



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES

2020

# UP SYSTEM REPORT

ON COVID19-RELATED ACTIVITIES

**APRIL 21-26**



*Written on April 30, 2020*

## **Involvement of CUs in COVID19-related Research/Technology/Extension Activities**

### **Policy plans for the lifting of ECQ in the Philippines**

Experts from UP Diliman School of Economics (UPD SE), UPD College of Science and College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, and UP Visayas (UPV), proposed strategies on how the government could fight the COVID-19 pandemic effectively, emphasizing the need for mass testing, and in consideration of the Philippines' economic status and experiences from various sectors. Both CUs proposed plans that will allow businesses to operate while maintaining safety measures for the people.

### **Non-COVID19 Online Medical Consultations**

CUs have acknowledged that there are other health-related concerns aside from COVID-19, that need to be addressed by the health sector. In line with the physical distancing protocol implemented nationwide, the University Health Service (UHS) of UPD launched its online consultation platform to assist non-COVID 19 patients. UP Dental Alumni Association of UP Manila also conducted its free online dental advice for patients who need dental care.

### **Direct participation in COVID-19 testing**

The Clinical Genomics Laboratory (CGL) of the Philippine Genome Center is now certified to perform independent testing for COVID-19. It is the 18th testing center in the Philippines. Locally-made testing kits by Dr. Destura's team have already been produced and distributed to the different hospitals and testing centers. UP Mindanao's (UPMin) testing laboratory, is also projected to have a gold-standard polymerase chain reaction (PCR) detection system by June 2020. UPD Asian Institute of Tourism (AIT), though a non-health-related discipline, now serves as a testing center for District 6 of Quezon City.

## **CU information dissemination and knowledge-building**

Information dissemination and knowledge-building never stops for UP even during a pandemic. Online platforms were utilized by CUs in order to share relevant information on COVID-19. UP Open University (UPOU) launched its podcast series to discuss the effect of the pandemic in the education sector and UP Manila (UPM) National Telehealth Center held a webinar that tackled data science and its role in decision-making. UP System and UPM collaborated to offer a webinar series for clinicians to discuss the best practices in addressing COVID-19; while UP Med Webinar for the week discussed how cancer and COVID-19 can be managed together.

Professors were also tapped to discuss pertinent Covid-related concerns. Dr. Violeta Bautista who heads UPD Clinical Psychology Program, served as a Resource Speaker in Sen. Hontiveros' online discussion on how people can take care of their mental health during this public health emergency. UPD professor Gideon Lasco and UPMin expert Thea Tandog shared their insights on the role of social sciences during a pandemic in the webinar organized by Ateneo's Institute of Philippine Culture and the Ugnayang Pang-Agham Tao (UGAT). UPV, on the other hand, conducted its face-to-face training program for health personnel while maintaining physical distancing, on the use of the locally-made test kits by UP-National Institutes of Health.



*(UPOU's Podcast Series Edu-Hack: Navigating Through a Turbulent Educational Landscape publicity material from UP Open University Facebook page)*

## **CU Involvement in COVID19-Related Coping Mechanisms (for students, faculty, researchers, staff, and community/residents)**

CUs which are housing students and communities inside their campuses, like UPD, UPLB, and UPV ensured that those who are stranded inside the campuses have ample supply of food. Stranded workers inside UPD were given rice from private donors assisted by All UP Workers Union. UPLB alumni donated food for UPLB University Health Service (UHS) frontliners, and the Institute of Food Science and Technology distributed calamansi juice bottles to the UHS frontliners and stranded students. In the Visayas, UPV administration continues to issue advisories regarding food and water supply for the its residents. Stranded UPV dormers continuously receive food packages from UPV alumni and UPV Beta Sigma Fraternity. UPM may not have a housing facility for their staff inside the campus, but they continue to ensure food provision for their staff through the assistance of private donors like Adamson University. Even communities outside the CUs were also assisted by the university. The Institute of Animal Science donated eggs and poultry to a nearby Barangay in Los Baños, and a UPLB alumna started a "kindness station" in Pangasinan where farmers and families can get relief goods for free.

Different CUs produced IEC materials which were released online to help the general public further understand the pandemic and its effects. UP-PGH, through the Bayanihan Na! Webpage and through the official UP-PGH Facebook page, has released information series for physicians, as well as members of the vulnerable sectors, on how to cope with the present crisis. UP Cebu, on the other hand, created heat maps in Cebu to keep the public informed on the status of COVID-19 cases in their area.

UPD and UPLB continues to conduct their Oplan Hatid for stranded students in their campuses. Both CUs are asking for assistance on how they could be connected with concerned LGUs that could facilitate the transport of their students back to their hometowns. Meanwhile, UPV and UPM have provided transportation assistance for their staff.

Mental health is also a growing concern during this time of the pandemic. To address this, UPD, UPOU, and UPV created initiatives to help the public deal with mental health issues. UPD

crafted its online video episode discussing mental health in time of a pandemic through their local radio program, UPOU in its website, has provided tips on taking care of one's mental health, and UPV has utilized art as a form of psychosocial support program through the *Pasundayag Paghilum ha Panahon han Covid-19*, a healing musical show to celebrate the National Literature Month amid Covid-19 pandemic.

Lastly, students, faculty, and staff in the different CUs (UPB, UPM, and UPV) have worked together to make face shields for medical frontliners nationwide, while UPM and UPLB, continue to receive face shields for their own frontliners as well.



(UPB Residence Hall (UP BREHA) students turn over face masks to the UPB Task Force Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) last 23 April 2020. Photo from UP Baguio Facebook page)