



PLM Today

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PLM Ranks 4th Top Performing School in 2017 Psychometrician Board Exam; 6 Topnotchers

Edith G. Habig, RPh



THE Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila maintains its good standing as a pioneer learning institution as it emerged the 4th top performing school in the 2017 Board Licensure Examination for Psychometricians with 124 passers and an 85.52% passing rate.

Six PLM BS Psychology graduates were among the top ten. Sharing the Top 5 spot were Anfernee Karl Cuenca, Gemyr Faye Sapitanan, and Raissa Maurice Signo with 83.60%. Scanley James Cerrillo and Mitos Vega were in 7th place with 83.2% while Bea Camille Binay secured the 9th spot with 82.80%. This year's performance surpassed last year's showing where only one PLM graduate landed in the Top 10.

PLM's performance this year is also significantly above the national passing rate of 56.97%.

A steady increase in PLM's passing rate over the years has been observed. Since the board exam's inception in 2014, PLM has consistently displayed above average performance. Last year, PLM ranked third with an 81.58% passing rate. In 2015, PLM's passing rate was 74.40% while in 2014, it was 58.82%. These ratings were all above the national passing rates of 50.46% in 2016, 46.15% in 2015 and 39.29% in 2014.

This year's top performing schools are: University of the Philippines-Diliman (97.67%), University of Santo Tomas (96.53%), Ate neo de Manila University(96.43%), Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (85.52%), Colegio de San Juan de Letran- Intramuros (85.19%) and University of San Carlos (81.43%).

Four subjects were covered in the Psychometrician board examination namely, Theories of Personality, Psychological Assessment, Abnormal Psychology and Industrial Psychology.

The Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) released the results of the October 2017 Psychometrician board exam on November 7, 2017, four working days after the last day of examination. ■

PLM finishes 2nd Runner-up in Genetics Quiz Contest

Rainier Ulrich D. Velasco, M. Sci

“A blonde-haired woman was lying on the ground, swimming in her own blood. There was a clear sign of struggle, as black hair strands were clenched between the victim's fists. Three suspects were identified and DNA samples were obtained from each of them. Find the murderer using the clues left behind.”

This was the theme of the 8th National Intercollegiate Genetics Quiz Contest (NIGQC) held last November 4, 2017 at the Southeast Asian Regional

Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) in UP Los Baños, where a team of PLM students finished 2nd runner-up.

The contest which showcased the use of modern genetic techniques in cracking forensic mysteries like serial killings, paternal tests, rape-slay cases, and many more were participated in by 11 top colleges and universities from different regions in the country, namely, Ateneo de Manila University, Turn to page 4



PLM graduates ace at October 2017 Chemist Licensure Examination

John Rafael N. Granada, RCh

THE BS Chemistry program of the PLM College of Science once again achieved a rating above the national passing rate in the October 2017 Chemistry Licensure Examination. The said examination was administered by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) in Manila, Cebu, and Cagayan de Oro on the tenth and eleventh, a PLM BS Chemistry graduate, Mr. Carl Dar-men Y. Menese, was ranked 6th among those who passed the examination.

For the first-time takers of the October 2017 examination, 12 out of 16 passed, corresponding to a 66.67% passing rate. The overall passing rate for PLM, which also takes repeaters into consideration, is 53.13%. This is above the national passing rate 44.02%; out of 1,195 examinees from the entire Philippines, 526 passed the examination. Those who passed the licensure examination were able to receive their certificate of registration and identification card at their oath taking ceremony held in Manila Hotel on November 10, 2017.

Graduates of the PLM BS Chemistry program who passed the licensure examination credit their success to hard work and perseverance. They also felt that the presence of the subject 'Integrated Chemistry Concepts' in their undergraduate curriculum helped them obtain a proper mindset regarding the licensure examination. This subject is meant to condition the students by making them take week-



Batch 2017 BS Chemistry graduates at the 2017 Oath Taking Ceremony of Chemists. Standing, from left to right: Christine Joann Almarez, Marielle Ydel, Eriko Lois Reyes, Therese Anne dela Cruz, Mark Harold de Chavez, Clarice Faye Oñate, Maria Sofel Taway, Rei Mart Alconera, and Michael Lagmay. Seated: Carl Dar-men Menese. Not in photo: Ynson Aldrich Amiller and Bill Martin.

ly examinations on the core subjects of the BS Chemistry program. In addition to enrolling in review centers, many of the graduates regularly met up for over-night review sessions. Proper planning and assessment during the review period also helped graduates to determine their weak points so that they can focus on improving them. Ultimately, going the extra mile in preparing for the examination and maintaining the goal in sight

helped the graduates pass the exam.

In the 2016 Chemistry Licensure Examination, the PLM BS Chemistry program was also able to achieve an overall passing rate higher than the national passing rate. PLM's was 61.90%, compared to the national passing rate which was 54.86%. Mr. Jonniel S. Vince Cruz, a PLM graduate, landed in the 6th place in the list of those who garnered the 10 highest places in the examination. ■

PLM College of Science Advocates Environmental Awareness; Spearheads Annual Tree Planting

Marivic G. Molina and Nemia T. Dacumos



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CS with HAPI tree planters at the La Mesa Watershed Forest Reserve.

