPEd Academic Track graduates are (4) Mark Jeembs Pineda, (5) Marie Arlene Christine Valerio, and the MHPEd Professional Track graduates are (6) Justin Romel Bernardo, (7) Christian Earvin Bondoc, (8) Janill Ignacio, (9) Maria Fatima Manuel, and (10) Vicente Carlomagno Mendoza III, (11) Ellen Palomares.

2.) I served as the reader-critic of the four of you: (12) Brother Dan Sanding, (13) Jill Capatoy, and (14) Steven Seno for MHPEd and (15) Maria Teresita Dalusong, our 2nd DrHPED graduate.

3.) The other 6 were under different advisers but were also my students in some courses like HP 211, HP 224, and HP 299. Fleda Rose Castro, Michelle Gamboa, Jesse Noel Conjares, Carlos Layese, Jr, Darby Santiago, and Edgar Mendoza.

Last November 2024, our team from NTTCHP was commissioned to document the Philippine-Pacific Health Initiative Conference on Sustainable Health Workforce for Health Security. Our very own DOH Undersecretary for UHC Policy and Strategy Cluster Dr. Kenneth Ronquillo reported that DOH uses the WHO Framework on Health Labor Market Analysis. Dr. Ronquillo explained that alarming attrition rates among students admitted in medicine, nursing, and midwifery were recorded based on the total number admitted from school years 2014-2022. Medical schools admitted 20,691 with an average drop out of 76%. This is why the average number of graduates were only 5,585. Nursing schools admitted 48,652 and average dropout rate was 77%. Average number of graduates was 11,014. Midwifery schools admitted 10,705 with average dropout rate of 70%, graduating only 3,176. These dropout rates are much higher than those who failed the licensure examinations and those who chose to work overseas. If NTTCHP graduates do their job well, nurture their students to help them realize their full potentials as health professionals, you can help prevent attrition in schools, help them graduate, pass the licensure examinations and produce a new stock of HRH in 4, 5, 6, and 7 years. Imagine these HRH from the 19 institutions where you all came from, dear graduates.

With this health labor market analysis, we can see clearly that NTTCHP is also doing its own share of a systematic, sequential, and wider attack in teacher training.

Systematic because you are all formally socialized to another career path as educators: you are equipped to be course designers, facilitators of learning across all settings and platforms, assessors of learner achievement, researchers, evaluators, leaders, and managers. Your dissertations, theses, and capstone projects reflect these professional roles. Your journey is also sequential because the courses are structured in the sense that you complete first the foundational courses, progress into the professional courses, and then conclude by making a new educational product: your final papers. This is also NTTCHP's way of making a wider attack to teacher training

because we admit students without borders. This means admitting you who are from all health and allied health professions, from public, private, local government health sciences schools, and wherever you are in the world.

The present and the next 50 years

Dear graduates, you are continuing your journeys as HP Educators. The challenge confronting all of us now is to contribute to the full realization of the Universal Health Care (UHC) Act. Let us approach this the outcome-based education (OBE) way by beginning with the ends in mind. Let me share my experienced UHC. I have visited New Zealand several times because I have a family there, the longest of which was in 2015 where I spent 9 months of my sabbatical. Just one random Friday, my brother experienced chest pains and sought consultation with his General MD Practitioner (GP) in the primary care facility nearest his residence. The GP recommended that he gets an ECG in the same facility; he was advised later by his GP to call his family and bring his things as he would be transported by an ambulance to the city hospital. He was monitored at the ER from Friday, then transferred to the Assessment and Diagnostic Unit of the city hospital from Saturday to Sunday while waiting for the cardiologist. He was admitted at the Cardiology Ward in the tertiary hospital in the city on Monday, had his angiogram on Tuesday then his angioplasty on Wednesday. He was discharged on Friday. The doctors put 1 long stent in his heart as his middle artery was 99% blocked. He was discharged after a week and paid NZ\$35 for the hospitalization and was charged an extra NZ\$5 for the prescriptions and take-home medications. The total of NZ\$40 is equal to PhP1,362. That time he was 51 years old. Today, he continues his maintenance medications and they are given (sometimes even delivered to his home) to him for free.

Locally I experienced first-hand being at the demand side for health care delivery services. I retired in April 16, 2025 and looked forward to a restful life of course, NTTCHP even gave me a framed License to Chill signed by all faculty and staff so I thought I would finally enjoy my rest. But I had to attend to the dissertation of Charlie, the theses of Mark, Maurice (with a record-high of more than 300 pages manuscript because his was a grounded theory study), JJ, and Christine. Then review as a reader the dissertation of Tetchie (which was also more than 300 pages), Brother Dan, Jill, and Teban. I also worked with all of my MHPed Professional Track dudes on their capstones. Nauna natapos sina Pachie and Janill. But Romel, Carlo, Ellen, and Christian submitted theirs in the nick of time, so as usual, puyat to the max kaming lahat. And I had to check papers of my 3 regular classes. I had 22 students in HP 211, 17 students in HP 231, and 9 students in HPed 399. While the due date for grades was last June 6, I needed to take an emergency leave from 26-30 April, then again on 3-16 May because my mother was confined at PGH.

Introduction ko lang yung pagchecheck ng papel, my main point is my experience with my mother as a patient. We

brought her to PGH by my car but with admitting orders from doctors who are my friends. Through another friend, I was assured of a room even before I went to pay admitting. My mother was first attended to at the ER while I waited 12 hours at pay admitting to finally have my mother settle in her room; and this was for both confinements. Once settled, I enjoyed being a receiver of care from the best doctors and health care workers and professionals. I did not mind waiting for the porters to transport my mother to and from her room to Radiology, having to wait for laboratory results to be released because the reader only comes once a week, or sometimes a few nurses were not very accommodating. Other than the P10,780 deposit, my mother's bills in both confinements were basically covered by PhilHealth. Nanay has many maintenance medicines and supplies like diapers, lancet to monitor her FBS, and we are only able to buy them with her Senior Citizen's discounts. In New Zealand, all of my brother and his family's maintenance medicines are provided / delivered to them for free.

I can go on and on with my local experience with UHC but I think we can all see some marked improvements to overwrite our frustrations. Our job as HPEducators is to include in our course designs intentional focus on making students internalize UHC as stipulated in RA 11223. Health science schools are obliged to teach their students to become competent primary care providers regardless of degrees and levels of specialization, and embrace primary health care approach. They have to appreciate how the UHC works in terms of the health systems approach, how the six system building blocks of (1) leadership and governance, (2) financing, (3) health care delivery service, (4) medicine, technologies, and vaccines, (5) information, and (6) health workforce should work in synergy to lead to a responsive system, efficient healthcare delivery, without causing any financial risks to people. The law stipulates that in the first 3 years, we should have achieved managerial integration. This means from 2019-2022, our healthcare workforce should already be adequate and deployed where they are needed most. And this must concern health science schools to consider empowering all healthcare workers like the BHWs (Janill's capstone), midwives, nutritionists-dietitians, pharmacists, etc. Let us all be guided by the recently approved National HRH Master Plan for 2020-2040 in reforming our admission policies, degree offerings, and duration of training and formal education.

RA 11223 also stipulates that in the next 3 years (2022-2024), we should have already achieved financial integration. This concerns PhilHealth and while we obviously still have a lot of work to do on this area, we see the said agency expediting the reforms. I do not want to equate financial integration with RA 11463: the Malasakit Centers Act of 2019 because it involves only DOH, DSWD, PhilHealth, and PCSO but so far, we see how these centers work in synchrony with the different hospitals around the country. Again, our students should be familiar with the

international classification of diseases, the diagnostics, even the supply chain of medicines and other medical supplies so they can appropriately advise their patients on availing these services.

The last 3 years are for technological integration referring to the operational use of information and communications technology, even Artificial Intelligence in keeping medical records and health data. While some facilities have a seamless way of doing this, migrating into one national health information service is something that might take a considerable period of time. But even then, when our students are introduced and made to embrace appropriate and responsible use of ICT and AI in their courses, this last UCH requirement need not be difficult to our digital natives.

Your courses should actually depict a whole of systems, whole of society, whole of government, people and community-centered approach so your institutions need to work with partners from both public and private institutions, and depending on the levels of care needed, to be less and less hospital-centric. Note how the health care provider network in New Zealand worked: from the routine check-up, to the use of ambulance, accessible quality health care facilities from primary to secondary, to tertiary, and apex facilities. Our students should be oriented on these structures so they will know what to do in referring their patients.

This last challenge of teaching UHC in all health sciences schools, is the health professions educators' systematic, sequential, and wider attack to address the global HRH crisis. It is systematic because the course designs that you will design, carry out, monitor, and evaluate are quality standards that we should all meet. Remember that in course planning, we should always be conscious of alignment of our institutional vision, mission, goals, program outcomes, course objectives, content, delivery strategies, and assessment. Alignment ensures total quality management. This conscious course planning is also expected to be followed by a faithful implementation so the approach is sequential. From planning, we implement, we reflect, and then improve. And finally, this pattern is appreciated as wider attack to addressing HRH crisis because we have numerous health sciences schools compared to other Asian countries like Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Hongkong, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. Some of our local schools even admit foreign students, hence if only our HPEducators will be faithful to this call, on our own, we should be able to overcome this HRH crises and move towards the achievement of a true universal health care.

In closing, I don't want to sound proud and NTTCHP-centric, but given the borderless and timeless influence of HPEducators, we can together really claim, what Dean Melf coined as the design of the NTTCHP T-shirt "habang may guro, may pag-asa."



THE GRADUATES

Ellen M. Paloma
Academic Excellence



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Dr. Ellen Palomares

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

We made it.

This moment feels a bit surreal, doesn't it? Parang kailan lang i was inquiring on how to enroll into NTTC tapos tapos na ako.

My journey with NTTC may be compared to highlights - Erlyn reminded me that she shadowed my internship group not so long ago, only to have 2 in that group study under her at NTTC.

Pandemic: mam Dots - simulation; interuniversity workshops

Dr nenita collantes - dragged PCP kicking and screaming into taking basic medical education or the time when after one workshop from mam Ems at our institution, 2 consultants would later enroll in NTTC.

One moment, we were nervously trying to figure out how to enter our online classes without links,—and the next, here we are, donning our sablays, looking back on a journey that has stretched our minds and tested our willpower.

I speak today not as one voice, but on behalf of all of us who came to NTTCHP with important life questions:

"Am I cut out for graduate school?" Matatapos ko kaya?

"Am I too old for this"?

"Can I juggle clinical work/duties, family, daily chaos of real life, and deadlines?" And my personal favorite — "How does one formulate learning objectives?"

But as the weeks turned into months, we found our footing, despite someone asking weekly, without fail, if we had classes. We learned to survive group work, online learning and experienced the magic of adult learning theories — and the horror of group chats with someone asking, "Is this due today?" Or coming to class without an assignment and telling the Professor, "I don't have an output but this is my idea".

