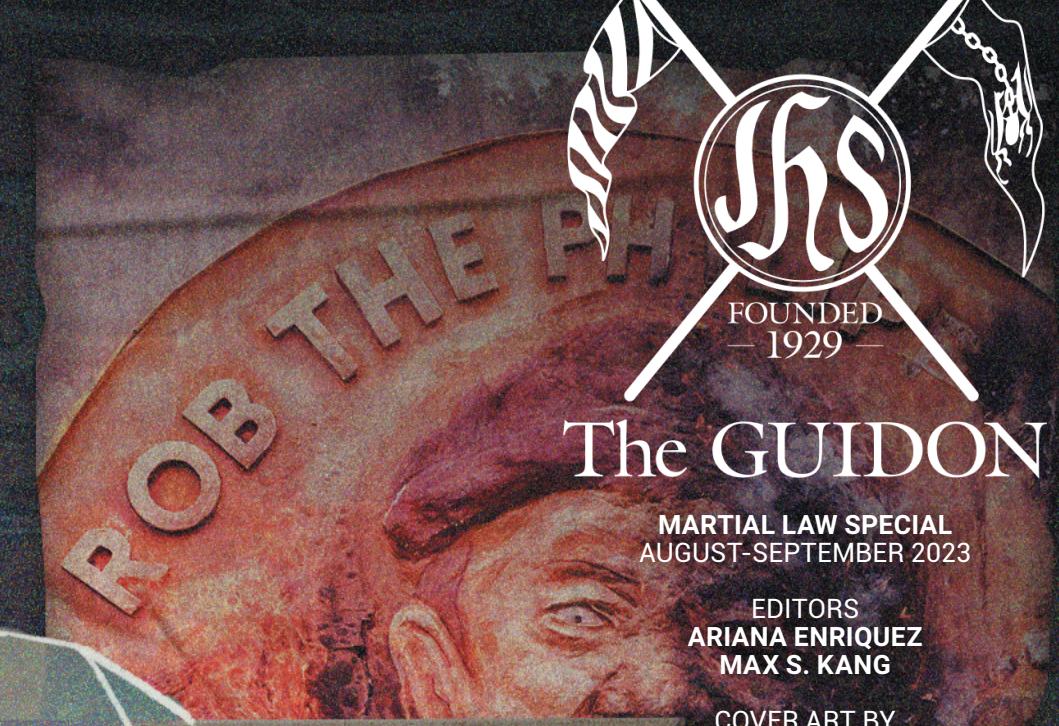


 JHSFOUNDED  
— 1929 —

# The GUIDON

MARTIAL LAW SPECIAL  
AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2023EDITORS  
ARIANA ENRIQUEZ  
MAX S. KANGCOVER ART BY  
LIANA FERNANDO  
BRYCE GARRETT G. TAMAYOLAYOUT ARTIST  
ZANTI ALFONZO C. GAYARES



# For name's sake: The Marcos legacy of press attacks

*Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s administration instigated a wave of attacks on the media at an unprecedented level in Philippine history. As his son takes his seat of power, concern arises surrounding the state of journalism and the future of the media.*

BY KATRINA B. ANTONIO AND SOHAILA SOMERA  
GRAPHIC BY JULIA ISABELLE YABUT

**IN HIS** 2022 presidential campaign, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. claimed to be a victim of targeted fake news. Since assuming the presidency, he has repeatedly assured the public that he would uphold freedom of speech and the press, in contrast to his predecessor who openly threatened it.

However, fear among various sectoral groups persists due to Marcos Jr.'s silence on attacks against the free press since the beginning of his term. Further fueling this fear is the history of his father and namesake, the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr., who imprisoned critics, journalists, and activists during his regime.

#### THE LEGACY OF SILENCE AND SUPPRESSION

On September 21, 1972, Marcos Sr. signed Proclamation No. 1081 to establish Martial Law due to "lawless elements" and "social disorder" allegedly perpetrated by communist-front organizations, among others. Within a week, he issued Letter of Instruction No. 1 authorizing the military to take over privately owned mass media outlets accused of subversion and involvement with the Communist Movement.

"[Political propaganda regarding the Marcoses] wasn't just prevalent, it was the only thing that existed [during] Martial Law," Senior Desk Editor for Rappler Chito de la Vega shares.

At the time, the public received information only through news outlets that belonged to Marcos cronies. Such media bodies circulated propagandist articles that projected positive images of the New Society by concealing the regime's shortcomings on its promises of equality, justice, and peace.

Journalists had little freedom with their writing, dealing with controlling editors and threats of losing their jobs. de la Vega began his career in journalism in 1984, working for the Manila Evening Post—a small broadsheet owned by subordinates of the Marcos family. "I remember there were [other journalists] working for Marcos newspapers and yet lost their jobs. I could not afford to lose my job, so I had to toe the line," de la Vega admits.

Amid the media takeover of Marcos cronies, a collective of small opposition newspapers emerged to form the "mosquito press." Though the mosquito press constantly faced threats of office shutdowns and detainment from the government, they remained steadfast in writing about the atrocities that transpired under Marcos Sr.'s regime until the late dictator was ousted in 1986.

After most Marcos cronies fled, the free press re-established its foothold in Philippine society. de la Vega applied to the Philippine Daily Inquirer, where he worked for 32 years before shifting to Rappler in 2017.

Today, concerns over political personalities allied with the Marcos family persist. The president's cousin House Speaker Martin Romualdez owns Prime Media Holdings, a Philippines-based holding company with investments in the entertainment industry. Romualdez's sister-in-law Alexandra "Sandy" Prieto is the current chief executive officer of the mass media conglomerate Inquirer Group of Companies. The Romualdez family also owns the Journal Group of Publications and national broadsheet Manila Standard.

Meanwhile, the plight of media workers under Marcos Jr.'s administration reveals that it differs little from that of its predecessor. The Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility reported 75 attacks on media personalities from June 30, 2022 to April 30, 2023, a statistic that "exceeds the number of attacks/threats in any one year during the term of Duterte." Moreover, red-tagging still remains an intimidation tactic against the media, with 17 cases already recorded in the same time period.

#### BREAKING THE ILLUSION

The existence of an organized network of pro-Marcos troll farms that generate inorganic engagement on pro-administration propaganda has been well-documented. This tactic was the cornerstone of Marcos Jr.'s election campaign and continues to boost the image of his presidency.

"Every day, we're not bombarded with imagery [that] Marcos is a hero. [However], slowly but surely, they're removing the meaning from the things that we take for granted as fact," Political Science Department Associate Chair Beatriz Beato shares.

As an editor in Marcos Jr.'s administration, de la Vega has likewise noticed the differences between the father's and son's treatment of the press. "[Marcos] Sr. is more repressive. [Marcos] Jr. uses more subtle things, I think, because of the social media tools available to him," he shares, in a mix of English and Filipino.

Moreover, Beato spotlights gaps in Martial Law education as a factor that made Marcos Jr. media tactics successful. She notes that these lessons highlight infrastructure projects but omit the Philippines' economic hardships during

the time; these gaps may then serve as foundations of pro-Marcos propaganda.

To combat this, de la Vega and other Rappler journalists have taken an active role in unearthing the truth about the Marcoses by producing several investigative pieces about their networks of disinformation. However, these are often bombarded with comments from trolls.

"[These comments] are casting doubt, not only on the information, but on the sender," de la Vega points out. Consequently, administration-critical pieces have lost credibility among Filipinos.

The emergence of political vlogs has only encouraged mistrust in formal news outlets. Despite being an informal source of information, political vlogs have gained popularity among Filipino citizens, which Beato believes is due to their accessibility and unique ability to capture the daily realities of the common Filipino.

With hyper-partisan vloggers boasting millions of views and yielding much sway over political discourse, the Palace has prioritized vloggers' accreditation in Malacañang coverage.

Such a decision has raised concerns about the future of journalism. "If you focus too much on vloggers, what happens to the role of the media not just as a reporter, but also as a watchdog? [...] Journalists and media practitioners have the specific role also of keeping the government in check," Beato says.

Despite taking on starkly different attitudes towards the media, Marcos Jr. and Marcos Sr. share the same goal—to leave a well-admired and untarnished legacy for the Marcoses.

#### BENEATH THE FACADE

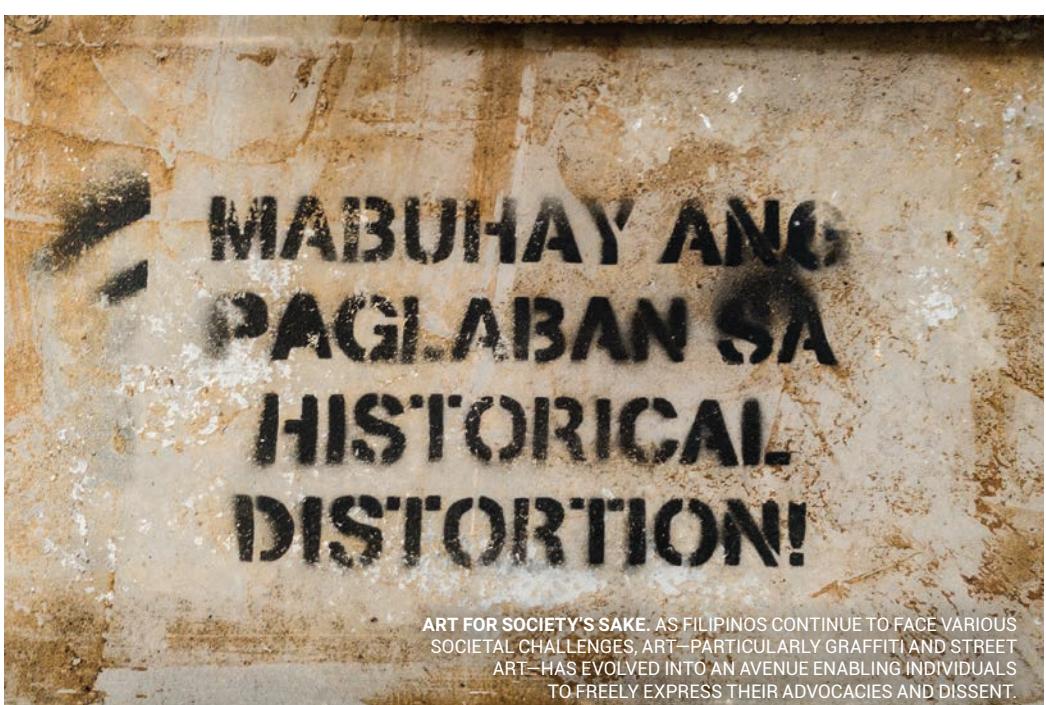
A year into the Marcos Jr. presidency, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism tagged the president's relationship with the press as amiable, yet the disconnect between the president's words and actions concerning press freedom remains salient.

One such case is of an alternative news website *Bulatlat*, which the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) issued a block order against in October 2022. In pursuance of a June 2022 NTC memorandum, the block order instructed Internet service providers to block websites of alternative media outlets such as *Bulatlat* and *Pinoy Weekly* for supposed affiliations with communist rebels.

"[Marcos Jr.'s tactics] are a little more subtle. Instead of outright banning people, they use tactics such as discrediting subtly [the] progressive smaller publications," Beato emphasizes.

However, while the former dictator faced insurmountable resistance towards the end of his term, his son assumed the presidency with support from millions of Filipinos. This backing helps strengthen Marcos Jr.'s attempt at rehabilitating a legacy muddled with press freedom restrictions and human rights violations.

As the nation witnesses these attempts in carrying out a decades-old goal, Filipinos are tasked to strengthen the counter-narratives that can upend the oppression characterizing the legacy of the Marcoses. Filipinos have a choice to be on the side of history that upholds genuine truth and justice—or the one that buries it.



# To be a (public) work of art: Graffiti and vandalism

Graffiti is a powerful tool for voicing dissent in public spaces—but when the lines between “artist” and “vandal” grow blurry, debates emerge about its moral ramifications.

BY GABBY ROSALES AND GABRIELLE CHRISTINA A. CORTES  
PHOTOS BY MIKYLA REYES

**ZIP THROUGH** EDSA’s busy roads and you will catch vibrantly colored murals celebrating women empowerment—a visual feast for the 7:00 AM rush hour. Turn to a narrow eskinita and you will spot the words “NEVER AGAIN” spray-painted in rushed handwriting.

These forms of street art or graffiti are characteristic of a modern city. Such kinds of art in these public, urbanized spheres do not adhere to a single technique, style, or method, which can be attributed to the socioeconomic diversity inherent to large cities.

## DIFFERENT STROKES

To categorize graffiti as belonging to high or low art is not too simple. Based on his undergraduate Fine Arts thesis on the practice of graffiti, Antares Bartolome argues that these labels are relative to one’s socioeconomic status.

“The dynamic of high and low art relies on the forces at play within the struggle for power. The term ‘art,’ when you attach it to something, already carries the connotation that it is of value and [thus] worth pursuing. [...] Those different assertions of how it is defined inform that struggle,” he explains.

From the perspective of a practitioner, street artist Archie Oclos espouses similar sentiments on the privilege inherent to these labels. He posits that the usual evaluation of high and low art is dependent on one’s education status or the lack thereof.

Institutions in power control what art is “good” and palatable. The inherent form and distribution of graffiti constructs an unruly and dirty image often associated with resistance. Graffiti, for instance, may encroach on private property—a valuable asset in a capitalist society—further contributing to its bastardized reputation.

As evidence of this, “street art” and “graffiti”—though existing on the same plane—both carry different connotations. The former is applied to artists who have access to legitimate spaces, but if one’s art fails to afford this privilege, their work is demoted to “graffiti” or even “vandalism.”

Moreover, Oclos challenges the status quo of who should define art. “Who are we to say *kung ang* high art *lang ang tanggap na* art, or *ang low art ay ‘di tanggap na* art (Who are we to say that high art is the only acceptable art, or

that low art is not acceptable)?” he asks.

## THE ARTIST AS A PROTESTER

While conventional art often finds itself confined within the borders of galleries and elite circles, graffiti is the unfiltered expression of the marginalized. This artistic rebellion finds resonance in history when the early Marcos regime weaponized art to beautify the Philippines and hide the horrific injustices under the shadow of extravagance. As Bartolome explains, they strategically championed formalist art because of its detachment from the visible, political world.

The Marcoses did not only collect art—they were determined to make the Philippines an art piece itself through grand edifices fostering exclusivity. Imelda Marcos’s fixation on beauty led her to deem the squatters across the Manila International Airport (renamed Ninoy Aquino International Airport) an “eyesore,” ordering that their homes be demolished to hide the poverty from freshly landed tourists.

With censorship at an all-time high and the press constantly monitored, street art became a manifestation of society’s struggles and cries. “By large, street art is born out of a need for another platform to express yourself,” Bartolome explains.

Amid the Marcoses’ efforts in silencing the masses, the Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista at Arkitekto ’71 (NPAA ’71)

stood as one of the pioneering organizations of militant artists from diverse fine arts colleges. The dangers of operating in secret during the Marcos regime did not stop them from finding an outlet for political protest through street art.

In today’s political climate, street art persists as a platform for untold and undocumented struggles.

Having worked with indigenous peoples, Oclos asserts that these different stories must be told. “*Yung kuwentong lokal at katutubo, laging nakukuwento sa pamaraan [ng] turismo. Yung totoo, hindi naman ganyan ang kalagayan ng taong ‘yun* (The local stories of the Filipino people are always narrated through the lens of tourism. The truth is, the situation is not really as picturesque as that),”

Oclos expresses.

However, street artists continue to battle repression from state forces. In 2019, policemen dressed in civilian clothing manhandled, beat up, and arrested four members of youth organization Panday Sining for “vandalism.” These artists had painted the Lagusnilad Underpass of Manila with the words “*Digmang bayan sagot sa* martial law - PS” (Revolution is the answer to martial law - PS) and “*Atin ang Pinas! US-China layas! - PS*” (The Philippines is ours! US-China leave! - PS) in red. This instance highlights the government’s unapologetic dismissal of street art in lieu of maintaining a clean and beautiful public space.

Bartolome and Oclos state that even if the messages of street art remain relevant, it will be perceived as illegal when done on government spaces or private property. However, instead of fixating on its criminality, they put emphasis on understanding why such practices are coming to light. “Vandals are a reflection of a failed society,” Oclos says.

## TAKING ART TO THE STREET

Art cannot exist independently of its socio-political ecology. As a product of its time and place, art and its value are often tied to the broader circumstances that shape its creation. In the battlefield for truth and justice, street art reflective of the gritty realities strives to upend the Marcoses’ narrative of a “beautiful” Philippines.

With the second year of the Marcos-Duterte tandem, the urgency for protest has reached its zenith, fueled by the surge of historical revision and political corruption. “We have to utilize everything, from graffiti to publishing, to everything while we have it. As soon as something pops up and they clamp on it, we have to find another way,” Bartolome says.

Despite the backlash and criminalization it faces, street art undeniably democratizes physical spaces. In these communal sites, people can freely express their anger and disillusionment against the government that has failed them time and time again. Street art revolutionizes society not just by challenging our evaluation of high versus low art, but also by reclaiming the streets and bringing it closer to the public—with whom it truly belongs.

# Invested interests, ‘sovereign’ fund

BY FELICITY C. SANTOS AND RONNEL BERMAS  
GRAPHIC BY KIANA PATRICIA REFUERZO

**IN AN** attempt to salvage the Philippine economy, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed Republic Act No. 11954 or the Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF) Act. Under RA 11954, the administration will use the income from investments to support its economic goals via financial instruments, joint ventures, and high-impact infrastructure projects. Among other goals, the creation of the MIF is projected to grow national wealth, create jobs, and achieve food security.

However, how this will materialize still remains unclear as the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the MIF have yet to be passed as of writing. As such, the positive outcomes speculated to arise from the MIF come alongside equally detrimental consequences.

#### SHORT-CHANGED

In previous iterations of the MIF, various individuals raised concerns regarding its provisions pointing to governance and sources of capital money. Despite this, the administration's economic managers have asserted that the MIF is a vehicle for economic growth through its ability to fund profitable socio-economic projects. In contrast, scholars from the Ateneo School of Government and the School of Social Sciences have found that other alternatives such as public-private partnership agreements are sufficient to achieve the MIF's desired objectives.

Moreover, the benefits to be reaped from the MIF pale in comparison to the sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) of other countries. Australian National University Research Fellow Emerson Sanchez, PhD cited that SWFs are usually funded by profits from natural resources such as petroleum and minerals or citizens' pensions funds managed as SWF. An example is



the Alaska Permanent Fund (APF), which issues a regular payout to its constituents.

"In both cases, the ownership of the SWF belongs to the people and so the return of investment is directed to the citizens," Sanchez emphasized.

Unlike the APF, the MIF will borrow from institutions, mainly the two government banks—the Landbank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines—and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. As the SWF is not sourced from the citizenry, the return on investment (ROI) is not directly remitted to them either.

Sanchez explained that this may be an issue if the MIF fails—whether through incompetence or corruption—since the burden would fall on the Filipino to pay it back through taxes. "[There is] too much risk for citizens and too little to gain for them," Sanchez added.