IN keeping with PLM's values as an institution that promotes social responsibility, the College of Science (CS), together with Humanist Alliance Philippines, International (HAPI), spearheaded the annual tree planting activity at La Mesa Watershed Forest Reserve in Lagro, Quezon City last September 24, 2017. This was the second tree planting activity

sponsored by CS since 2015.

The tree planting activity aims to encourage participation in activities that would raise environmental awareness, preserve and protect the environment, and contribute in mitigating the adverse effects of global warming and climate change.

Faculty members from the College of Science, College of Education, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Nursing, CS alumni, and students from different colleges actively participated in the activity. Around 60 seedlings of Molave and Lanete were planted.

The participants received certificates of participation duly signed by the Dean of CS, Dr. Emelinda P. Sabando and the Executive Director of HAPI, Ms. Jennifer G. Baltazar.

The activity was rated excellent by the participants in terms of accomplishing its objectives, relevance and its alignment with PLM's core values. ■

Initiative for Automation Managing the Faculty Performance

Francis B. Aguilar

An end-of-course evaluation is an essential tool to accurately assess the course and faculty effectiveness. Faculty evaluation ratings help ensure high quality instruction and promote excellence in teaching and learning.

Despite the implementation of a computer-based faculty evaluation in 2010, it was hounded by drawbacks due to limited throughput, principally restrained by the limited access to the system since there were only twenty (20) desktops used for this purpose. The first rating session is usually scheduled barely after the Midterm exams.

One disadvantage of this early conduct of evaluation is it fails to consider the entire breadth of the learning process.

With a handful of terminals, the turn

out usually covers only more than half or 50% of the student population. This means the rating is not representative of the entire population. More importantly, it condones the lack of responsibility on the part of the students to perform their obligation to meaningfully participate in this evaluation process of ensuring academic excellence.

Steadfast in improving processes and systems through innovative applications, the Information & Communications Technology Office (ICTO) introduced the online version of the Student Faculty Evaluation System (SFES) as a multi-fold enhancement to the old system.

Starting 1st Semester, SY 2017-2018, registered students were able to evaluate themselves towards the tail-end of the semester, or two (2) weeks before the Final exams. Using

their own smartphones or computers, students can remotely access the SFES anytime and anywhere. This impacted to a 100% turn-out, more so that the completion of the SFE is now an automated requisite prior to receiving their eGrades in the online Computerized Registration System.

With the ability to generate real-time, results-based evaluation reports, the colleges are now granted direct access to the wealth of information in managing the performance of their faculty members.

Under the direction of the Systems Development Office, the SFES was developed by its team of programming assistants led by Patrick V. Uri. The operations of the SFES -- supervised by the Operations Management Office -- are governed by PAO No. 2017-28-ACA. ■

Leyte Normal University Delegation Visits PLM

Kelly B. Vergel de Dios

It was a hectic Wednesday: the Public Affairs Office was juggling preparations for three consecutive events when the visiting fifteen-member delegation from the Leyte Normal University descended on the PLM Campus.

From Paterno Street in Downtown Tacloban, twelve teachers and three office staff of the LNU found themselves inside the historic walled area of Intramuros.

In two hours, they had wanted to check out the laboratories, observe a class and interview the faculty and talk to some office workers.

Problem was the laboratories were in the process of being fitted out with fume hoods, equipment and furniture and classes were in session.

So we did the next best thing for them: we gathered the Deans of some of our Colleges with the best licensure-exam performance, two Vice Presidents and an AVP and went into a huddle with them at the PRMEC to answer their questions and share some of our best practices.

The LNU delegation—Nilda Jamora, Adelina Naing, Liza Barredo, Pearlita Vivero, Marife Daga, Nelson-Mau reen-Andrei and Breann Bernardo, Marife Catindig, Joseline Aboy, Candice Agui los, Marc Llarenas, Feliditha Cagara and Joderic Navarette – were curious about how PLM manages to sweep the licensure exams with mostly a 100-percent passing rate.

VP for Information and Communications Technology, Engr. Garry Erwin deGracia, explained to them that the University has a very stringent admission test that pretty much limits the entrants to the best and the brightest. The PLMAT is a two-hour examination consisting of sub-tests on language proficiency, reading comprehension, mathematics, science and reasoning to ensure that passers have the capacity to hurdle the rigors of an excellent yet exacting university curricula.

Dean of the College of Education, Dr. Jimmy Romero, along with the Dean of the College of Engineering, Engr. Clydelle Rondaris, Dean of the College of Medicine Dr. Angeline Alabastro and Dean of Chass Risa Asuncion all agreed that while the curricula in PLM's 12 academic colleges and 6 academic support units is based on what the Commission on Higher Education prescribes, the university's education system exercises full autonomy to alter or enhance these to maintain its edge.

Public Affairs AVP Cuchis Erquiaga and myself also shared that the University creates an environment that is conducive to optimum learning and imbues its students with leadership skills and develops their critical thinking and learning by exposing them to speakers of various persuasions who are invited to the Campus to challenge their view on a certain subject or issue – or simply strengthen an already existing opinion. There are close to 60 student organizations at PLM and a slew of publications including the official student paper *Ang Pamantasan* and the university's monthly newsletter that the Public Affairs office puts together, *PLM Today*.

After the exchange at the PRMEC that lasted for approximately an hour and a half, VP de Gracia took the LNU delegation on a walking tour of the Campus – taking the covered walk from the UTMT (“under the mango trees” in front of the Justo Albert Auditorium where generations of PLMayers congregate in between classes and winding up back at the Auditorium.

