

# **UPCM: The Path to Excellence, Honor and Service to the Nation and the World**

## **INSPIRED: Three years and Beyond**

I stand before the community of scholars of the UP College of Medicine humbled by the challenges during the past three years as the Academic Leader and Dean of our beloved alma mater.

Many of you have heard the INSPIRE Flagship programme which we embarked on in 2018 as a shared aspiration. The journey has not been easy especially in the past year battling an invisible enemy that has affected all of us, having lost our colleagues, honored mentors, alumni, friends and family. On top of these we had volcanic eruptions, typhoons and floods stretching our resources to the limits, challenging the very core of our being as the premiere medical school in the country.

For the next three years the INSPIRE Flagship Programme will be relentlessly pursued.

## **InFRASTRUCTURE**

In 2018, three months after I started Pres. Danilo Concepcion approved the site for the new Medical Sciences Building while the legal issues for the failed Academic Center was pursued relentlessly by UPMAF under the leadership of Prof Emeriti Drs Rody Sy and former Dean Dr Agnes Mejia. As revised plans were made with the new contractor DMCI, architectural plans were approved in Oct. 2018. The construction cost came out to PhP 577 M in March 2019, and so as funds at that time were not complete given that the original cost of the Academic Center was about PhP 240M I asked classmates from UPCM Class 1985 specifically Dr. Princess Tamesis-Sy and other alumni like Dr. Regina Makalintal-Canlas and Dr. Joselito Chavez to tap the Sy Family Foundation. In August 2019, the first tranche of PhP 300M and the second tranche in Feb. 2021 were handed to UPMAF by the board of trustees of the Henry Sy Sr Foundation. The foundation was laid even in the midst of an ECQ with safety protocols strictly followed and monitored by our indefatigable Assoc. Dean for Planning and Development Dr Jose Joven Cruz. March 2 this year marked the topping ceremony. Thus on the 116th year anniversary of UPCM – a new Henry Sy Sr. Medical Sciences Building – an iconic building solely built on philanthropy is envisioned to have a soft launch and pivot UPCM to another century of leading our nation to a new era where transformative medical education further serves our vision of excellence and leadership in community oriented medical education directed to the underserved. Meanwhile, the basic science departments such as Anatomy, Pathology, Biochemistry, Pharmacology and Physiology are all under variable stages of renovation so within the century old buildings will be modern facilities for laboratories and enhanced educational facilities. We will also prepare for the new Dr. Florentino Herrera Jr Library which will be located on the third floor of the University Library with connection to the Medical Sciences Building. Spaces for our programmes like the Clinical Simulation Center, the SIBOL, Faculty Lounge, the graduate medical education center will be housed in the phase 2 of the MSB that should all happen within the next two to three years.

Aside from the brick and mortar infrastructure projects, what truly prepared us were the investments we made in building our Virtual Campus through the Digital transformation of the UP College of Medicine. This helped greatly the Hiraya Class of 2020 in their clearances prior to the historic first ever virtual graduation, the digitalization of medical education by the donation of the Phi Lambda Delta International

and the Phi Kappa Mu Fraternity Alumni Association and the Phi House Foundation as well as alumni for the MORPH virtual human dissection tables and visualizers for anatomy. Thanks to the vision of Assoc. Dean Coralie Dimacali our investment in video capture lecture platforms such as PANOPTO, and former faculty Dr. Rosalinda Milla our first training on CANVAS that was initiated through the UPMASA-UPCM Visiting Teacher Programme.