Apart from the issue of funding and ROI, the implementation of the MIF is an area of concern as well. Sanchez pointed out that some scholars view the SWF as a possible instrument for authoritarian governments to cling to power.

The governance of the MIF has come under question, too—the law designates the Finance Secretary as the chairperson of the Maharlika Investment Corporation, which is the body that will manage the MIF. In Sanchez's view, this gives rise to a probable conflict of interest as the Finance Secretary holds influence in institutions that fund the MIF, such as the Landbank of the Philippines. Moreover, the chairperson could potentially be beholden to the president as a political appointee.

#### PERSONAL STAKES

Even with amendments, civic and migrant groups have

warned that the MIF framework is not free of loopholes ripe for exploitation. For instance, the law stipulates that three out of the nine members of the Board of Directors must come from the private sector in an independent capacity. According to Political Science Assistant Professor Arjan Aguirre, this stipulation is problematic as these members are not obligated to undergo transparency measures such as filing their Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth (SALN).

"You can expect that [public officials] will adhere to the practices and ethics of being a public servant. However, for the private sector, this is not the case," Aguirre remarked.

Furthermore, Aguirre mentioned that the oversight committee within the legislative body could politicize how the MIF will be carried out. Given that the majority of the members in Congress are aligned with

the administration, decisions regarding MIF's implementation are more likely to be friendly to partisan interests.

Overall, Aguirre opined that the government "has not been honest enough" about the susceptibility of the MIF to vested interests. He stressed that the media, the academe, and civil society groups must inform the public of the consequences that may possibly arise from the MIF's complexity.

"The challenge there is to continue to be vigilant; people in power will be using the taxpayers' money, and it will be up to their discretion how and where they wish to use it," Aguirre said.

#### COUNTERBALANCE

In keeping up with the stakes raised, further provisions ensuring transparency and accountability on the government's part can be put in place to effectively monitor MIF's implementation. Although former president

Rodrigo Duterte signed an executive order obligating officials to disclose their SALNs in 2016, Aguirre finds it lacking as it is only a directive. In the case of transactions carried out with the MIF, such information would have to be requested.

On the other hand, a Freedom of Information (FOI) law would prescriptively mandate public officials to publish information, according to Aguirre. This would ensure proper management of the MIF and penalize erring officials. Additionally, an open government policy would ensure the proper archiving of information.

"This will be important for the MIF because we will be using public money here; we don't have excess funds these days. Hopefully, there's a way where even the information they release has a system in place," he said.

For that reason, empowering stakeholders gains paramount importance as it would enable the citizenry to actively monitor the MIF's financial reports, vigilantly counterbalancing the potential misuse of funds. However, while concerns about the MIF's lack of transparency continue to abound, the burden of remedying these—along with responsibility for the consequences in the event of failure to do so—ultimately still remains with its policymakers.

“

**The challenge there is to continue to be vigilant; people in power will be using the taxpayers' money, and it will be up to their discretion how and where they wish to use it.**

**[There is] too much risk for citizens and too little to gain for them.**

EMERSON M. SANCHEZ, PhD  
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
CRAWFORD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH FELLOW

ARJAN AGUIRRE  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE



THE OFFICIAL STUDENT PUBLICATION OF THE ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY

STAND WITH THE TRUTH



**MOVING FORWARD.** The University's transition to primarily onsite classes aims to enhance learning and quality of life through digital innovations.

PHOTO BY DARYL D. SY  
GRAPHIC BY FRANC VICTENTE

# Digitally-supported Ateneo returns to primary onsite set-up

BY ENZO BELLO AND DERRECK DE LEON

**DIGITAL IMPROVEMENTS** to learning and quality of life are expected to be implemented during the first semester of AY 2023-2024. Among those mainly outlined are the integration of RFID chips in centralized ID cards and digitalization of student processes such as payments.

First discussed in last February's budget hearing, these plans have notably begun to see implementation with recent shifts to digital modes of payment. Focusing on digitalization, Vice President for Higher Education Maria Luz Vilches, PhD explained how the move is part of making the Ateneo's systems more efficient and convenient.

"The changes related to the digitization of the ID system and other systems [are] a product of a thorough review, and we monitor the effects of such changes so that we can modify or develop it further," Vilches said.

## DIGITAL SERVICES IN PLACE

In consideration with existing systems, the University will continue to use Canvas to supplement onsite classes. Vilches expounded that it will be kept to allow for independent study and to assist the flow of face-to-face learning modalities.

Meanwhile, the Ateneo Integrated Student Information Systems (AISIS) is currently undergoing improvements led by the Office of the Vice President for Digital Information and Technology Services (OVP-DITS).

Vilches elaborated that the OVP-DITS is taking its time to finish working on AISIS, as they have to carefully go through the different features and functionalities to make sure the system comprehensively addresses student needs.

Additionally, the OVP-DITS has already started to put other plans in motion. Among these includes the January 2024 deactivation of school emails under the current OBF subdomain in favor of a "consolidated" license linked under Ateneo's main domain—ateneo.edu.

With regards to other pertinent services being offered, Student Concerns Head Michael Jacinto Mallillin shared that the Office for the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (OADSA) has automated data collection for student processes such as ID application forms, minor violation databases, and other similar procedures.

"Everything is already automated in terms of collecting data. [...] All of these [online forms] have QR codes. [...] We have gone paperless in terms of our forms, so everything is done digitally," Mallillin stated.

Moreover, he said that the aforementioned digital integrations are already in implementation this school year, especially seen with the issuance of temporary digital IDs due to delays in the processing of new IDs.

## THE NEW ATENEO ID

Expounding on these delays, Mallillin said that the change in its central issuance from the OADSA to the Campus Safety and Mobility Office (CSMO) is taking time. However, in the long term, the move hopes to streamline and centralize key student services with regard to safety, health, security, and access to campus facilities.

The first instances of this streamlining can already be seen with the Rizal Library's facilities, which integrates and allows students from all Higher Education Cluster schools to access resources in the Katipunan, Rockwell, and Ortigas campuses through their valid IDs.

To implement a more durable and secure ID card, Mallillin described the new design as "sparse"—only featuring the student's ID number, photo, full name, barcode, and the newly-added RFID chip. He further explained that this design will be uniform to all units in the basic and higher education clusters.

Elaborating on the RFID chip, Mallillin said that it is designed to facilitate the validation of student campus access through the use of a tapping mechanism in key University entry points in campus buildings and closed-off areas.

Aside from its security features, the chip also includes an e-wallet powered by Maya, an online payment account. Mallillin confirms that when it is linked

to an existing digital wallet, it can be used for daily transactions both within and outside Ateneo.

In terms of design, the ID card will now be vertically oriented and color-coded to distinguish the wearer's school unit. Furthermore, to verify a student's enrollment status, the semestral validation stickers will be retained.

Despite these new quality-of-life-oriented features, Mallillin disclosed that they may only be implemented by the next academic year.

"We're asking for everybody's patience *kasi baka magkaroon pa ng kaunting* (because there may be some) delays in production, and the features will not be fully activated altogether," he explained. "This is a new system, and CSMO keeps reminding us that it will take a few years for it to be fairly ubiquitous."

## A DIGITAL UNIVERSITY

Further expounding on OADSA's future plans, Mallillin shared that they plan to further digitize other processes such as student surveys and request forms.

Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Rene Salvador San Andres added that they also plan to integrate these developments into their office's conduct of the sixth iteration of the Ateneo College Survey (TACS), a review of the current state of the Ateneo student body expected to happen in February 2024.

**"**

**The integration process is not an easy one. It needs listening to people's needs, appreciating strengths, awareness of resistance and sensitivities, understanding contexts, sharing stories in view of opening doors for collaborative engagements.**

MARIA LUZ C. VILCHES, PHD  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Reflecting on these plans, San Andres believes that these changes are Ateneo's initiatives to join the wave of the future. "If you look at our overall environment, this [digitalization] is actually the way things are going for much of the world," he reasoned.

Similarly, Vilches revealed the challenges of this process, especially in its first year of implementation. "[The integration process] needs listening to people's needs, appreciating strengths, awareness

of resistance and sensitivities, understanding contexts, [and] sharing stories in view of opening doors for collaborative engagements," she said.

Nevertheless, she remains hopeful about where the University is heading. As the new academic year starts, Vilches said that all these plans are part of a continuing development of the Ateneo community's culture in the Ignatian tradition. For her, the Ateneo may be diverse, but it remains united in its shared mission of education.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Follow us on Instagram @theguidon

Like us on Facebook facebook.com/TheGUIDON

Follow us on Twitter @TheGUIDON

## OPINION

**One kilometer per hour.** Navigating through the bustling Katipunan Avenue is an unending automotive labyrinth. Well-known for its spirited 'One Big Fight' chants, Ateneo has now transformed into 'One Big Parking Lot'—a seemingly endless car show.

## SPORTS

**Defending the nest.** Throughout the years, towering figures such as Ange Kouame, Jarvey Gayoso, and Jia Morado-De Guzman have stood as a testament to the Ateneo's steadfast culture in nurturing exceptional talent across diverse sporting disciplines.

## BEYOND LOYOLA

**A sea of food.** Providing livelihoods for a large share of the population, the Philippines' waters remain of vital importance. The fisheries sector alone accounts for 1.6 million Filipino jobs and 1.3% of the Philippines' Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

## FEATURES

**Come hell or high water: Storm-braving rescuers.** In a country that puts disaster risk reduction and management on the back burner, rescue operation teams serve as the frontliners, valiantly saving lives even at the expense of their own.

## INQUIRY

**Ateneo student activism through the years.** Situating itself in the larger Philippine society, the Ateneo has been a cradle of student activists who stood at the forefront of the national struggle for liberation and social justice.

# Ateneo community launches active mobility initiatives to address traffic concerns

BY AZRA CAGSAWA AND ANA RUFU PADUA

**TO EASE** the persistent traffic within the campus and along Katipunan Avenue, the administration and student-led advocate groups plan to establish and build upon initiatives geared towards active mobility.

In particular, the Sanggunian established the Task Force on Mobility last February, delegated to better understand the Ateneo community's insights regarding traffic and to encourage active mobility through lessening car-centric practices.

Similarly, Mobility March point person Maxine Cuartero shared that their initiatives held during last year's Talakayang

Alay sa Bayan (TALAB) will be returning as a flagship project for the upcoming student active mobility advocate group Blue Mobility (BlueMob).

On the administration's end, last February's budget hearing revealed the Ateneo's intent to promote active mobility within campus through the increase of e-jeeps and the revival of express lanes.

#### PURSUING MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Since last year's return to onsite classes, students have been raising concerns about traffic congestion, which they

attributed to the volume of vehicles in the campus daily. Moreover, this gridlock was also cited as a struggle for cyclists and pedestrians.

In an effort to alleviate heavy traffic, the Campus Safety and Mobility Office (CSMO) has updated the traffic scheme after opening Gates 3.1 and 3.2 last April 24. Along with these changes, CSMO also installed larger wayfinding signages to help drivers locate their destinations with ease.

However, Sanggunian President Bernice Mendoza recognized that while these new gates have granted easier entry into campus, this in turn only contributes to the increase of vehicles on campus.

"Traffic within campus is caused by multiple factors, such as external traffic outside in Katipunan and the car-centric layout of the campus," Mendoza stated.

With the mention of this external traffic, CSMO Director Josephy Almosera expressed that the University may continue to coordinate with the local government and other relevant stakeholders, but they have "no control over the volume of traffic along Katipunan."

However, on the administration's side, Almosera relayed that the Central Facilities Management Office plans to rehabilitate the parking spaces within the current academic year. Notably, the North, Northwest, and West

Car Parks are all expected to be completed by early-mid 2024.

Almosera also mentioned other planned improvements such as the construction of dedicated e-jeep lanes and upgraded bicycle lanes. In line with this, the campus e-jeep fleet is expected to increase to eight by January 2024 to accommodate more passengers.

#### PEOPLE-ORIENTED TRANSPORTATION

To address mobility concerns through student-initiated projects, Mendoza explained that the Task Force on Mobility will begin operations in September or early October. The team will focus on research and planning during the first semester to gather data for their future initiatives.

According to Mendoza, the Sanggunian held separate courtesy calls with University President Fr. Roberto "Bobby" Yap and the Office of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to discuss mobility issues concerning the University.

Similarly, the Task Force hopes to coordinate with CSMO in the near future to gather insights on possible effective solutions.

At the organizational level, Mendoza mentioned that discussions have been continuous with the Move As One Coalition and the Department of Student Welfare and Service regarding their plans for mobility improvements. The



**I don't think campus traffic is impossible to solve, but it will most likely require institutional changes to lessen the congestion within the campus.**

**BERNICE MENDOZA**  
SANGGUNIAN PRESIDENT

three groups, however, have yet to meet again for the current academic year.

Meanwhile, Cuartero discussed BlueMob's goal through the Three-point Mobility Agenda—identity, community, and advocacy—envisioning a community "where people can push for behavioral policy and infrastructural changes."

"Before we are able to reimagine our spaces and understand other people, we also want to be able to share our uniquely different stories, especially that of mobility," Cuartero elaborated.

Upon BlueMob's launch, Cuartero expressed that the organization's initiatives will focus more on the inclusivity and sustainability aspect, highlighting that they want

BlueMob to run in the long term while catering to all sectors.

To aid their future initiatives, Cuartero said that BlueMob will be collaborating closely with the Sanggunian Task Force on Mobility to gather data from the Ateneo community regarding their experiences on transit within and around campus.

Ultimately, Cuartero asserts that mobility requires an intersectional approach. "It's in that way that we can bring together different advocates to exercise their agency and reimagine the potential that is in our cities and communities," she shared.

Sharing a similar insight, Mendoza conveys that a mobility-centric campus will take many steps but is not an impossible goal.

**Mobility requires an intersectional approach and it's in that way that we can bring together different advocates to exercise their agency and reimagine the potential that is in our cities and communities.**

**MAXINE CUARTERO**  
MOBILITY MARCH POINT PERSON

REVITALIZE CAMPUS TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY. HEC, SANGGU SEEKS IMPROVEMENTS IN TRAFFIC CONDITIONS WITHIN THE CAMPUS AND ALONG KATIPUNAN AVENUE.

PHOTO BY JHANINE CAOILE



# URH resumes normal operations, returns to full student capacity

BY ISABEL CANDIDA GONZALES

**TO ACCOMMODATE** more dormers within the campus premises, the University Residence Halls (URH) returned to normal operations and total capacity beginning the first semester of AY 2023–2024.

According to a July 19 memo, room occupancy in Cervini Hall, Eliazo Hall, and the University Dormitory (UD) will return to quadruple-sharing, with four students sharing one space.

Vice President for Administration and URH Officer-in-Charge (OIC) Rodolfo “Rudy” Ang stated that the protocols during the pandemic—such as the acrylic barriers in bathrooms, and arrows on the floor to promote social distancing—will be taken down to accommodate the University’s decision to adjust to the “new normal.”

[The term] ‘normal’ is not normal na pre-pandemic, but a new normal. [...] We are moving out of crisis mode or pandemic mode as the rest of the nation has done,” Ang clarified. He added that they have isolation rooms as a contingency, should there be an upsurge of COVID cases.

In line with the URH’s plans, Ateneo Resident Students Association (ARSA) President Angela Yu stated that since the sector’s return and reactivation, it has been committed to supporting the administration’s operations and formation activities, such as the organization of karaoke or movie nights for dormers.

## A HOPEFUL RESTART

This academic year, OIC and Assistant to the URH Director for Facilities and Operations Marie Villanueva stated that the dormitories currently hold over 1,100 residents, with last year’s occupants being around 900 students.

To better accommodate this increase, Ang mentioned that they are looking into adding two new laundromats to the International Residence Hall and the Cervini Hall respectively. Moreover, a new team of dorm assistants has been added to help organize the structure and activities of the URH.

The URH has also outlined logistical changes for the current AY. Notably, Ang shared that they plan on adding a third dorm cafeteria concessionaire by next

year after their clean-up of the Jose Mari Chan Hall.

However, the hall will be used temporarily as a study area exclusively for the student-athletes while renovations are ongoing at the Blue Eagle Gym. Moreover, the Alingal Hall will be used as the temporary gym for URH residents, as the Judo Team will use the Cervini Rec Room for practices.

## A HELPING HAND

With the dorms unoccupied until last year, Ang shared that they have been focusing on “touch-up efforts” to address area and room concerns such as water leaks, broken toilets, and damaged walkways.

However, due to the URH’s limited student capacity during the pandemic, Ang cited the lack of human resources as the main challenge his office faced during preparations for the current AY. Despite this, Ang assured that they have begun recruiting for open positions to be filled this year.

On the other hand, ARSA has been supporting the URH on the sidelines, providing feedback based on student sentiments. Yu mentioned that students course these through a grievance system that gauges the experience of each dormer for future discussions on improvement.

Yu also expressed that there are times when the URH and ARSA do not see eye to eye, but both committees nonetheless work together with one shared vision. “We don’t necessarily align in terms of the means to [reach our objectives, but] I know that we all have one goal, and that is to build a stronger URH community as one,” Yu shared.

Yu conveyed that while the URH administration and ARSA are separated in terms of their projects and plans, they aim to push for a united dormer community to ensure a comfortable atmosphere.

## FAR FROM HOME

To help dormers adjust to a new environment, Yu said that ARSA has been holding bonding sessions and dormer wellness to the community.

In particular, the ARSA ran their own rendition of the Orientation Seminar held last

August 15 to 27. This event aims for newcomers to feel welcome around other dormers and be informed regarding the URH’s policies.

Sharing their experience, dormer Chatrine “Chat” Lanot (2 Dip IR) expressed that despite the changes in room assignment policies such as the now quad-sharing rooms, they find themselves being able to adjust well with the URH and ARSA’s efforts.

Specifically, Lanot emphasized that under the discretion of the URH and ARSA, both new and old dormers were given University Dorm Kits to constantly orient them of the student policies and rules.

“I’m very thankful for the ARSA community and the dormer community. [...] I appreciate the amount of effort [they] put into the orientations and initiatives,” Lanot shared.

Similar to Lanot’s sentiments, Ang states that the URH staffers strive to provide a nurturing and caring environment where dormers can feel welcome. He adds that the URH community is here to make their lives as convenient as possible.

“

**[We want] to provide a nurturing and caring environment for our dormers, to give them a community which will make them feel [...] that they belong [...], to find the support group within the dorm similar to what they would have if they were living at home. That is our goal, to make life as convenient as possible for everyone not luxurious.**

**RODOLFO “RUDY” ANG**  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICER-IN-CHARGE, UNIVERSITY RESIDENCE HALLS

**BACK TO OPERATIONS.** The University Residence Hall is ready to welcome full capacity of students for the new academic year.