VP Garry – also the PLM's resident historian - pointed out the building of each College and gave a brief description of the facilities therein while explaining the history of General Luna Street which runs alongside the PLM Campus. South of the corner of Calle Real de Palacio (now General Luna) was where one of the earliest educational institutions established

by the Jesuits in 1590 was located. The school was first called Colegio de Manila and was renamed Colegio de San Ignacio in 1626 in memory of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

He also pointed out the Rajah Sulayman Gym (the renovation of which is now in its finishing stages), the 18th to 19th-century design of the other buildings built in the style of the Bahay na Bato of the Spanish era and the SMART and Globe antennae protruding from the Gusaling Villegas (including its Accenture Ideas Exchange Room) and Gusaling Lacson to boost their signal to serve the students and employees better.

Back to where they started after the short tour, the party was invited into the cavernous 500-seat Justo Albert to catch the dress rehearsal of the “Lukot-lukot, Bilog-bilog” interactive play as an example of a non-traditional approach to teaching financial literacy to students.

As chance would have it, the group staging the interactive play performed just a weeks earlier at LNU and shortly after super-typhoon Yolanda hit and someone in the cast knew someone from the school and pleasantries were exchanged before the visitors had to head off to City Hall for a courtesy call on the Mayor.

We'd like to think that they came away with the learnings they had hoped for. All we know is that if they came to learn from the Greats, they came to the right place and both sides ended up learning from each other. ■

Passages

Vic Lactaon

on November 23. He was a part-time CHASS faculty member teaching Senior High School.

PLM finishes 2nd Runner-up in Genetics Quiz Contest *From page 1*

Ateneo de Zamboanga University, Bulacan State University, Miriam College, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, UP Manila, UP Baguio, University of San Agustin, Southern Luzon State University, and Xavier University. The PLM representatives, 4th year BS Biology students Mr. Jean Marke Flores, Ms. Xaileeh Dimaano, and Mr. Matthew Briñes, competed in a game of brain prowess and wits. They were assisted by their coach and Department Chairperson, Asst. Prof. Rainier Ulrich Velasco.

The quiz contest was divided into five rounds: 1) Synopsis (Individual written exam round) 2) Initiation (Easy round) 3) Elongation (Average round where you get deductions for answering questions incorrectly) 4) Termination (Difficult round where you get deductions both from leaving the question unanswered and answering the question incorrectly) and 5) the Genetic Drift (Bottleneck round where you get the chance to amplify points earned by



PLM's Pride. Starting from left. Jean Marke M. Flores, Xaileeh L. Dimaano, Matthew T. Briñez with their coach, Prof. Rainer Ulrich Velasco

using various multipliers).

After five rounds, the Bulacan State University was declared the new Champion, followed by Miriam College and PLM as the runners-up. ■

Result of September 2017 Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET)

Conchita V. Yumol

THE LET Performance of the College of Education, Pamantasan

ng Lungsod ng Maynila remains impressive with a passing percentage for first timers of 95.65% for the Elementary level and 94.5% for the Secondary level.

However, combined with the repeaters, the overall performance of the College is 88% for the Elementary level and 84.21% for the Secondary level. This is still far beyond the National Passing Percentage which is 26.33% for the Elementary level and 46.37% for the Secondary level.

The CED-PLM, Elementary level though it attained an 88% overall passing rate, is not included among the Top Performing Schools because the Examinees were less than 50. ■

GNTV Learniversity at PLM: The Kapuso Network Advises Graduating Students How to Make It in the Real World

Kelly B. Vergel de Dios

THERE were long queues at the registration booths of both the University Activity Center and the Justo Albert Auditorium long before the event was scheduled to start on Friday, November 24.

Almost as if the crowds were waiting for limousines to drop off movie stars at the marquee which, of course, they were.

Because movie stars and rock stars (at least the resource speakers and hosts who were not actually actors, were that - renowned or revered in their field of accomplishment) were on four panels of speakers who were scheduled to go on that day.

And at the UAC, five learning booths featured a miniature SONA set where anchor wannabes could have themselves recorded doing a stand-upper (and get to keep the material, yay!), a booth where they could try to beat GMA New Media's Rubik's Cube-solving robot Mr. Cuboto, a photo-booth with the PLM and Learniversity logos as backdrop to commemorate the event, a freedom wall where they could stick post-its with their "hugos" and thoughts/feedback on the interactive booths and panels of speakers, and a game app - hop piko-piko - they got to play on available tablets.

The activity at Justo Albert began promptly at 9:00 a.m. with Panel 1 speakers - new Kapuso dream girl Joyce Pring (the radio dj and celebrity blogger/vlogger - she's on Instagram (Joyce to the World), twitter and everywhere else) and actor/dancer/singer Derrick Monasterio, who spoke on how to make social media work for you.

Their tips for PLMayers: choose social media platforms wisely and write individual

posts for each network: Joyce uses Instagram for her travel photos, twitter for her views on social issues, Derrick posts about his gigs, new records coming out, on his website.

They both also advise against giving one's opinion on issues about which one is not well informed because one cannot think critically unless one has a lot of relevant knowledge about the issue at hand.

Joyce reminded the audience that everyone is entitled to their opinion and that we should respect that instead of thinking that we should always sway everyone to our point of view because then it could all quickly escalate into a heated argument or tit-for-tat exchange.

