The Mind & Heart of the city and the region
Looking back at its eighty years of existence and seeing the celebration of its Ruby Jubilee, no one can deny that Xavier University—Ateneo de Cagayan, fondly called XU, has been and is closely associated with Cagayan de Oro City.

## XU Celebrates Feast of St. Francis Xavier

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## Cover Story

**XU: the HEART and MIND of Cagayan de Oro and Northern Mindanao**

For 80 years, the growth of Xavier University has been closely intertwined with the growth of the city itself.

## Feature

**Moments of Joy**

XU celebrates its Ruby Jubilee anniversary with three significant events
Ruby warmth is a suitable symbol of our Catholic identity. Cura personalis or care for the person for others. We are called to develop in our students a dynamic, joyous, and vibrant faith that is never satisfied with working just for God’s glory, not even for God’s great good. Rather we aim to do everything for God’s greater glory. We will always live with passion, striving for excellence and going all out to become the best that we are capable of to enter into the places of pain, to share in the brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, powerless with the powerless.

On this feast of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother, we ask her intercession that Xavier will always be faithful to its values, services, and cura personalis, and true to its University identity as Filipino, Jesuit and Catholic. Mary, immaculately conceived, pray for us!

Xavier University’s College of Nursing was cited by the House committee on higher and technical education of the House of Representatives as one of the best nursing schools in the country. The rankings are based on the performance of graduates in the last two nurse licensure exams given by the Professional Regulation Commission. Xavier’s College of Nursing has consistently performed well in the national licensure examination for nurses since the program re-opened in 2002. In the December 2010 national licensure test, seven of XU’s graduates landed in the top ten and the university was the second top performing nursing school in the country.

XU places 2nd in Regional Search for Sustainable and Eco-friendly Schools

Xavier University’s campus on Carasas Avenue was awarded 2nd place (tertiary level) in the Regional Search for Sustainable and Eco-friendly Schools by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental Management Bureau, Department of Education, and Commission on Higher Education with Smart Communications, NDRRMC, Ormoc City Foundation, Petron Foundation and UPLB’s UPL; the search involved around the theme “Sustainable and Eco-friendly Initiatives of the Responsive Schools.”

2013 Outstanding CPA in Education

Dr. Virginia Loudermilk Yap was chosen by the Philippines Institute of Public Accountants (PICPA) as national awardee for Outstanding CPA in Education. Dr. Yap teaches at the School of Business and Management where she also serves as dean from 2006-2013. She is presently the director of the University Alumni Affairs Office. Apart from her BS Commerce degree from XU, Master in Business Management from the Capitol University and a Doctor in Management from the University of San Jose Recoletos, Dr. Yapacan also holds an MBA degree from XU and an MA English Literature from the Ateneo de Manila University. She started working with Xavier in 1992 teaching English and Accounting. She has been Chair of the English and Accounting Departments and Associate Dean of the College of Commerce.

Clam and Cielo Lacandula won the 8th Best Quiz Show for regionalmirror in August. The team represented Northern Mindanao in the 2013 Intracholistic Quiz Show in November.

The Ruby Jubilee culminated without observance of the feast of the Immaculate Conception of St. Francis Xavier who is an icon of Mission, Passion and Compassion. Xavier Festival Day 2013 was significantly simplified in the light of the enormous suffering and needs of the victims of Yolanda. On that day we also prayed for the students, faculty and staff who went on Tabang Visayas missions to Northern Cebu and Leyte. Leading the Ateneo Way means consoling those who suffer and showing that effective love is stronger than a super typhoon. The solidarity shown by the simplified Xavier Ruby and the compassionate service of the XU’s Tabang missions are Ruby testimonies of dynamism, fire and warmth.

17th World Championship of the Performing Arts

XU graduate Alex Dagala reaped medals at the 17th World Championship of the Performing Arts (WCPA) held in Los Angeles, California. Alex was also part of the Singapore Team where he competed as a soloist. He won silver medals in the pop and contemporary categories and bronze in the open category. Alex finished his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music at Xavier University in 1999. He works as a performer at Universal Studios Singapore.