We stayed and persevered because we believed in something bigger. We came not just to earn a degree, but to be transformed—so we could transform others.

There were moments of deep reflection — like when we began seeing ourselves not just as health professionals, but as educators with a purpose.

There were also moments of doubt — like when we had to submit multiple final outputs on the same days within the same week, and seriously questioned our sanity entirely.

And yet, we're here. Not because it was easy, but because it was worth it.

We are deeply grateful to the NTTCHP faculty and mentors — Drs Fajutagana, Melf Atienza, Prof Erlyn Sana, Betchay Grageda, Emely Dicolon, Monica Wales, Niña Yanilla, Erik Nieto and the staff: mam Claire, sir Mandy and sir Alvin.

To our mentors: Thank you for not letting us settle. Your brilliance, patience, and commitment have molded us. You didn't just teach us how to teach — you showed us how to lead with integrity, to question with curiosity, and to educate with heart. For your wisdom, patience, and the occasional deadline extension that saved our sanity. You modeled the kind of educator we aspire to be: clear, compassionate, and deeply committed to transformative learning.

I am proud to share that despite being known to be strict, my students have acknowledged that "I consistently champion for their success".

To our families and friends — thank you for being our sanity and our support. For every cup of coffee or wine, every word of encouragement or push, every time you shared that you were also staring blankly at your laptops and made me realize I was not alone — you did more than you know. Shout out to the safe space friends- carlo, mavel and trish.

And to my fellow graduates — what a force we are. We come from different islands, different disciplines, and different lives, but we share a common calling: to transform health professions education. We have made it not just through a program, but through a powerful process. One that reshaped how we teach, how we lead, and how we serve.

But today isn't just about celebration. It is also a call to action.

Let's not forget what this degree means. It's not just a diploma — it's a responsibility. Because now more than ever, our country needs educators who will rethink and realign health professions education with the realities of our healthcare system.

We, as health professions educators, must produce graduates who are not just clinically competent, but community-responsive, collaborative, and grounded in primary care. We must design learning that reflects the lived realities of the people we serve — in the barrios, the barangays, and the farthest sitios.

We cannot continue training graduates for a system that no longer exists — or worse, one that should never have existed to begin with.

Universal Health Care is not just a policy — it's a promise. A promise of equitable, accessible, and responsive care. And it begins not in hospitals or clinics, but in classrooms.

Because beyond this hall, the world needs teachers who listen, leaders who inspire, and systems that heal. And we've been trained to do just that.

Let's carry what we've learned not just into our classrooms, but into every ward, barangay, and boardroom we walk into. Let's be the kind of educators who spark change, even if all we have is a whiteboard and a room full of skeptical interns.

Today, we don't just graduate — we step into the role we were meant to play.





University of the Philippines Manila
National Teacher Training Center for the Health Professions

10th College Recognition Ceremony and Don Paulino Gonzalez Memorial Lecture

UP Manila: Saligan ng Kahapon, Gabay ng Kasalukuyan, Tanglaw sa Hinaharap

Manila Prince Hotel
San Marcelino St, Ermita, Manila, Philippines 1000
July 23, 2025 at 9:00 AM



Diwa ng Parmasya 2025 College of Pharmacy Told to 'Contribute to

Text by Jennifer

Photos by Brandon



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ayutiko ng Bayan: armacy Graduates to Nation's Progress'

er F. Manongdo

don Deichmann



The University of the Philippines College of Pharmacy (UPCP) celebrated a milestone on July 18, 2025, with 91 new graduates in a ceremony held at the UP Film Institute in Diliman, Quezon City.

University officials, led by Chancellor Michael Tee, College of Pharmacy Dean Mac Ardy Gloria, and College Secretary Charles Mandy Ayran conferred academic degrees to 44 BS Pharmacy graduates, 43 BS Pharmaceutical Sciences graduates, and three MS Pharmacy graduates.

Dean Gloria conveyed a heartfelt message of admiration for the graduates who endured the challenges of shifting to online learning during the pandemic. He said, "Dumaan sila sa pandemya dulot ng COVID-19, at nang ito ay natapos, kinailangan naman nilang lumipat mula sa online learning patungo sa face-to-face learning delivery mode - na kinailangan din ng malaking adjustment. Ang kanilang buhay sa loob ng Kolehiyo ay puno ng puyat, pagod, sakit, luha, at mga agam-agam... Na minsan ay napapatanong sila sa kanilang mga sarili kung: Tama pa ba ang mga iniisip at ginagawa nila?"

The Dean also commended the graduates for their unwavering perseverance and for overcoming challenges with remarkable determination. "Pero sa kabila ng lahat, pinili at pinilit nilang bumangon, magpakatatag, manindigan, at magpatuloy," he said before a round of applause erupted in the theater.

Pharmacists Not Just "Tindera sa Botika"

In her keynote speech, multi-awarded pharmacist and Vice President for Manufacturing at E.L. Laboratories, Inc., Maria Rosario B. Barangan shattered the stereotypes of pharmacists as mere dispensers of medicine. Prof. Barangan, who is also a lecturer at UPCP, reflected on her own story, which began when she was a young girl folding medicine boxes in her mother's pharmaceutical factory, marveling at how machines turned powders into tablets. Her curiosity grew into passion and a strong resolve to take BS Industrial Pharmacy.

While studying at UP Manila, she had to confront a common misconception. She said, "People would say to my face, 'Ah, nag Pharmacy ka, magtitinda ka ng gamot sa botika!'"

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"But I was determined to graduate and eager to build my own pharmaceutical manufacturing facility, to develop pharmaceutical products, and make the best medicines here in the country, and I did all that. That's why I can say, 'Ang parmasyutikong ito ay hindi lang nagtitinda ng gamot, ako ang gumagawa ng gamot,'" she emphasized.

The UPCP alumni also expressed frustration over the country's outdated pharmaceutical systems, especially when compared to neighboring countries that are advancing in high-tech, patient-centered care. She noted that although around 4,000 pharmacy students graduate each year, only a small number choose to practice as pharmacists, and even fewer remain in the country to serve. To create real change, Prof. Baranga urged the graduates to take on strategic leadership roles across sectors.

Noble Purpose

Kathreen Ashley Reforsado led the UPCP Class of 2025 as valedictorian and summa cum laude. She graduated with a general weighted average grade (GWA) of 1.1859. In her valedictory speech, Reforsado shared how the

demise of her cousin became a turning point that inspired her to pursue a degree in pharmacy.

"In her fight, I found the seed of a dream...that maybe, if I chose this profession, I could one day understand her disease better. Maybe, in the future, I could even help invent a cure," she said.

Reforsado acknowledged the diverse paths their batch may embark on, whether in clinical practice, industry, research, or even non-traditional fields. She also honored mentors, friends, and loved ones who supported her and her batchmates throughout their education. She ended her speech with a call to lead with humility and service.

"So, wherever we are planted, in hospitals, in communities, in research, in policy, I hope we continue to lead with humility and heart. I hope you remember that service is not something you do only when it is convenient or rewarded," she said.





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Maria Rosario B. Barangan

Keynote Speaker

Good afternoon, Chancellor Michael Tee, Vice Chancellors and your management team, Dean Mac Ardy Gloria, esteemed faculty, fellow alumni, proud parents, families and friends—and most importantly, the graduating class of 2025.

Let me start by congratulating the proud parents. I know being a parent of a UP student is hard - standing by your child through sleepless nights, some shifting majors, thesis stress, and org overloads. But seeing your child here today with their sablay, ready to graduate, makes it all worth it. This moment is just as much yours as it is theirs. Your love, support, and quiet sacrifices made all this possible. You didn't just raise a graduate—you raised the future "Parmasyutiko ng Bayan".

To your professors and mentors: year after year, you show up with dedication—continuously enhancing your knowledge and teaching skills, keeping up with the ever-evolving science and technology vital to our field—to ensure that our students receive the most relevant, rigorous, and forward-thinking education. Thank you.

Dean Ardy, I must take a moment to congratulate you as well. I have seen you grow into this calm, responsible, and very capable young man. You are a model for what it means to be a UP College of Pharmacy graduate, true to your mandate as an Iskolar ng Bayan, bravely you took the challenge of leading equally talented and strong-willed individuals. The College is truly in good hands.

It is such an honor and pleasure to be invited here today. It gives me such joy to speak to you today here in UP Diliman. You see, I grew up here. As a UP Elementary student I played and ran around the academic oval and sunken garden, I crossed and walked Katipunan to the then UP

Integrated School, now Town Center and went up and down the halls of what we used to call AS Building and Pharmacy - Chem Pavilion, UP Diliman was my home. You should have seen the rallies and rumbles in the 80's, experiencing and surviving the 1st quarter storm, the curfews and lockdowns in the 70's, the height of activism and social disobedience.

I belonged to the graduating class that transferred to UP Manila in 1984, we had to spend our last year in Manila. So, from the sprawling greens of Diliman, we were transported to the noise, dust and red lights of Manila.

But it was in UP Manila at PGH where we saw and experienced the lines and rows upon rows of patients we needed to serve. It was at least for me an awakening of the challenges and realities our country is facing.

A few weeks ago, I was playing with my 10-month-old grandniece. As I looked at her cute, chubby, determined little face, I thought, "There's a future pharmacist!" And it made me wonder—did my own mother ever think the same when she looked at my baby face?

You see, I was one of six siblings, and in our family, I was designated the "future pharmacist." By the age of three, my mother—who owned and managed a pharmaceutical manufacturing company—would take me to work. I distinctly remember, I would form medicine boxes beside her office desk, watch bottles glide along conveyors, and marvel at the machines that turned powder into tablets. To me, that was Disneyland.

So, when UPCAT time came, checking the BS Industrial Pharmacy box felt natural, and I had to make sure I passed UPCAT, for UP was the only school I knew.

As I toiled through Physics, the dreaded subjects of Phy Chem, Pharm Chem, and Pharmacog, after all the sleepless nights and grueling exams, lining up early in the library to reserve the 1 of five books for the entire class, imagine, no internet, no Google, no ChatGpt, just some photocopied books, people would say to my face, "Ah, nag Pharmacy ka, magtitinda ka ng gamot sa botika!" But I was determined to graduate and eager to build my own pharmaceutical manufacturing facility, to develop pharmaceutical products and make the best medicines here in the country. And I did all that! Ang Parmasyutikong ito ay hindi lang nagtitinda ng gamot kung hindi gumagawa ng gamot. My mother must have seen it while looking at my three-year-old face.