Serving as host and panel moderator was Tonipet (Unang Hirit, Pop Talk, Art Angel, Kids on Q, Tara Let's Eat!, The Beat) Gaba who worked the Justo Albert crowd into singing the Art Angel jingle, taking groufies with the speakers and posting their thoughts and photos on #Learniversity to make the GNTV Learniversity event at the PLM trending and viral on social media.

Next to go up onstage was Chief Marketing Officer of GMA Network and President and COO of GMA Marketing and Productions, Inc. Lizelle Maralag who also masterfully worked the full house by explaining that her staff advised her to dress down because students responded better to someone in comfortable clothing than someone in a stiff suit.

That and her talk that revolved around numbers: the year she graduated at UP-Diliman with a BS in Education, the age she graduated (18), her first pay (P1,200) and key phrases like integrity even when no one is looking, made up her formula for success.

Ms. Maralag's advice was simple: be yourself in all that you do, keep it real, and work should feel like play in that it should be something you enjoy doing, otherwise it will only be work, a deadend job, a bore.

Also, she told graduating students there is no shame in being poor or coming from humble beginnings. The challenge is lifting yourself to something better through sheer hard work and good planning and the rest will fall into your lap.

She was living testament that it can happen the old fashioned way. She needed no backers. Did not call in any favors. She was just herself.

A mutual friend at PANA or the Philippine Association of National Advertisers - Ad Standards Council Executive Director Digna Dator Santos - describes her as very professional, driven. One who diligently does her research even for something as simple as the case presentations of participants in PANA's IMC Student Competition which is why she can ask relevant and spot-on questions of them resulting to a very good learning opportunity for both the students and the audience.

You believe it, too, seeing her in her element with the Justo Albert crowd.

If you're pursuing a course that was only forced on you by your parents or your circumstances, her advice was to shift gears. There's still time, she encouraged. Or work part time after graduation to finance one's pursuit of one's true dream or vision.

Panel 2 consisted of GMA News reporters Mark Zambrano and Steve Dailisan and GMA 7 resident meteorologist and IMReady (public service) sa Dobol B on *Turn to page 6*

Visa brings play on financial literacy to PLM; bags in laughs, lessons

Ludmila R. Labagnoy

EDUCATING and empowering the Filipino youth to make informed financial decisions may not be an appealing subject for learners. But PLM's senior high school and college students chuckled and laughed through the hour-long rib-tickling stage play *Lukot-Lukot, Bilog-Bilog*, that tackled financial literacy.

The interactive play featured among others, national heroes Jose Rizal and Apolinario Mabini, a civet, and Mount Mayon, come alive from crumpled bills and rounded coins as Gwyneth, a young student, is challenged to make decisions between her needs and wants. Written by Eljay Deldoc and directed by Abner Delina, Jr., the play was performed by the Tanghalang Pilipino Actors Company at the Justo Albert Auditorium on Nov. 22.

Visa Inc., the world's leader in digital payments, brought to PLM the recently-launched play on money management developed with Tanghalang Pilipino (TP), the resident drama company of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP). This is the first program of its kind launched by Visa in the Philippines in support of the government's National Strategy for Financial Inclusion spearheaded by the BSP.

Visa's financial literacy initiative under its Teach for the Philippines program was able to reach out to the University's senior high and college students from the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, College of Business Management, and College of Education.

The play showcased various scenarios on

making smart monetary decisions to which students in the audience easily related. With millennials forming a large population in the Philippines, the play emphasized the need for the audience "to manage their money well (even) at a young age," said Stuart Tomlinson, Visa Country Manager for the Philippines and Guam during the play's launch.

Nanding Josef, artistic director of TP, underscores the power of the theatre to "stimulate creativity and challenge its audience on their perception of money and spark critical thinking on the value of money by presenting economic concepts in a realistic and entertaining situation that could help students easily apply their learnings in their daily lives."

Ms. Pia Roman-Tayug, Visa's head of finance advocacy points out: "The innovative approach of blending education and art can help the government's existing programs. Financial education should be introduced to learners early on, especially key concepts including budgeting, investing, and setting financial goals."

The cast also indulged the theatre arts students from the Department of Mass Communication, CHASS under Mr. Mark Gutierrez, with an open forum following the curtain call. The stage performers engaged the audience in a discussion on the processes and initiatives that went with the conceptualization, writing of the script and the other elements such as stage design and performance, among others. ■



CHASS conducts Gender-Fair Language Seminar

Joy B. Gamad

GENDER issue is not just a woman's issue, it is a human issue."

In response to this public concern, the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CHASS) organized a Seminar on Gender-Fair Language on November 28, 2017 at the Bukod Tanging Bulwagan.

Prof. Prescilla B. Vallarta, a seasoned social worker and the former Department of Social Work chair in this University and at present, part-time faculty, served as the resource speaker and echoed the training she recently received on Gender Responsive Case management sponsored by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

PLM faculty, students, and staff were introduced to what Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) is. They were presented ways on how gender bias language can reinforce gender stereotypes, inequalities, and marginalization in any communicative setting. Prof. Vallarta enlightened the discussion by giving concrete options to make language respectful, gender-fair and empowering.