BIDA Winners

Students of Business Administration and Electronics Engineering won first place for their collaborative project titled, “CHUWRK (Calorie Handler Upgraded Real Time Virtual Application)” in the Technology Category of the Business Idea and Development Award held in October. These students were Jefferson Curioto, Joan Alenca Cavidal, David Esperiamul, Melvic Sebuel, and Elijah Dan Seballos. Their faculty adviser was Tracy June Dy.

5th Graduate School Research Forum

The Graduate School held its 5th Research Forum at the Don Renato Hotel Ballroom on September 14 with the theme “Enhancing Graduate Student Research Culture The Ateneo Way.” In attendance were more than 80 graduate students, faculty members and university administrators, including Dr. Roberto Yap, University President; Dr. Lita Sauvage, Academic VP; Dr. Rene C. Tacabas, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Luis S. Seza, Dean of the Graduate School. The researches covered a wide range of topics, among them Disaster Management Information Systems, life expectancy in Mindanao Oriental and professional values among nurse educators in the City.

New Physicians

Our Medicine graduates performed excellently in the August 2013 Physician Licensure Exams with 26 out of 27 passing the tests, giving XU a passing percentage of 96.3, above the national passing average of 82.9.

New Agriculturists

XU produced 35 new agriculturists in the July 2013 Licensure Examination for Agriculturists. XU garnered a passing rate of 63.2 percent, higher than the national passing percentage of 53.2.

New Electrical Engineers

Seven new electrical engineers have been added to the roster following the Licensure Examination for Registered Electrical Engineers in September. XU earned a passing rate of 87.5 percent, above the national passing percentage of 53.6.

New Civil Engineers

Congratulations to our new civil engineers who passed the Civil Engineering Licensure Exam in November. XU’s passing rate was pegged at 40.4 percent (20/50).

New Mechanical Engineers

The Licensure Examinations for Mechanical Engineers given in September yielded XU 29 mechanical engineers, giving the University a passing percentage of 85.29, over the national passing of 68.67 percent.
In May 2013, Philippine President Benigno Aquino III signed into law the Enhanced Education Act of 2012, a major educational reform that requires all students to go through one year of kindergarten, six years of grade school and six years of high school (K to 12). This big change aims to enhance the basic education curriculum, as well as improve the employability of our high school graduates.

What changes can we expect from having a Junior and Senior High School? Here’s a short guide on the expanded basic education program as it will be implemented in XU.

Is kindergarten a pre-requisite for entering Grade 1?
Yes. Republic Act No. 10153, or the Kindergarten Education Act, institutionalizes kindergarten as part of the basic education system and as a pre-requisite for admission to Grade 1. Public schools will admit children who have not taken kindergarten into Grade 1 only until SY 2013-2014.

Will current Grade 2 to Grade 6 XU students be affected by the new curriculum? What about the current HS 2-4 students?
No. They will follow the old grade school curriculum but will be required to undertake the Bridging Program after they graduate from Grade 6 in order to be able to proceed to XU’s Grade 8. Only then will they follow the new curriculum. For HS students, only those graduating at the end of SY 2013-16 or the current sophomores will be mandated to go through the SHS. The juniors and seniors can immediately proceed to tertiary level after their high school graduation should they so wish.

What is Junior High School?
Junior High School now refers to the four years of high school after Grade 6. The JHS program covers Grade 7 (1st year JHS) until Grade 10 (4th year JHS). XU JHS will be at the Pueblo Campus.

When will the new Junior High School curriculum be implemented in XU?
XU started offering Junior High School in school year 2013-2014. After passing the XUHS entrance exam, Grade 6 graduates from school year 2013-2015 until school year 2017-2018 (those who are still under the old curriculum) will be transitioned to Grade 8, but will be required to undergo a pre-requisite for entering Grade 1 and pass a Bridging Program to prepare them for admission to Grade 8.

What is Senior High School?
Senior High School is comprised of the last two years of High School referred to as Grades 11 and 12.