PHOTOS BY BETTINA CUAN AND JILLIAN SANTOS



“

**We really all have one shared vision [...] We don't necessarily align in terms of the means to get there, [but] I know that we all have one goal and that is to build a stronger URH community as one.**

**ANGELA YU**  
ATENEO RESIDENT STUDENTS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT



PHOTO BY JHANINE CAOILE

GRAPHIC BY JULIA ISABELLE F. YABUT

# Blue Eagle Gym undergoes major renovations, briefly relocates athletes

BY JOAQUIN BAANG

**IN HOPES** of improving the management and look of its facilities, the Blue Eagle Gym (BEG) has been closed for major renovations. With this, University offices and varsity teams have been moved to new venues as BEG undergoes refashioning for University-wide events and higher quality athletics training.

Ateneo Athletics Office Director Emmanuel Fernandez disclosed that the construction will allow for new amenities, such as an indoor running track encircling the building, a centralized air conditioning system, and a larger floor space that can accommodate roughly three basketball courts.

#### BACK TO THE STARTING LINE

Plans for the gym's renovation began back in 2019 as Fernandez stated that the University Athletics Office (UAO) believed that the venue was too hot for the students. In particular, attendees of the Ateneo Grade School masses would faint because of the heat.

Given these issues, the UAO originally planned to add an air conditioning system into the venue. However, Fernandez mentioned that the plan evolved into improving the BEG into an area fit for big University events, taking inspiration from American schools that often hold ceremonies in their gyms.

Elaborating on the planning's development, Fernandez said that

renovations had to go through different approval stages from the administration before it was greenlit.

The first stage was a review of structural plans with University officials and architects. Following approval, the project had to find external sources for its budget since no funding is coming from the University. According to Fernandez, the project is currently being sourced by an anonymous donor who is covering the majority of the expenses.

Fernandez disclosed that the estimated timeline of the construction is around one year, with the construction having begun in September.

In addition to the upgrades in acoustics and ventilation, the concrete bleachers will be removed in favor of pull-out bleachers which can be stored away during training. Fernandez explained that these changes will improve the venue's capacity as the new estimated floor size will roughly equate the area of three basketball courts.

#### TEMPORARY HOMES

Despite sweeping renovations, Fernandez cited that one of the many difficulties with the renovation came in the relocation of the various sports teams and offices stationed at the BEG.

Notably, the office of the Ateneo Employee and Workers Union will be transferred to the dorm areas, while the Security Office will be transferred to Gate 5. According

to Fernandez, the University delegated these relocations in line with the UAO's decision of making the gym exclusive for athletic teams.

On the other hand, Fernandez explained that the athletic teams housed in BEG—such as the Judo, Table Tennis, and Chess teams—have slowly been moving out of the gym and training elsewhere.

For instance, the Judo team will be moving their training to the Cervini Hall's Rec Room, while the Table Tennis team will be using the second floor of the Gonzaga Cafeteria. The Chess team will also move to the Pollock Renewal Center's meeting room.

In contrast, other teams have yet to finalize the details of their new setups relative to their equipment and team size. While the UAO is helping relocate teams to spaces ideal for each respective team's equipment and size, the new venues still pose a challenge. Table Tennis Coach Rosar Crisostomo commented that the transfer would not only mentally impact the players but also affect their technique.

"We don't know if [the venue] will be spacious enough. We don't know if we can use it as often as we would like to, and we don't know if we will have the same amount of space as we currently have," he admitted.

Due to these changes, Crisostomo foresees that the Table Tennis teams will be entering a challenging year, and hopes that the team can return

back to the new gym as soon as possible. Fortunately, he said that the UAO has assured the teams that they will be welcomed back once renovations have been completed.

#### A NEW FUTURE

Fernandez stated that one of the other main reasons behind the refurbishments is to create a quality area that is up to par with the level of training athletes experience.

"Being a student-athlete is difficult; you not only handle academics but [also] sports. What is important for me is to have an area for athletes to train inside the University," he said.

However, Fernandez mentioned that it is most important to improve the BEG rather than create a new building, stressing that revamping will mainly be done to the interior in order to keep the iconic facade of the building.

"Most of the NCAA games were done here [before], and I remember in college, even concerts were being done here. But now *napag-iwanan na siya* (it's been left behind by changing times)," he added, hoping to revive the landmark's prestige.

Meanwhile, Crisostomo hopes that the Blue Eagle Gym's renovations could be done as soon as possible, especially given the Table Tennis team's 20-year history with the venue. He remains hopeful that the construction will be able to provide a more conducive area to train for all athletic teams.

**“**  
**I hope that the Blue Eagle Gym will be the center for the University. We all know that in sports, improvement in facilities, infrastructure, and training should come hand in hand.**

EMMANUEL FERNANDEZ  
ATENEO ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

EMMANUEL FERNANDEZ  
ATENEO ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

# OrSem: Muli welcomes new Ateneans, revives traditions

BY DERRECK DE LEON AND ANA RUFU PADUA

**REVIVING TRADITIONS**  
such as the O-Night and the Irwin Show, the University welcomed freshmen and transferees alike in this year's Orientation Seminar (OrSem) held asynchronously online last August 3 to 4 and onsite last August 7 to 8.

With the theme Muli, the event celebrated the new students in a way that recalls OrSem's primary roots—love and care-filled. Elaborating on these, O-Chairs Joey Tekiko and Maureen Tan envisioned a "freshie-centric" OrSem, giving new Ateneans opportunities to "rediscover themselves."

## TRUE ATENEAN WELCOME

Prior to the onsite festivities, a new online talk series entitled Yugto had 14 speakers from the Ateneo community discuss Atenean life, ranging from co-curricular activities to inclusivity and cultural understanding.

Tan shared that Yugto was their way of providing more talks that "struck a chord" with the freshmen, adding that as many as 700 freshmen participated.

Beyond talks, Muli also incorporated hybrid options for O-Laro activities, allowing the blocks to form bonds through online challenges and

onsite activities. Aside from these, the top eight contestants of O-Idol: Ideolescence were able to showcase their concluding performances to the live crowd.

## BEHIND THE WELCOMING DISPLAY

With only 11 weeks of preparation, Tan and Tekiko attributed OrSem's success to the Organizing Committee (OrCom) and volunteers' harmonious efforts. "OrSem is a very technical, systematic, and highly operational event. But the core of it really boils down to the people and

the community that we build and share," Tan asserted.

Despite the initial difficulty in practice, Tekiko mentioned that events, notably the campus tours, ran "like clockwork" for the volunteers. This efficiency was made more possible through consultations with prior OrCom.

## A NIGHT FOR ALL

Capping off OrSem: Muli, this year's O-Night: Kinang recognized the new students' active participation through awardings for the O-Laro and O-Idol winners. The culminating

concert also spotlighted notable performers such as drag impersonator Taylor Sheesh and award-winning OPM band Lola Amour.

Tekiko and Tan mentioned that O-Night's revival provided an avenue for students to further bond and interact beyond structured activities.

When asked about her sentiments regarding OrSem, Annika Montoya (1 BS PSY) said that OrSem: Muli showed her how enthusiastic and welcoming the Ateneo is. "I really feel like all my worries just melted away a bit," she shared.

Similarly, Zia Carreon (1 BS BIO) initially felt intimidated as a student coming from the province, but after feeling the overall ambience of the event, she felt more at home in the Ateneo.





## The GUIDON

Founded 1929 by Rev. Frank O'Hara, SJ  
First Editor-in-Chief, Manuel C. Colayco, AB '30**PURPOSE**Committed to its mission of truth-telling,  
The GUIDON seeks to document the existing  
realities of the Ateneo community and beyond.Ryan Suarez, AB DS '24  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEFAnna Pineda, BS BIO '24  
ASSOCIATE EDITOREmman Evangelista, BS CS '24  
DESIGN EXECUTIVE EDITORSilas S. Chiew, AB EC '25  
MANAGING EDITOREnzo Bello, BS BIO '25  
Eloiza Mariano, AB COM '25  
NEWS EDITORSAnton E. Mercado, AB EC '24  
Jurus Salvador, AB COM '24  
SPORTS EDITORSMax S. Kang, AB EC-H '24  
BEYOND LOYOLA EDITORAriana Enriquez, BS PSY '25  
FEATURES EDITORLourence Segovia, AB EC '25  
INQUIRY EDITORTherese Garcia, BS REnt '24  
Rei Jamola, AB COM '24  
VANTAGE MAGAZINE EDITORSAlia Tupiro, BS CTM '24  
BROADCAST NEWS EDITORAngela Villano, AB DIPR '24  
BROADCAST NEWS PRODUCERLiana Fernando, AB MA POS '25  
France Vicente, BFA ID '24  
PHOTOS EDITORSAnnika Maria Victoria M. de la Fuente, BFA ID '26  
Bryce Garrett G. Tamayo, BFA ID '26  
GRAPHIC DESIGN EDITORJeremy P. Fortaleza, BS CH-MSE '26  
VIDEO PRODUCTION EDITOREthan M. Encarnacion, AB EU '24  
VIDEO PRODUCTION DIRECTORRazel Tan, BFA ID '24  
DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT EDITOR FOR DESIGNWaleed Lugod, BS CS '26  
DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT EDITOR FOR TECHNOLOGYMarga Hernandez, AB DS '24  
EXTERNALS MANAGERSabina David, AB IS '24  
Fin B. Mahala, BS HS '25  
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGERSNoelle Paterno, AB SOCIO '24  
Achaiah Deanne Sayson, AB COM '25  
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERSLanclet Batara, AB MEC '25  
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**NEWS**

Joaquin Baang, Chaezie Chariz Cabel, Azra Cagsawa, Dereck De Leon, Isabel Candida Gonzales, Ana Rufa Padua

**SPORTS**

Gershon Anapi, Ralph Anthony Bautista, Caitlin Bernal, Matthea P. Lazo, Luis Antonio Licas, Euan Markus, Lyza Mama, Jostle Doen Pilayre, Marit Samson, Eury See, Vincent Somera

**BEYOND LOYOLA**

Ronnel Bermas, Ram Hebron, Troi Mendoza, Felicity C. Santos, Sohalia Somera

**FEATURES**

Francesca Abalos, Katrina B. Antonio, Aidan Bernales, Gabriele Christina A. Cortes, Alyss E. Duque, Ingrid Leanne Manuel, Odessa Julianne Rebaya, Gabby Rosales, Jeansha Mae Viray

**INQUIRY**

Alexandra P. Elicano, Ashley Enriquez, Regina Manalo, Camille Dominique (Mon) Salispis, Kate San Mateo, Nicole Anne Kelsy Sy

**VANTAGE MAGAZINE**

Chanel Ang, Reign Iris Centeno, Tan Dela Cruz, Mikyla Reyes, Jillian Santos, Hans Dominic M. Periodico

**BROADCAST NEWS**

Angela Ballerda, Angeline Braganza, Allison Co, Fiona Gomez, Tep Isidro, Leanne V. Isip, Trixie Mamafug, Hannah Mantos, Rome Saenz

**PHOTOS**

Miguel Abad, Stella Arenas, Jhanine Caiole, River Elginolin, Mikyla Reyes, Jillian Santos, Naomi Soriano, Daryl D. Sy

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

Abigail M. Chua, Alexis Chua, Zanti Alfonzo C. Gayares, Kiana Patricia Refuerzo, Gerald Lois M. Roldan, Kyne Siao, Julia Isabelle Yabut

**VIDEO PRODUCTION**

Hannah Arias, Zach Bulatao, Rafael Cabrera, Ice Flores, EG Goloso, Arianne B. Mendoza

**DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT**

Basti De Leon, Angelo Lumba, Aidan Olarte, Tiffany Ong, Ysabella B. Panghulan, Chesca Reyes, Frants Reyes, Luigi Rodriguez, Kathrynne S. Yu

**EXTERNALS**

Issa Arayata, Floriane Jara, Amanda Moreno, Iana Luis Padilla, Kir Peñalber, Meg Victorino

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

Anne S. de Villa, Julia Gomez, Diego Quicho, Julia Quiñat, Kenny Reyes, Yana Villanueva, Aga E. Villaroman

**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Desi Balanquit, Giuliana Bautista, Alyanna Cachuela, Lion De Leon, Megan Del Castillo, Mawi Jayines, Emma Oranza, Marlon Reyes, Patricia Tan, Dianne Yunol

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Regine Bautista, Kaylyn Fan, Andrea Guanlao, Razel Malahan, Maxine Marqueses, Maria Sophia Andrea E. Rosello

Luz R. Rimban  
MODERATORFor comments, suggestions,  
and contributions, email:  
[desk@theguidon.com](mailto:desk@theguidon.com)

## EDITORIAL

# LoGovernance: AN ILLUSORY PROGRESS

A NEW epidemic has been spreading throughout the Philippine government as various agencies have undergone rebranding efforts, ranging from new logos to fresh slogans. Most notable among these initiatives is the administration's Bagong Pilipinas campaign, which represents the government's action for an "inclusive" economic and social transformation plan. President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr. mandatorily implemented this

Looking at the bigger picture, these rebranding antics play a more consequential role in the Marcoses' propaganda to reclaim legitimized seats in power.

**BEYOND THE FAÇADE**

The mastery of the Marcoses in institutionalizing propaganda is no secret, as they have crept back to Malacañang through utilizing the same strategy. Given the recent rebranding initiatives, Marcos Jr.'s administration also looks to make use of this vanity scheme, glossing over the harsh realities confronting the Filipino masses.

outstanding debt at Php 14.15 trillion as of writing.

The DOT's deeply controversial video further drives this point forward. Having used stock footage of a fisherman and a rice farm from our Southeast Asian neighbors showcases the lack of intentionality put into these videos despite its Php 49 million cost. Moreover, such an instance exposes the disconnect and lack of initiative to reach out to local communities and show their contexts.

Needless to say, this excessive spending for these makeover activities only proves that the government is more interested in maintaining a favorable public perception than finding solutions to the country's existing social ills.

**QUICK ESCAPE**

Driven by the fixation on image and reputation, the administration tends to focus on public branding, seeking to affect the people's perception of the country, government, and its citizens.

Realistically, government rebranding efforts are not a rare trend in the country. Former president Fidel V. Ramos emphasized long-term economic development with "Philippine 2000," while then-two-term president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo focused on strengthening government institutions through the "Strong Republic" branding. Former president Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III also pushed for the "Daang Matuwid" slogan in eliminating government corruption.

Likewise, tourism slogans have been changed several times, with "WOW Philippines" and "It's More Fun in the Philippines" being the most memorable ones in the past two decades. Although such government practices aid in keeping their

branding fresh and relevant, the question of necessity remains open, given how the country is still recovering from the debilitating pandemic.

Ironically, amid the unfulfilled promises from its first year in the Malacañang, the Marcos-led government still feasts on these needless publicity stunts, seemingly to cover up their subpar leadership. For instance, the Bagong Pilipinas campaign was launched last July 2023, but has not yet shown significant results.

Although the PSA's July report shows the lowest inflation rate (4.7%) since March 2022, such a rate can still be unstable, as the agency still needs to account for the damages of Typhoon Egay. The PSA also noted that rice prices have increased since February, which could push inflation up.

Filipinos are still facing challenges that greatly affect living conditions, such as price hikes in public transportations, limitations in food supply, and the effects of El Niño in the country. Rather than a continuous slate of rebranding stunts, solving the salient injustices experienced by the everyday Filipino should be on the administration's list of action points.

Questioning whether the Bagong Pilipinas campaign is genuine or just a facade cannot be discounted. The government

must do more to show its commitment to serving the people, not just its image. After all, this is a Bagong Pilipinas campaign, not Bagong Mukha.

**IMPALPABLE PROGRESS**

While a good public image is generally advantageous for a country's reputation, actual change must not only be seen but felt. If not linked with on-the-ground initiatives, rebranding efforts only point to governance driven by deception and false promises.

Suppose the Marcos administration is serious enough about solving the country's deep-seated problems. In that case, it must first unmask itself from a facade that hides its current positionality and come down from its position of privilege. Only then can it truly include the marginalized in discussing meaningful solutions and achieving genuine developmental reforms for Filipinos and the nation.

These efforts currently remain as legacies heavily reliant on publicity and pretense. In the end, the remaining years of Marcos Jr. in power shall contribute to how the Filipino people will continue to remember his family's legacy—one that is currently built on lies and whitewashed historical narratives.

**With these recent rebranding initiatives, the current administration also looks to make use of this vanity scheme, glossing over the harsh realities confronting the Filipino masses.**

rebranding in all government agencies, where the logo must be visible on all official government letterheads, websites, social media accounts, and state-funded flagship programs.

Despite not using public funds, the rebranding draws divided opinion from the citizens, similar to the controversial Php 3-million Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) logo and the Department of Tourism (DOT)'s "Love the Philippines" rebranding.

More or less, the new government branding was inspired by the Bagong Lipunan campaign of his father, the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr.

Based on a recent report released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), farmers and fisherfolk still grapple with their everyday living, as they remain to have the highest poverty incidence rates in the country. On top of this, the agriculture sector continues to face problems prompted by issues of smuggling, climate change, and agricultural land loss.

Although rebranding expenditures can bring in several economic implications, this exorbitant use of resources only highlights the administration's seemingly misplaced sense of priorities, especially with the national government's

**If not linked with on-the-ground initiatives, rebranding efforts only point to governance driven by deception and false promises.**





FIN B. MABASA  
LIGROTHISM

## Excess baggage

**EXCESS BAGGAGE** comes with a price—it could either rip you or your suitcase apart. As I stared at my suitcase, sweat dripping down my forehead while I sat atop it, I grappled with the task of squeezing everything in. It appeared as though my suitcase was on the verge of bursting at the seams, its zippers stretched to their limit—but, it was ready.

Stepping through the airport doors, reality struck—my entire life was compressed into a 30-kilogram suitcase, dreams meticulously tucked within its confines. However, the true weight burdened me in the form of hidden doubts and fears, stowed away in my chest.

As I set foot on the school grounds, I was greeted by a heartwarming scene: parents exchanging affectionate kisses, imparting words of encouragement, and sharing tight hugs with their children. A sense of yearning surged within me, evoking memories of the once-familiar joy when my own parents used to kiss me goodbye.

Caught in an emotional whirlwind, I found myself trapped in a state of limbo. On one hand, a part of me basked in

the euphoria of finally living the life I had long envisioned: navigating unfamiliar spaces, forming connections with new people, and taking charge of my own decisions. However, amid the freedom I now enjoyed and the constant company of my new friends, an overwhelming sense of homesickness persistently gnawed at me.

Homesickness felt like an anomaly, a sentiment that seemed incongruent with the image of a capable “grown-up.” Ashamed, I resolved to bury these feelings, viewing them as a detour from the path of maturity I was striving to walk. In the process, however, I found myself packing new experiences into my baggage, adding to the weight I was already carrying.

There were no steaming hot meals awaiting me at the table when I arrived home from school. Instead, my current reality revolved around overly salty ramen noodles on my study table, with Meredith, Miranda, and Derek keeping me company through seasons one to ten.

As the weight of my baggage grew insurmountable, it eventually ruptured. I came to the realization that baggage weight limits exist for a reason. The memory remains

vivid—through choked sobs, my words faltering into a jumble of incomprehensible fragments, “Ma, *nalangkag na ako sa imo.*” (Mom, I miss you.)