A collection of biased and non-biased words for analysis was presented which include: chairman vs chairperson, businessman vs business executive or entrepreneur, man and wife vs husband and wife, Lady Senator vs Senator, brotherhood vs community, mankind vs humanity, ladylike vs courteous or cultured, best man for the job vs best person for the job. The participants showed interest and commitment on the challenge posted by the speaker that implementation of this advocacy should start from the four corners of the classroom.

The open forum that followed provided the opportunity for the audience to share their personal experiences and concerns regarding abuses, to express their thoughts on the role of the academe regarding the issue, and to encourage everyone to value life itself.

The seminar also coincided with the commemoration of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women (VAW), observed annually from November 25 to December 12. ■

The 4th & Penultimate Para La Musica: Nonpareil

Harold Perfecto R. Galang & Kelly B. Vergel de Dios

THEY usually pack them in at a great little club on Jupiter Street in Makati called Strumms but as a bigger group called the Glass Onion.

But on stormy November 9, a storm signal (number 1!) sent them indoors from Plaza Roma and they had to hastily set up at the lobby of Gusaling Emilio Ejercito at the PLM Campus, for a performance.

Nonpareil headlined by lead male vocalist Boy Mendez – the Mick Jagger of the Philippines, female vocalist Cathy Melendrez (daughter of tenor Jimmy Melendrez), Benjie Santos on drums, Cathy's brother Billy Melendrez on lead guitar (with mean improvisation skills), Celso Mangharon, bassist, Richard Reyes, keyboard, and – tada! – PLM President Ma. Leonora V. de Jesus alternately on keyboard, rhythm guitar, ukelele and flute – was the featured band that slayed covers of some of the most popular artists of the sixties and seventies.

The concert commenced with the PLM Executive Chorale singing the national anthem and "Fill the World With Love" from the 1969 American musical *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* as front act for Nonpareil.

New Vice President for Public Affairs Kelly Vergel de Dios in her opening remarks observed how music – through Para La Musica – brings us all together and creates a warm feeling of camaraderie (no matter what the weather).

Almost as if they had expected the night's free concert to be rained out and brought indoors – Nonpareil broke into Neil Sedaka's 1974 hit "Laughter in the Rain" with a lot of baby boomers in the audience singing along to "Ooh I hear laughter in the rain, walking hand in hand with the one I love, ooh how I love the rainy days and the happy way I feel inside."



They preceded that with another 1974 hit – this one by American rock/jazz band Steely Dan – "Don't Lose that Number" with the crowd stomping their feet along and yelling "Rikki, don't lose that number!" whenever the band got to the refrain.

The band went on to perform music they grew up along with including the Beatles' "Something in the Way She Moves," Chicago's "Colour My World," Elton John's "Daniel," Frank Jr. and Nancy Sinatra's "Something Stupid," Billy Joel's "She's Always a Woman," Petula Clark's "Downtown," the Rolling Stones' monster hit "Satisfaction" and ended the evening with Little Anthony and the Imperials' "Goin' Out of my Head" with some important guests joining the band onstage bringing the audience to its feet and applauding wildly that Nonpareil had to do an extended version of the song to give in to their clamor for an additional performance. The rain did not let up all throughout Nonpareil's performance but inside Gusaling Ejercito – the feeling was warm and fuzzy. The band truly lived up to its name and the music they made, unrivaled. ■

GNTV Learniversity at PLM: The Kapuso Network Advises Graduating Students How to Make It in the Real World *From page 4*

super Radyo DZBB host Nathaniel “Mang Tani” Cruz who spoke on the humanity of journalism or how to retain one’s humility, honesty, fairness, empathy and vulnerability in this day and age when technology plays an increasingly important impact on the practice.

All three shared personal experiences on the job when they realized their goal was no longer just to inform the public but to connect with them through stories and shared experiences. Mang Tani mentioned Yolanda when the people in the news themselves became the news...the reporters mentioned case studies whose tragic stories made it hard to distance themselves from their subjects.

Mark and Steve said the greatest reward from the job is not the money to be made from the career – but the deep satisfaction that comes from knowing you have helped people or got them help by telling their stories.

None of them imagined they would wind up doing the news or the weather: Mang Tani studied to be an agricultural engineer, Mark was a courtside sports reporter and Steve wanted to be a pilot or a flight attendant but as fate would have it, all three were sidelined to their true calling: Mang Tani had to take a yearlong in-house training at PAGASA to be a weather forecaster and Mark and Steve became newsmen.

It’s a vocation, they told their rapt audience, and once you find yourself in it, you have to take on the responsibility and accountability that come with it.

That means doing the job even when the going gets tough, working during typhoons and other disasters, outbreaks, holidays, pulling long hours, going without sleep when necessary but always mindful of one’s safety and that of one’s crew, wearing safety gear, following protocol and doing what’s right and fair.

For the afternoon session, host and panel moderator Tonipet asked a disembodied voice in the wings (that sounded very like a showbiz host’s whinny singsongy speech) to join him onstage and who else came traipsing in with a bit of a limp (she was nursing an injury) and in red flats but Kris – that is, someone impersonating her – comedian Kenneth “Divine Tetay” Ocampo!

T and T then introduced the third panel of speakers who spoke on how reel life can mirror real life through telenovelas, sitcoms, films. On the panel was writer/director/actor Cesar Cosme who is known for his work on Pepito Manaloto, Bubble Gang; author/screenwriter for film and television Suzette Doctolero (she is the creator of the genre-innovating telefantasya Encantadia and My Husband’s Lover); and head writer/brainstormer/two-time Palanca winner for Literature Michelle “Mike” Rivera (Pepito Manaloto, Art Angel, Party Pilipinas, Idol sa Kusina, Personalan).