What specializations/tracks will be offered in XU’s Senior High School?
For now, XU will be offering two tracks of SHS, the Voc-Tech and Academic tracks. Voc-Tech track will be offered by CIT, while the Academic track will be offered at the Corrales Campus come 2016.

For the Academic track, the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Business, Accountancy and Management (BAM), and the Humanities, Education and Social Sciences (HESS), specializations will be made available.

Will students choose specializations or will this be determined by assessment?
Students will undergo several assessments to determine their interests and strengths which should help students decide on their specialization. These will include an aptitude test, a career assessment exam, and an occupational interest inventory.

How will the K to 12 Program help students intending to pursue higher education?
The K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum will be in accordance with the College Readiness Standards of CHED, which sets the skills and competencies required of K to 12 graduates who intend to pursue higher education.

What is XU’s niche on the K to 12 program?
Besides the offer of quality education, XU will maintain its Ateneo brand through an enriched curriculum that reflects the Ignatian ideals of service, magis (more) and cura personalis (care for the whole person), forming persons of competence, conscience and commitment.

I like this program but I’m worried about additional cost to families. How will government respond to this difficulty?
Kindergarten and 12 years of basic education is offered for free in public schools. There are additional indirect costs, but government agencies are collaborating to provide programs that will enable everyone access to quality education, especially to those with lesser means. Proposals such as the expansion of the Education Service Contracting (ESC) scheme under the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE) and other cost-sharing arrangements are being developed by DepED.

What cost may I expect from XU?
K to G1 tuition and fees are not significantly higher than current tuition and fees despite enhanced curriculum. On the other hand, G1 and G2 will be billed per semester, much like tertiary. Rates will depend on track/specialization selected.

All this sounds very promising. Where can I get more information?
The Grade School, High School and CIT would be glad to give you more information. You may call 63 88 853-316 or 4411 (GS), loc 4411 (HS) or 63 88 309-8443 (GT).
Looking back at its eighty years of existence and seeing the celebration of its Ruby Jubilee, no one can deny that Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan, fondly called XU, has been and is closely associated with Cagayan de Oro City.

The school and the city have grown hand-in-hand over the years and one cannot name Cagayan de Oro without mentioning Xavier University, and the reverse is equally true. Wherever you are in the Philippines or abroad, if you say you come from CDO, chances are that you will be told “Ah, is that where you find Ateneo de Cagayan?” or “I am an alumnus/a of Xavier University!” “Oh XU, in Cagayan de Oro!”

Associating an educational institution with mind and intellectual activities is easy to notice, but to point out the correlation of education with heart is less obvious. This is what this story is about, to explore how Xavier University can be considered the mind and heart of Cagayan de Oro City.

At the time of its creation in 1933 as a High School for boys by Bishop James Hayes, SJ, Ateneo de Cagayan had only 17 students and Cagayan de Misamis was a municipality of less than 50,000 inhabitants. Both suffered during World War II; the school was forced to close and the campus was destroyed along with most of the city.

The re-opening of the School after World War II really marked the beginning of the main period of the growth of Xavier at three levels—the Grade School, High School and College. From 1946 to the present, Xavier’s student population multiplied almost 30 times. In 1946, the school had less than 500 enrollees while nowadays it has over 15,000. In 1958, it became the first Jesuit University in the Philippines and the first university in Mindanao. Similarly, Cagayan became a city in 1950 and its population, from less than 50,000 after WWII, rose to almost half a million in the 21st century.

Ateneo de Cagayan in its present Corrales campus after the bombing during World War II

At the background: the fountain at the Gaston Park, Cagayan de Oro City’s main plaza in 1965.
The entwining of Xavier University and Cagayan de Oro is very obvious with the toponimy of the City showing the influence of two major Jesuit figures.

Fr William Francis Masterson SJ, founder of the College of Agriculture, SEARSOLIN and the first cooperative in Mindanao; and Fr. William F. Masterson, SJ, the founder of the College of Agriculture and SEARSOLIN. The Hayes Street crosses the heart of the City from the river eastwards up to Saint John Vianney Seminary; the Masterson Drive goes from the river up to Lumbia, again following the pattern of Cagayan urban expansion.