I lost count of how many times I had to go through these equally agonizing instances. Despite putting on a tough and confident front, I would revert back to being the scared little girl I was as soon as I entered my dorm room. Lying on my bed with the scent of home lingering in my blanket, I grappled with homesickness in silence, alongside the struggle to fit in.

Baggage isn’t meant to remain confined within the limits of a suitcase; rather, it allows us to carry pieces of home with us as we venture in search of new ones.

Just like that overpacked suitcase, we often find ourselves carrying baggage—the baggage of our doubts, fears, and worries. However, there comes a point when the weight becomes too much, a moment when we realize we can’t keep cramming everything in.

We can’t carry everything with us, but we can always learn to set that baggage aside and unpack it one by one to lighten the load.

*Fin is a Health Sciences student expected to graduate from the Ateneo de Manila University in 2025. Advocating for children’s rights, she weaves together her passions for science, journalism, and effective people management.*



**I grappled with homesickness in silence, alongside the struggle to fit in.**

CHALK MARKS

## The Political Economy of Martial Law Revisited I

BY WALDEN BELLO

**IN RESPONSE** to the efforts of Marcos apologists to disseminate the image of the Marcos dictatorship from 1972 to 1986 as a “Golden Age,” many analysts have rightfully described it as more akin to a dark age. What both sides often forget, however, is that Marcos was not alone in creating what one side sees as an era of milk and honey and the other as years of infamy.

Economic management during the Marcos era was always a joint venture between the regime and the World Bank.

This is, of course, a critical piece of history that the World Bank—which continues to have a strong institutional presence in the country—would prefer to consign to oblivion. But the fact is, the Bank provided Marcos a curtain of international legitimacy behind which he and his cronies plundered the public till. Moreover, the marriage of the Bank’s pro-market policies and the regime’s predatory practices gave birth to the worst of all possible worlds for Filipinos.

Looking back at the Marcos era, it is tempting to depict the Marcos regime as a “failed developmental state.” It was the promise of development that accounted for the way that Marcos was able to initially assemble a coalition

of left-leaning people like Blas Ople, military technocrats like Alejandro Melchor, corporate managers like Cesar Virata, and elite personalities like Manda Elizalde to support his thrust toward dictatorship in the early 1970s.

### REVOLUTION FROM THE CENTER'

Marcos’s project, building on his infrastructure-building during his two terms as president, was labeled as the “revolution from the center” that would break the “democratic stalemate” that had prevented development.

Enthusiastically joining this ambitious project was the World Bank, then headed by Robert McNamara, the former U.S. defense department chief who had managed the unsuccessful U.S. war in Vietnam in the 1960s. McNamara favored capitalism and markets, but he also believed in a strong role for government in development.

This program of conservative modernization or “development from above” was inspired by the apparent success of the Brazilian military-technocrat alliance in bringing about high growth rates in Brazil in the late sixties and the concurrent push of the Park Chung Hee regime to promote high-speed growth in South Korea. By the

early ’70s, these two experiences had created in political and economic development circles a zeitgeist of disillusionment with democracy as a development mechanism and a fascination with authoritarian approaches to “modernization.”

The appeal of Marcos’s revolution from the center to Western development specialists was its promise to weaken the power of land-based elites that stood in the way of the capitalist modernization of the economy while stealing the thunder of left-wing and nationalist forces advocating a more radical transformation of the economy.

It offered an opportunity to apply what had become the new silver bullet for breaking out of underdevelopment: export-oriented industrialization (EOI), which would open up limitless global markets that would substitute for the limited domestic market as an absorber of a country’s products. Meanwhile, stability in the countryside would be promoted by Taiwan and Korea-style land reform that would create a conservative base of “kulaks” or small property owners that would serve as a barrier to peasant-based insurgent movements.

In the division of labor to promote this scheme, the World Bank, international private

banks, and foreign investors would supply the resources while Marcos would provide the “political will.”

In terms of financing the venture, the Bank delivered, with the Philippines joining South Korea, Brazil, and Indonesia—all dictatorships—at the top of the list of Bank recipients. The Philippines was designated a “country of concentration” to which the flow of Bank assistance would be “higher than average for countries of similar size and income.”

Whereas prior to martial law, between 1950 and 1972, the Philippines received a meager \$326 million in Bank assistance; between 1973 and 1981, more than \$2.6 billion was funneled into 61 projects. Before martial law, the Philippines had ranked around thirtieth among recipients of Bank loans in cumulative terms; by 1980, it placed 8th among 113 developing countries.

### SEAL OF APPROVAL

But the principal contribution of the Bank was not financial, though this was of course indispensable. It was the provision of legitimacy. The partnership with the Bank provided Marcos with a patina of moral approval that he exploited in drawing more financial resources from



JEREMY P. FORTALEZA  
ANTIMONY

## One kilometer per hour

**NAVIGATING THROUGH** the bustling Katipunan Avenue is an unending automotive labyrinth. Well-known for its spirited ‘One Big Fight’ chants, Ateneo has now transformed into ‘One Big Parking Lot’—a seemingly endless car show.

To arrive on time for class, students often leave home much earlier than usual, often two hours ahead, for what should be a mere 20-minute commute within a six-mile radius. Be a count behind, and you’ll find yourself stuck in a sea of motionless sedans. Even taxi drivers sometimes refuse to drop off students inside the campus. As people jest, “once you enter Ateneo, you can never leave.”

The nearly identical ingress and egress times of the Higher Education Cluster (HEC) with primary and secondary schools lead to patterns of tangled messes in these peak hours. While this may stem from genuine parental concern for safety, the deeply ingrained “hatid-sundo” culture significantly exacerbates immobilized traffic.

In reality, many members of the Ateneo community deem driving cars to school as the more practical choice. Associated with more affluent backgrounds, this practice saves time and is more convenient. Parking spots on the campus further incentivize car usage among those who can afford it, contributing to more constricted traffic jams. Seeking precious spaces on campus becomes another level of challenge and the Ateneo now

appears more like a sprawling parking garage for the privileged.

This isn’t just a tale of a traffic-ridden school; it’s a story highlighting the extent of commitment to the values and ideals promoting sustainable development goals. The Ateneo has made commendable strides in its focus on integral ecology and carbon neutrality by 2030. However, the administration’s decision to add Gate 3.1 and 3.2 roads seems to have intensified the trend toward car-centrism—a stark dissonance with its commitment to becoming one of the Laudato Si universities.

Gradually, the school grounds mirror its outside boundary: the C-5 and Aurora Boulevard. From external three-laned asphalt to extended one-ways, the dominance of private vehicles has repercussions not only for the environment due to increased pollution but also for the overall campus experience.

If only the public transportation system were efficient, comfortable, and reliable, more people would be inclined to commute than ride private vehicles. Car-centrism and inept transit networks affect everyone, irrespective of socioeconomic status. Commuters

continue to bear the brunt of such consequences. Thus, integrating transport management, commuter sentiments, and engineering is essential to bridge the gap between private and public transit.

It’s indeed unsettling to think that with each passing day, we’re witnessing changes in the urban landscape within our campus. What was once our ‘home’ with abundant green spaces may gradually transform into a mere utilitarian site solely for transactional education.

Proximity ironically plays with time. You might be so close to Ateneo, but never with four wheels. We are not quite there yet, but once embedded permanently, we could never drive backward an EDSA replicate.

*Jeremy is a Chemistry with Materials Science and Engineering student expected to graduate from the Ateneo de Manila University in 2026. With a fervor for climate justice, science education, and journalism, he is committed to driving STEM empowerment through his creative works.*



**Proximity ironically plays with time. You might be so close to Ateneo, but never with four wheels.**

*Walden Bello is the former Editor-in-Chief of The GUIDON (1965–1966). Among 26 other books, he was the principal author of Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines (San Francisco: Food First, 1982). Named Amnesty International Philippines’ “Most Distinguished Human Rights Defender” in 2023, he is currently a visiting researcher at Kyoto University’s Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the International Adjunct Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York at Binghamton. He served as a member of the House of Representatives of the Philippines from 2009 to 2015. He is currently being prosecuted for cyber libel charges brought by the camp of Vice President Sara Duterte.*

investment—foreign investment inflow minus the outflow of investment income—came to only \$87 million between 1973 and 1979.

This did not mean, however, that foreigners were investing less. Indeed, the Bank asserted that in 1980, investment by foreign firms came to 500% more than the annual average for the 1970s.

These new investments were financed mainly from local profits or borrowings from domestic capital sources. Thus, while foreign capital inflow slowed to a trickle, foreign corporations raised their cumulative borrowing from local sources from \$1.9 billion in 1973 to about \$3 billion in 1977, according to one estimate.

**SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR THE FULL ARTICLE**



# Sports

THE CLARAVALLS:  
BLOOD AT THE HELM

The bonds of a family are believed to be the strongest of all human ties—as the adage goes, “blood is thicker than water.”

02



## Defending the nest

BY CAITLIN BERNAL AND EURY SEE

THROUGHOUT THE years, towering figures such as Ange Kouame, Jarvey Gayoso, and Jia Morado-De Guzman have stood as a testament to the Ateneo's steadfast culture in nurturing exceptional talent across diverse sporting disciplines. These prominent athletes who have significantly contributed to the Blue and White's legacy have undoubtedly brought forth a renewed sense of meaning and purpose to the University's identity of service and excellence.

As the Ateneo community anticipates the dawn of a new season, the stage is set to usher in the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) once again. Holding on to the excitement and thrill of another season, The GUIDON Sports revisits the invaluable lessons, indelible legacies, and indescribable triumphs that the Blue Eagles have charted in their journey throughout the past year.

### DYNASTY OF CHAMPIONS

For numerous years, the Ateneo has relentlessly demonstrated its caliber as a titan in the collegiate league, as evidenced by the countless achievements amassed under its banner. A household name in the tournament, the Ateneo Men's Basketball Team (AMBT) has constantly showcased its dominance as a formidable contender on the hardwood with its stellar feats. Having been led under the wing of Coach Tab Baldwin since 2015, the AMBT continues to ride on the momentum of their numerous accomplishments up to this day.

In a similar vein of excellence, the Ateneo Women's Badminton Team secured an impressive tally of six UAAP championships within the past decade, with the recent completion of their three-peat

victory coming last Season 85. Likewise, the FAST Ateneo Men's Swimming Team maintains its illustrious reputation among its peers as the reigning champions of the league's waters for seven consecutive seasons.

Looking back at his journey in the UAAP, former Ateneo Men's Swimming Team Captain Aki Cariño shares how these experiences have shaped his perception of the school's dynasty of champions. "To be a part of [the Ateneo] swimming program is a real honor. For me, we were able to set the standard for college swimming in the Philippines," Cariño shares.

"I went to UAAP seven times. It still doesn't get old because representing the school and giving them honor was a surreal feeling every time," the former FAST skipper adds.

### ECHOES OF TRIUMPH

UAAP Season 85 was launched under the banner of "Rise as One," a call to collectively celebrate the return of the full athletic calendar after the frustrating limitations brought about by COVID-19.

The current Team Captain Andrew Uy emphasized that their silver achievement was mainly a feat carved out of team discipline. AMTTT's greatest challenge was managing their time to excel not only in their sport but also in their studies—a hallmark of the Ateneo student-athlete.

"Yan 'yung nagpush sa akin para mag-podium finish, kasi if hindi namin pinaghirapan, maybe hindi kami aabot ng podium finish," Uy proclaims.

(This is what pushed us to a podium finish, because if we did not work hard for it, maybe we wouldn't have reached a podium finish.)

Indeed the Ateneo sporting legacy stands on the pillars of discipline and dedication of its athletes. To celebrate the Blue and White's hunt for honor, Season 85 saw the return of one of the most anticipated traditions, the Blue Eagle Bonfire. Graced by the best-performing athletes of the first semester, the flames that illuminated the night sky symbolized the desire for the triumph that burns in the hearts of those who play for the Blue and White.

### BEYOND THE SCOREBOARDS

This fire, however, was also a warm reminder of the invaluable support present in the Ateneo sporting culture. Women's Chess Team Captain Kristine Flores notes that the community did not fail in proudly recognizing their exceptional performance in Season 85. This renewed sense of belongingness made the squad's achievements even sweeter for Flores, who endured a tough road on the journey to ending their 12-year podium finish drought.

Flores shared that before landing their historic bronze medal, she dealt with the stress that undeniably comes with being a student-athlete. Aside from the academic standards that she had to keep up with, pressure was also at a premium within the team for the young talent. According to Flores, she was placed in board four this past season by her skipper due to the high expectations entrusted upon her to succeed at all times. This immense pressure resulted in unexpected panic attacks that affected her overall well-being during this period.

**Representing the school and giving them honor was a surreal feeling every time.**

AKI CARIÑO  
FORMER TEAM CAPTAIN  
ATENEO MEN'S SWIMMING TEAM

**To be a part of [the Ateneo] swimming program is a real honor. For me, we were able to set the standard for college swimming in the Philippines.**

AKI CARIÑO  
FORMER TEAM CAPTAIN  
ATENEO MEN'S SWIMMING TEAM

Flores decided to attend counseling sessions under the Loyola Schools Office of Guidance & Counseling which greatly helped in controlling her panic attacks. By also listening to loved ones who showered her with endless support, she was ready to power through the long and rocky road of Season 85. Flourishing for the Blue and White, Flores took home the individual gold medal while her comrades finished the season with a 4-0 victory against Adamson University, securing the bronze medal as a result.

More than just winning for Ateneo, Flores discovered the importance of taking things one step at a time. "Kailangan ko minsang huminga. Don't be too harsh on yourself. 'Di ba dapat kapag pine-pressure ka ng ibang tao, 'yung sarili mo [ang] kakamihan mo," the Women's Chess Team Captain says.

(I just need to breathe. Don't be too harsh on yourself. When other people pressure you, you should back yourself up.)

Behind every point won, every goal scored, and every time record broken is a story of the

### THE BLUE AND WHITE LEGACY

In hopes of continuously expanding the horizons of Ateneo's storied legacy, these stories speak volumes of the Blue and White's pledge to sporting excellence. As torchbearers of the Ateneo's sporting heritage, the Blue Eagles now stand poised to vividly showcase their unwavering commitment to carry the aspirations of a community with dedication, pride, and glory at its core.

Standing on the cusp of a new UAAP season, the Blue Eagles will now shoulder the long-standing dynasty of the Blue and White banner, while embodying the spirit of a university that cultivates and reveres true champions.

GALLERY OF EAGLES

# The Claravalls: Blood at the helm

BY LUIS ANTONIO LICAS AND LYZA MAMA

**THE BONDS** of a family are believed to be the strongest of all human ties—as the adage goes, “blood is thicker than water.” For Ateneo Judo team captains and siblings Elijah Claravall and Yzabelle Claravall, an instant teammate in life is provided at birth, and this happens to be the case in more ways than one.

The unique brother-sister duo at the helm of their respective squads hopes to use their familial kinship with one another to guide the Ateneo Men’s Judo Team (AMJT) and Ateneo Women’s Judo Team (AWJT) to great heights. Under one shared vision, the Claravalls look to lead the Blue and White to the promised land in University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) Season 86.

## FAMILY BUSINESS

The Claravalls’ distinct role as sibling captains should not surprise those familiar with the brother-sister tandem. Both siblings entered the realm of sports at a young age, with Elijah and Yzabelle starting off with backgrounds in karate and gymnastics, respectively.

Elijah, however, served as the catalyst of the Claravall family’s judo journey. Upon seeing a catalog of sports offered at his former school, the 12-year-old Eli was intrigued by judo and asked his father to describe it. “[My father] told me, ‘Oh, it’s a sport where you throw people,’ so it sounded interesting [to] me, so I started joining. [After] one session, I instantly liked it,” he recalls.

After bringing his skills to the Ultimate Judo Fighters Club (UJFC), Elijah was recognized by Coach Robert Divina, who offered him the opportunity to study at the Ateneo and pursue competitive Judo as a member of the Ateneo Judo Association (AJA).

Notably, whether for leisure, health, or competitive purposes, memberships in the UJFC are open to judokas of all masteries and ages. Thus, after Elijah had been part of the said club for a couple of years, his father joined as well. “Yung tatay ko, gusto may ginagawa siya and bumalik din

sa exercise (My dad likes staying active and returning to exercise),” explains Elijah.

With two of her family members now judokas, Yzabelle believes their influence sparked her interest in joining the sport. She stresses that her gymnastic training in balance and flexibility facilitated her transition to judo.

Since then, Yzabelle—who was likewise recruited to the Ateneo’s high school team—has joined Elijah in university-level competitions a year subsequent to her brother’s UAAP debut.

## SIBLING DYNAMICS

When considering the norms of sibling interactions, it is instinctive to assume that Elijah plays the “overprotective kuya” role. Elijah, however, sees Yzabelle to be independent on and off the mats, as he claims that a trusting bond allowed them to deviate from such an orthodox arrangement. “Considering that we both are martial artists and practicing at a high level, I’m pretty confident that my sister can do fine on her own,” he says.

Noting Elijah’s skills, Yzabelle regards her kuya as a role model. She fondly adds how much closer they grew when he showed her the ropes of competition preparation via weight training and technique-honing. “Sa training, sobrang bilis niya, so I wanted to be the same as him (In training, he is so fast, so I wanted to be the same as him),” she recalls.

Pushing further into the siblings’ dynamics on the mats, their appointments as captains only enhanced their relationship. Being leaders for both the men’s and women’s teams necessitates a great deal of collaboration between the two.

“It is easier to achieve the proper communication and cooperation simply because I’m talking to my own flesh and blood,” the Men’s Captain says. The Women’s Captain agrees, claiming that because they both know how each other thinks, shared



visions for the team are relayed more effectively.

It goes without saying that the siblings’ relationship outside of judo is critical to maintaining affinity as co-captains. As a result, the Claravalls enhance their bond through doing recreational activities together, such as working out. “My sister would always go 10 kilos below the weight that I’m currently lifting. I would always push her to her limits and help her surpass a certain weight so that she can progress to heavier lifts,” Elijah explains.

Outside the gym, Yzabelle shares that they enjoy traveling and spending time with friends and family.

## BUILDING CAMARADERIE

Within each team, one of the most important aspects that captains have to work on at the start of every season is molding the group’s overall chemistry.

Apart from

the in-game preparations, Elijah emphasized the importance of building a “family bond” off the mats.

“We try our best to hang out with everyone. Coming into the UAAP, we’re able to try to hang out with [everyone] and do some sort of activities. I remember one time, we went bouldering and it was very fun. I was with one of our seniors, and some of the recruits were also there, too,” he shares in a mix of Filipino and English.

Apart from the planned team-building activities, the senior also noted the significance of small events, including team dinners after training sessions. According to Elijah, these efforts come a long way in keeping the bond between him and his teammates tightly knitted.