Today, even in an age where information is only a click away, and science has advanced by leaps and bounds, many still see us as just "tindera sa botika"—or, at best, botika owners. And with the recent move to allow selling of OTC medicines in the sari-sari store, we might even be called "tindera sa sari-sari store". Honestly, was there ever a time the person at the drugstore counter explained to you anything - anything about the medicine you are buying? Or when you are in the hospital - other than PGH of course- did you ever see a Pharmacist do the rounds with the Doctors? And who gives you instructions about your take home medicines, the Nurses - right. Where are the Pharmacists, happily behind the counters, or even the cashier and maybe the storerooms. So, can we blame the ordinary people?

Nothing wrong with tindera or owner of a botika, it is part of our profession. You might not realize that we, Pharmacists, are the only health care professionals wherein part of our profession includes selling, doing business.

No offense to the doctors, or those among you who wish to be doctors, but when doctors sell anything including medicines or medical devices, they are not doing it as a doctor but already as a businessman, but for us Pharmacists, selling and marketing medicines and medical devices is part of our professional role as pharmacists. So, we can really be a professional tindera ng gamot and be

rich, richer than Doctors even, while serving, counseling and ensuring the safe and effective use of medicines by our patients.

But let's not forget how far we've come. Filipino pharmacists today are clinical pharmacists, immunizing pharmacists, social pharmacists, compounding experts, regulators, researchers, educators, and innovators. We've come a long way—but there's still work to be done. Because the question remains: How do ordinary people see us today and more importantly will see us tomorrow?

Maybe today's theme gives us the answer.

"Diwa ng Parmasyutiko ng Bayan: Paghabi ng Sipag, Dedikasyon, at Malasakit."

Sipag – You've shown it. You entered UP during a global pandemic. You endured unstable connections, online labs, isolation. And still, you pushed through. But sipag doesn't stop after graduation. The field is rapidly evolving—new technologies, emerging diseases, future pandemics. Sipag will still be needed.

Dedikasyon – Every quiz you failed but bounced back from, every lab report, every time you showed up even when you wanted to quit—that was your dedication. And in the real world, you'll need more. Especially when the flaws of our healthcare system and our country confront you. You will need to stay dedicated even when it hurts.

Malasakit – This is the soul of our profession. It is compassion, empathy, the courage to speak up—even to doctors or policy makers—when lives are on the line. Go out of your counters or offices and engage with the patients or clients. Lower your phones, see, talk, listen and understand. This is something no AI, no machine, not even ChatGPT, can ever replace.

Today is about you, together with your mentors, proud parents, family and friends, we celebrate your achievements, while you move onto the next adventure in your life. As you graduate on Tuesday, I ask you - What does it mean to be a UP graduate? What makes you, UP graduates, different?

This graduation season I am sure many speakers used ChatGpt as I did. So let us test and ask ChatGpt. Let us ask "What does it mean to be a UP graduate?"

It says, "To be a University of the Philippines (UP) graduate is to carry a unique blend of honor, excellence, and responsibility that extends far beyond academic achievement. It means being shaped by an institution known not only for its world-class education but also for its role in nation-building, activism, critical thinking, and social justice."



Well, there is Honor and Excellence right, but even ChatGpt is not updated. As recently and rightfully, UP President Angelo Jimenez added Service.

Always—honor comes first. Because honor means integrity. That integrity will be tested again and again. Especially in our field. You'll be offered shortcuts. You'll be asked to "just sign" things. You'll be told, "makisama ka na lang." You'll be tempted to lend your license for a fee. Yung nakasabit lang ang license mo sa botika tapos may sweldo buan buan ng wala ka naman duon. Sadly, this sounds too familiar even for UP alumni.

Let me talk about Service. To me Service means giving back to the nation as, ChatGpt also said: "As a "Iskolar ng Bayan" (scholar of the nation), a UP graduate is morally bound to give back to the people. You are not just trained to build a career but to lead, uplift communities, and contribute to national progress."

Ang taas ng expectations,
so much pressure. So
much more when more
than 80% of you are
graduating with honors.
Let me tell you, whatever
people say, I am sure, you
deserve the honors.

This is the load you must carry the moment you transfer your sablay from your right shoulder to your left, "give back, to lead, uplift communities, and contribute to national progress".

You will not be just UP graduates; you will be UP College of Pharmacy graduates. You are not just the "Pag-asa ng Bayan", you are "Pag-asa na Parmasyutiko ng Bayan". To be a Pag-asa ng Bayan means Love of Country, for how can you be the hope of the nation if there is no love for the country and its people.

Pero, madalas nasasabi natin ang hirap mahalin ng Pilipinas. True. It seems that we are just going around in circles, as we see more of our neighboring countries progressing into high-tech, patient-centered pharmaceutical care, while we remain stuck in outdated systems and underutilized roles. Pero ganuon talaga pag Love, diba, laban lang.

There are about 4,000 graduates of Pharmacy each year in the country and only about 2% are UP graduates. Out of

the 2%, how many actually practice as Pharmacists and not as Doctors, how many remain here in the country. Sadly too few. For us to make impactful changes we need to occupy strategic leadership positions in government and non-government institutions and private enterprises.

So, look at who leads our hospital pharmacies, our regulatory agencies, our academic institutions, and our pharmaceutical industries. Look closely—and you'll see UP graduates. Still here. Still pushing boundaries. Still hoping to make a difference. Some are here with us today, we have the officers and the board of directors of the UP College of Pharmacy Alumni Association and the UP Pharmacy Foundation. They are here today, proof of their Sipag, Dedikasyon and Malasakit.

For now, while you are young—go. Explore, experience, and seek the knowledge, lessons, and wisdom the world may offer. Deepen your expertise, pursue your Master's or PhD, and become the best in your chosen field of pharmacy.

But may your journey always lead you back home.

We hope you choose to
return, to serve, and to
build a future here, to
continue the dream we all
have for our country.

Should you, however, find yourself in a foreign land, strive to find your way back—not necessarily in a physical or financial sense, but by staying connected and giving back. This can be through building networks for our students and institutions, or mentoring our young pharmacists, initiating collaborative research, organizing outreach programs, supporting local initiatives remotely, or sharing the knowledge and skills you've gained.

Class of 2025—when you walk out on Tuesday with the sablay on your left shoulder, know that you carry more than a degree. You carry a promise—to serve, to lead, to contribute, and to love your country even when it hurts.

The nation's future pharmacists, including my 10-month-old grandniece, are counting on you to change how Filipino pharmacists are valued, respected and recognized by the people.

Congratulations, mga Pag-asa na Parmasyutiko ng Bayan. Padayon!





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Kathreen Ashley Reforsado

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

Hindi ako nagising isang araw at sinabing, "*Gusto kong magrotavap ng extracts ng walong oras para marecover yung solvent*"

Wala rin sa dream board ko ang "*magprepare sa OSCE,*" "*magcounsel ng patients*" o yung "*tumagal ng isang buong araw sa lab para magcolumn chrom.*"

Sa totoo lang, this was never part of my original plan.

I didn't choose this degree program — not in the way most people imagine choosing.

I was supposed to be somewhere else, pursuing a different path. But life has a way of shifting our plans. I requested to transfer, not out of passion or clarity, but out of necessity, to qualify for a scholarship our family simply could not afford to lose. It was a decision rooted in survival, not certainty.

At first, I felt like I had landed here by accident. But slowly, I began to feel something else, that maybe I wasn't here by chance, but by calling. That somehow, even when I wasn't looking for it, this path found me. And I know this is not just my story.

Many of us started this journey unsure of where it would lead. Some of us arrived carrying doubts. Some already had clear goals. Others simply followed what was practical. But somewhere along the way, through the sleepless nights, the never-ending exams, the chaos of laboratory classes, and the whirlwind of internship rotations, we began to discover something deeper. A thread that slowly wove itself into meaning. For me, it was a thread spun from grief.

Just months before the UPCAT results came out, my cousin, who I've always considered a sister, passed away from leukemia. She died in the very same hospital I would intern in four years later. It felt surreal walking those halls again, remembering where our family once prayed for a miracle.

Her story was the quiet nudge in my heart that told me, maybe, I was meant to be here. In her fight, I found the seed of a dream, bold, uncertain, and impossibly distant,

that maybe, if I chose this profession, I could one day understand her disease better. Maybe, in the future, I could even help invent a cure. Of course, I later learned that the science is hard. The road to treatment, let alone a cure, is long and filled with failure. But in that process, I learned not just to dream big, but to dream deeply.

During her treatment, I witnessed firsthand how broken our healthcare system is. From hospital to hospital, I saw how access to treatment remains a privilege rather than a right. How many patients never even get the chance to fight. And I realized: this is why the work we do matters.

As pharmacists, we don't just dispense medicine, we dispense hope, access, and trust. We are part of the invisible scaffolding of the healthcare system. We ensure safety. We bridge the gap between diagnosis and treatment. We advocate for truth in an age of misinformation. We are stewards of both science and service.

From our first compounding lab to our last patient encounter, we have been practicing the art of paghahabi — of weaving together threads that, alone, may seem

fragile, but when intertwined, become strong enough to hold lives together.

We weave precision and empathy. Molecules and meaning. We make sure that a dosage isn't just correct, but that it's explained in a language patients understand. We make sure that medications don't just exist, but that they are accessible, affordable, and appropriate. But what we weave is not just for advancing the profession. It is also for resistance. In a country where many still cannot afford their medicines. Where some walk hours just to reach a health center. Where pharmacists are often overlooked and not recognized as experts. We continue to show up. Behind the counter. Beside the hospital bed. Inside the laboratory. And in communities.

Because to weave is also to mend. To repair. To resist the unraveling — even when the system itself makes it difficult. We have been taught to be meticulous, to check dosages and weights down to the last milligram. But we have also learned to be human, to speak gently to a worried patient, to listen to the elderly woman who doesn't understand what "three times a day" means, to advocate when someone cannot afford their medicine. These moments do not make the headlines. But these are the stitches that hold healthcare together.

We may not all walk the same path after this. Some of us may go into clinical practice, others into industry, research, regulation, or community pharmacy. Some might even find their way into fields that don't look like pharmacy at first glance.

But no matter where we end up, one thing's for sure: we will carry with us the profound, unshakable respect for the profession. For the science. For the service. For the vital role it plays in people's lives.

We are a batch unlike any other — we lived three different lives in five years. We started online, adjusting to the chaos of a global pandemic. We shifted into hybrid, figuring out how to learn in half-filled classrooms and Zoom calls. And finally, we returned to full face-to-face, rebuilding routines, relearning spaces, and rediscovering one another.

None of this was easy. And yet, nandito tayo. Kahit napakaraming mga araw na nagsisimula pa lang pero gusto na nating matapos. Mornings when we woke up already exhausted, nights when we question if we were really cut out for this. And yet, we discovered strength — strength in the community of people who, despite the rough and uncertain path, chose to keep moving forward together.