PLM students were curious as to where they find inspiration or their muse and the answers were as colorful as their body of work: direktor Cosme says he spends long hours in the john or brainstorming with the cast of Bubble Gang, Mike Rivera asks the cast of Pepito Manaloto to come to work with a baon of stories



(LEFT) From left to right: Host moderator Tonipet Gaba, Cesar Cosme, Suzette Doctolero, Michelle Rivera and ‘Tetay’.



(RIGHT) PLM officers with GMA Marketing and Events team.

they overheard, scenes they witnessed that could be worked into the characters of the sitcom and end up on the script of the week’s episode while Suzette likes to explore subplots and arcs (My husband’s Lover is the very first gay-themed series in Philippine television and Encantadia is a Filipino fantasy franchise with its own constructed language called Enchanta with words like “Avisala” (greetings) and “Aisala Meist” (good-bye) – that another speaker in the 4th and last panel used to greet the PLM audience).

Cosme himself says he does not research from books (“I am not a big book reader”) or television or films...but that real life and real people are the canvas from which he draws his inspiration. He encourages the audience to be the same (“be original”). Doctolero likes to veer away from the common and ordinary – even a book she’s published Ako si Alex, Babae which Filipino novelist Lualhati Bautista (Dekada ’70, Bata Bata Pa’no Ka Ginawa? And ‘Gapo’) helped her write – is a tagalog romance novel in the style of the Mills & Boon paperbacks – dare to be different, seems to be her guiding principle. And Rivera – well, she won the Likhaan Awards: Drama for Toilet Confessions at the 22nd University of the Philippines National Writer’s Creative Writing Workshop – so she and direktor Cosme appear to have something in common in that they both like to find their inspiration in the loo.

And on the fourth panel of speakers were actress/singer and advocator Glaiza de Castro and singer/actor/host and model Christian Bautista to talk on how to create one’s own personal brand.

Like Joyce and Derrick in the morning, Glaiza and Christian said one should choose platforms and assign one separate and distinct interest to each so one’s followers know where to go to update themselves on their activities.

Glaiza has many interests including travel, her work as an actor (she is Sang’gre Pirena in the 2016 remake of Encantadia), her music and her advocacies (she was part of the UN Women’s Safe Cities Program to increase awareness and stop street harassment and sexual violence against women in public spaces; she is also the first ambassador of goodwill of the Philippine Chinese Charitable Association, Inc.) so she categorizes these interests into separate social networking sites.

Glaiza however says to be careful when one is using one’s celebrity to leverage online buzz because it can just as quickly backfire. Even something as innocent as a fan taking a selfie with you while you’re in a queue to buy concert tickets with the fan (who as it turns out was part of the group organizing the event) posting the photo online and netizens suspecting you of having used your celebrity to score tickets without queuing – can turn into something ugly with netizens heaping hate on you for the imagined wrong.

Although Glaiza admits the incident affected her badly she advised against allowing one’s self to be provoked online. “Choose your battles wisely,” she says, “Just let it go, the truth will out eventually.”

Christian apprises his followers where to find him on which dates, from the time he won a reality singing show up to the time he started modeling, did album launches and concert tours both here and in Southeast Asia, increasing his fan base as time went on.

Both advised PLM students in the audience to stay true to their craft and themselves, comport themselves well in public and on social media and to cultivate and keep on strengthening their brand so that fans and followers will continue to increase in numbers and remain loyal.

Aside from the speakers’ groufies with the audience after each panel discussion and open forum, selected members of the audience were called onstage to participate in impromptu contests and win prizes from Learniversity’s sponsors.

A “Help Rebuild Marawi” video was also shown to solicit donations for the survivors of the five-month-long crisis through the Kapuso Foundation and the heartwarming GMA Christmas Station ID was aired to remind everyone to spread the love.

Tonipet closed the event by saying: “GMA News TV Learniversity’s mission is not to tell you which career path to take but only to help open the gates so you can see far beyond the four corners of your Campus, with the hope that you will find your life’s purpose, your own personal mission, your own battle and your own journey to success.”

From the Kapuso Network to the Pamanatasan ng ‘mga Lubos na Matatalino’: Here’s to your Adoyaneva (future) and Amarteya (freedom)! Avisala Eshma (Thank you)! ■

Willie Nepomuceno: Celebrated Impressionist

Kelly B. Vergel de Dios



WHEN I met him up close about four hours before he was to go up on stage for Willie Nepomuceno: The Art of Impersonation – he looked the part of a French mime in stock images, in tight black jeans and a slimfit long-sleeved black top.

It was almost like he was about to do a live performance right there in the foyer of the Executive Building where we received him.

I have watched him several times before – including at least one Gridiron skit mounted by the National Press Club (having worked in the news media for the last 35 years) – but never at such close quarters and always in character, never just as Willie Nep.

So, which one is he really? Impressionist, impersonator or mimic?

He does not answer you directly in his two-hour performance of stories, performance, videos and song which the PLM hosted at the Justo Albert Auditorium on November 23.