Likewise, Yzabelle finds that integrating her teammates in extra workouts is also another effective way to strengthen rapport within the squad. “We would invite them to join us in jogging and in our weights

**“It is easier to achieve the proper communication and cooperation simply because I’m talking to my own flesh and blood.”**

ELIJAH CLARAVALL  
TEAM CAPTAIN  
ATENEO MEN’S JUDO TEAM

training. We also push them safely to go up the weights and become stronger individuals,” she says.

## A SHARED VISION

With both captains having attained remarkable achievements throughout their Ateneo stints, bagging multiple medals collegiately and competing internationally, their eyes are now fixed on sharing their winning pedigree to galvanize their respective squads.

Having been far removed from their last overall podium finish, Ateneo’s Judo teams are hungrier than ever to soar to the top. According to Yzabelle, her hope is for the AWJT to play with all their heart and use their upcoming experience as a learning process moving forward.

While instilling a never-say-die attitude to her teammates, the younger Claravall asserted that the team must remain humble throughout their journey. As the new UAAP season rolls around, Yzabelle also expects that her

troops will not give up during their matches while also striving for more beyond the mats.

Meanwhile, Elijah echoes the same sentiments for his side. “I expect that everyone in our team will fight the good fight and play [with] the heart of a warrior. We’ve been training so long and so hard,” he shares.

Now in his final year, Elijah has high expectations for the Blue and White. The 21-year-old is not just envisioning a podium finish, but a potential title as well. “We would like to bring it back [to the Ateneo]. With the team that we have now, I think we have the chance to do so,” he adds.

With years of judo expertise fortified by the perks of a brother-sister duo, the Claravalls are able to trust one another in their decisions and approaches when pushing their respective teams. As these co-captains take the helm through the upcoming UAAP season, they proclaim the potential of their judo family to thrive even further than before.

**“I expect that coming this UAAP season, they’ll never give up during matches and they’ll strive for more when they play.”**



ALL IN THE FAMILY. Eli Claravall and Yza Claravall are the formidable team captains of the men’s and women’s teams, respectively, of Ateneo Judo. They are the driving force behind the teams’ relentless pursuit of excellence, on and off the mats.

PHOTO BY STELLA ARENAS

YZABELLE CLARAVALL  
TEAM CAPTAIN  
ATENEO WOMEN’S JUDO TEAM

## OPINION

# To be Half-Filipino

BY MATTHEA P. LAZO

**FROM GENERATION** to federation, athletes of mixed races receive unwelcoming sentiments from the athletic community and are often victims of racial slander and discrimination. When ethnicity is deemed as the sole determinant of skill in the realm of sports, the idea of cultural diversity is dismissed, ultimately perpetuating courtesy in the name of global sportsmanship. By assuming that one's physical ability is dependent on racial background, sports enthusiasts unknowingly encourage race-based bias, discrediting the skills and efforts of mixed athletes and dividing the athletic community further.

Even in a country where Filipino pride is celebrated, an athlete who presents as only part-Filipino will inevitably be defined by their multiracial identity. While being biologically native has its own truth, being Pinoy at heart and in practice promotes a more meaningful athletic narrative beyond one's descent.

**MEDIA AND MISDIRECTION**

The Philippine media readily celebrates individuals with any trace of Filipino lineage when they showcase their talents on the international stage. These include celebrities with local ties, who are celebrated for Filipino representation in highly competitive atmospheres, such as in beauty pageants and in the entertainment industry.

One recipient of this recognition is Catriona Gray of Australian-Filipino descent, who showcased the defining

qualities of Filipino beauty as she was crowned Miss Universe in 2018. Gray's confidence, passion, and diligence have shown the world that Filipinos are capable of achieving greatness through hard work.

Hollywood actress Vanessa Hudgens holds the same pride for the Philippines. Now the country's Global Tourism Ambassador, Hudgens works to promote the country through a privately funded cultural documentary. Returning to her roots by visiting her homeland, Hudgens aspires to uphold the idea that Filipinos always strive to give the world their best.

However, the outlook on Filipino pride and representation takes a sharp turn when the spotlight is shone on an athlete; counterintuitively, one's ancestry begets a question of loyalty in the world of sports. Despite her silver medal finish at the 2023 Southeast Asian (SEA) Games, karateka Junna Villanueva-Tsukii received backlash for "having no trace of being Filipino."

The Philippine Women's National Football Team "Filipinas" also faced harsh criticism for its intimidating lineup of half-Filipino talents. Despite the team's impressive debut performance and victory over New Zealand at the 2023 Fédération Internationale de Football Association World Cup, football fans across the world viewed this as an inauthentic feat by the Philippines.

When physical attributes and surnames are treated as indispensables to the Filipino

athlete identity, the image of Philippine sports only distorts into an avenue for racial prejudice.

**THE QUESTION OF BEING "PART-FILIPINO"**

As mixed Filipino players are frequently perceived differently for their distinct technical style and physical appearance, it can be assumed that cultural diversity remains controversial in the highly competitive nature of sports. Filipino athletes of mixed backgrounds often have to prove their intent and skill to be recognized and respected by Philippine media and local fans.

Reflecting on her younger days, Ateneo Women's Basketball Team Co-Captain Sandra Villacruz emphasized the importance of having faith in oneself and trusting in one's capabilities. The Filipino-Chinese guard shared that, amid the excitement of participating in basketball camps, building experience with full-Filipino players came with curious comparisons with other athletes.

Being predominantly Chinese, Villacruz noted that the full-blooded Filipino athletes she learned from seemed faster and more athletic. However, despite sharing the playing field with an unfamiliar set of players, she stressed that all athletes must strive to keep exerting as much effort as they can in pursuit of what they love. "[In the face of adversity and diversity,] don't be afraid to be different," Villacruz shared.

The beauty of cultural differences extends to the collective and

distinct Filipino athlete identity regardless of how biologically "Filipino" a player is. "When you're Filipino, you embody strength and independence," shared Takako "Taks" Fujimoto of the Ateneo Women's Volleyball Team.

On and off the court, the Filipino-Japanese setter believes that success begins with the strength invigorated by athletes of the same team. This inspires her independence which comes with bouncing back to gain better results. When teamed together, both build camaraderie between Filipinos in sports. In times of hardship, Fujimoto likens her confidence in overcoming challenges to her Filipino-born eagerness to succeed.

When Filipinos empower one another to perform well for the love of the game, they promote inclusivity and healthy competition in sports. Should the athletic community find more value in the passion that Filipinos are all inherently born with and raised to have, no Filipino athlete would stand unsupported on the international stage.

**HAVING "PUSO"**

*Puso*, which directly translates to "heart" in English, stands for the Filipino passion and resilience that all Filipinos are expected to have. Rather than reserving *puso* for select athletes, it is better treated as a uniting sports philosophy that transcends ethnicity and athletic capability.

While the term may have different meanings unique to different individuals, *puso* embodies the shared commitment

to excellence by Filipinos all over the world.

"That's [really] fighting until the end, until the last possession. It's more of [doing] those little details, like sprinting a little faster when you're going for a layup," Villacruz says. She understood *puso* as having respect for a certain dream that one would run the extra mile to attain.

In crucial times, Fujimoto found meaning in *puso* as the undying team spirit. "When you hear *puso*, you believe you can do it," she shares. Always serving with *puso*, Fujimoto is assured that her personal skill and the team's synergy will always shine through to the finish.

Whether in sports, academics or in other fields, this intrinsic motivation to pursue greater things is what distinguishes any Filipino from the competition.

Although both athletes have shared that their respective fields are growing more open to diverse Filipino representation at the collegiate level, the general sporting community continues to display a hostile atmosphere towards mixed Filipinos.

Mixed Filipino athletes should neither be placed on a pedestal nor frowned upon, since cultural differences promote growth in all sports. Filipino athletes raised in other countries undergo entirely different training programs and face game tactics that are unfamiliar to local Filipinos. When part-Filipino athletes are equally viewed as assets to learn from and improve at the same time, Philippine sports may evolve into a more welcoming and constantly progressing avenue for moving forward with *puso*.



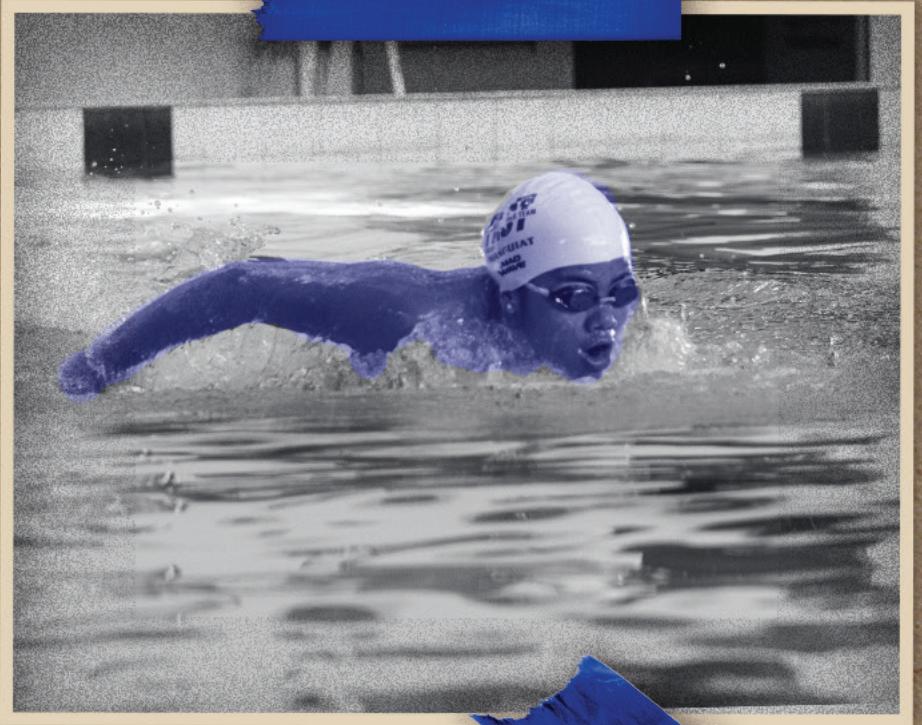
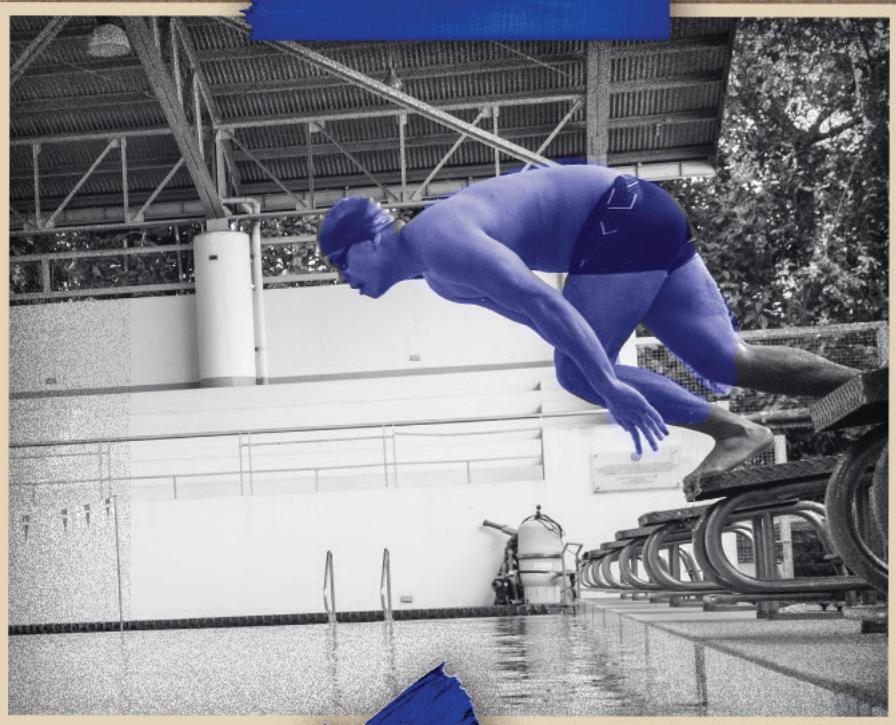
**When you're Filipino, you embody strength and independence.**

SANDRA VILLACRUZ

TEAM CO-CAPTAIN  
ATENEO WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM



# BLAZING THE ATENEAN TRAIL



**UAAP SEASON 86  
FIRST SEMESTER PRIMER**  
VIEW DIGITAL PRIMER HERE

# Beyond Loyola

FISHING THE SEA:  
The Philippine fishing  
industry's status as a  
global powerhouse fuels  
the country's seafood  
demand, but just how much  
do we really consume?

02



## A sea of food: PERSISTING PROBLEMS IN THE FISHING SECTOR

**PROVIDING LIVELIHOODS**  
for a large share of the population, the Philippines' waters remain of vital importance. The fisheries sector alone accounts for 1.6 million Filipino jobs and 1.3% of the Philippines' Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Despite the sector's vast contribution to the economy, its workers still experience one of the highest poverty rates in the country. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the sector was estimated to have a poverty rate of 30.6% in 2021.

Fishing groups continue to express their dismay towards the government's lack of action, with some even evaluating the current administration's response to their needs as a failure. As the needs of the country's fishing sector go unaddressed, many of the problems that it already faces could lead to increasingly severe consequences.

### UNSUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The industry currently faces a multitude of issues brought about by poor enforcement of fishing guidelines in Philippine waters. As a country rich with marine resources, the Philippines regularly faces cases of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

IUU methods such as overfishing pose a grave threat to the country's marine biodiversity as it reduces the volume and quality of our marine livestock. Such a problem may in turn adversely affect food security in the country since seafood makes up about 40% of the total animal-sourced protein consumed by Filipinos. Effects may also be felt economically as the country annually loses Php 62 billion to IUU fishing.

In spite of the harmful effects of IUU fishing, fishers still opt for these methods as a way to yield more profit. According to Nygiel Armada, Chief of Staff

of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Fish Right Program, the most common perpetrators are small-scale fisherfolk, who are actually aware of the proscriptions on IUU fishing.

According to a 2021 study by Misamis University, fisherfolk in the coastal areas of Misamis Occidental typically engage in illegal fishing methods as they struggle to provide for themselves and their families. While fishing was enough to provide their daily needs, it did not account for any extra expense that they would need to incur, such as sudden hospitalization or their children's education. Thus, despite the risks, IUU fishing yields more catches and has become a norm within some communities.

For fisherfolk to unlearn these traditions, Armada advocated that they be shown how sustainable fishing is actually just as profitable. He further expressed that fisherfolk must be taught about the environmental risks of IUU to their community as well as the waters in which they fish.

"The approach that [USAID Fish Right is] trying to work now is to focus on behavior change, focus on compliance, and show fishers that complying can be just as good as doing illegal [fishing] in terms of profit," he said.

### GAPS IN RESPONSE

As these issues persist, fisherfolk remain ill-equipped to handle them. According to Armada, the most basic challenge the country faces is the lack of equipment that can monitor our waters and apprehend violators. To address this, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) seeks to fully implement

the Monitoring Control and Surveillance System, which will track all fishing activities in the country.

Through the program, every fishing vessel in the country would ideally have a navigational device installed. The information gathered by this device would then be relayed to the BFAR's main office to help the government better identify and capture perpetrators of IUU fishing.

However, many fishing vessels have yet to comply with the program. Armada explained that while it has been easier getting commercial vessels to comply since they risk having their licenses stripped away, there has been very little compliance from small-scale vessels and none yet from municipal vessels.

Such implementation gaps are further exacerbated by the occurrences of foreign vessels poaching in the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Illegal poaching by Chinese vessels remains a major point of contention in the Philippines' current dispute with China over the West Philippine Sea (WPS) and has directly hampered the livelihoods of many fisherfolk in the country.

In a 2022 interview with Inquirer, Asis Perez, a former BFAR director, said that the Philippines could lose around 7.2 million kilograms of fish product for every month that China drives Filipino fishers out of WPS. This situation has had adverse effects on the income made by fisherfolk, which ranges from Php 300 to 1,000 for every fishing trip they make.

Many of these problems are not new, yet they persist. Although responses to the

sector's needs have been made, fisherfolk are left vulnerable by the gaps of inclusivity in policy-making and implementation.

### FUTURE PROJECTIONS

As the government navigates the tumultuous task of solving the fishing sector's immediate problems, more pressing challenges could trouble the industry in the near future. For instance, the ever-growing threat of the climate crisis looms over the sector. Alongside causing job insecurity, climate change could gravely damage the Philippine economy. Its impact on fisheries is expected to cause a 9% decline in the GDP if mitigation measures are put in place; in the worst-case scenario, the country could see a decline as steep as 18% up to 2060.

While Armada expressed that forecasting specific effects was difficult, fisheries would no doubt feel concrete and grievous impacts. "I can imagine that there will be more fishes going towards the north [where the waters are] cooler, as the Philippine oceans become warmer and we lose our biodiversity," he said.

The loss of biodiversity could become another factor leading to a further decline in the present fish volume, thus lessening fishing catches. Such a problem could only prove to worsen the living conditions of already impoverished fisherfolk.

To protect the livelihoods of fisherfolk in the country, Armada stated that protecting and increasing the reproductive capacities of fish need to be a primary focus of government bodies such as the Department of Agriculture, who have the help of scientists. He also said that further instituting policies such as seasonal closure is imperative for fish stocks to remain balanced as ocean temperatures continue to rise.

Ultimately, the intersectionality of these issues cannot be ignored. Armada himself emphasized how IUU methods further enhance the damage that climate change can cause, and the same is true for foreign vessels that poach in Philippine waters. While the government seeks to mend the sector's wounds, it is important they make sure that new ones do not take their place.

“

**The approach now that we're [Fish Right] trying to work is practically focus on behavior change, focus on compliance, showing fishers that complying can be just as good as doing illegal [fishing], in terms of profit.**

NYGIEL ARMADA  
CHIEF OF STAFF, USAID FISH RIGHT PROGRAM

“

**Although responses to the sector's needs have been made, fisherfolk are left vulnerable by the gaps of inclusivity in policy-making and implementation.**

# Net losses

BY RAM HEBRON  
ILLUSTRATION BY ABIGAIL M. CHUA

**THE PHILIPPINES** is no stranger to the multitudinal effects of climate change. With climate discourse becoming more prevalent, municipal fishing tends to be seldom discussed despite its consequentiality to the Philippine way of life.

For instance, Albay fisherman Federico Laprades Jr. noted in an interview with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs how Super Typhoon Rolly (Goni) halted his livelihood in 2020. Laprades—like countless other fishermen in his hometown—suffered severe damage to his home and work equipment such as his bangka (small boat).

"We're used to storms, but this one was really strong; the water level went all the way up from the shoreline to our house. We were scared but we couldn't really do anything but wait it out," he said.

As storms become tougher to brave, the country's food supply consequently faces a great risk. About 18% of the country's protein intake is seafood, with the Philippines being the world's eighth largest supplier of fish. In particular, the nation's poor rely on seafood both as a food source and a means of livelihood. As such, the effects of the climate crisis would not only impact the nation's economy but compound the plight of the less fortunate.