To my batchmates, I am so proud of us. Thank you for the five years that I will never forget. To 1421 extended, Ysa, Cyra, Nadine, Aianna, CL and Wana, my anak AJ, my council partner Ruben, tofu sisig, Steven, Leroi, Vince, Kyril and Gia, and to my Bhielockmates. Those five years were difficult but they were bearable because of all of you. Thank you for being my safe space in the chaos, for the laughter that kept me sane, and for giving the kind of support that didn't always need words. I would carry our memories with me always.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the people we drew strength from, the people who continue to believe in us when we didn't believe in ourselves.

To our professors and mentors — thank you for challenging us to think, to question, to care. You showed us that knowledge alone is not enough, it must be wielded with responsibility and compassion. I would also like to personally thank two mentors who impacted me the most. Sir PJ, thank you so much for always rooting for me and

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believing in my capabilities. Hindi ka lang sa akin naniwala, sa aming lahat. You were and continue to be an inspiration. Sir Charles, thank you so much for the opportunities you have given me and for all the support you provided in my leadership endeavours. I will always look up to you.

To my friends from way back, Cjay, Anj, Dianne, Yani, Fincie, Mar, Fred, Faye, Emma and Juliano, thank you for continuing to show up even as life pulled us in different directions. Your steady presence reminded me of who I was. I'll always carry that with me.

To our families and loved ones — thank you for every sacrifice and for being our greatest support system. To my relatives, present here or not, who loudly root for me in whatever I do. To Jomar, for always making me laugh and for always saying that he is proud of me. To my mom, who carried the weight of two people, and somehow still had enough strength left to carry me too. Thank you for never making me feel like something was missing. To Ate Eloj, thank you for being my quiet why. I hope I make you proud. I know that somewhere in this room, or maybe waiting outside, or cheering from miles away, there is someone who helped carry you through.

Maybe it's your family, a friend or even someone who isn't here anymore, but whose love still echoes in your heart. Let's all take a moment to stand and offer the loudest, most heartfelt round of applause for them. This moment is yours, too. Maraming, maraming salamat po.

Lastly, our success, no matter how individual it may feel, is rooted in something collective. It is built on the bravery and militant spirit of activists, the labor of the working class, and the taxes paid by people we may never meet. They are the unseen pillars who held us up when we didn't even realize it. This foundation is not just something we

thank in passing. It should shape how we live and act. Laging sinasabi sa atin na tayo ang pag-asa ng bayan, the light of the future. But we rarely talk about what being light actually demands. To be the light of the future is not to shine for recognition. It is to burn for something that matters. Light demands fuel. Light requires burning. And if we are serious about being a light for others, we need to be willing to give something of ourselves. We must be willing to feel the heat. To show up when it's inconvenient. To stay when it's easier to walk away. To serve when no one is watching.

We are stepping into a profession that is both humble and heroic. One that demands rigor and empathy in equal measure. Ours is a calling that rarely seeks the spotlight but holds people's lives in its hands. And as for me?

I didn't choose this degree program — but maybe, in all the best ways, it chose me. It chose us.

So wherever we are planted, in hospitals, in communities, in research, in policy, I hope we continue to lead with humility and heart. I hope we remember that service is not something you do only when it is convenient or rewarded, but it is a commitment to others, especially those who have long been overlooked, unheard, and underserved. Because the world needs not just pharmacists who know, but pharmacists who care. And if we can be that — then we were never chosen by accident.

Congratulations, Class of 2025.

Maraming salamat, at isang mapagpalayang araw po sa lahat.





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'Sino ang Makikinabang ng Inyong Husay?': UP College of Medicine Graduates Called to Serve Remote Communities

Text by Dr. Cesar Perez, Jr.

Photo courtesy of UPCM

For Journalist Alfonso Tomas "Atom" Araullo, being a 'good doctor' is more than just attending to the needs of patients in hospitals. It is a profound call for altruism. A commitment that rises above personal ambitions.

In his commencement address to the 169 new graduates of the University of the Philippines College of Medicine on Aug. 5, 2025, at UP Diliman University Theater, the

multi-awarded TV documentary host urged the new physicians to broaden their perspective about medicine and have a deeper appreciation for their patients' lives and struggles. He recalled meeting UPCM graduate Dr. Lionel Peters, who was then serving on the remote island of Agutaya in Northern Palawan as part of the Doctor to the Barrios government program in 2018.

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"Napag-usapan namin kung gaano kahirap yung sitwasyon ng mga residente sa isla. Ang pinakamalapit kasing ospital sa kanila, dalawa hanggang tatlong oras pa ang layo sakay ng bangka, sa Cuyo. Kung kailangan naman nila ng espesyalista, pupunta pa sila ng Puerto Prinsesa, o di naman kaya, dito sa Maynila," he said.

"Kwento ni Doc Lionel sa akin, talagang nagsusumamo na siya minsan sa mga pasyente na magpunta na ng ospital kapag grabe na ang kanilang kalagayan. Inaabutan pa nga sila ng konting tulong para lang makumbinse. Sasamahan pa raw niya yung pasyente sa pantalan, halos bantayan na nga hanggang makalarga," Araullo added.

Still, some residents choose not to seek medical treatment. "Takot sila sa gastos, karamihan mga magsasaka at mangingisda lamang...Marami ang namamatay sa mga sakit na pwede naman sanang gamutin," Araullo pointed out.

Beyond these stories, there are also quiet tales of sacrifice. Stories that can only be witnessed when one chooses to serve and care for the needs of the sick in far-flung areas.

"Walang kakulangan ng pagmamalasakit at kabutihang loob sa ating mga komunidad, lalo na mula sa mga kababayan nating walang-wala," the media personality said. "May mahalagang aral akong natutuhan sa mga karanasang ito: kapag palyado ang sistema, ang malasakit at pag-aaruga ng pamilya at komunidad ang

nagiging sandigan ng mga may sakit para magpagaling, o kahit man lang mabawasan ang kirot o takot na nararamdaman."

In pursuing their dreams of success, Araullo reminded the new doctors to demonstrate selfless service, justice, and compassion.

"Being a good doctor is already an extraordinary thing. But if you also choose to confront the larger realities that shape your patient's lives: poverty, inequality, injustice—then you become something even more powerful. A force for transformation," he noted.

With the theme "Tanaw", the new physicians were presented by Dean Charlotte Chiong and Philippine General Hospital (PGH) Director Gerardo Legaspi to UP Manila Chancellor Michael Tee. Additionally, more than 14 graduates of Masters and PhD programs of UPCM were also honored during the event.

There were 2 Magna Cum Laude and 92 Cum Laude graduates in the class of 2025. Among the graduates, more than half signified their intention to apply for residency at the PGH, Dr. Legaspi noted. The rest are contemplating on applying to the Doctor to the Barrios program of the Department of Health.

Dr. Adrian Jeremiah Bornilla delivered a message on behalf of Class 2025 and Class President Dr. Arlyn Jave Adlawon delivered a message of gratitude during the ceremony.



Alfonso Tomas “Atom” Araullo

Keynote Speaker

Magandang araw po sa inyong lahat!

To the officials, faculty, and staff of the UP College of Medicine, to the proud families and loved ones in the audience, and most of all, to the Class of 2025, congratulations! Ikinalulugod ko pong makapiling kayo sa espesyal na araw na ito.

Today, you are not just new doctors—you are new doctors from the storied and highly respected UP College of Medicine. Sabi nga nila, mahirap makapasok sa UP... pero mas mahirap makalabas. Nang buhay. I'm sure that's especially true when you're studying to become a doctor. So let's pause and take stock. Of how far you've come. Of everything you've achieved. Of everything you've survived. It's also a good time to ask: what does it all mean? Because while we celebrate your tremendous accomplishments today, let me remind you—this is not just a personal milestone. It is also a public one.

UP is not just any school; it is the country's premier academic institution. While here, you received the best possible education that our country, and your brilliant and dedicated teachers, could provide. Samantala, sinuportahan at itinaguyod din kayo ng buwis ng mamamayang Pilipino. Marami ang makikipagpatayan para sa pribilehiyong makapag-aral sa UP College of Medicine.

Kayo ay mga Iskolar ng Bayan. At bilang mga Iskolar ng Bayan, dapat isapuso hindi lang ang karangalan, kundi pati ang responsibilidad na kaakibat ng inyong nahasang talino at kasanayan habang nasa UP.

Ang tanong: paano ninyo gagamitin ang pribilehiyong ito para mag-ambag sa lipunan? Paano ninyo itataas ang dignidad ng mga kababayan nating sumuporta sa inyo? Sa isang banda, hindi na kailangan ikunot ang ating mga noo. Mga duktor kayo. Isa ito sa pinakamahalagang katungkulan sa lipunan. Doctors will always be relevant, because there will always be people who need healing. Kung mawala lahat ng mga mamamahayag gaya ko, baka magsusurvive pa ang mundo kahit papaano. Pero kung walang duktor? Good luck.

Kaya naman mabigat ang responsibilidad na kaakibat ng propesyong ito. Lalo na kung aalalahanin natin kung nasaan tayo.

Medicine, as you already know, is not just a career. It's a calling. It is one of the most sacred duties in our society. To heal is to hold a person's life in your hands, often at their most vulnerable. In the eyes of many, doctors are second only to God.

Magkukwento lang ako ng konti. Noong 2018, nagpunta ako sa isla ng Agutaya sa Northern Palawan para sa isang dokumentaryo. Malayo ang lugar na ito, tuldok lang siya sa gitna ng Sulu Sea. Depende sa lagay ng panahon, aabutin ng 18 to 20 hours ang biyahe mula Agutaya papunta sa mainland Palawan. Napakaganda ng lugar, it's part of the same island cluster as Amanpulo, that famous luxury resort I have yet to visit. Ang problema, iisa lang ang duktor para sa labingtalong libong residente doon.

Noong 2018, graduate din ng UP College of Medicine ang nadeploy sa Agutaya, shoutout kay Doctor Lionel Peters. Naging bahagi siya ng Doctor to the Barrio program. Napagusapan namin kung gaano kahirap yung sitwasyon ng mga residente sa isla. Ang pinakamalapit kasing ospital sa kanila, dalawa hanggang tatlong oras pa ang layo sakay ng banka, sa Cuyo. Kung kailangan naman nila ng espesyalista, pupunta pa sila ng Puerto Prinsesa, o di naman kaya, dito sa Maynila.

Kwento ni Doc Lionel sa akin, talagang nagsusumamo na siya minsan sa mga pasyente na magpunta na ng ospital kapag grabe na ang kanilang kalagayan. Inaabutan pa nga sila ng konting tulong para lang makumbinse. Sasamahan pa raw niya yung pasyente sa pantalan, halos bantayan na nga hanggang makalarga. Alam niyo yung ginagawa



ng iba? Pag medyo nakalayo-layo na yung bangka, iikot lang sila para dumaong sa kabilang bahagi ng isla. Imbis na magpunta sa ospital, pinipili nilang magtiis sa kanilang bahay. Takot sila sa gastos, karamihan mga magsasaka at mangingisda lamang. Dagdag pa sa problema, habang nasa ospital sila, yung magiging bantay nila, wala ring trabaho at kita. Wala naman silang mga ipon. Marami ang namamatay sa mga sakit na pwede naman sanang gamutin.

