

## **Plans for 2017-2020**

**By Dr. Dennis S. Mapa**

I plan to continue with my fiduciary duty for the next three years, if appointed as Dean of the School of Statistics. My priority areas for the next three years, in addition to continuing the programs that I started in the past years, are the following:

- a. Creation of additional Research Laboratories at the UPSS (increase the number of students completing with advanced degrees, increase the number of published journal articles, increase the number of policy papers)**

The accomplishments by the two research laboratories (NONPAR and PHRL) are promising, and the UPSS must create more research laboratories to increase the number of students completing the graduate programs as well as the number of published outputs (e.g. journal articles and policy papers) produced by the School.

In the last year, two opportunities came about that may help in the creation of more research laboratories at the UPSS.

First is the Philippine Energy and Policy Institute to be established in the UP Diliman. This Energy Institute is the brainchild of Senator Gatchalian and the bill is now being heard at the Senate. The Energy Institute will act as the think-tank of government on matters related to energy. Recognizing the role of statistics on matters related to research and policy formulation, the School of Statistics is included as part of the Institute's Advisory Council (together with the UPD Chancellor, College of Science, College of Law, School of Economics and College of Engineering) of the Energy Institute. The Dean of the School of Statistics, together with experts from other disciplines, help formulate some of the key provisions of the Energy Institute. If the bill becomes a law, the Energy Institute will have a seed fund of Php 500 million for its operations, and an annual budget of Php 150 million.

The second potential opportunity is on the area of finance. The Japanese government provided technical assistance to the Philippine government to create a Credit Risk Database to help banks assess the credit-worthiness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the country. The Philippine government, through the Department of Finance (DOF), created a technical working group to help make this project a reality. The panel is composed of representatives from the DOF, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Recognizing the expertise of faculty members in assessing credit risk through statistical models, the BSP Governor invited the UPSS to be part of the technical panel. Moreover, since the database will be needing expertise of statisticians, the government representatives to the panel are eyeing the UPSS as the institution that will manage the credit risk database.

I envision that at least two more research laboratories will be created at the School of Statistics, with research focus on the areas of Energy and Finance (and possibly others).

**b. Catapult the UPSS to be the Center in Statistics Education in the ASEAN Region**

The success of the first batch of ASEAN-EU Scholars in completing the Master of Statistics graduate program have established a strong linkage between the School of Statistics and the ASEAN Regional Office in Jakarta, together with the European Union. Capitalizing on the success of this initiative, the UPSS will work with the ASEAN Jakarta Office and the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) to plan for the training of potential succeeding batch of scholars from the CLMV (and possibly other ASEAN member countries). These training programs can either be short-term courses or the formal graduate programs, such as the MOS.

**c. Push for Additional Faculty Items**

The initiatives in (a) and (b) will not be possible (or extremely difficult at the very least) without additional faculty items. Currently, there are seven (7) faculty members in the School without regular items. Acquisition of additional faculty items will be a top priority for the next three years.

**d. Professional Masters in Data Science Analytics for the UP BGC Campus**

While the UPSS has presence at the UP BGC through classes in graduate level, the UPSS wants to harmonize its graduate program offerings at the UP BGC and the UPSS Diliman Campus. The Professional Masters in Data Science Analytics will be offered at the UP BGC starting AY 2018-2019 (once approved by the BOR). The PM in Data Science Analytics will target a different group of graduate students and will complement the other graduate programs offered by the School. It is expected to increase the graduate enrolment in the years to come.

**e. Strengthening the Master of Science in Statistics and the Master of Statistics (MOS) programs**

The MS (Statistics) and the MOS programs will have to be revised to answer the needs of the government, industry and the academe. Benchmarking the graduate programs of the top statistics departments (e.g. Stanford University and National University of Singapore), the School has already started curriculum review and recommendations have been made on the potential directions on how to revise the two programs.

**f. Strengthening of the Bachelor of Science in Statistics programs in view of the K to 12**

The current BS Statistics program is being revised in view of the K to 12 undertaking. The revised BS Statistics is expected to be ready once UP Diliman welcomes the new group of first year students in August 2018.

**g. Harmonizing Incentives for Faculty and Staff**

Increase incentive of faculty members who will serve as supervisors and panel members of graduate students, as well as faculty members teaching at the UP BGC. Moreover, increase the annual incentive given to administrative personnel and identify ways on how to improve their capabilities through short-term training programs.

**h. Strengthening Student Welfare**

Continue to support the programs and activities for the students to make their stay at the School of Statistics pleasant and worthwhile.

Opening of more spaces for students (and faculty and staff) for collaborative activities such as group study and discussions. In addition to the seminar and discussion rooms located at the soon-to-be opened UPSS Building Phase 2, the roof deck of the main building will also be opened for students as an additional (green) space.

Creation of support group (composed of students, faculty members/staff, and professionals) to help and address the needs of UPSS students experiencing mental health problems. The UPSS will play a more active role in helping students with mental health problems, rather than a passive role of referring them to the guidance office.

A proposal to the UP President to initiate a study on the Health and Wellness of UP Students (a follow-up study to the Health and Wellness of the Faculty and Staff).

**i. Continue engaging the members of the UPSS Alumni and the Private Sector for resource generation to create seed fund to support the operations of the UPSS.**