The environmental concerns faced by fisherfolk today pose a threat beyond the regular off-season. As the country bears current environmental tensions in the fishing industry, further complications may continue to wear the trade down. Whether the nation will be equipped to adapt to these ever-growing threats remains to be seen.

Mayo also asserted that the increased strength of typhoons coupled with hotter summers have made fishing a much more daunting task than in the past. The Philippines has the highest global disaster risk due to its position in the Pacific Typhoon

**With the consequences of climate change extending to marine life, declines in local fish populations only exacerbate the status quo of low returns for high-risk work within the industry, leaving the livelihoods of millions of Filipinos hanging in the balance.**



# Fishing the sea

BY RAM HEBRON  
ILLUSTRATION BY ABIGAIL M. CHUA

**THE PHILIPPINE** fishing industry's status as a global powerhouse fuels the country's seafood demand, but just how much do we really consume?

## PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

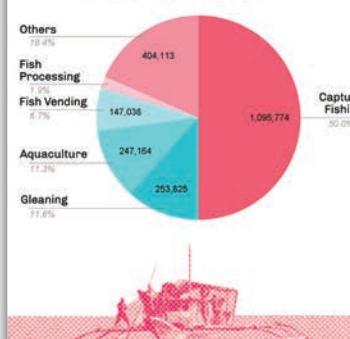
### ECONOMIC IMPACT

In 2021, the Philippines reported about 4.4 million tonnes of total seafood production, valued at approximately Php 248.47 billion—about 1.2% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

### WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

Around 2.19 million municipal fisherfolk are engaged in local fishing activities, with about half engaged in small-scale traditional fishing.

- As of 2021, the employment distribution of the 2.19 million fisherfolk is as follows:



## RESULTING EFFECTS

### MARINE ENVIRONMENT

- Households in the north of the country derive most of their income from fishing, but an increase in severe weather disturbance events will limit the number of fishing days.
  - Approximately 20 tropical cyclones either form or cross the Philippine Area of Responsibility each year.
    - Typhoon frequencies remained consistent over Luzon from the 1971–2000 period—slightly increasing in Visayas and decreasing in Mindanao.
    - Typhoon intensities have increased by 12–15% since 1970, and extreme rainfall is projected to increase in Luzon and Visayas over the next 30 years.
- Less than 1% of the nation's 26,000 square-kilometer coral reef area remains in excellent condition.
- Around 2.2 million tons of organic pollutants are released annually into local waters.
- Mangrove forests have been reduced to less than half of their size since 1918.

# Lagging behind

BY MAX S. KANG  
ILLUSTRATION BY ABIGAIL M. CHUA

**IMPROVEMENTS TO** the country's Internet connectivity infrastructure have been made throughout the years. In 2022, the Philippines' overall Internet speed in December 2022 rose to 25.12 megabits per second (Mbps) from its record of 19.2 Mbps in 2021. However, the country still lags behind the global median speed of 36.74 Mbps and ranks fifth among its ASEAN neighbors.

For a vast proportion of Filipinos, poor connectivity infrastructure means a lack of access to information as well as many basic services. Without equitable access to the Internet, the Philippines risks being left behind.

### STALLING SPEEDS

One significant hindrance in improving the Philippines' Internet is the lack of competition in the telecommunications industry. The three major Internet providers in the country are Globe Telecom, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT), and Dito Telecommunity Corporation (DITO).

While other smaller companies like Cablelink and Bambunet exist, their services are limited to fixed broadband plans rather than mobile Internet due to the industry's high barriers of entry. For instance, Republic Act (RA) No. 7925 or the Public Telecommunications Policy Act of 1995 requires telecommunications operators to build 400,000 telephone lines, which is an exorbitant yet unprofitable venture.

As such, only established business entities are capable of providing these services. Consumers thus have limited

## CONSUMPTION OVERVIEW

### CONSUMPTION TRENDS

- The Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and the National Capital Region (NCR) consume the least fresh fish per day, while the Zamboanga Peninsula (Region IX) consumes the greatest amount.

### DIET TRENDS

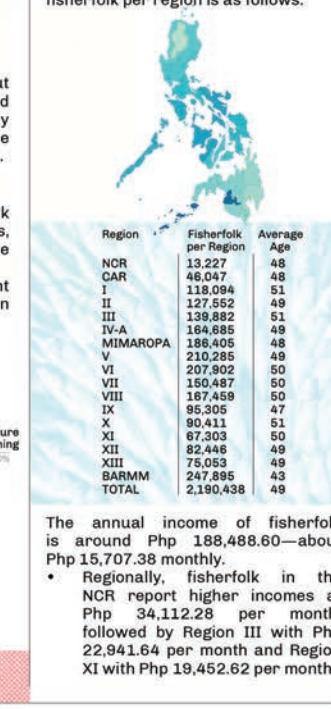
- Seafood accounts for about 42.2% of total animal protein intake and 18.3% of total protein intake in the country.
- Fresh fish is generally consumed equally among urban and rural areas, but rural consumers eat significantly greater amounts of dried fish and processed fish products.

### CONSUMPTION LEVEL

- Estimates of seafood consumption per capita have decreased from 36 kg per year in 1993 to 14.32 kg in 2018–2019.



The demographic distribution of fisherfolk per region is as follows:



The annual income of fisherfolk is around Php 188,486.60—about Php 15,707.38 monthly.

- Regionally, fisherfolk in the NCR report higher incomes at Php 34,112.28 per month, followed by Region III with Php 22,941.64 per month and Region XI with Php 19,452.62 per month.

From 2006 to 2018, the recorded poverty incidences of fisherfolk were relatively higher compared to the national poverty incidence. The records are as follows:



**PROFITABLE PRODUCTS** The ten highest-produced seafood products on a national level are:

- Seaweed
- Tuna
- Milkfish
- Sardines
- Tilapia
- Round Scad (Galunggong)
- Big-Eyed Scad (Matangbaka)
- Mackerel
- Shrimp
- Shellfish

### PRODUCTION HOTSPOTS

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has the highest production volume among all regions, accounting for 23.79% of the total volume of fisheries production.

- This was followed by Region IX (13.47%), MIMAROPA (8.90%), Region VI (8.87%), and Region III (8.68%).

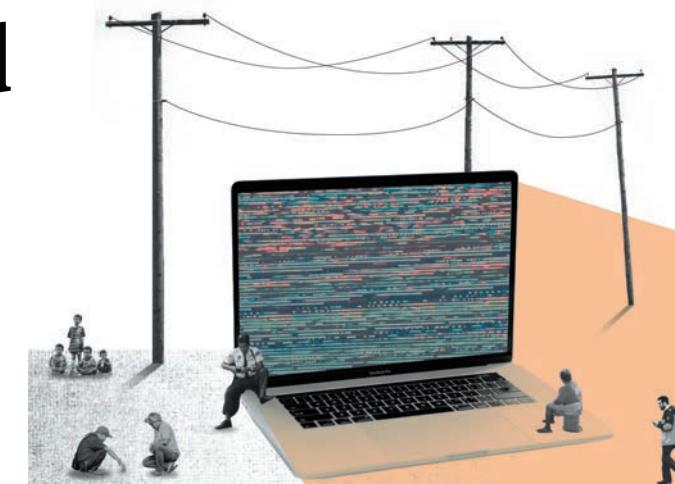


Overall, the Philippines ranks 8th among the top fish-producing countries in the world. Its total production of 4.35 million metric tons (MT) of seafood constitutes 2.06% of the total world production.

- The Philippines ranks 11th in the world for aquaculture production. Particularly, it is the 4th largest producer of aquatic plants with around 1.48 million tons or 4.56% of global production.

### POPULATION DECLINE

- Local fish populations are declining with catch rates on a steady loss since the 1980s. From 2011 to 2020, Philippine fisheries production lost an estimated more than 494,490 MT of fish.
  - In response to the decline in local supply, the government increases foreign imports from neighboring countries such as China, Vietnam, and Taiwan.
  - Sardine populations or Sardinella in Central and Western Visayas have been reported to be under particularly heavy fishing pressure, with stocks of *S. gibbosa*, *S. fimbriata*, and *S. lemuru* being overexploited.
  - Hauls of bigeye scad (*Selar crumenophthalmus*) have declined substantially in Surigao del Norte.
  - Management of commercial fisheries has been ineffective at reducing overfishing and replenishing local fish stocks.
  - Important sardine fishing hotspots such as in Visayas, Northern Mindanao, and Palawan enforce a strict three-month closed season to protect fish stock during their breeding season.



(DICT) Undersecretary for Public Affairs and Foreign Relations Anna Mae Lamentillo.

For the size of its Internet user base, the Philippines' cell tower infrastructure is insufficient, with macro cell towers serving a rough average of 3,500 Internet users at any given time. This figure is in stark contrast to the target tower-to-user ratio of the National Telecommunications Commission at one tower per 500 users.

High costs of network connectivity further limit access to the Internet. Netherlands-based information technology firm SurfShark ranked the Philippines 72nd globally in terms of Internet affordability, with Filipinos needing to work five hours a day to afford the cheapest mobile Internet package. The World Data Lab furthermore estimates that nearly 19 million Filipinos or 16.6% of the Philippines' population can currently be considered "Internet poor," which means that their monthly salary cannot buy a minimum Internet package of 1 gigabyte (GB) of data with 10 Mbps download speed.

### CATCHING UP

In spite of the unfavorable status quo, the Philippines has come a long way in upgrading its

Internet. As previously mentioned, the country's Internet speeds have been increasing. Moreover, competition in the industry is not completely stagnant; new entrants such as Converge ICT have encouraged telco giants to further innovate.

In government, both existing and pending legislation seek to improve the quality of Internet within the Philippines. RA No. 10929 or the Free Internet Access in Public Places Law of 2017 has prompted a rollout of 4,518 free Wi-Fi hotspots nationwide as of June 2022, though the pace of its implementation has been met with criticism from legislators. The DICT is also currently implementing an aggressive expansion of broadband connectivity nationwide as part of the National Fiber Backbone Program, the first phase of the National Broadband Plan.

Nevertheless, Filipinos must continue to demand urgent action from vital players. The government must also assess how its infrastructural and Internet-related policies affect accessibility and inclusivity across many sectors. The country must keep up with the digital landscape that now dominates nearly all spheres of life—and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

# Features



## COME HELL AND HIGH WATER: Storm-braving rescuers

In a country that puts disaster risk reduction and management on the back burner, rescue operation teams serve as the frontliners, valiantly saving lives even at the expense of their own.

BY AIDAN BERNALES AND JEANSHA MAE VIRAY

PITCH BLACK darkness engulfs you. The wind relentlessly bangs on your windows. Soon enough, the floodwater gushes in. Alarmed and desperate, you climb up the highest point of your home—the roof—where you find the rest of your neighbors desperately shouting for help. Never mind the soaked furniture and appliances. In these vulnerable times, nothing matters besides survival.

From a distance, people in personal protective equipment and flashlights approach you like your only sliver of hope. These unsung heroes brave the storm and risk their lives to save others, come hell or high water.

### MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE OR POSSIBLE?

Surrounded by enormous bodies of water, the Philippines is a hotspot for natural disasters, weathering around 20 typhoons per year. One of the most devastating was Typhoon Yolanda, which inflicted Php 95.48 billion worth of damage in 2013. Given the recurrent stories of destruction and casualties, the significance of disaster preparedness has become more salient in recent years.

As the disasters that the country faces evolve, the call for rescuers also escalates. Essentially, some step down from their jobs to do what they love: volunteering. Erwin Valdez, the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer II of the Quezon City Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Office (QCDRRMO), used to work at a hospital as a registered nurse before entering the Quezon City Emergency Medical Services

unit in the latter part of the 2000s. Upon realizing that he enjoyed field work compared to the hospital setting, Valdez eventually became a volunteer for the Emergency Operations Center unit.

According to Valdez, disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) was institutionalized in the aftermath of Typhoon Ondoy in 2009, when Regions I, II, III, IV-A, IV-B, V, Cordillera Administrative Region, and the entire National Capital Region

was submerged in floodwater. Since then, the Republic Act 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, was established to provide an all-hazards, multisectoral, and community-based approach to DRRM.

Collaboration, Valdez notes, is central to the operations of DRRM-related work. The QCDRRMO is further divided into four sections: administrative and finance, research and planning, training and logistics, and operations and warning. Each section works together on a pre-disaster risk assessment conducted before the landfall. After this, the operations and warning section monitors and evaluates information for related emergency services, such as medical or search, rescue, and retrieval.

At the top of their priority list are vulnerable sectors: persons with disability, senior citizens, pregnant women, and children. However, Valdez notes that the goal has always been to rescue everyone. Valdez confesses that he cannot recall a particular instance in his

barangays, local executives, and decision-makers to discuss the proposed course of action. To further account for the large area of Quezon City, the QCDRRMO taps into the potential of social media broadcasting to reach a wider audience, especially considering that five out of 142 barangays are flood-prone.

Despite rigorous and comprehensive preparations, the events that will ensue can be unpredictable. "We can never prepare enough," Valdez remarks.

### WHAT LIES IN EACH WAVE

Compared to earthquakes or fires, storms have an estimated "d-day," predicted with the aid of weather forecasting tools. On the countdown toward the impending deluge, rescuers review their battle plans and mentally prime themselves for what lies ahead.

Valdez shares that the main rescue method in the landlocked, low-lying areas of Quezon City is swift water rescue. A wealth of videos online demonstrate swift water rescue training, including rows of men dunking their heads in swimming pools and decoy officers feebly gliding with the violent currents. High-angle operations require rescuers to climb billboards while low-angle operations require rescuers to plunge into floodwater and scavenge for signs of life.

At the top of their priority list are vulnerable sectors: persons with disability, senior citizens, pregnant women, and children. However, Valdez notes that the goal has always been to rescue everyone. Valdez confesses that he cannot recall a particular instance in his

mission that stood out for him. Those that do, however, are distressing. "Iba 'yung nadatnan mo na nawala na, kaysa 'yung nahawakan mo na buhay pa pero nawala on your watch (Stumbling upon a corpse is different from witnessing someone perish on your watch)," he adds.

Last year, the onslaught of supertyphoon Karding claimed the lives of five rescuers in Bulacan. Eager to participate in the mission, they had assured people that they would be there to help, moments before they met their demise. All five rescuers left behind wives and children, a harsh reality that has kept Valdez—a father of three young children—away from on-the-ground work after his youth.

Such traumatic incidences necessitate rescuers to undergo institutionalized Mental Health and Psychosocial Support. "Every after [a] run, kapag may cases na namatay, [mag-usap-usap kami tungkol sa] nangyayari (Every after a run, if someone passes away, we process the event among ourselves)," Valdez says.

### HEAD ABOVE WATER

All jobs have their fair share of risks—but Valdez thinks that some are just greater than others. The tragic plight of the rescuers does not end when the storm does, as the rescuers' woes are intrinsically tied to how undervalued the DRRM sector is in the country, despite their tireless sacrifices.

Although Quezon City is relatively "gifted with funds," Valdez mourns the fact that the majority of their responders are still contractual. "Sometimes,

IT TAKES A VILLAGE. In times of typhoon disasters, volunteers at the Quezon City Disaster and Risk Reduction Management office propose solutions and initiatives to improve future rescue plans.

PHOTOS BY PAULINA SINGH  
PHOTO COURTESY OF QCDRRMO  
GRAPHIC BY DARYL D. SY



**Iba 'yung nadatnan mo na nawala na, kaysa 'yung nahawakan mo na buhay pa pero nawala on your watch (Stumbling upon a corpse is different from witnessing someone perish on your watch.)**

ERWIN VALDEZ

LOCAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICER II,  
QUEZON CITY DISASTER AND RISK REDUCTION MANAGEMENT OFFICE

they gather experience here then fly abroad because they receive higher salaries there," he explains in a mix of English and Filipino.

While labor groups appreciated the condolences of local officials and senators, they demanded much larger action from policymakers. "Their [deaths] should be a wake-up call to our lawmakers to end contractualization in the public sector," the Public Service Labor Independent Confederation had said in their statement. They requested the enactment of the Security of Tenure Bill which seeks to prohibit "labor-only" contracting.

Regularization would let employees receive health insurance, which Valdez considers a consolation that the family of the rescuers can benefit from—if anything unfortunate transpires.

The bill, however, was vetoed back in 2019.

Ultimately, search and rescue operations are a team effort, as Valdez notes. The DRRM program of the country strives to uphold the same perspective. Alfredo Lagmay, Executive Director of the University of the Philippines Resilience Institute, echoed the holistic approach stipulated in RA 10121 in his interview with CNN Philippines last December. He calls for the whole community to participate in anticipatory planning.

To ensure that each sector of the community is represented, DRRM involves not just the local government but also farmers, educators, businessmen, and many more. Furthermore, it must be proactive and preventive—rather than reactive—especially when the line between life and death can so easily be washed away.

# Keeping things clean

Empowering the endeavors of sanitation workers entails supporting them to earn more than simply "enough."

BY FRANCESCA ABALOS AND ODESSA JULIENNE REBAYA

**SANITATION WORKERS** strive to keep cities and communities clean. With public welfare on the line, no task is too mundane or meticulous for them.

Toiling day in and out, sanitation workers preserve the pristine conditions of spaces where people can feel comfortable. They go through their work days with pride, whether passersby notice them or not.

However, their own well-being comes secondary, as the absence of safety nets in their workplaces exposes them to constant threats of occupational hazards. The risks they face become more daunting as insufficient salaries leave them struggling to keep their families afloat.

#### HOLDING THE BROOM

Working in the University for over 15 years, Kuya Eric currently oversees the Science Education

Complex (SEC) A building. Besides mopping floors and changing out trash bags, he also repairs electric power outlets, tends the SEC gardens, and carries equipment during school-sanctioned events.

A short walk away, in the Loyola Heights Barangay Hall, a different set of sanitation workers dedicate their days to cleanliness. Ate Lot, Kuya John, and Ate Rosemary are part of the Eco-Aides, a team of 11 under the barangay's Solid Waste Management initiative.

On regular days, they clear garbage from the sidewalks. However, their tasks—like Kuya Eric's—are not confined to these undertakings. Once a week, they wade through the Katipunan creeks to clear trash from the waters. They also cut off tree branches that might fall on passersby or traveling cars.

After a laborious day, sanitation workers return to their individual families, whose sustenance largely depends on their income.

Kuya Eric has two children: one is currently a college student and the other is establishing her career as an accountant. His job helped him pay for his two daughters' college educations. He casually mentions that he is used to hardship, but he works diligently so his daughters never have to experience it.

Ate Lot and Ate Rosemary, each with their own families, draw the same inspiration from their loved ones to continue in their profession.

While without a household of his own, Kuya John remains resolute in his determination to assist in covering the living expenses of his mother and three siblings who live with him.

For many of them, this position was their sole option to survive as inflation rates soar and employment options dwindle, especially when not all of them have graduated from school. "Ang hirap maghanap ng trabaho sa panahon ngayon kung wala kang pinag-aralan (It's so difficult to find a job nowadays if you did not receive formal education)," Kuya John says.