Sa kabila ng lahat, laking pasalamat ng mga residente na kahit papaano, may duktor sila doon. Totoo yan: by becoming a doctor, you already make a direct contribution to our nation's health. But is being a good doctor good enough?

Isa sa mga pinakamalaking hamon sa inyo bilang mga bagong duktor ay ang palawakin ang inyong mundo. You need to expand your field of vision to see beyond the hospital, beyond your practice, and beyond the arc of your own career.

PGH is already a powerful training ground. Huling takbuhan ito ng mga kababayan nating kapos sa buhay. Nakakasalamuha niyo sila dito, at saksi kayo sa kalunus-lunos nilang kalagayan. Pero bago pa man sila makarating ng PGH, marami na silang mga pagsubok na kinailangang lagpasan.

Ano ang nangyayari sa mga lugar nila? Anong trabaho nila doon? Bakit sila nagkakasakit? Ano ba ang kanilang kinakain, kung nakakain man sila? Malinis ba ang kanilang inuming tubig? May mapupuntahan ba silang health center? Sino ang nag-aalaga sa kanila kapag sila'y may sakit? Hindi natin matutuhan ang mga bagay na ito kung mananatili lang tayo sa loob ng ospital.

Pero higit pa sa mga malulungkot na kwento, sa mga komunidad, marami ring kwento ng inspirasyon. You will witness quiet, everyday acts of care and sacrifice that are nothing short of heroic.

May nakilala akong nanay na isinakripisyo ang lahat para lang alagaan ang dalawa niyang anak na may schizophrena. May nakilala akong tatay na araw-araw na naglalakad sa bundok para lang buhatin ang anak niya na may kapansanan papunta sa eskwelahan. May mga nakilala akong simpleng magsasaka at manggagawa na ibinabahagi ang kanilang oras, pagkain, at pera sa mga kapitbahay nilang hindi na makapagtrabaho dahil sa sakit. Walang kakulangan ng pagmamalasakit at kabutihang loob sa ating mga komunidad, lalo na mula sa mga kababayan nating walang-wala.

May mahalagang aral akong natutuhan sa mga karanasang ito: kapag palyado ang sistema, ang malasakit at pag-aaruga ng pamilya at komunidad ang nagiging sandigan ng mga may sakit para magpagaling, o kahit man lang mabawasan ang kirot o takot na nararamdaman. Napagtanto ko rin kung bakit may mga taong umiiwas magpunta sa ospital. Bukod sa kapos sa panggastos, takot

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din silang maiwang mag-isa. Takot silang tratuhin bilang kaso, at hindi bilang tao.

Alam kong hindi madali. Mabigat na responsibilidad ang pagiging doktor. Araw-araw niyong nakikita at hinaharap ang pagdurusa ng iba. Natural lang na magtayo kayo ng mga pader sa paligid ng inyong puso para protekahan ang inyong mga sarili. Pero sana, alalahanin pa rin natin: may tao sa likod ng bawa't pasyente. Taong may mga pangarap, may mga pananagutan, may pamilya. Mga taong nag-aalala sa mga anak nilang naiwan sa bahay, sa trabahong hindi nila napapasukan, at sa lumolobo nilang gastusin sa bawa't araw ng pamamalagi sa ospital.

You are meeting them on the worst day of their lives. And that is why even a small act of compassion—a few extra minutes to explain a diagnosis, a look of reassurance, a hand on the shoulder—can mean the world. To your patients, you are the system. What they feel from you, they will feel from the world. Kaya muli nating itanong: sino ang makikinabang sa inyong husay? Kanino ninyo ilalaan ang inyong galing at talino? Of course, I understand that you have your own dreams too. Some of your friends from college may already be earning big salaries in corporate jobs. It's normal to want to build a career, earn well, and give back to your families. You deserve that. You've worked hard, and many of you carry the weight of your parents' sacrifices. But as you build your lives, please make space for service, justice, and compassion.

Being a good doctor is already an extraordinary thing. But if you also choose to confront the larger realities that shape your patient's lives: poverty, inequality, injustice—then you become something even more powerful. A force for transformation.

In the Philippines, access to the best medical care is largely determined by one thing: money. That should disturb us. And as future leaders in the medical profession, you have the power, and responsibility, to ask why that is so. And more importantly, what can be done about it. This will require you to stay engaged and stay grounded. So go to the communities. Keep your eyes open. Talk to fellow health workers. Advocate. Organize. Speak out. There is no escaping politics. And doing nothing is also a political act—one that reinforces the status quo.

Hindi ko sinasabing kailangan niyong maging martir o magpakabayani. Pero sana isabuhay niyo ang inyong propesyon hindi lang para sa sarili, kundi para rin sa iba. Sapagka't bahagi tayo ng lipunan, at patulo'y na nahaharap sa krisis ang mundong ginagalawan natin. Hindi lang mga realidad sa larangan ng medisina at pampublikong kalusugan ang kailangan nating harapin. Napakaraming suliranin sa ating mundo na kabit-kabit at nagsasangasanga.

The climate emergency is accelerating. Infectious diseases are crossing borders faster than ever. Displacement is at an all-time high. As of the end of 2024, 123.2 million people around the world had been forced to flee their homes because of war, persecution, and disaster. The Philippines is not insulated from these realities. We see it in the rising seas and intensifying typhoons. In the collapse of our healthcare systems during the pandemic. In the threats to our peace and territorial integrity. In the daily decisions people make between buying medicine or buying food.

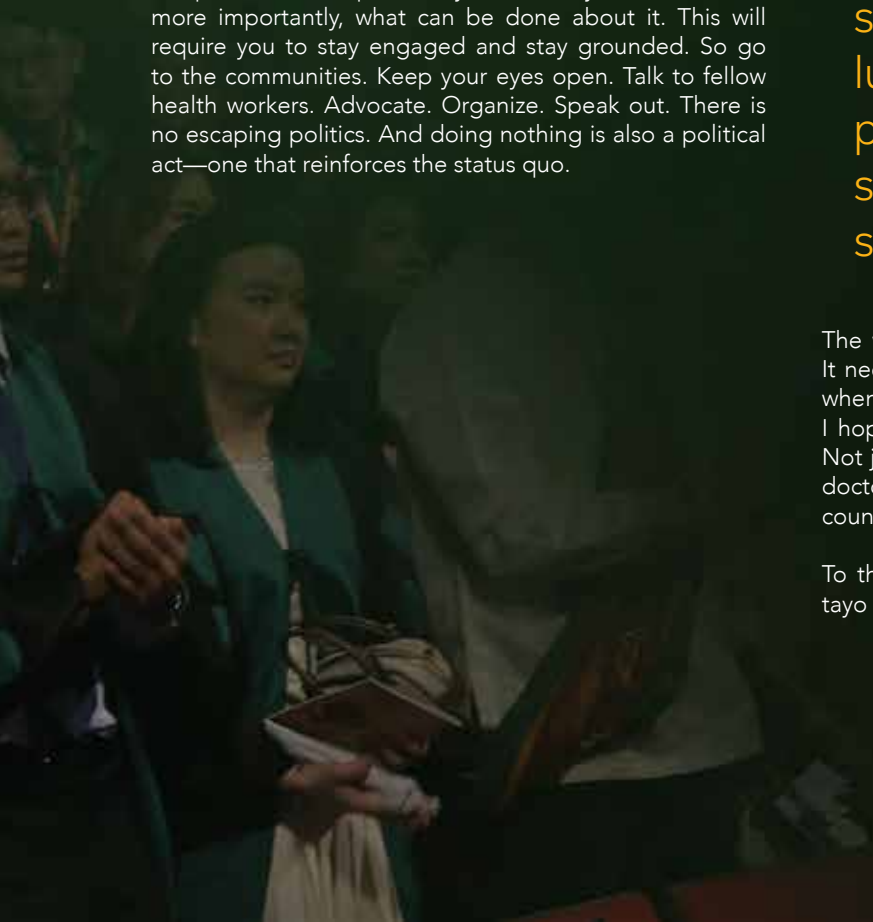
We live in a world of interconnected consequences. And we need healers, not just of the body, but of our fractured society. Sa pagtatapos, ito lang ang gusto kong iwan sa inyo:

Ang mga suliranin ng kahirapan, kawalan ng katarungan, katiwalian, karahasan, at krisis sa klima ay hindi problema ng iba. Problema natin ito. At kung hindi tayo kikilos, patuloy lang itong lalala.

Huwag nating sukatin
ang tagumpay batay lang
sa layo ng ating narating.
Sukatin din natin ito
sa ating kakayahang
lumikha ng makabuluhang
pagbabago para sa iba, at
sa paninindigan natin para
sa tama.

The world does not need more experts who look away. It needs professionals who show up, speak out, and stay when things get hard. This world will ask a lot of you, but I hope you meet it not just with skill, but with courage. Not just with brilliance, but with heart. That is the kind of doctor the world needs. That is the kind of Filipino the country deserves.

To the class of 2025, mabuhay kayong lahat. Maglinkod tayo sa sambayanang Pilipino.





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Dr. Adrian Jeremiah Bornilla

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

Sa ating panauhing tagapagsalita sa hapon ng ito, Ginoong Alfonso Tomas Araullo, sa mga Opisyal ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas na pinamumunuan ni Kgg. Atty. Angelo Jimenez, mga miyembro ng Lupon ng mga Rehente, mga Opisyal ng Pamahalaan, Tsanselor Tee at ang mga Opisyal ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas - Manila, Dean Charlotte Chiong at ang mga Opisyal ng Kolehiyo ng Medisina, mga Kagalang-galang na Panauhin, mga magulang, kapamilya, kaibigan, katuwang sa buhay, mga guro, mga kaklase, isang mapagpalayang hapon po sa ating lahat.

Tanaw. Vision. Hindi lang basta pagtingin gamit ang mga mata — kundi pag-unawa at pagkalinga gamit ang buong puso't isipan. Tanaw is a kind of sight that goes beyond what's merely in front of us, and looks holistically upon how life moves, changes, and runs its natural course for each moment in time.

Ang vision na ito ay isang pagbabalik-tanaw: looking back with fondness, maybe even regret, but definitely, with insight – to remember, to honor the past, and to learn from it. Kasama dito ang pagbabalik-tanaw sa mga gabing inilaan sa pag-aaral para sa mga exams, SGDs, OSCEs, at iba pang mga gawaing pang-akademiko ng Kolehiyo, pati na rin ang mga luha, pawis, at dugong inalay - hindi lang natin, kundi kasama rin ang mga taong sumuporta sa atin: mga kapamilya, mahal sa buhay, kaibigan, mga guro - para umabot tayo sa puntong ito ng ating buhay. Recalling the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the uncertainty that everyone felt during the public health emergency of our lifetime, and how we – as a united People – braved through the storm and trudged onward to where we are today.