Archbishop James T Hayes, SJ, and Fr. William F. Masterson, SJ, the founder of the College of Agriculture and SEARSOLIN. The Hayes Street crosses the heart of the City from the river eastwards up to Saint John Vianney Seminary, the Masterson Drive goes from the river up to Lumbia, again following the pattern of Cagayan urban expansion.

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Ateneo de Cagayan from its primary location in Bugros Street, in 1933, the school moved to Corrales Avenue at the end of Divisoria which became the active center of the city in the 1950s and 1960s. When the City expanded towards the South, Xavier University followed and new campuses were opened, first in Upper Carmen for the College of Agriculture and SEARSOLIN, then in Macasandig in 1970 for the primary and the intermediate schools, and then in Pueblo de Oro in 1998-1999. Today, the Pueblo Campus stands in the center of what is becoming a booming, new Business Center District of Cagayan with the new subdivisions, modern commercial buildings and a shopping mall.

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The newest addition to the XU campus, the Jose Ch Alvarez Technology Complex in Manresa, Upper Carmen.
In 1958, Ateneo de Cagayan was granted university status and was henceforth called Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan.

One of the striking changes as the years went by was the diminishing presence of the Jesuit Fathers and therefore the laicization of Xavier. The absolute number of the Jesuits did not drastically diminish, but they did not grow in number to correspond with the increase of the population. Contrary to the early times when the majority of the Jesuit Fathers were Americans, today, they are mainly Filipinos.

A quick look at the different versions of the XU Mission and its objectives in the last eighty years reveals that the constant goal of Ateneo de Cagayan was to develop completely the student as a whole person following the educational Jesuit principles established in the Ratio Studiorum more than 400 years ago by the founder Ignatius of Loyola. But, a closer look shows that some modifications from the original mission and objectives were made to adjust to the needs of the changing times.

Some additions were put in order to meet the political, social and economic changes occurring in the country at the national and regional levels. The pre-war objectives declared that Ateneo de Cagayan aimed “… to develop the complete man—his intellectual, moral, and physical powers.” The Jesuit educational system selects such studies as to equip a student to reach his full development; to lay a solid foundation for future careers in life. Special emphasis was placed upon character and training for citizenship. In this training, Religion plays an important role.” (Ateneo Catalogue, 1939)

This same vision was pursued after WWII but emphasis was put on the Filipino character in the 1970s. These were the years when the Mission started as: “Xavier University is a Filipino, Catholic and Jesuit academic community dedicated to the integral development of the whole person.” It mentioned social justice and insisted on the need for well trained technicians to guide the progress that industrialization can bring. It is the responsibility of universities to produce those who can assure that industrialization will serve man’s needs. The University’s role in keeping up with technological advances and with technology appropriate to local needs is essential.

“Xavier University’s College of Education provided ¾ of the province’s teachers. (Gusadar Yearbook, 1973)

The role of XU in providing qualified labor force for a developing Northern Mindanao was stressed by Ambassador Michael Armacost in his address during the inauguration of the Engineering building on July 31, 1982. He said, “With the Region’s rapid growth has come the need for well trained technicians… The Regional Planning Board of the United Nations states that the Region needs 500,000 more technicians in the next five years. Xavier University plays a major role in supplying a competent labor force.” (KinoAdaman, 1983)

The agreements with major corporations such as CEPALCO, Nestle, Philippine Oil Corporation, Cagayan Electric, Transasia Airlines, and even Nestle in Asia Pacific (AJCU-AP) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2012.

The University Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is located at the heart of the main campus of Xavier University.