**SWEEP UNDER THE RUG**  
Facing elusive job opportunities, Kuya Eric and the Eco-Aide workers remain in their current jobs to feed their families. "Natutulungan ko [ang pamilya ko] kasi ito 'yung pinili kong trabaho (I can help my family because I chose this job)," Ate Lot says.

Despite their gratitude, they also acknowledge the risks their work entails. Ate Rosemary explains that they always have to be careful, especially when dealing with the pavements of Esteban Abada. As they walk along its bustling and uneven sidewalks, they are mindful of their movements and positions, as a single misstep could result in

dire consequences they cannot afford to happen.

The creek cleanings they do every Saturday also pose more risks. Ate Jean elaborates that despite wearing boots, rat urine may contaminate the water, increasing their odds of contracting leptospirosis. Ate Lot, Ate Rosemary, and Kuya John all share a mutual dislike towards this particular task.

The Eco-Aides are also first responders during typhoons. "Kung dumating man 'yung bagyo na may kasamang malakas na ulan at hangin, 'pag once na may binaha, isa kami sa [mga] maglilikas ng tao (When a powerful typhoon comes that causes a flood, we are some of the volunteers who help those affected)," Ate Jean says.

During these times, they bring evacuees to the barangay hall for shelter, maintain its bathrooms, and distribute food. If a tree falls, they also go out with their chainsaws and bolos to clear whatever it is blocking.

Working with trees, even on regular days, is one of the scarier tasks for Ate Jean, as she had witnessed a colleague get electrocuted after coming in contact with a live wire while trimming tree branches. None of them mention any other instances of someone on their team getting hurt or sick, but this story is a reminder that they will not always be so lucky.

Within the Ateneo, Kuya Eric is also never as far from injury. In rare instances, he and the other maintenance staff help catch and release snakes that wander into the Ateneo buildings. Beyond these occasions, he emphasizes that his predominant concern lies in experiencing bodily discomfort due to the physical demands of handling heavy equipment.

**"Regardless of weather or location, sanitation workers put their physical safety and health on the line. Knowing this, regulations that ensure they get to go home unscathed must be enforced."**

During typhoons, he also goes on-campus for work because he needs to wait for the University to cancel classes. He and his colleagues always notice how slippery the floors get during the rain, so they mop and put up signs to keep the community safe. "Your [the students'] safety is number one," he remarks in a mix of Filipino and English.

Regardless of weather or location, sanitation workers put their physical safety and health on the line. Knowing this, regulations that ensure they get to go home unscathed must be enforced.

#### CLEANING FROM THE GROUND UP

All of these workers say that although labor protections exist, they remain invisible and unfelt. Despite putting their welfare at risk, their safety is left to their discretion, rather than overseen by sanctioned procedures. The burden of worrying about their well-being is not on their employers, but on them.

The lack of protective regulations does not just affect these workers, but their families as well. With other people to support, any injury or illness that keeps them from working means less money for everyday needs.

The Eco-Aides consistently highlight that they do not receive adequate financial compensation for their work or the risks it entails. Although they receive hazard pay, such remunerations do not truly alleviate their situation.

"*Kulang pa [rin]* (It's still not enough)," Ate Rosemary declares, referring to their Php 9,400 monthly pay. "*Pinagkakasya lang namin para lahat meron* (We just make it work for the whole household.)"

On the other hand, Kuya Eric makes Php 30,000 per month, enough for him and his family to live comfortably. However, the maintenance staff assigned to the Schmitt Hall are the only ones who receive Php 50 per day hazard pay, given that the building houses laboratories with harmful substances.

Ultimately, the Eco-Aides and Kuya Eric do not mind the nature of their duties. "*Walang problema po sa trabaho namin kahit mahirap. Kakayanin, kaso kailangan lang po namin ang [mas mataas] na sahod para naman matulungan namin 'yung pamilya namin* (We have no problem with our job even if it is hard. We can endure. We just need better wages so we can help our families)," Ate Lot says, summarizing the sentiments of sanitation workers.

All of them advocate for humane working conditions, but a better life necessitates a living wage that enables them to earn more than simply "enough." Working towards such a goal clears the dust that clouds the realization of their hopes and dreams. Lobbying for their welfare ensures that their calls to enhance their families' standard of living will no longer be brushed aside.

**Walang problema po sa trabaho namin kahit mahirap. Kakayanin, kaso kailangan lang po namin ang [mas mataas] na sahod para naman matulungan namin 'yung pamilya namin (We have no problem with our job even if it is hard. We can endure. We just need better wages so we can help our families).**

ATE LOT, ECO-AIDE  
LOYOLA HEIGHTS BARANGAY HALL



**TIDYING DUST AND DIRT.** Sanitary workers traverse around the streets of Katipunan and the halls of Ateneo in order to ensure that waste is cleared and floors are cleaned.

PHOTO BY NAOMI SORIANO

# Inquiry

TREMORS ON THE HILL:  
In pursuing a disaster-resilient Ateneo, there is a crucial need to tackle interconnected challenges in earthquake preparedness.

02

## Atenean student activism through the years

BY ASHLEY ENRIQUEZ AND REGINA MANALO

PHOTO COLLAGE BY MIGUEL ABAD

**ONE BIG FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS.** As the social and political climate of the Philippines shifts, Ateneans continue to find ways to advocate and fight for truth and justice

Images from:  
Gabriel J. Medina, Matthew G. Yuching,  
Zach G. Garcia, Jerry Feng, Regine Salumbre,  
Jim Dasal, John P. Oranga, Casey Mateo,  
and Julia Carpio (The GUIDON)

**SITUATING ITSELF** in the larger Philippine society, the Ateneo has been a cradle of student activists who stood at the forefront of the national struggle for liberation and social justice.

From burning newsprints of publications owned by Marcos cronies in 1983 to denouncing the Anti-Terror Law's unconstitutional provisions in 2020, the campus gates have witnessed Ateneans across generations confront the social ills of their contemporary setting.

Now with the dictator's son and namesake in the seat of power, student activists face more serious threats of external socio-political harassment, opening discussions on the University's progress as a safe space for dissent.

### HISTORY IN THE MAKING

In the late '60s, the Filipinization movement in the Ateneo was in full swing, aiming to deepen the socio-political and civic engagement of the Atenean community. With Ferdinand Marcos Sr. elected for a second presidential term, civil unrest and a surge in student demonstrations defined the decade to come.

On January 18, 1971, 200 students from Ateneo and its neighbor Maryknoll—now Miriam College—marched from Katipunan to Cubao, and then to a corner in EDSA. The students staged a demonstration in Camp Crame, calling for the impeachment of Marcos Sr. for the use of heavy militarization, the death of student activists, and the "fascist-like" raid that took place in the now-closed Ateneo Padre Faure campus.

In his valedictory speech "In Retrospect," Class 1972 Valedictorian Joven D. Reyes (AB MA '72) marked his entry in the Ateneo during what he called a period of

national awakening and upsurging nationalism. "Some 14 members of Class 1972 have dropped out of school and have graduated into what they call full-time activism to serve the people," he remarked.

When the dictatorship neared its downfall, Philosophy professor Manuel Dy Jr., PhD (AB PH '67) recalled how faculty members and student dormers set up a food brigade in Gate 4 of Camp Aguinaldo at the height of the seniors' final exams season in February 1986.

As a dormitory prefect, Dy received endless telephone calls from parents asking about their children's whereabouts. In response, he would offer his reassurance. "Naging tape recorder ako, Ma'am, don't worry Ma'am, your son is making history," he shared.

(I was like a tape recorder, "Ma'am, don't worry Ma'am, your son is making history.")

### CROSSING THE LINE

These events that changed the course of history are memorialized through the books published by the University Press and annual Martial Law commemorations.

For instance, Edgar "Edjop" Jopson—whose documentary was also screened in last year's commemorative event—is deemed the ideal Atenean activist. The Martial Law Museum even describes him as "a symbol for the idealistic Filipino youth, dedicating their entire lives to their country [...] even to the point of death."

Carrying the legacy of Atenean activists at present is Maria Maranan (4 AB HI). Entering the Ateneo in 2020 when the Anti-Terrorism Law was legislated, she decided to join Samahan ng Progresibong Kabataan - Katipunan (SPARK). She resonated with their cause of collective action

against working-class issues and fearlessly opposing repression.

Having participated in protests such as SPARK's solidarity campaign with the Ateneo Employees and Workers Union, Maranan said that the University administration's attitude towards present activists is not as "supportive," as they tend to shut down protests.

"Ateneo is coming from this place where you are projecting as progressive, but there's always a line, an idea that 'Wait, you can't be too radical.' [...] There's always a line

allowed on certain time periods as these can "disrupt" classes. "You have to follow this, you have to follow that. At times, it gets in the way of the actual point of a protest," she added.

### SAFEGUARDING STUDENT ACTIVISTS

Despite the University's seemingly conservative stance on activism, it continues to offer avenues for student formation. These include the Binhi, Punla, and Bigkis programs of the

However, Maranan finds the formation programs to be inadequate if one were to champion a sustained form of political engagement. "You only do [these programs] sometimes or once, and then it's like you check it off your list," she shared.

Maranan believes "consistent, practical experience" is key in truly addressing social ills, although she acknowledges the students' reluctance to engage with societal issues due to safety concerns and persistent red-tagging in the country.

Having experienced a precarious situation during a protest, Maranan divulged that she would not turn to the University for protection against red-tagging. "There are protections, of course, against gender identity, religion, ethnicity," she explains. "Dapat kasama rin ang politics doon (Politics should be part of it.)"

While the Loyola Schools Undergraduate Student Handbook details the students' rights against prior restraint and the militarization of the school campus, there is a lack of implementing policies that protect students from any possible socio-political harassment within and beyond the campus. The absence of protective mechanisms poses threats to the welfare of student leaders and activists, especially since the University has been red-tagged by military officials under the Duterte administration in different instances.

Acknowledging this gap, Arcigal and Tan intend to refine the Sanggunian's Socio-Political Harassment Help Desk, which was launched in 2021 to little exposure. Created upon the passage of the Socio-Political Safeguarding Act, the help desk aims to provide immediate psychosocial support, legal assistance, and

security to Ateneans who have experienced red-tagging.

### REDEFINING ACTIVISM

With the country's ever-changing socio-political realities, Ateneans are compelled to continue the culture of student activism in a way that proactively provides solutions to societal problems.

According to Maranan, the Ateneo's positionality must be challenged for the University to genuinely connect with the struggles of the masses. "We need to come to terms with [its position as an elite university] in a way that is actually productive," she suggested.

For her, being an activist means going beyond one's privileged upbringings, which entails dedicating one's life to the causes of the poor and marginalized sectors of society.

Following this, Arcigal believes that the Ateneo can serve as a place of solidarity among students, which can resound beyond campus grounds.

"Marami tayong resources na

pwebe nating gamitin to mobilize

people and really take action.

[...] Dapat siyang gamitin nang

mayaos, para sa tama, at para sa ikabubuti ng masa," Tan added.

(We can use a lot of resources

to mobilize people and really take

action. [...] We should use these

properly, justly, and for the good

of the masses.)

In a society that grows warmer to the presence of the Marcoses, Ateneans are called to stand their ground on the plains that belie the proverbial Hill, so as to ultimately flatten it. Working for such necessities the University to provide its activists with adequate protection and security, ensuring that the Atenean spirit of activism can be sustained for generations to come.

**Ateneo is coming from this place where you are projecting as progressive, but there's always a line, an idea that 'Wait, you can't be too radical.' [...] There's always a line that must not be crossed.**

MARIA MARANAN

SAMAHAN NG PROGRESIBONG KABATAAN-KATIPUNAN CHAPTER HEAD

that must not be crossed," she said in a mix of English and Filipino.

The administration's ambivalent stance on activism is nothing new. In 1971, seven student leaders faced disciplinary action for carrying out a boycott protesting the dismissal of two progressive faculty members.

Currently, the administration's lengthy, bureaucratic process for holding protests becomes discouraging for some student groups. According to Maranan, even noise barrages are not

# Tremors on the hill: Envisioning an earthquake-resilient Ateneo

BY ALEXANDRA P. ELICANO AND KATE SAN MATEO  
INFOGRAPHIC BY KIANA PATRICIA REFUERZO

"I LITERALLY froze. I know what to do, but fear got the better of me."

What began as a normal history class on the second floor of Bellarmine Hall soon became a moment of panic for Gian Marquez (3 BS ES) when an intensity IV earthquake was felt in Quezon City last June 15.

On the Ateneo grounds, everyone experienced the earthquake differently. Marquez recalled seeing the projector shaking before feeling a swinging sensation, which fit the description for a moderately strong intensity earthquake on the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) Earthquake Intensity Scale.

As of writing, 94 earthquakes classified as moderate to major hit different parts of the Philippines beginning in mid-June, with recorded magnitudes ranging from 4.0 to 6.3.

These recent earthquakes, coupled with fears surrounding the imminent dangers posed by The Big One, strengthen students' call for increased efforts in building a disaster-resilient Ateneo community.

#### NO SENSE OF URGENCY

Boosting its disaster preparedness initiatives, the University held emergency drills for Grade School and Junior High School early this year. However, undergraduate students from the Higher Education Cluster (HEC) have yet to experience such efforts since the return of onsite classes.

When asked about his own earthquake preparedness, Marquez admitted feeling "nowhere near confident" especially without undergoing any drills and training sessions conducted by the University. He was also unaware of the specific evacuation assembly areas on campus.

While this calls for effective, constant communication between the administration and the whole Ateneo community, being well-informed alone does not ensure disaster preparedness.

Despite knowing exactly what to do when an earthquake hits,

Marquez found himself unable to move due to the shock. There was also no automatic response nor reaction from his instructor and other classmates at the time.

In these moments of emergencies, Marquez emphasized the need for disaster preparedness training, not only for students but also for the whole Ateneo workforce. According to him, training and seminars would help faculty and other employees "relay information to students and proactively react to the situation" in case of an earthquake.

However, apart from conducting extensive preparations for emergencies, examining students' perceptions and attitudes toward disaster preparedness is also crucial. Students seem to display a lacking sense of urgency, as observed among Ateneans leaving the campus before fire and earthquake drills and some students making a TikTok video during the actual June 15 earthquake evacuation.

Marquez finds this passive attitude beyond alarming. "It seems like the occurrence of natural disasters [is] being attributed by students for class suspension. [...] There [really] is no sense of urgency anymore to everyone," he says.

#### REEVALUATING STRUCTURAL RESILIENCE

While University members are encouraged to commit themselves to safety procedures, the Central Facilities and Management Office (CFMO), together with the Local Unit Emergency Response Team (LUERT), undertakes a crucial responsibility in evaluating the seismic vulnerability and structural integrity of campus buildings.

Following the June 15 earthquake, CFMO Director Michael Canlas shares that they conducted an inspection of the campus for possible building cracks and deformities. He adds that the unit's Post Construction and Building Care section ensures that campus facilities are monitored and thoroughly assessed to determine the necessary interventions.

Canlas notes that the University's recent architectural projects, as well as its forthcoming construction

# #LigtasSaSakuna: Earthquake Safety Reminders and Guideline

BY ALEXANDRA P. ELICANO AND KATE SAN MATEO  
INFOGRAPHIC BY KIANA PATRICIA REFUERZO



As potential dangers surrounding The Big One continue to loom, earthquake preparedness can be vital in saving one's life. A major part of being prepared is staying informed.

## 100-150 EARTHQUAKES

hit the Philippines every year on average, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).

These earthquakes vary in magnitude and intensity. PHIVOLCS defines magnitude as the "energy released by an earthquake at the focus" and is recorded using a seismograph. On the other hand, intensity refers to "the strength of an earthquake as perceived and felt by people."

## BRACING FOR THE BIG ONE

As earthquakes mostly occur due to fault movements, PHIVOLCS regularly monitors around 30 active fault systems in the Philippines. One of these is the West Valley Fault (WVF), which stretches over a span of 100 kilometers from Angat, Bulacan to Calamba, Laguna.

Currently, the most imminent concern stemming from the WVF is the potential occurrence of "The Big One," which refers to severe earthquake scenarios in the Philippines, particularly the worst-case seismic event in Metro Manila. Following a 400-year cycle, the WVF is forecasted to soon trigger a 7.2-magnitude earthquake after previously causing a major tremor in 1658.

According to the Metro Manila Earthquake Impact Reduction Study (MMEIRS), The Big One could cause the following:

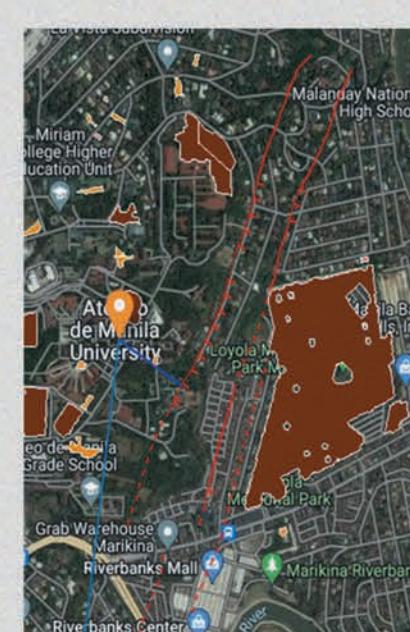
- Frequent instances of building collapse in the regions encompassing Western Marikina City, Eastern Pasig, and notably, North Eastern Quezon City.
- Most substantial impact on educational institutions, followed by hospitals and fire stations.

**8-10% HEAVILY DAMAGED OR COLLAPSED**

**20-25% MODERATELY DAMAGED**

This anticipated earthquake raises notable apprehension, particularly for the Ateneo, which stands close to the West Valley Fault.

## NAVIGATING THE RISKS



This map from DOST-PHIVOLCS shows the Ateneo campus situated right next to the WVF. Only 303 meters to the northwest of WVF, Ateneo's proximity to the fault line puts the University at Intensity VIII for significant ground shaking. Otherwise, the University remains safe from other threats posed by a major earthquake.

The Ateneo Primer on Disaster Preparedness indicates that the following grade school buildings are situated in close proximity to the WVF:

- DAVID HALL
- FERMIN HALL
- PACQUING HALL

While distant from the Higher Education Cluster, the buildings' close positioning to the WVF poses a general concern for the entire Ateneo community.

undertakings, adhere to the guidelines specified in the National Structural Code of the Philippines. This compliance to established regulatory principles guarantees the structures' integrity and their capacity to withstand seismic events.

Meanwhile, older buildings undergo retrofitting measures based on CFMO's findings from inspection and examination. These efforts are done in recognition of the close

proximity of certain areas on campus to the West Valley Fault (WVF), where The Big One is forecasted to originate.

As highlighted in the Ateneo Primer on Disaster Preparedness, three grade school buildings—specifically David Hall, Fermin Hall, and Pacquing Hall—stand close to the WVF. While these structures are distant from the HEC, their adjacency to the fault line raises concerns for the entire Ateneo community.