But what I understood from his explanation of the distinction between those terms is that what he is – is a complete impressionist in that he is the complete package: not just someone who does voice mimicry of famous people, exaggerates their accents, or copies their dress or singing style (although he admits he began there but started “diversifying” when he got bored with what he thought everybody else was doing) – he also does voice, body movements, physical looks and mannerisms.

He started developing his art of impersonation as a young boy when his parents (both inclined to the arts) would make him perform for relatives by imitating a funny aunt or an eccentric uncle.

He always got applause for these performances and he found he liked the sound of an appreciative audience.

So gradually he started honing the art – adding bits and pieces here and there as he grew up. He would observe people and would imitate even sounds (a siren, for instance) and musical instruments. As a college student in UP-Diliman, he would jolt rowdy classmates to attention by

mimicking his teachers. He was an activist, too, and did street theater, political satire, skits and speeches that ridiculed or poked fun at the establishment, something that the activist in the artist would carry with him throughout the years.

Willie Nep explains it thus: my audience laughed when I poked fun at political officials, at the establishment because I am able to verbalize resentments they might have and get away with it. It’s a form of release for them.

And for Willie, it was a chance to pursue his advocacy on the sly, to serve as the means for those most vulnerable in society to have their voice heard on issues that are important to them, safeguard their rights in a way that their targets can’t really be piqued about else they be labeled a bad sport or pikon. More importantly, it made the targets of his ribbing think and change their ways or at least tone it down or be more disimulado about it.

Willie Nep perfected his art on the job by going as far as to dig into the background of characters he impersonates, finding out why comedian Dolphy walked with a stoop, for instance, (he was asthmatic) or why the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos put on a different persona depending on the kind of crowd he was addressing. He studied what made them tick or what ticked them off. This way he is able to play “footsie” with or dance around the subjects of his skits and acts without being thrown into jail or roughed up.

He became so good at it that, once, while rushing to a gig at a television station and entering the premises already in full make-up and costume, he would alternately have the gate guards and company officers saluting him (when he came in as General Fidel Ramos) and shaking his hand and addressing him as Mr. President (when he came in as President Estrada at a function where the real president was also a guest!)

He is a myna bird. A parrot. A complete performer.

So a millennial might well ask him: ‘how to be you, sir?’ and Willie Nep’s answer: start with what you already have and make those work for you.

For Willie, he started with his looks – ‘chinito na ako, so ang ginaya ko yung mga medyo kahawig ko’ – and that included a slew of presidents (owing to his activist and political-satire beginnings): Ferdinand Marcos, Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada, Noynoy Aquino and more recently, Rodrigo Duterte.

Or, ‘kaboses niya’ – Frank Sinatra, Paul Anka, Stevie Wonder, Sammy Davis, Jr., Tony Bennett (okay, him millennials probably only remember now as having cut an album with Lady Gaga or someone who did duets with the likes of John Mayer, the late Amy Winehouse, Sheryl Crow, Josh Groban, Mariah Carey but, hey, there were enough of us baby boomers in the audience and most of the audience still recognized Dolphy and in the video – Hitler, Fidel Castro, Muhammad Ali, Saddam Hussein, Gringo Honasan, Nur Misuari, German Moreno, Manny Pacquiao, Panfilo Lacson...)

He was so good at his art form that Marcos – during his term – would invite him to rallies to draw the crowds, singer Darius Razon – whose hit at the time he would do in sketches – actually waited for him backstage one time to give him his new recording to include in his act!

He liked to say he was drawn to the arts by a father who loved to dance and a mother who played the piano. Willie himself had dreams of becoming an actor (he acted in at least three movies between 1974 and 2013) or a singer (he could not sing in his own voice for long because he kept slipping into character) so none of those careers really took off.

While in college, he also took the odd summer job or two working as an illustrator or either wrote or edited textbooks (he was at one juncture, managing editor of the Philippine Collegian) but he was at his happiest when playing to a crowd and turning around to slip on a half mask, wig or moustache and facing an audience with someone else’s voice, someone else’s face.

It was almost as if he had multiple personality disorder.

But for those who want to delve into the art form for a living, the Maestro only had a handful of advice to impart: start with what you have, be a keen observer, be true to your art and enjoy what you’re doing otherwise, it becomes a job. just a chore. (A recurring tip from most of PLM’s guest speakers).

Already, his pretty daughter Frida (who was coordinating her dad’s videos and orchestrating his performance from the sidelines at the Justo Albert Hall) does a pretty impressive Kris Aquino and will most likely evolve to be as versatile as her father.

Then it struck me as Willie Nep wound up his act – his first in a year and a half after an almost fatal stroke (he apologized for a bit of a slur in his speech and a slight weakness in his gait, explaining that he was still in therapy) – it wasn’t a street mime in Paris that he reminded me of that day – it was another of his characters: the legendary martial artist Bruce Lee.

A stroke might have sidelined this impressionist for more than a year, but the ‘dragon’ in him (a symbol of courage and strength) has awoken.

And government officials with skeletons in their closet better take cover because the dragon is in the wings and is about to make another entrance. ■

Happy Birthday!