Sa pagbabalik-tanaw ay nagkakaroon tayo ng ideya at direksyon sa kung saan tayo patungo sa hinaharap.

Bilang halimbawa ng konsepto ng pagbabalik-tanaw na aking nabanggit, payagan n'yo akong ibahagi ang isang kuwento ng naging karanasan ko sa PGH, na i-p-present ko nang mala-endorsement rounds – para short but sweet:

The first case revolves around Nanay Nila, a 62-year-old female who was admitted in the General Medicine ward, primarily as a case of intraabdominal abscess, secondary to gastrointestinal tuberculosis, TB sa tiyan. She initially presented with decreased sensorium and intractable vomiting – and was received on room air, with reported 3 episodes of fecaloid vomitus on the day of ward admission. Her condition was already present 1 year prior, pero dahil na-lost to follow-up siya, hindi niya nainom nang maayos yung anti-TB medications niya na dapat niyang iniinom sa nakaraang mga buwan.

Ngayong mayroon na tayong sulyap at pagbabalik-tanaw sa konteksto sa likod ng kasalukuyang kondisyon ni Nanay Nila, ating busisiin at himayin ang mga salik - ang mga social determinants of health - na nakaapekto at bumago sa landas ng buhay ni Nanay. Tulad nga ng paulit-ulit na nababanggit sa atin sa med school lectures natin: health is ... a fundamental human right, and is multifactorial. Hanggang ngayon, nagsisiksikan pa rin ang isang pamilyang binubuo ng lagpas limang miyembro sa loob ng iilang metro ng kanilang bahay – na pwedeng risk factor para magkahawaan ng mga sakit tulad ng TB. Ilang daang tao pa rin sa bansa natin ang walang access sa malinis na supply ng tubig na naiinom at sa masustansyang pagkain para sa pang-araw-araw. Libo-libong Pilipino pa rin ang walang trabaho, o 'di naman kaya'y kontraktwal pa rin at palaging hinaharap ang takot ng terminasyon. Kung may trabaho naman, ang araw-araw na sahod para sa pangkaraniwang manggagawa ay lubhang kapos upang matugunan ang mga pangangailangan niya at ng kanyang pamilya. Ilang libong Pilipino pa rin ang hindi nabibigyan ng maayos na access sa healthcare system, ni hindi nakakakita ng doktor, para sa mga dinadaing nila sa kanilang kalusugan.

Ang bigat harapin ng ganitong realidad – pero, hindi tayo titigil sa pagbabalik-tanaw. Kasabay dapat nito ang pagtanaw sa hinaharap, sapagkat maraming tulad ni Nanay Nila sa ating lipunan. Sa aking mga kaklase, tumingin tayo sa ating paligid: maaaring ilan sa ating mga kasama sa bulwagang ito, at lalong higit na mas marami pa paglabas natin sa tunay na mundo, ang tulad ni Nanay na araw-araw binubuno ang sari-saring mga problema ng lipunang bumibigo sa libo-libong Pilipino, na maaaring maging dahilan ng pagpalya ng kanilang kalusugan. Considering this, moving forward, what must we, the manggagamot ng, para sa, at kasama ng bayan, do? To keep our patients' stories – tulad ng pag-alala ko sa kuwento ni Nanay Nila

na siyang unang SIC ko sa Internal Medicine rotation; to introspect and reflect on our interactions with them, to lend an ear that listens, a mind that understands, and arms that welcome and embrace them without discrimination; and most importantly, to advocate for each of them.

Mahalaga ang pagbabalik-tanaw; pero kaakibat nito ang isa pang uri ng pagtanaw, na napahapyawan ko na kanina: ang pagtanaw sa hinaharap — the kind of vision that pushes us forward. Ang pagtanaw paabante sa kinabukasan na ating pinag-uusapan ay namumuhunan sa pananampalataya – faith, despite the uncertainty that tomorrow brings. Kahit hindi malinaw minsan ang hinaharap, kahit walang kasiguraduhan, may bigat, o may takot, our ability of vision or pagtanaw helps us to keep going as it reminds us that there is something ahead. Tulad ng pagkapit natin sa ating mga “Bakit?” sa paglalakbay na ito, pinanghahawakan natin na may pupuntahan ang ating mga pinagdaraan. May patutunguhan. May paniniwalang may ikabubuti pa ang kinabukasan kumpara sa kasalukuyan.

Moving on mula sa kuwento ni Nanay Nila, hayaan n’yo akong magbahagi ng isa pang kuwento – si Nanay Esther naman, isang 63-year-old lola sa Maragondon, Cavite, may altapresyon at gout, na pumasok sa barangay health station para magpabasa ng lab results niya para makakuha ng libreng gamot pang-maintenance. Pero, kapansin-pansin sa kanya noong nagpakonsulta siya ang pagdurugo sa noo niya – nabangga raw sa pako na pinagsasabitan ng sampyan nila, ilang minuto bago siya pumunta sa akin. Bilang paunang-lunas, nilinis ko yung sugat ni Nanay, na sinundan ko ng paliwanag tungkol sa kahalagahan ng pagbabakuna kontra-tetano. Ngunit, sa kabilang pakikiusap ko, ang naging sagot lamang ni Nanay ay “Naku dok, wala akong pera; kailangan ko lang ng reseta para sa high blood at gout ko.” Tumatak sa akin sa maikling konsulta na iyon ni Nanay ang sinabi niyang iba ang kailangan niya – na hindi tugma sa kung ano yung mas urgent na problema niya (yung sugat niya sa noo).

Muli, kailangan nating himayin yung konteksto sa likod ng sitwasyon ni Nanay Esther: siya ay isang retired Barangay Health Worker ng higit sa labinlimang taon, pero sa kasalukuyan ay wala na silang pinagkukunan ng pantawid sa pang-araw-araw ng kanyang asawang may sakit rin na hypertension at diabetes – maliban na lamang sa kaunting naibibigay sa kanila ng kanilang mga anak. Sa maikling sulap na ito ng kanyang buhay, maaaninag natin kahit papaano yung pinanggalingan ni Nanay doon sa hindi pagkakatumag ng priorities niya at ko sa pangangalaga sa kanyang kalusugan: na kung gagawin niya ang lahat ng kailangan para sa kanya, ay baka wala na siyang maipang-tustos sa mga pangangailangan nila bukas, dala na rin ng hirap ng buhay. Oo nga naman, kung mapipilitan siyang bumili ng bakuna kontra-tetano dahil naubusan na nito sa kalapit na municipal hospital, baka bukas o makalawa ay kulangin na sila ng pambili ng makakain.

In the stories that I have shared, it has been highlighted that pagtanaw is not about forgetting the past, but using what we’ve learned to move forward with more purpose. We are history takers – but beyond this, we are history keepers. Baon natin sa ating paglalakbay ang mga kuwentong ibinabahagi sa atin ng ating mga pasyente. And more than keeping their stories, we are advocates – ang mga kuwentong baon natin ay hindi mananatiling kuwento lamang. Pinagkatiwalaan tayo ng ating mga pasyente, ng ating mga kapwa Pilipino, ng kanilang mga salaysay – ng kanilang kuwentong hubad at totoo. Buhat nito, tungkulin nating maging katuwang at kasangga nila sa laban nila tungo sa isang patas na lipunan. Ipaglaban natin sila. At maging kritikal tayo - magtanong tayo ng mahihirap na mga tanong sa mga nakaupo sa puwesto ng kapangyarihan. Alamin natin kung sino ang may pananagutan, at matuto tayong singilin sila sa kanilang tungkulin at pangako.

Huwag tayong makuntento sa kung ano na ang nakasanayang bulok na sistema, na siyang unti-unting pumapatay sa ating mga kababayan. At, manalig tayo na matatanaw rin natin sa dulo ng pagkilos na ito ang isang mas magandang kinabukasan para sa kalusugan ng bawat isang Pilipino.

In all the points that I have discussed and shared, tanaw rides on the flow of time: remembering the past, as in pagbabalik-tanaw, or onward into the future, as in pagtanaw sa hinaharap. But, before I end, I want to highlight another aspect of tanaw that I have mentioned at the start: one that sees beyond the surface of the story and compassionately understands with the heart and the mind. For this, let me share one last story – that of my very first patient in this journey called Medicine.

R.B., a 74-year-old male, was brought into the ER due to acute-onset right-sided weakness and facial asymmetry.

He was seen 8 hours post-ictus, now with decreasing sensorium. Brain attack team was activated, the necessary work-up done, which revealed an ischemic stroke. Siguro, naisip natin at this point, 8 hours post-ictus? Walong oras matapos ma-stroke? Ang daming nawalang oras na sana'y nagamit para masimulan yung gamutan sa kanya. But, little did we know that R.B., who was driven by his son to PGH in the early hours of the morning of April 22, 2021, had already sought help at two different hospitals in Rizal – waiting over four hours in the emergency department of one hospital, without ever being seen by a doctor. Ang kanyang pamilya ay aligang-aligaga kakahanap ng ospital na tatanggap sa kanya nang ganoong oras – sa gitna ng pagtaas ng mga kaso ng COVID-19! Ang ending, kahit na galing pang Rizal si tatay, ay dinala siya sa PGH dahil una, wala nang ibang pampublikong stroke-ready hospital na malapit, at pangalawa, sa UPM nag-aaral ang kanyang apong nakatayo sa inyong harapan ngayon. Sumugal ang pamilya ni tatay na dalhin siya sa PGH kahit na ang dami noong kaso ng COVID-19, para maipagamot siya.

Sa ganitong mga tagpo, masasampal ka ng realidad ng healthcare system ng Pilipinas: madidismaya ka sa haba ng kailangan mong lakbayin para makaabot ka sa dapat mong puntahan at makatanggap ng tulong medikal, na para bang wala kang matanaw na katapusan at katiyakan. Pero, sa kabila ng gulong sinuong ni tatay RB at ng kanyang pamilya upang siya'y maipagamot, siya'y sinalubong ng isang doktor mula sa Adult Neurology nang may puso at isip na umuunawa nang higit pa sa kung ano ang sakit ni tatay. Ganitong uri ng pagtanaw sa pagkalinga ng kapwa ang nawa'y ating maisabuhay: ang makapagbigay-lunas, makapagkaloob ng ginhawa, at higit sa lahat, ang umunawa't dumamay sa lahat ng pagkakataon.

Ang kaharap natin ay hindi lamang sakit o kondisyon na dapat suriin ng kabi-kabilang mga diagnostic test at bigyan ng karampatang gamot o lunas, kundi sila'y tao muna – mga taong may buhay sa labas ng apat na pader ng ospital na tumanggap sa kanila, na may mga salik

panlipunan na naging dahilan ng kanilang karamdaman, at ang mga salik na ito'y kailangang maaksyunan dahil ano pang saysay ng pagbibigay ng gamot na iinumina araw-araw kung ang kondisyon ng kanilang ginagalawang lipunan ang mismong magbabalik sa kanila sa ospital?