The University Church...
The XU Dramatics Guild stages “Song of Bernadette,” 1959

The Xavier Stage’s Pre-Islamic adaptation of William Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” 2013

XU students express support for People Power, 1986

Former City Mayor Vicente Emarno and incumbent City Mayor Oscar Moreno at the Mayoral Forum organized by the Research and Social Outreach Office with the XU Governance and Leadership Institute designed to help voters make informed choices, May 2013

Wastewater treatment facility installed at Xavier Ecoville, the XU-led resettlement site for Typhoon Sendong survivors

Meeting of the members of the original Ateneo Credit Union (1956-57) which is now the First Community Credit Coop (FICO)

The Ateneo Cooperative Credit Union (ACCU) was established by a small group of school employees and students in 1954, with the support of Fr. William Masterson SJ, as the first cooperative in Mindanao. In the 1970s, it was renamed the First Community Credit Cooperative (FICCO) as it opened its memberships to the community at large. Through the years, it has expanded and become one of the largest Philippine cooperatives with thousands of members.

FICCO was also responsible for organizing other cooperatives throughout Mindanao. The University and more particularly the College of Agriculture, has been actively fighting malnutrition through the Food Technology Center that provides trainings and, with DOST-FNRI, produces supplementary food blends for underweight children from 6 to 35 months old. Programs such as the Peace Village Economic Gardens in association with Belgian Universities and the CEFIRREM helped provide better nutrition and additional income to local farmer beneficiaries as well as introduced new farming techniques to those who needed them. The sanitation of the families involved in the program improved through the work of the Sustainable Sanitation Center (SUSAN), a research and Social Outreach unit under the School of Medicine, which built toilets and enhanced the distribution and quality of water.

In 1959, the Community Health Care Center (CHCC) was inaugurated, it is a symbol of the cooperation of the Committee of German Doctors for Developing Countries and the College of Medicine. It was intended to provide free treatment and medicines to at least 150 poor and needy patients per day. Since its creation, the collaboration has moved out of the walls of the Center and now has a rolling clinic that enables the doctors to participate in immunization and prevention programs.

In terms of environment, the McKeough Marine Center has taken the lead for the organization of the Macalalar Bay Development Alliance that moves 14 local governments to work for the restoration of a marine environment that can support the people living along the Bay.

These are just some of the commitments of Xavier University to improve through different engagements the livelihood of the local communities. However, the heart of Xavier is particularly present in times of hardships, especially when disasters strike.

Very early in its history, the Corrales Campus had been displaced by fire or volcanic eruption and political unrest. Yet, the most recent intervention of Xavier University following Tropical Storm Sendong may be considered the one with the greatest amplitude. XU-led Xavier Ecoville, located in Lumbia, is a settlement for 300 families affected by Sendong. Xavier Ecoville, according to Fr. Roberto C Yap SJ, is intended to become a sustainable and healthy community where the different colleges of the University are involved for education, health and sanitation. Aside from homes, Xavier Ecoville has a Chapel of its own, a Day Care Center and a Multi-purpose Center to facilitate training for livelihood activities. For the past 80 years, Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan and Cagayan de Oro City grew side by side; the City largely provided the student population while the University provided qualified labor force. While the school did not always approve of the political development in the City, it always worked for its inhabitants especially during difficult times. The synergy between the two facilitated the progress of the Region. The Xavier community has put in action the motto of “Men and Women for others” by giving its heart and utilizing its mind to improve the quality of life of the Cagayanons and of the people of Northern Mindanao.

The XU Students express support for People Power, 1986.

Elizabeth B Enerio is the director of the Office of International Cooperation and Networking. She is also a faculty member of the History/International Studies/Political Science Department.

More importantly, Xavier University-Altiles de Cagayan demonstrates that it forms “Men and Women for others” in implementing social justice and in lending a hand to improve the lives of the needy Cagayanons as well as giving assistance on special occasions to victims of natural calamities. The Research Institute for Mindanao Culture (RIMCU), in particular, with its demographic and social researches, provide a reliable picture of local economic and social conditions.