NOVEMBER 19



WILFREDO E. CABRAL
Ex-Officio Member, Board of Regents

NOVEMBER 03

JOANNA V. FRANQUELLI
Consultant, OVPPA

NOVEMBER 18

SANTIAGO G. YANGCO
Dentist IV, UHS

NOVEMBER 20

RITA LOURDES SOCORRO G. VILLADOLID
Executive Assistant, OVPA

NOVEMBER 24

DOLORES J. BALUYOT
Management and Audit Analyst IV

Angeline D. Alabastro, Dean, College of Medicine

Kelly Vergel De Dios

ANGELINE Alabastro of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila's College of Medicine brings to mind a Norah Jones song:

*Feeling tired
By the fire
The Long day is over*

*The wind is gone
Asleep at dawn
The embers burn on*

*With no reprise
The sun will rise
The long day is over*

Something about the song - perhaps its haiku-like conciseness - somehow sums up the good doctor's personality. I see her petite figure walking down the covered walk of the University with the purposefulness of someone on a mission.

She may be soft-spoken and retired but the lady is far from 'retiring' or diffident.

In fact, she has big plans for the College of Medicine. She wants to see it in what she calls "research mode" with an accredited Ethics Board, a Level II PAASCU accreditation and with international linkages to Asian Universities.

She dares to go as far as to aspire for ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance in terms of the PLM's mission, vision and objectives.

"We also want to upgrade and update our facilities no matter how limited our space is," she emphasizes and qualifies that with "although it is a dream come true to have a bigger building particularly on hospital grounds."

Dr. Angie must have been born with a tongue depressor in her mouth and a stethoscope wrapped around her neck because she's married to a doctor (Dr. Victor Alabastro who's with the De La Salle Health Sciences Institute), has a daughter studying medicine and reads medical books even when she's not working and is supposed to be relaxing.

And like Norah Jones' The Long Day is Over, she does keep long hours - coming to work as early as seven in the morning and not knocking off until late afternoon.

But you won't see the fatigue on her face nor the droop to her shoulders.

Instead you'll see the wisdom of the years in her "unbearable lightness of being" as she meditates with some quiet music (instrumental, no rap) or putters around her kitchen cooking Chinese or whipping up Italian pasta.

Like Milan Kundera in his novel, she appears to adhere to the adage that we should not think of life as heavy or light - out to just enjoy the pleasures it affords.

For Dr. Alabastro, it's achieving work-life balance. Raising two daughters with Dr. Victor. Taking time to go out with friends who are not in the medical profession to understand the world from other points of view, finding comfort in prayer.

Her colleagues describe her as all that is



brave, strong and true.

She carries her educational background like a badge of honor: a Master's degree in Government Management ESP from PLM, a Doctorate in Medicine from the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery and a Bachelor of Science General from the UST College of Science.

She undertook her residency in Pediatrics at the UE Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center, community exposure in La Union and Ilocos Norte and post-graduate internship at the AFP Medical Center.

She has been with the University for thirty years, starting out as an instructor in 1987 then Chair of its Department of Pediatrics and working herself up to Assistant Dean (2012-2014) then Dean (from 2015 up to the present).

Concurrently, she's also on the faculty of the PLM College of Medicine (Pediatrics, Pharmacology and Therapeutics).

And, boy, is CM going places on her watch. Not only is the College one of the best-looking on Campus but there are plans to improve its wet lab and have an animal cage built as well as acquire new equipment and gear. Plans that are going into action next year.

It was a wise man who said "the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others" but Dean Alabastro didn't always plan on becoming a doctor as I initially thought.

In fact, if she had her way, she'd have preferred taking up foreign service. But her parents wanted her to go into medicine and she had enrolled in a pre-med course. After being accepted into the faculty of Medicine and Surgery, it seemed only logical to proceed where fate was leading her.

Going into the program with her eyes open, she began to develop a healthy respect for Filipino doctors. She admired their resilience, compassion and dedication to their work.

In the rural areas with meager facilities to treat their patients, Filipino doctors develop their "clinical eye" or keen sense of clinical observation where the identification of key pieces of data and interpreting

their significance and meaning is so crucial in medical decision making. This to Dr. Alabastro is their edge against their Western counterparts.

Many areas in the Philippines are not equipped with enough resources making it difficult for the adequate delivery of health care services. That is why she hopes to see a better distribution of doctors in these places and significant improvements in our health care system.

So to new doctors, including those she has trained at the University, her advice is: "Be competent in whatever field of Medicine you choose to practice and continue to be updated. Be prudent and ethical in your decisions. Be compassionate to all your patients and always remember that all life comes from God and so God alone has the right to take it."

The important thing is never to stop questioning and learning - and seeing Dr. Angie poring over her medical books, defending the College of Medicine's budget and steering the CM's faculty to make sure PLM's medical students have the best training they can possibly give them even if it means taking on that extra load gratis just so the students don't lack for anything - you believe her and find yourself rooting for her and her lean but formidable staff.

Yup, the doctor is definitely in - and for the whole nine yards. ■

New At The U



- 11 at 11: Soft opening of eleven concessionaires at the old property office this month (Waffle Time, Master

Siomai, Fruit Haven, Chow To Go, Varda Enterprise (Burgers & Fries), Barbara's, M. Day Heavenly Food Delight, Diego's Fastfood, Oriondo's Eatery, Mares (Mami & Pares) + 1 more franchisee) on December 9/10 or 11 with a lounge at the mezzanine.



- The installation of 2 "Sugod, Manila!" Christmas lanterns from City Hall at the entrance of the main building.



- Musically-inclined students and faculty of the PLM stage a street performance (basking) every Monday at the main lobby of the University.