### **Science and Discovery**

Collaboration breeds creativity and innovation proven by my experience where engineers and clinicians worked before for the Hearing for Life Project ( HELE ) of the Philippine National Ear Institute. This came about on the heels of a successful advocacy leading to a law that mandated universal newborn hearing screening in our country. Thanks to the leadership of Dr. Edward Wang UP SIBOL, a research programme under UPCM was approved for funding of PhP 146M for 2020 by DOST. Because of the pandemic there was a delay of 1 year of the projects under this programme. However in response to the pandemic the SIBOL TASK FORCE on COVID came to fore as an agile response. Projects on PAPRs (portable air purifying respirators), sanitation pods, telemetry using RxBox and Telekamusta robots were deployed to PGH to help in the fight against COVID. Our MD-PhD programme thanks to Dr. Leslie Dalmacio was given a three year grant for operational enhancements and our MD-PhD students got involved in new exciting projects under the MORPH with PhP 136M in funding, PhDiamond with almost PhP 114M grant funds. Through Associate Dean Dr. Marissa Alejandria , RIDO has reported total funding of over 800 Million. Our researches have not only come in bigger numbers but for the past three years the faculty have contributed immensely to improved rankings of the University with high citation scores beating other world renowned universities. We had the honor of conducting the WHO Solidarity Trials for COVID 19 therapies and vaccines in the country while our faculty served with dedication in the expert panels for HTA, vaccine reviews, IATF sub-committees yet continued to teach our students and share their expertise in the virtual conferences, webinars and lay fora to better inform the public and policymakers. On congressional hearings we lent our voice on alcohol taxes, cannabis, bills on PGH bahay antayan, foresight hearings ably through multidisciplinary huddles and position statements prepared through the office of the Assoc. Dean for Planning and Development Arm and the liaison for legislative affairs Dr. Ana Melissa Hilvano- Cabungcal.

### **Partnerships for Progress**

The strong partnership between UPCM and PGH in clinical services, postgraduate education, research and faculty development will be even more felt as we see the realization of the Center for Clinical Simulation. Thanks to Dr. Julieta Germar who represented UPCM in the meetings with congress we have been given an appropriation of PhP 109M to start procuring the learning management system, task trainers and mannikins. Slated to be housed in the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the MSB and additional spaces in the 9<sup>th</sup> floor will also be planned for UPM Interprofessional HEALTH Sciences Simulation Center. We are now in talks with the Herrera family for the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the University Library that will house the Dr. Florentino Herrera Jr. Medical Library. We are expecting an endowment from UPMASA, trust funds from William Lippy Jr. Endowment at UPMAF from last year. We had 49 well chosen titles delivered from the US with help from Dr. Rosalinda Milla. The donation of Dr. Eusebio Kho of 10,000 USD last year was used to purchase these new collections. We will be adding 25 new titles in the next few months with a more than 7000 USD donation coursed thru UPMASA.

To facilitate remote learning for some of our disadvantaged students we have partnered with SMART, GLOBE for the provision of mobile loads to 189 marginalized students. Thanks to Monde-Nissin, Mr. Lito Abrogar, and several alumni groups more than 110 laptops were loaned to our students scholars, while all UPMASA scholars were also given laptops. Testing capacity for COVID improved with 20,000 PCR kits from Monde Nissin thru the Temasek Foundation along with two automated PCR machines and low temperature biofreezers from the UP Medical Foundation were provided to NIH and PGH MRL.

Thanks to the UP Med Foundation and UP Medical Alumni Foundation we were able to provide medical assistance to faculty, students as well as administrative staff. We also provided quarantine facilities to PGH staff and healthcare workers, clerks and interns as an added assistance for safety.

### **Innovation and Leadership in Transformative Medical Education**

The UPCM has always been recognized as a pioneer in medical education having introduced the ladderized programme of the SHS, the INTARMED, the Organ system integrated curriculum and the MD-PHD programme. These past three years the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine not only took care of the CPDs but was able to stage the Second Patient Safety Congress, initiate the 2021 GSS and creation of the first UPMAS Chapter of Davao. Thanks to PGIM led by Dr Teresa Luisa Gloria-Cruz, we are on track with the many curricular reforms for our graduate offerings and our graduate student population now comprise more than 300 every year! We have gained approval for the revised curriculum of the MS Pharmacology, approval by the Chancellor of the Doctor of Medicine-Masters in Clinical Epidemiology dual degree programme that will be soon submitted to the OVPAA, as well as final stages of the MD-MPH program with the College of Public Health that will hopefully be approved within the year. Our graduates have done well as we continue to have the highest passing rate for the Physician's licensure exams. Last year we even managed to have 9 of our graduates top the Medical Board exams including the # 1 spot. We have already finished substantial work for crafting degree programmes for those interested in an academic track for residents and fellows who will in the future add to the cadre of clinician scientists that come rarely in a country that really needs them. The Department of Orthopedics has committed to a vigorous push for this. We envision that in the next 3 years some of our residency and fellowship programs will be so transformed to offer these academic tracks.