**Sana'y sa henerasyon natin
ng mga manggagamot,
magkaroon ng pagtanaw
sa pangkabuuan ng isang
tao at ng kanyang lipunang
ginagalawan.**

Humahawak ako sa pag-asang manggaling sa atin ang pagkilos tungo sa mas malinaw na kinabukasan para sa kalusugan ng sambayanang Pilipino. Sana, hindi lang yung “free of disease or infirmity” na definition ng health ang patunguhan natin, kundi yung “complete physical, social, and mental wellbeing” ng bawat tao. Saanman tayo dalhin ng ating pagtanaw tungo sa hinaharap – sa public health man ito, hospital-based work, research, sa academe, o kung saan pa, dalhin natin ang pagkabatid na ang kalusugan ay karapatan, at pagsumikapan nating ipaglaban ang isang sistemang pangkalusugan na mas Makatao para sa bawat Pilipino.

Sa mga kapamilya, mahal sa buhay, kaibigan, guro, staff ng unibersidad at kolehiyo, at iba pang mga taong sumuporta sa amin, ang mga nagbigay ng tanglaw upang aming matanaw ang dapat naming marating, taos-pusong pasasalamat sa pagsama sa aming paglalakbay hanggang sa puntong ito. Sana'y patuloy n'yo pang ibigay ang inyong suporta sa iba't ibang landas na aming tatahakin.



Arlyn Jave B. Adlawon

Response on Behalf of the Graduates

Distinguished guests, faculty, mentors, family members and batchmates, a pleasant day.

The beginning and end of a journey is a moment of celebration for everything that was and for the future that will be. We come together not only to honor achievements but also to recognize the overcoming of struggles and acknowledge the people who carried us through today. Because indeed it takes a village to raise a doctor but an entire country to mold a UP doctor who has the mind to achieve and an even greater heart to serve the people.

Many of us come from different parts of the country - from Ilocos, Kalinga, Metro Manila, Cebu, Iloilo, Butuan and Cotabato to name a few.

We were shaped by the realities of our families and the communities we came from and it is just right to honor the roots that anchored us, so we can stand strong.

Thank you to all the parents and family members who supported the dream of each one of us gathered here today. Thank you for ensuring our needs are met and more. For braving the years of separation. For being our emotional support in times of self doubt, in times when the stress gets to us. Thank you for trusting us sometimes even more than we trust ourselves. For travelling far to witness this milestone. We may not always say it but it truly means a lot especially to a tired, hungry and sometimes cranky medical student. Because we saw how you handled life's challenges with grace and strength, we were able to endure.

As the paths of 170 medical students converged 5 years ago, history was made. Because for the first time and hopefully the only one in this lifetime, a batch started medical school during the pandemic, an experience that not only took a lot from all of us but also highlighted the gaps in our healthcare system.

We went through our days full of uncertainty of how we will be able to do medschool, and if and when things will be back to normal. It was not easy, not when months turned into years of not seeing each other and feeling as if we are all struggling alone in front of our screens. In the course of our journey during that time and beyond, it was not only once or twice when we would receive inquiries on the process of taking Leave of Absences - for personal, financial and mental health reasons. This is the reality of our times that continue to call upon us today for change that will ensure healthcare workers are also taken care of in the way we need it most.

Eventually, after all the zoom lectures, the return demos with our stuffed toys, recordings with family members as our first patients, online mentoring sessions, and the anxiety-inducing situation of taking exams during typhoons, we pulled through. We pulled through. Our heartfelt gratitude to all our teachers, mentors and the College who did not give up on us, who did not give up on teaching despite the difficulties of transitioning online. You extended so much patience and understanding for the difficulties our class faced. For that we will always be grateful. Your passion continues to inspire us and if not for your efforts, we would not be here today, thank you.

When we finally started face to face Out Patient Department duties in LU5, our third year, the excitement was palpable and there was much catching up to do not only in terms of our skills but also in forging bonds with each other. Third year was memorable for Grand OSCE which we feared at that point in our lives. In an OSCE we are tasked to demonstrate how we would do our history and physical examination as if it was a real patient while simultaneously explaining the entire process to our consultants or we will be given a case to which we will point out pertinent findings, give our diagnosis, interpret labs and make a plan. 13 stations in 3 hours, and a weekend to prepare.



I don't know how we did it, how many books or trances we read, scripts we memorized but I'll just be proud we survived and smile at the memory of being asked 'what else?' And couldn't answer. Then came clerkship and internship year wherein now we were entrusted with more responsibilities for our patients. Where everyday is a reminder of our duty as part of the healthcare team. And for sure there are patients we will never forget. Our first code, our first SICs, and the heartbreak of not being able to do anything more but give comfort. They will always be with us as much as the thank yous, and the first PF we received (i.e. food).

In PGH, we've heard countless stories of how patients had to leave at 2 AM in the morning just to line up, of how they had to save up for their transportation from the province, of how they can't come back for follow ups because their family wouldn't have anything to eat for the day, of why they couldn't consult earlier even if they wanted to. Remembering their apologetic faces as they ask for many papers and abstracts, to be able to request funds from politicians - and our frustrations, pains us 'til today. You see, health could not be separate from our livelihood, education and government.

For many reasons hearing this everyday might have desensitized us but we stand here as a reminder that just because we hear these things everyday, doesn't mean it should always be that way. Because it is an injustice to accept that. Hanggang may mga Pilipinong tulad ng kwento ni Rosario, hindi dapat tayo makuntento.

Thank you to our patients for teaching us that many times in life there will be things we could not change as easily as we wanted to but believing that we can and trying with everything that we had in us is what makes a difference. Because to aspire for what is better for ourselves, our families, our patients, our country is what brings us together in this institution. And the feelings of frustration? I'd like to think they are the manifestations of our hope in disguise.

Thank you to PGH for the years of teaching, for showing us that excellence is possible even with the most limited of resources. So how much more if all healthcare workers, not only in PGH but the entire country are given much support, if working conditions and culture are improved, if supplies are readily available, or even better, if we just ensure our communities are healthier. Thank you to PGH for teaching us to be leaders in our own right, allowing communication with respect and giving opportunities for feedback. Because you believed in our voice, we can go on to be a catalyst for positive change whatever path we may take.

And to my dearest classmates, thank you for seeing this journey through. For fighting most especially when it was hard to study, to get up, to find a reason to continue. Thank you for the trust and for the friendship. After LU3, I swore I had nothing left to give and I was just happy to have someone accept the role through Nicole. But time and space does wonders for our plans. I would get questions why I came back and as corny as it sounds, I would say it's because I missed it and I loved the people that make up the batch. We aren't perfect but I like how we try to help one another when the situation calls for it. And most of all I treasure the privilege of getting to know you.

Thank you to LU3 council who made it possible for a community to arise from the class in spite of our physical isolation. For LU4 council for guiding us in one of the most difficult years of med school. For LU5 council for helping us transition to face to face. For LU6 and 7 council who stuck together in our past struggles and in the future. I didn't feel alone because you all made it bearable. For all the block heads, committee members, liaison officers, Grad Comm, IMED batch, our mentoring groups and closest friends who saw us grow from our lowest and highest points, our seniors and juniors, thank you. We made it together.

For everyone who made all the pain, the sweat and the tears worth it. 2025, May we choose to do what's right, most especially when it's hard. May we not lose sight of our whys. And may we always have the strength to overcome. And so for one last time we cheer, Dare to Be, XXV!



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Dr. Maria Serena I. Diokno

Keynote Speaker

CHED Chair Dr. Shirley Agrupis and members of the Board of Regents, Pres. Angelo Jimenez, National Scientist Carmencita Padilla, System officials, Chancellor Michael Tee, vice chancellors and deans, special thanks to Dean Mia Rotor of the College of Allied Medical Professions, fellow faculty and staff, parents and family of our graduating students, and most especially, Batch 2025: Ito ang araw ninyo. Pinaghirapan nyo ito. Lahat ng inyong pagod ay may bago nang pangalan: tagumpay. Congratulations!

Thank you, Chancellor Tee and colleagues, for inviting me to speak before you today. But frankly, I think you chose the wrong person because I never attended any of my commencement ceremonies. The first, that of my undergraduate degree in UP Diliman, I refused to join because the president of the country then (same name as the president today) was the commencement speaker. The editor and managing director of the Philippine Collegian were in prison at the time as were many others. My father, Jose or Ka Pepe, was barely two years out of martial law prison. Honor graduates were required to attend the ceremony, but my sister and I (we graduated together as I was ahead by one semester) could not stomach the thought of going up the stage to receive our awards from the university's chosen guest. So, we did not attend the ceremony. That was forty-nine years ago, when I was in your shoes. My second commencement was for my master's degree, which I obtained three years later in the U.S. The dictatorship was still in place and no one in my family could be present. I celebrated instead with my friends in a rather spirited fashion. My third commencement, four years after my MA, was for my PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. I opted to skip the ceremony and return home, which turned out to be three days before Sen. Ninoy Aquino was assassinated at the Manila international airport. The commencement ceremonies I passed over turned out to have historical meaning for me.

Let me explain. When I was chair of the National Historical Commission, I arranged to have the files of the Presidential Commission on Good Government digitized as I was alarmed by the growing loss of their records. One April day in 2015, the project head handed me a copy of a letter he found that was tucked away in the PCGG's

intelligence file. It was the graduation letter my sister and I had written to the University Registrar nearly four decades earlier, explaining why we refused to attend the general commencement. I had forgotten all about that letter; I didn't even have a copy of it. Why, for heaven's sake, would it end up in the PCGG's intelligence file? Of course, my sister and I spoke truthfully in that letter, that the guest of honor stood for martial law, which was "incompatible with education for human freedom and dignity," and that by choosing him, "the University authorities ... betrayed the ideals of academic freedom and human liberty that the University was founded to instill." That was pretty straightforward, don't you think, painfully direct but honest. So, I ask again, why would our letter to UP land up in a government intelligence file?

It turns out that the university had sent our letter to the palace and that the occupant of the palace himself remarked on our letter, in writing, with his signature, just three days after we had written the letter. He said that our refusal was "a hollow gesture!"; that UP "was saved and is run by martial law, supported with funds raised by martial law...;" that we (my sister and I) were "afraid to listen to the other side of political controversy [and] should have avoided the university from the start." Medyo pikon pero ok lang. Now imagine my surprise to see this letter decades after we had written it. In a way that 49-year-old letter connects the different stages of my life: as an undergraduate student in the university, to what was going on outside the walls of the academe, all the way to my years as a faculty member at UP Diliman, as chair of the historical commission, and then back to UP-the continuum of time, kahapon, ngayon, bukas, connected on a single thread.

