



UP SYSTEM PUBLIC SERVICE REPORT



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As the world welcomed 2023 with greater hope for the future amid the continuing shift to the new normal, the University of the Philippines opened the new year by securing its leadership in the areas of research, innovation, and public service and constantly adapting to the changing needs of its constituents and the general public.

The University continues to position itself as the country's leading institution in research and public service with its delivery of socially relevant and innovative public service programs. This report highlights the initiatives of the University and its Constituent Universities (CUs) in research and development, capacity-building, knowledge sharing, volunteerism, and strategic partnerships. These accomplishments reaffirm the commitment of the University to national development and the overall improvement of Filipino lives.

Strengthening management of national and global health risks and issues

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted access to healthcare services, exacerbated the prevalence of anxiety and depression, impeded scientific progress in treating communicable diseases, and drastically lowered overall life expectancy rates. Recognizing the need for strengthening the country's management of common health issues (ex., communicable and non-communicable diseases), the University has conducted webinars, research, information and education campaigns, and other knowledge-sharing initiatives.

In the *Updates on Omicron Subvariant XBB 1.5 (Kraken)* episode of the Stop C.O.V.I.D Deaths Webinar, infectious disease expert Dr. Franco B. Felizarta and Philippine Genome Center Executive Director Dr. Cynthia P. Saloma discussed the social implications of the use of the mythological 'Kraken' to describe the Omicron subvariant XBB 1.5. The experts also compared the new subvariant to the preceding ones in terms of transmissibility, signs and symptoms, vaccine effectiveness, and the treatments and their availability in the Philippines.



UP Marine Science Institute

In a Zoom conference, scientists from the UP Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI) in UP Diliman urged the nationwide adoption and use of wastewater-based monitoring of COVID-19 to strengthen the government’s capacity in localized surveillance and targeted mitigation measures. Through the *Integrated Wastewater-Based Epidemiology and Data Analytics for Community-Level Pathogen Surveillance and Genetic Tracking (iWAS)* Project, UP-MSI researchers conducted a study on wastewater-based epidemiology (WBE) in Davao City. According to the researchers, WBE provides an effective and faster analysis of community-level COVID-19 infection and requires fewer resources than clinical monitoring (ex., RT-PCR testing) and contact tracing - both relatively limited in the early detection or prediction of community outbreaks and can be logistically demanding and expensive when applied to a large population. The detection of viral ribonucleic acid (RNA) in wastewater can assist local government units (LGUs) in closely monitoring at-risk barangays that may not necessarily need a blanket lockdown. The researchers also alluded to the need for improving wastewater management in Davao City amid the presence of bacteriological and pharmaceutical indicators on untreated wastewater within the Davao River basin.

Other than COVID-19, UP CUs also contributed to providing relevant information and services on other prevailing health issues in the country, such as sexual and reproductive health and communicable and non-communicable diseases, among others. One of the

highlights includes UP Los Baños' Gender Center's initiative of providing HIV self-test kits to its constituents.

In other news, Dr. Maria Margarita Lota, chair of the Department of Microbiology at the UP College of Public Health, urged the government to use a pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) that is suitable against existing and more prevalent strains of pneumonia for its National Immunization Program (NIP). This advice came after the country experienced cooler weather patterns which could induce weather-related diseases such as pneumonia, a disease that could be prevented by vaccination, particularly among children.

Improving Filipino's quality of life through public service

Consistent with its mandate, UP has shown leadership in research and development, education, and public service. The University's public service initiatives have supported communities and public and volunteer services; and provided technical assistance to the government, private sector, and civil society. These are driven by the University's commitment to give back to society by improving the quality of Filipino life through capacity development and public service engagements.



UPM DRRM-H Center with DENR representatives

The UP Manila Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Health Center (UPM DRRM-H Center) conducted a simulation training with representatives from the Department

of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Central Office services, bureaus, attached agencies, and the DENR Disaster Response Team. The simulation training delved into the identification of duties and responsibilities of said units during an earthquake. The training ensured that the participants are knowledgeable of their specific roles and responsibilities during an earthquake and have the corresponding skills for this purpose.

In UP Los Baños, the UPLB Department of Social Development Services, College of Human Ecology, in partnership with the UP Alumni Association Palawan Chapter and the UP Tarabidan, organized a fundraising campaign for flood victims in Sofronio Española and Brooke's Point, Palawan. Meanwhile, the UPLB Office of Scholarships and Grants has offered the Nora C. Quebral Scholarship Program through the College of Development Communication Alumni Association as part of the Adopt-A-Student Program. The scholarship program was opened for students enrolled in BS Development Communication.