The BLISS or Blended Learning Initiative for Scholars led by the Medical Education Unit head Dr. Heizel Manapat-Reyes have provided much needed boost for the delivery of course packs, trainings for course redesigns and even the provision of the gadgets and laptops for our students and departmental staff to facilitate remote learning. With a new edutech unit that we have formed and IT support thru the efforts of Dr. Arsenio Cabungcal and Dr. Philip Fullante we have been able to make headway in the IT and digital resources in the webportal now also with all learning platforms, repository for memoranda, thesis modules, access to HRIS, INSPIRE magazine and other resources within a secure and data privacy compliant webportal. It even has a COVID tracker for our community and guests as we prepare for the face to face classes.

## **Resource Generation, Empower, Embrace diversity**

Our fiscal position greatly improved with the fresh funding from all fronts whether private or government, alumni or friends. The true BAYANIHAN spirit that remains at the core of our cultural ethos became clearly evident. We are grateful for the additional resources of almost PhP400M raised for the MSB in the past three years and almost a billion for the myriad of projects and research programmes we have initiated. Our community and the network of patients and friends if you recall came together for the SOAP2 which in a record time of barely two months of work generated more than 10M pesos not to mention the great feeling of being one community thanks to the hardworking team of DR. Melfred Hernandez, UPMAS Executive Director Lilibeth Genuino and 2019 UPMAS President Jean Toral . We remain committed to empower our communities. The Department of Dermatology finally got to be independent from the Department of Medicine. Theirs is a story of persistence and undying faith as they reach a century from being a unit in PGH.

More than at any other time Associate Dean Dr. Maria Liza Antoinette Gonzales had exerted great effort in supporting the needs of faculty and students. We have managed to continue providing scholarships for many students and for young faculty to enroll in emerging fields needed such as Patient and Quality assurance and PhD in Oncology. Mid career faculty were provided funds for leadership training, publication of papers and books. Our professorial chair holders have come together in the PC lecture series to share their life's work to our community while new faculty have been introduced in welcome ceremonies hosted by our faculty association President Dr. Allan Hilario and his team.

Our Office of Resiliency with Dr. Josefina Ly Uson, Dr. Benjamin Sablan , the Mentoring Committee led by Dr. Josefina Lapena catered to an increasing number of students whose mental health had to be supported especially in the past year of this unprecedented crisis that rages up to now. By embracing the issues with humility and understanding we have nonetheless stood for unity in diversity. We remain committed to our values and our promises to our countrymen whose health we vow to improve even at the cost of our lives. The triumph of science over death that stands as “ Lady Med “ in our frontyard which no less than our national hero Dr. Jose Rizal sculpted serves to remind us that our struggles today will bring us one day to that moment of victory.

The UPCM Newsletter has been transformed to an official magazine of our college INSPIRE which has come out not only in print but in digital form thru our website for wider dissemination to our publics. Thanks to Dr. Angela Aguilar who has also promoted strong linkages locally and internationally our community has been kept abreast thru these magazine and student editors, contributors, artists have enthusiastically shared in the bi-annual issues.

## **Delivered Promises and Looking forward**

My profound thanks to the Dean's Management Team especially our college secretary Dr Abner Chan and the Dean's Advisory Council, all the faculty who contributed their time and talent in the course redesigns, curricular reviews, academic programme initiatives, mentoring and crisis management for our students and those frontline healthcare workers especially in PGH for the outstanding service to our institution and ensuring we have a future to look forward to. The key accomplishments of the different departments highlight the outstanding work of our faculty, trainees and serve as prime examples of the

leading roles of our clinician experts in the different specialty and subspecialty fields. Our family and community health practitioners continue to make great impact in so many communities not only in Cavite but in so many other regions in the country.

With the support of all of you and the grace of God I stand ready to carry on this work as your Dean, to continue our shared path to honor and excellence, pave new roads for the next generation of six star physicians – an audacious goal beyond Charles Boelen’s five star physician – clinician-scientists with nationalist fervor ready to perform the arduous task of serving the Filipino people wherever one’s life leads to--- the barrios, the boondocks, or even in foreign shores because I too believe in those words of UP Naming Mahal : “ Malayo man ang marating Di rin magbabago and damdamin”.

The future has been defined by the past, today we stand only in but a fleeting yet exquisite moment of gratitude.

*Charlotte M. Chiong, MD PhD*