Ganyan ang buhay. Sa ngayon ang nakikita at nararamdaman lamang ay ang kasalukuyan.

Bata pa kayo kaya ang inyong nakaraan ay halos literal na kahapon lamang. At ang kinabukasan naman ninyo, tilang malayo pa dahil ang dami pang maaari at dapat gawin bago magkaroon ng hugis ang hinaharap. Ngunit sa kabuuan ng buhay, hindi mahihiwalay ang mga yugtong ito. Ang tanong ay: ano ang ninanais ninyo maging saligan, gabay, at tanglaw na siyang tutuhog sa lahat ng aspeto ng inyong buhay?

Para sa UP, ito ay karangalan, kahusayan at paglilingkod. Una sa lahat, ang bawat isa-honor, excellence, service-ay dapat patunayan sa pamamagitan lalo na ng gawa. Ang karangalan, halimbawa, ay hindi nanggagaling sa katungkulan, kahit pa man "Your Honor" ang tawag sa nakaupo sa poder. Sa totoo, marami sa binabating "your honor" ay wala talagang honor. Honor is not built into the position. We all know that appointments and elections to office do not always yield the best or the most appropriately able. So, the position does not confer honor. You bring honor to the position and not the other way around. And this applies to UP as well as to our country and every aspect of our lives.

Pangalawa, hindi pwedeng pumili ng isa lamang sa tatlo. Type ko ang service, hindi ang excellence. Hindi pwede yan.

Ang ating pamantayan sa UP ay all or nothing. Tell me, ano ang silbi ng utak at talento kung walang prinsipyo at tapang upang panindigan ito?

Imagine, isang salita, iisang salita, "forthwith," ay ayaw intindihin ng nanunungkulan sa senado (UP graduate

iyon) at binigyan pa ito ng bagong kahulugan: hindi agad (forthwith) kundi apat na buwang makalipas o dili kaya, kapag may panahon pa ang senado. Dagdag nya, kasalanan ng mga gumawa ng ating saligang batas ang diumano'y kalabuan ng salitang "forthwith." Dapat daw sa halip nito, ginamit ang salitang "immediately." What utters nonsense! Batch 2025, hindi ito usapin ng talino kundi ng kawalan ng prinsipyo, ng pansariling ambisyon, ng transaksyong pampulitika sa pagitan ng mga mahigpit na kumakapit sa kapangyarihan.

Isa pang halimbawa: paano ka maglilingkod kung hindi mo inaral ang isyu o makitid ang iyong paningin? May drug problem? Simple ang solusyon: tokhang; patayin ang sinasabi nilang adik; targetin ang maliliit na tao. Isipin nyo, sa "evidensiyang" isinumite ng pulis sa Korte Suprema, pareho ang justification sa libu-libong kaso: nanlaban daw ang tinokhang. Sa madaling sabi, kasalanan ng mga pinatay ang kanilang pagkamatay. May mas baluktot pa bang pag-iisip kaysa dito? Well, here's another. The present government discovered that PhilHealth was dripping with money. Sabi ng Finance Secretary: "Kung hindi natin nasilip ang mga sobra-sobrang pondo ng PhilHealth, malamang hanggang ngayon ay nanatili itong natutulog." By the same token, your education in UP Manila prepared you not only for your career, which I have no doubt you will do well, but also, and equally important, for a life of meaning.

Palagay natin na ganito nga ang sitwasyon, ano ang nararapat na solusyon? Hindi ba, dapat tiyakin na ginagamit ang pondo para sa mga serbisyong pangkalusugan, palawakin at dagdagan pa ang coverage ng PhilHealth, at tanggalin ang mga walang kakayahang opisyal na hindi marunong o di kayang tuparin ang trabaho ng PhilHealth. Lohikal, diba? Pero hindi. Ang lutas ng gobyerno ay tanggalin ang budget ng PhilHealth at ilipat ang halos 90 billion mula sa reserves nito patungo sa National Treasury, bukod sa 60 billion na nalipat na. Muli: honor, excellence, service-all or nothing. We do not get to pick and choose which one will serve us at any one moment. By the same token, your education in UP Manila prepared you not only

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for your career, which I have no doubt you will do well, but also, and equally important, for a life of meaning. What does this denote, a life of meaning? David Viscott offers inspiring advice. He says: "The purpose of life is to discover your gift. The work of life is to develop it. The meaning of life is to give your gift away."

Let's break this up. How does one discover his, her, their gift? I think by now you know what interests you and what bores you to death, your strong points and your vulnerabilities. But your gift is way more than that. It is, at the core, about who you are and your ability, both innate and trained, to become your finest version. I use the word version deliberately because we all have a good side and a not so good side, and the never-ending challenge of life is to rein in the lesser side so that your good self dominates consistently, especially during trying times. It helps to surround yourself with persons who are able to bring out your best. I often advise young friends that the true test of a good partner is whether you become a better person as a result of your relationship; if you become worse, then that barkada, that BFF, that partner isn't the right one for you.

The gift which each of you possesses needs to be developed, and university education is just the beginning. Minsan akala natin na marami na tayong alam lalo na't graduate tayo ng UP Manila, which ranked in the top 7.9% of 21,462 higher education institutions in the world rated by the Center for World University Ranking in 2025. (Congratulations, UP Manila!)

Soon you will realize, however, that you have lots more to learn in whatever career you choose, not only because your profession demands it, but also to improve yourself as a human being who seeks to live and enjoy life, who respects others and cares about the community, society and world you live in, whose air you breathe, whose soil and waters nourish you, whose future is inextricably woven into your own. Learning now is much easier than before because you have ready access to all sorts of knowledge. There are even programs that can create your essays, draw

for you, speak for you, and think for you. But learning is also more difficult now because your easy access to everything includes falsehood and all kinds of crazy stories and conspiracies that quickly catch fire. How many times in your chat groups have stories been shared that turned out to be fake?

Yet people fall for fakery, some out of sheer lack of competence. Nine years ago, the Stanford University History Education Group assessed the ability of middle school, high school, and college students to evaluate claims made online. In all they analyzed 7,804 student responses across 12 states. Included among the participants were college students from Stanford, which rejects 94% of its applicants. Their finding is chilling: "Overall, young people's ability to reason about the information on the Internet can be summed up in one word: bleak." The Stanford History Education Group calls this new skill civic online reasoning, which has yet to be included in our basic education curriculum. Obviously, adults need training in this competence, too.

Our students are, of course, taught in school to differentiate between fact and opinion, but they are not taught enough to differentiate between a good opinion—logical, well argued, provides sound basis—and a bad one. The truth is that not all opinions are equal. Some are worth listening to, while others ought to head straight to the bin. So even as we respect the right of persons to an opinion, we need not embrace any of their opinions. For example, referring to the public uproar over the vice president's use of confidential funds, a senator lamented that no such noise was made about former VP Leni Robredo's use of confidential funds. Well, of course, because VP Leni had none! That same senator promoted an AI-generated video because he likes the fake message. Huh? We are hounded daily by baseless opinions like his. Our duty is to resist absurdity that comes from the top because it causes disastrous results for our people.

One other reason why people fall for false news is confirmation bias (also called directed motivational



reasoning), which in my view is far more difficult to cure. Confirmation bias is the tendency to give greater credence to information that suits or reinforces one's beliefs or pre-existing views, suggesting that emotion and personal belief have greater influence than proven truth or even logic in gathering information and forming opinions. For instance, no matter how many sanctioned killings took place as part of his government's drug war policy, the man at the helm then remains popular and was just overwhelmingly reelected mayor while in jail awaiting trial for crimes against humanity. Some justify their support by saying that the number of those killed is exaggerated. (They do not, however, contest that killings took place.) Others claim that the former president's rights were violated, conveniently ignoring the rights of those murdered by his policy. And so, their reasoning goes, one person has rights and thousands, apparently none.

It is difficult to remove confirmation bias because, as you can see, it isn't rational. You can't argue with it. The solution lies in self-awareness or the ability to understand one's own thoughts, feelings, motives, and actions, and how these affect others. This is not a mere exercise in self-reflection for the sake of feeling good. It is about knowing how our thoughts and actions could affect others. In my discipline of history, self-awareness is necessary to prevent subjectivity from clouding historical judgment. We historians must read contrary evidence; we cannot, should not select only those sources that confirm our argument or ask questions that lead to only one answer or the answer we prefer. That would be intellectual fraud. Without self-awareness, the result would be blind judgment at one end, resulting in patent unfairness, or at the other, what is called "the confidence of the incompetent," referring to people who believe they are smart when they aren't, or think they know what they are doing when they don't, and even show off about it. Letting persons like that run our country, our work places, and our lives is a dangerous thing.

Ok, so: "The purpose of life is to discover your gift. The work of life is to develop it." Now we turn to the last: "The meaning of life is to give your gift away." Your talent, intellect, creativity, and ability aren't yours to own and enjoy exclusively but yours to develop for the greater good—your own, the good of those you love, and of the larger community. Sharing your gift for the greater good speaks to a sense of humanity, of which each of us is but a part. UP Manila is not content with a merely skilled doctor, for instance; such a doctor would be fairly easy to produce. But the doctor who combines knowledge and skill with compassion (not ego) and a desire to serve others is the university's goal; such a doctor is far more difficult to develop.

A sense of humanity will keep you constantly aware of your own personal and professional limitations. What you do not know, you will continue to learn, and what you can do, you will strive to do as best as you can.

There will be situations
you won't be able to solve
even with the best minds
and means available.
Your humanity will keep
you afloat and console
you when you cannot
overcome the odds.

Just as important, a sense of humanness will remind you of your purpose in life. Remember this: if money is your sole and abiding purpose, you need not even try to be human. The quickest way to riches, as we have seen, is to take shortcuts, align with the powerful, and exploit other human beings. But true achievement emanates from your knowledge and talent, coupled with a profound sense of humanity. As Apolinario Mabini advised: "Develop the special talents God has given you, working and studying according to your capabilities, never straying from the path of good and justice, in order to achieve your own perfection, and by this means you will contribute to the progress of humanity...." That is the true measure of success.

Let me end where I started, with the letter to UP in 1976: "graduation exercises should be a meaningful experience—at once an end and a beginning, a looking back and a looking forward, a parting and a welcoming."

Batch 2025: May you keep your friends in college and find new ones after graduation who will stay with you through thick and thin. May you find the strength to bear the pain of heartbreak and disappointment and relish all your happy experiences with equal fervor.

May your memories of the university remain with you throughout your life as you make room for memories yet to be made.

As you bid everyone good-bye today, do thank those who made your time at UP Manila worthwhile.

Batch 2025, I wish each of you a happy, exciting, and meaningful future. Share your gift with others! Give your gift away with joy!

Mabuhay at maraming salamat!



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