According to Canlas, the Campus Safety and Mobility Office (CSMO) collaborates with the school units and conducts two emergency drills per year, encompassing both unit-wide and University-wide exercises. It also engages in the post-drill evaluation and solicits feedback from LUERT members and the Building Emergency Assistance Team.

To assess the Ateneo's readiness for earthquakes, LUERT head

Christopher Castillo shares that they measure the speed of University members in evacuating the building and reaching emergency assembly areas, which are the Bellarmine Field, the Ateneo Baseball Field, and the major and minor Ocampo Fields.

On the other hand, Canlas points out the importance of referring to classroom posters displaying earthquake response procedures,

**"The advocacy here is for people to be not dependent on external prompting on how to be safe. Each one has a responsibility to keep oneself safe and those within reach."**

CHRISTOPHER CASTILLO

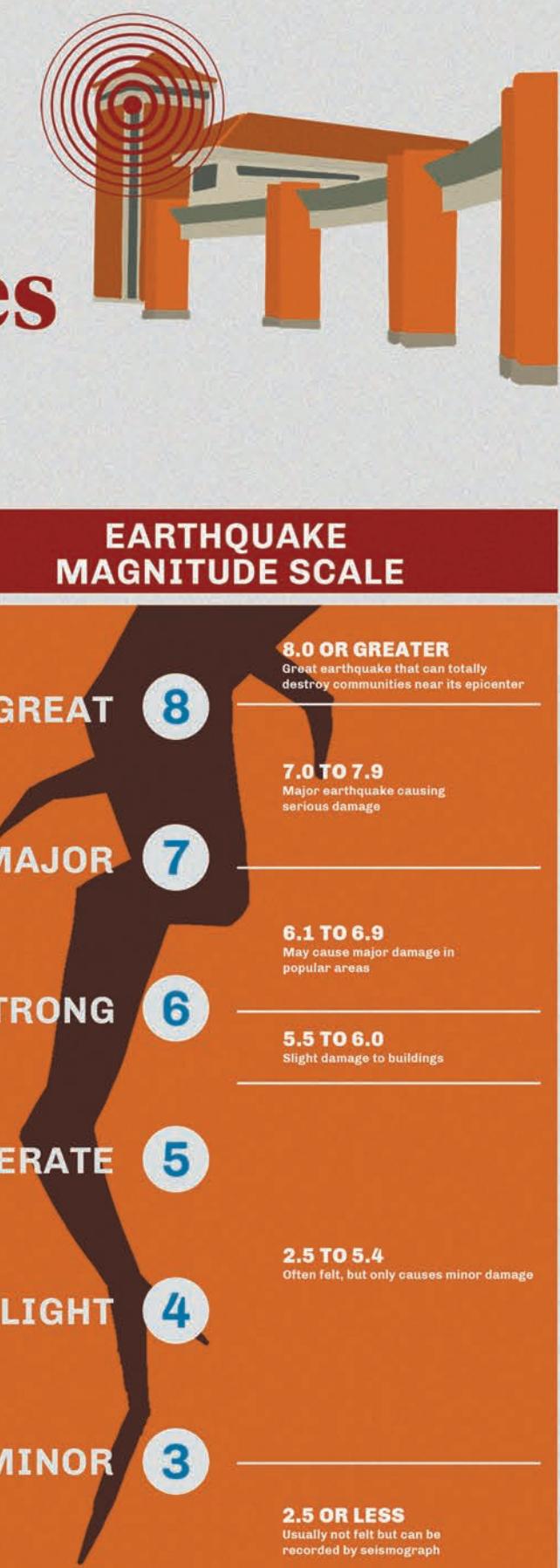
HEAD OF THE

LOCAL UNIT EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (LUERT)



Familiarize yourself with exit routes, and

Secure furniture and other items to prevent injury if they fall.



EARTHQUAKE INTENSITY SCALE		
INTENSITY	SHAKING	WHAT PEOPLE MAY EXPERIENCE
<b>1</b>	<b>SCARCELY PERCEPTIBLE</b>	- Noticeable to some people - Water moves slowly
<b>2</b>	<b>SLIGHTLY FELT</b>	- Felt by few people indoors - Hanging objects swing slightly - Water moves noticeably
<b>3</b>	<b>WEAK</b>	- Felt by people indoors, especially in upper floors - Some experience dizziness - Hanging objects swing
<b>4</b>	<b>MODERATELY STRONG</b>	- Light sleepers are awakened - Hanging objects swing - Plates, utensils, windows and doors rattle - Water moves strongly
<b>5</b>	<b>STRONG</b>	- Many sleeping people are awakened - Shaking felt in buildings - Hanging objects swing violently - Light or unstable objects may fall
<b>6</b>	<b>VERY STRONG</b>	- People lose balance - Motorists feel like driving with flat tires - Heavy furniture move - Cracks appear on walls - Trees shake
<b>7</b>	<b>DESTRUCTIVE</b>	- People have difficulty standing in upper floors - Furniture toppled - Church bells ring - Old or poorly-built structures damaged
<b>8</b>	<b>VERY DESTRUCTIVE</b>	- People have difficulty standing - Damaged buildings and bridges - Railway tracks broken - Tombstones overturned - Landslides
<b>9</b>	<b>DEVASTATING</b>	- People are thrown to ground - Totally damaged buildings - Bridges destroyed - Towers tilted - Landslides
<b>10</b>	<b>COMPLETELY DEVASTATING</b>	- Destruction of man-made structures - Massive landslides - River courses change - Trees uprooted

Source: PHIVOLCS

STAYING CONNECTED	
<b>LS EMERGENCY HOTLINES</b>	
CSMO	4991
ATENEO RISK MANAGEMENT UNIT	0999 885 4392 4208
SECURITY PERSONNEL	4111 5580
LS OFFICE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING	0920 918 2532 0920 946 6201 0920 859 8798
HEALTH SERVICES	0998 842 2791 0999 885 4922 0968 895 2768
QUEZON CITY EMERGENCY HOTLINE	122

## ECHOING EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS MEASURES

### BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE



### DURING AN EARTHQUAKE



### AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

#### INDOORS

- Quickly get down onto your hands and knees (drop/duck), and take cover under sturdy furniture or against an interior wall.
- Protect your head and neck until the shaking stops.
- Stay indoors, avoid running or panicking, and watch for falling objects.
- Turn off equipment with hazardous materials if possible.
- Remember unsafe conditions, trapped individuals, or hazards to report later.

#### OUTDOORS

- Stay outside, and move to an open area away from buildings, trees, and wires.
- Be cautious of falling objects, especially if standing near buildings.

#### IN A VEHICLE

- Stop in an open area. Avoid bridges and overhead wires.
- Stay in the vehicle until the shaking stops.

#### EVACUATION

- Go to the designated evacuation assembly area. Do not use elevators.
- Take emergency supplies, keys, wallet, and purse.
- Report injuries or hazards, do not move people who are seriously injured unless necessary.
- Await instructions, be patient, and prepare for aftershocks.
- Stay on campus until safety is confirmed, as roads may be damaged.

#### WHEN TRAPPED INSIDE A BUILDING

- Stay calm and use clothing to signal rescuers.
- Tap on walls or pipes for location indication.
- Signal with a flashlight or whistle if available.
- Pull the manual fire alarm if possible.
- Shout only as a last resort, avoid unnecessary movement, and cover your nose and mouth.

such as the “duck, cover, and hold” technique. However, he admits that these posters have to be updated due to changes in hotline numbers.

Expanding upon this, the LUERT plans to develop instructional videos or use social media platforms to communicate basic emergency response protocols, although doing so may require the active involvement of some central offices.

#### SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

As seismic risks persist, the need for a better-coordinated effort among the Ateneo community becomes even more apparent. Marquez urges the administration to conduct more drills as an avenue where students can apply what they already know. “Train them, instill a culture of urgency and responsiveness to them [...] Have them be

prepared during [disaster and emergency] scenarios,” he says.

Meanwhile, Canlas states that the University constantly updates its disaster preparedness plans by coordinating with agencies such as the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, the Bureau of Fire Protection, and the Barangay Response Team. The CSMO also partners with the Ateneo Institute of

Sustainability in improving safety guidelines and organizing disaster-related workshops.

Following this, Castillo recognizes the influence and network of student groups as effective channels for disseminating crucial information to their peers. He underscores the shared duty of the administration and various organizations to guarantee each other’s well-being.

“The advocacy here is for people to be not dependent on external prompting on how to be safe. Each one has a responsibility to keep oneself safe and those within reach,” Castillo asserts.

Similarly, Marquez prompts Ateneo student organizations to do their part and spearhead localized disaster preparedness initiatives, such as information drives and disaster response

training. “We really don’t know when disasters will happen so it really boils down [on] how prepared [we] are,” he reiterates.

As earthquakes remain unpredictable, the safety of the Ateneo community lies in the institution’s consistent and extensive preparations. Thus, effective systems and improved coordination within the University are essential in securing an unshaken hill.

# Looming figures: Rethinking safety in Katipunan

BY CAMILLE DOMINIQUE (MON) SALIPSIP AND NICOLE ANNE KELSY SY

AS STUDENTS come from their evening classes or pull an all-nighter at Matteo Up for finals, the lively Ateneo spirit during the day seems to wane at night. With a dark Red Brick Road and a silent SEC walk, trudging the University streets and roads during late hours might be frightening for some students.

Although the Ateneo may seem like a ghost town during the night, students are never alone as guards are stationed by the gates and in some buildings to ensure the community's safety. Stepping out of the campus, however, welcomes one to an entirely different experience.

With students and civilians alike occupying bars and restaurants scattered across the avenue, Katipunan nightlife becomes busy and alive. However, when these individuals tread the path of going home, they become vulnerable to various threats from perpetrators on the streets.

These recent safety issues pile up in anonymous platforms such as the ADMU Freedom Wall, raising concerns over the effectiveness of security measures observed inside the campus and within the dark sketchy streets of Katipunan. With such crimes transpiring, the role of proper authorities is crucial in safeguarding the entirety of Loyola Heights.

#### RENEWED PROTOCOLS

Since the University resumed its onsite operations, crimes have also slowly returned to the streets. Over the last year, there have been cases of suspects posing as officers in order to intimidate

their victims. Most notably, the shooting case that happened in Areté occurred in the same year, leaving three dead and one injured.

In light of these incidents, the Campus Safety and Mobility Office (CSMO) has further fortified the Ateneo's safety guidelines by intensifying Campus Access Request procedures. Since then, the University has also requested police visibility on campus during major events, along with the utilization of metal detectors and K-9 units in conducting bag inspections.

For off-campus incidents of theft, however, CSMO Assistant Director Jomer Maghirang notes that processing reports of such cases is not within their jurisdiction. Thus, they offer assistance to students by relaying these reports to the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the authorities of Barangay Loyola Heights.

Situated right in front of the Ateneo, Brgy. Loyola Heights and its authorities remain to be a relevant arm in securing Ateneans' safety outside the campus. For instance, Kagawad Renz Murao narrated their immediate response during the shooting incident last year. Before the University could call for their assistance, their team of personnel—along with the officers-in-charge—were already stationed in areas near the campus. This allowed them to hear the commotion and rush to chase the suspect.

Additionally, Murao shared their recent coordination with the CSMO in deploying guards by the footbridges, especially

those leading to Gates 2.5 and 3.5. During the night, these officers-in-charge position themselves above the footbridges so they can respond to any crime incidents that usually happen there.

As such incidents continue to occur in Katipunan, students are forced to remain vigilant both outside and within campus grounds.

#### SENSE OF SECURITY

With the return of onsite activities, many students have to frequent the campus and Katipunan roads at night due to their evening classes or extra-curricular events.

Among these students is Viktoria Danikka Galabo (2 BS PSY), who would often endure the rigorous test runs of Loyola Mountaineers until 7 PM. When studying in nearby cafes, she would often have to walk around campus until 11:30 PM.

Regardless of these late hours, Galabo expressed that she has never felt hesitant to leave her dormitories at night. "As a dormer and a woman, I really feel safe walking around campus," she shares.

Galabo attributes this feeling of safety to a number of security measures put in place within the University. In particular, she points out that guards would usually roam around the campus on motorcycles. Some of them also patrol the dormitory grounds. However, Galabo has observed that there would be fewer guards in the evening.

In terms of exiting and entering the Ateneo gates, Galabo also explains that there are existing

protocols in place. For one, dormers have a midnight curfew that they would have to meet to avoid getting reprimanded.

These University safety protocols are communicated to dormers through a dorm kit, which also specifies that whenever leaving the campus overnight or near the curfew, they would have to sign out from their logbook and inform the guards of their expected time of return.

Furthermore, re-entering the campus at late hours requires dormers to have the guards check their IDs for an updated dormer validation sticker, which is also renewed at the start of every semester. As an added layer of security, the dormer's identity is verified by calling the dormitory itself.

In contrast to this sense of comfort within campus grounds, Galabo feels hesitant to walk within certain areas in Katipunan. She specifies that she usually avoids the inner roads like Esteban Abada or Xavierville, because unlike the main road, fewer cars pass there during the night. Reports of hold-ups and robberies around Katipunan had also contributed to her fear.

#### PRACTICING PRECAUTIONS

As possible danger still persists beyond the University's control, protocols and reminders must be improved to avoid cases of theft and security breaches from reoccurring.

Currently, the coordination between the Ateneo and Brgy. Loyola Heights only relies on their respective contacts and their adherence to their specific protocols, such as bringing

suspects to the barangay or to the Police Station 9.

To further advance this collaboration, Kagawad Letty Palanog suggests that the Ateneo administration conduct a student orientation regarding safety measures. According to her, these can include keeping their cell phones and laptops inside their bags and staying responsible when drinking late at night.

Moreover, Murao and Palanog advise students to be more vigilant with the attire of an officer. They emphasize that *barangay tanods* always have an ID, and usually wear either a blue or white uniform. Along with this, the barangay now requires business establishments to put up CCTV cameras in order to improve safety around the avenue.

Maghirang also reminds students to never give their personal information to strangers and avoid dark areas or walking alone at night. For her personal safety, Galabo shares that she opts to take a tricycle instead when going from one location to another during late hours.

In the end, one's safety can be widely determined by their vigilance and individual adherence to precautions. However, it is also heavily influenced by systems and policies in place, underscoring the need for combined efforts between relevant institutions within and beyond the University.

With this, Murao calls on school authorities and student leaders to strengthen

their collaboration for more improved safety mechanisms. "Yung mga nakakausap ninyo sabihin niyong mag-ingat, sabihin niyo 'yung mga precaution na dapat gawin. [...] Tulungan na lang tayo," he said.

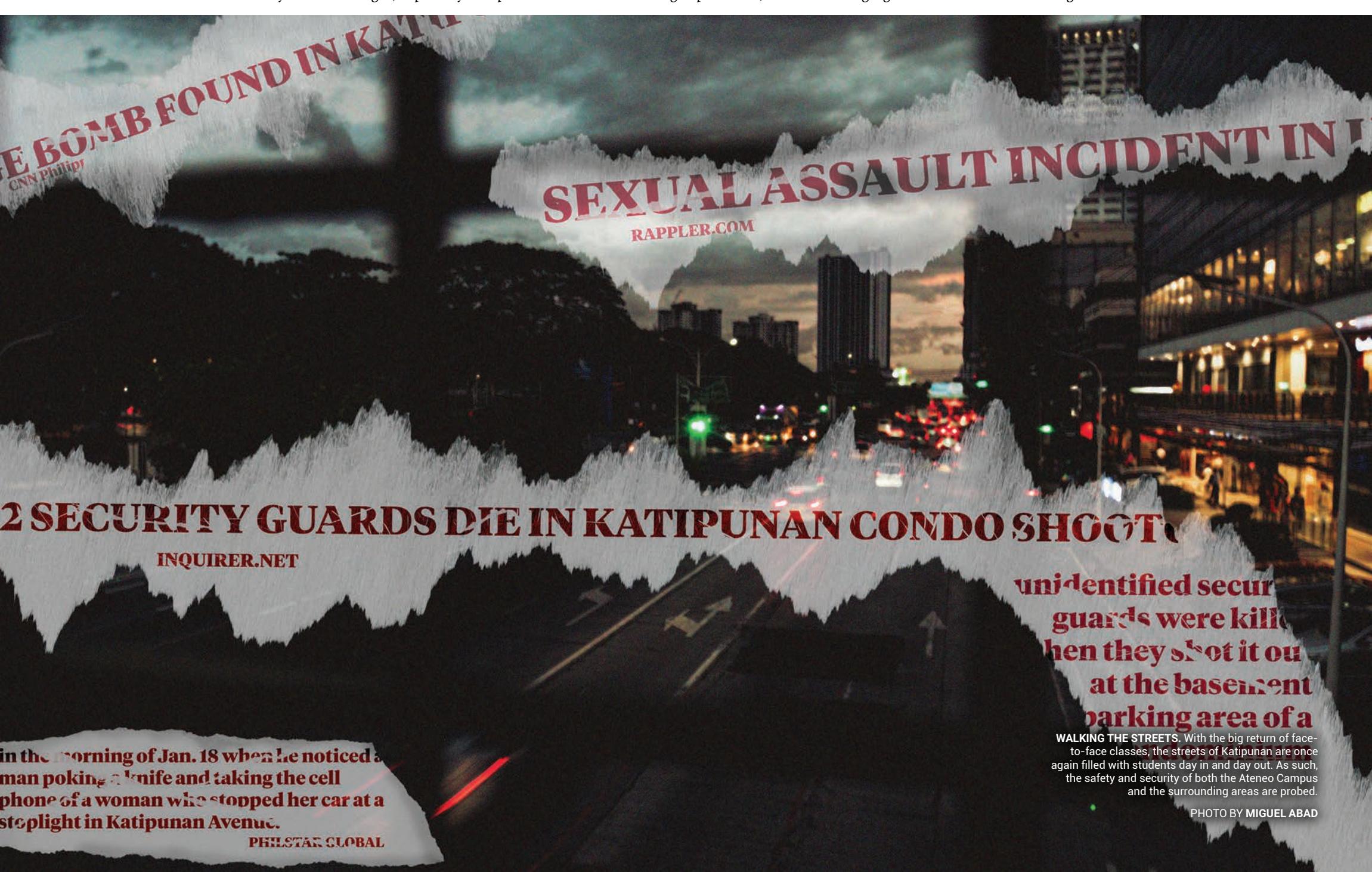
(Remind the people that you talk to that they should be careful, and inform them of the precautions that they must follow. [...] Let's help each other.)

In case of any emergencies, the following hotlines must be recorded: 02-8666603 (Barangay Loyola Heights), 02-84343942 (Anonas Police Station), and 0917-562-8641/0999-992-5715 (Ateneo Security).



**As a dormer and a woman, I really feel safe walking around campus. The guards are very friendly and professional.**

VIKTORIA DANIKKA GALABO  
2 BS PSY



WALKING THE STREETS. With the big return of face-to-face classes, the streets of Katipunan are once again filled with students day in and day out. As such, the safety and security of both the Ateneo Campus and the surrounding areas are probed.

PHOTO BY MIGUEL ABAD