The Corrales Campus has been for decades one of the main locations of important cultural events in the City, especially after the construction of the first gymnasium and the opening of the Museo de Oro. The yearly presentation of plays by the High School and College Students, concerts rendered by the Glee Club (founded by Fr. Antonio Cuna SJ), different sports events especially basketball games, intramurals and Xavier Days festivities drew thousands of Cagayanons together to the University campus especially in the 1950s and 60s. The popularity of TV and, nowadays, the Internet, the 50s and 60s.

The popularity of Cagayanons together to the Days festivities drew thousands of the University campus especially in the City. Although the III Gymnasium and the GSU, the main locations of important cultural events in the City, have slightly diminished the attraction but still the tradition remains and any cultural endeavor on campus through the initiatives of units such as the XCCA, the Dulaang Atenista and the Glee Club still draw a large number of outsiders to the Ateneo Campus.

Xavier University also involved itself in political activities, either supporting or opposing the government, and helped in the electoral process. Since 1986, the gymnasium has been the seat of the electoral process. Since 1986, the government, and helped in the delivery of basic services to their constituents.

The Research Institute for Mindanao Culture (RIMCU), the College (now School) of Business and Management, and recently, the Research and Social Outreach (RSO), through their studies and programs have assisted in the development and improvement of the region. The Research Institute for Mindanao Culture (RIMCU), in particular, with its demographic and social researches, provide a reliable picture of local economic and social conditions.

Meeting of the members of the original Ateneo Credit Union (1956-57) which is now the First Community Credit Coop (FICO)
How do you celebrate 80 years?

At Xavier, the celebration of 8 decades of history was beautiful, enthusiastic and meaningful. Three events were at the center of the occasion: the blessing of the houses for Sendong survivors relocated to Xavier Ecoville, the conferment of an honorary doctorate in the humanities on Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio G Cardinal Tagle, and the renaming of the Immaculate Conception Chapel as University Church.

Hope Festival

The Ruby Jubilee kicked off with the blessing and turnover of more than 500 houses to their new owners—families displaced by the tragic floods of Sendong two years ago. "A new dawn has come for Xavier Ecoville," said Fr Roberto "Bobby" Yap SJ at the event called "Dayun, Padayun: The Xavier Ecoville Hope Festival" on July 6. Xavier Ecoville is a resettlement community facilitated by Xavier University. It sits on a 5-hectare lot in uptown Lumbia donated by the school.

A slew of activities was prepared for the enjoyment of Xavier Ecoville residents and guests. There was a Freedom Wall, Face Paint and Henna stations, ReCreate/Art Attack activities, Chalk Art, Origami Making, Family Bingo and Fun Games. There was also a Photobooth, which proved to be the most popular attraction, drawing a crowd that stretched throughout the Multi-purpose Center where it was located. A band from XU, Soundtable, played to provide music throughout the afternoon.

The Showcase Night was packed with spectators. Residents of Xavier Ecoville and guests were entertained by performances given by Ecoville dance groups and by artists of XCCA.

Sky lanterns were released and fireworks shot up to light the night sky—a perfect metaphor for the roots of Xavier Ecoville. This humble community was built on hope that was lit with the help of good people inspired by God’s grace, and this light remained shining through the darkness of their suffering with the perseverance characteristic of the Filipino people.

"A new dawn has come for Xavier Ecoville..."
MOMENTS of JOY

From Chapel to Church

Xavier University's Immaculate Conception Chapel was renamed the University Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Sept 8, Feast of the Nativity of Mary. It was also the University's way of being one with the Local Church, which was also celebrating the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Cagayan de Oro. The first Bishop of Cagayan de Oro was James T C Hayes SJ who was also the founder of Ateneo de Cagayan in 1933.

A Marian liturgical concert by various university choirs including the high school preceded the unveiling and blessing of the plaque bearing the new name of XU's main house of prayer as a University Church. Most Rev Antonio J Ledesma SJ, DD, Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro, presided the Eucharistic Celebration.

The Immaculate Conception Chapel started out in 1946 as a temporary structure with sawali walls in the quadrangle where the statue of St Ignatius now stands. Since then, it underwent many improvements, such as the installation of the stained glass windows in 2003-2004 honoring Mary Immaculate, the Patroness of Xavier University and of the Philippines. Most notable is the lovely center panel depicting the Immaculate Conception.