In UP Baguio, the Ugnayan ng Pahinungód Baguio posted an invitation for volunteer tutors who are interested in joining the *EDUKaravan sa Springhills*. Volunteer tutors are currently being deployed to teach Grade 3 students of Springhills Elementary School in Springhills, Brgy. Apugan-Loakan, Baguio City in the subjects of Reading and Numeracy/Mathematics. The tutorial program is being held every Monday, from 30 January to 5 June, for one hour per subject.

In UP Cebu, students and organizations held a candlelight protest at the UP Cebu entrance gate, urging the government to pursue accountability in the week-long abduction of development workers Dyan Gumanao and Armand Dayoha. The two were later found safe by their families and colleagues in Carmen Town. UP Cebu also joined calls for further investigation into their disappearance.

In UP Mindanao, the Department of Human Kinetics facilitated the donation of basketballs and volleyballs from the Philippine Sports Commission, through 3rd District Representative Isidro Ungab, to Barangay Datu Salumay, Marilog District.

Facilitating organizational knowledge through knowledge sharing

Noting the importance of intellectual capital, UP continues to capacitate its community members through the creation, sharing, use, and management of knowledge and information. The University and its CUs have developed and conducted knowledge-sharing sessions, such as training programs, learning sessions, and workshops to improve the absorptive and innovative capacity of the participants.



Basic GAD Concept Training of Trainers

In UP Los Baños, the UPLB Gender Center organized a *Basic GAD Concept Training of Trainers* for Gender and Development (GAD) Committee members, Technical Working Group, and MOVE members. This was in line with the University's efforts to intensify gender mainstreaming among its CUs. The training was intended to equip attendees with knowledge and skills in conducting GAD-related seminars for UPLB constituents as part of the gender mainstreaming mandate of UPLB Gender Center.

In UP Manila, the UP Manila Standards and Interoperability Lab (UPM-SILab) hosted the second session of its Community of Interoperability Labs - Knowledge Sharing Session (COIL-KSS) series with peers from Japan last 9 January. Dr. Kume Naoto, an Associate Professor from the Department of Electronic Health Record at Kyoto University, shared his

own experience, learnings, and best practices from Japan's nationwide implementation of electronic health records. Synthesizing the session, UPM-SILab noted that the discussion emphasized the need for networking to build capacity in the interoperability of health and the involvement of and continuous collaboration with the government, local health insurance offices, electronic medical records vendors, and other stakeholders.

In UP Open University, the UPOU Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, in coordination with the Multimedia Center (MC) and the ICT Development Office (ICTDO), conducted the hybrid workshop *Introduction to Online Course Development and Facilitation* for new faculty members, affiliates, and lecturers.

In UP Visayas, the University Library conducted a three-day training-workshop on *Institutional Repository (IR)* for the library staff. The IR is a digital service expected to provide an online warehouse that archives, manages, organizes, preserves, and showcases the intellectual outputs of students, faculty, and staff. Technical experts from the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center/Aquaculture Department (SEAFDEC-AQD), Central Philippine University, and West Visayas State University served as trainers. The UP Visayas Graduate School, in partnership with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, also conducted a *Seminar-Workshop on Internationalization of Graduate Programs* to orient faculty members on internationalization opportunities for their graduate programs.

Exploring knowledge-sharing opportunities through strategic partnerships

As the country's leading academic institution, the University fosters strategic partnerships with both foreign and local institutions that would mutually enhance existing mechanisms for the mobilization and sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology, best practices, and other resources.

Following the renewal of UP Manila's five-year partnership agreement with the Tokyo Medical and Dental University (TMDU) last November 2022, representatives from TMDU's Department of Global Health Entrepreneurship and UP Manila's College of Public Health and SEAMEO TROPMED Philippines met last 16 January to explore, discuss, and strengthen possible areas of collaboration in research, teaching initiatives, public service engagements in healthy cities, and student and faculty exchanges. Meanwhile, representatives from UP

Manila's College of Pharmacy and its Alumni Foundation met with officials from the Federation of Asian Pharmacy Associations (FAPA) to discuss the College's initiatives and their support for the upcoming 29th FAPA Congress in Taipei, Taiwan. The UP College of Pharmacy also explored and discussed collaborative opportunities with QualiMed Manila on internship and externship programs, telehealth, clinical pharmacy services, pharmacy workforce, scholarships, and continuing education.

Future collaborations were also explored and discussed in the meeting between officials from UP Visayas and representatives from MATE: Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the Office of Commercial and Trade of the Embassy of Hungary.



High-level exploratory meeting between UP Visayas officials and Indonesian Ambassador Agus Widjojo

Another high-level exploratory meeting was held on the 20th of January between officials from UP Visayas and Indonesian Ambassador Agus Widjojo and his entourage. Some of the topics discussed include the available scholarship programs in Indonesia and short-term courses on Bahasa Indonesia, among others.