Conferment of honoris causa on Cardinal Tagle

Xavier University bestowed an honorary doctorate in the humanities on Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio G Cardinal Tagle in a special academic convocation on Aug 1 at the University’s Immaculate Conception Chapel.

Cardinal Tagle talked of the Catholic Church’s call to a New Evangelization for the transmission of the faith. He bid XU to “go to the wells frequented by our people,” just as Jesus reached out to the Samaritan woman he met at a well and spoke to her about the life-giving water.

The Cardinal was also the Commencement Speaker during the academic convocation of Xavier University in March. He gave a video message as he was in Rome at that time attending the installation of Pope Francis. Cardinal Tagle was the only Filipino Cardinal-elector at the then recently concluded conclave. Fr Bobby referred to Cardinal Tagle as “a leader formed the Ateneo Way.”

“Go to the wells frequented by our people...”
Xavier University held its Xavier Festival Day (XFD) in honor of its patron St Francis Xavier. Although traditionally celebrated for a number of days, this year’s XFD was cut short to a day, Dec 2, to sympathize with storm victims in the Visayas.

Celebration for a cause

The much toned-down XFD allowed the Xavier University community to donate the savings from the celebration to Tabang Visayas. The various activities also served as avenues to gather more donations for the storm victims. Audiences were encouraged to give in kind and volunteers collected cash donations. Many student organizations also sold items with messages of hope, and buyers were given the chance to donate the items they purchased (such as a pair of slippers) to the victims.

Songs about faith and love were performed during the opening program and several university bands dedicated their songs to the people affected by ST Yolanda. The University also lit up a tree of hope along the main lane, a beautiful belen courtesy of the Alumni Affairs Office, and the University Church. Candles were lit, as well, at the closing program.

“Let us celebrate in solidarity with and for our suffering sisters and brothers who are victims of the worst natural calamity that has devastated our country,” said Fr Roberto Yap, XU President, in his memo on XFD, which he described as “significantly simplified.”

Since news of the devastation broke out, XU has been mobilizing relief efforts for the people affected by the super typhoon. Besides accepting in kind and cash donations, it sent its Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) Team to Northern Cebu from Nov 20-26. The team was composed of students, faculty and staff who carried out missions in health, sanitation, relief, psycho-social, and post-disaster needs assessment. A separate group was also sent to Palo, Leyte for medical and psycho-social response from Nov 29-Dec 4. Yet another group went to Tacloban from Dec 16-21. The XU DRRM Team was officially launched at the XFD.
Still, there was occasion for celebration as the University turned 80 years old. While keeping the fanfare low-key, XFD, which had Smart as event partner, retained some of its signature programs such as Kinauyokan, a neo-ethnic dance competition among the undergraduate colleges and high school. This year, the participants got creative in interpreting the history of XU from when it was founded in 1933 until its ruby jubilee this year. The Center for Integrated Technologies was proclaimed the grand winner, keeping the crown for the third straight year.

Another much-loved XFD event is the Christmas Caroling Contest. The spirit of the season echoed through the walls of the University Church as chorale groups from the different colleges and the high school entertained the audience with their musicality and choreography. The School of Education outdid all the other performers to claim the top prize.

Student bands also got together to perform eight decades of music. The University main lane was transformed into a concert ground as people gathered to listen and groove to music from the ‘30s to the current decade. Even teachers formed their own rock band and performed some of the Beatles’ classics.

Those more inclined to the arts had their fill of chalk art and poster-making. There were trivia, Minute to Win It games and exhibition basketball games. The soccer field teemed with boys and girls in colorful costumes who showed off their dance routines during the field demonstration. Science films from the Goethe-Institut were screened at the Audio Visual rooms 6 and 7 from 10 am to 5 pm. Dulaang Atenista, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary, performed improvisational theater at Audio Visual Room 9, and The Xavier Stage mounted their production of William Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at the Little Theater.

The finals night of Himig Atenista, featuring original compositions of XU students, capped XFD. The students brandished their talent in writing and performing music that communicated what Atenistas are and what it means to be “persons for others.” Cat Project’s “Nagdaang Dekada” won the top prize followed by “Menesa Tala Nga” by John Fernandez, and “Code of Conduct” by Old Time Fling. Smart Communications’ Testers’ Choice Award and Magic 89.3’s Listeners’ Choice Award were both given to “Now It’s Time,” by Heartbeat, a group composed of Medical students.

As the celebration came to a close, Fr Yap commented that it had been a day of faith. “In faith, we heard the cries of our suffering brothers and sisters, and in faith we responded. It is in faith that we believe that love is stronger than a super typhoon.”

Besides his compassion, Francis Xavier was a man of passion. In describing his missionary work, Fr Yap said that Xavier was “filled with passion to go far and wide, to go to the ends of the earth to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.” The question for us is not only “What have I done for Christ?” or “What am I doing for Christ?” but more importantly, “What more can I do for Christ?”

This year’s celebration of the Feast of St Francis Xavier has been a call for the renewal and deepening of XU’s ideals of mission, passion and compassion. As Fr Yap put it, “May our celebration of the feast of our patron during this time of natural calamity be an affirmation of our faith in the God who suffers with us and is always near.”

Icon of Mission, Passion and Compassion

Dec 3, the actual Feast Day of St Francis Xavier, was declared a University holiday. In honor of Francis Xavier, whom the school is named after, is considered the principal Patron of Missions. He crossed the oceans from Europe to Asia to spread the gospel and propagate the Christian faith.

At the opening mass of XFD, which was preceded by a wreath-laying ceremony at the statue of St Francis Xavier, Fr Yap described Xavier as an icon of “mission, passion and compassion” – the slogan of this year’s XFD.

“Xavier pursued six missionary journeys,” narrated Fr Yap. “These were journeys that took him immense distances by sea and foot. Xavier went to a place, did what was immediately necessary and later sent other missionaries to remain for a longer period to continue what he had begun.” Xavier also showed extreme compassion for the poor and the sick. “Xavier took no notice of his own pains, forgetting them in work for others,” said Fr Yap. He was a true example of what it means to be compassionate.

“Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless.”

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In 1937, Ateneo de Cagayan (AdeC) turned out its first HS graduates and from this class was born the 1st Jesuit alumni of the Ateneo de Cagayan School. Being the Alma Mater of Jose Rizal, the famous Christian gentleman, which gave me the most precious values in life in the form of true Christian beliefs and which made me a soldier in the army of Christ and a devoted son of Mother Mary.

Aside from my parents, I owe everything to my Alma Mater. She opened the windows of my mind not only to things material but moral and spiritual as well. At this juncture, allow me to express my deepest and warmest gratitude to our first Rector Fr James Edward Haggerty, to our second Rector Fr Andrew Cermin, to Fr Francisco Araneta and Fr James McMahon; to Fr William Masterson SJ who designated me as his secretary; doctor and overall assistant in the pioneering years of the College of Agriculture; to our Jesuit professors Fr Antonio Bautista, Fr Coroase and our beloved Fr Robert Cunningham, our I.A moderator, to our lay professors Mr Ezequiel Valmores (Math), Mr Manuel Qusumung (Science), Mr Pio Roa (Philippine History), Mr Aristarco (Spartan) and Mr Venancio Romanin (Phil.).

To all who one way or another had helped me as had Nene Pimentel, Antonio Calla, Nandy Pineda and Anastacio Jun Limbo, my heartfelt thanks.

And last but not the least, to my family, my wife Fe, daughters Marie Gay, Juniefer, Mariecel and son “Cocoy” Emmanuel, my love to you all.

Mr Emeterio F Villanueva Jr was born in 1933. The same year the Ateneo de Cagayan was founded. He finished his Grade School and High School at the Ateneo de Cagayan where he graduated in 1949 and 1953 respectively. With a full scholarship, he took up AB and graduated in two years and a half. He was then hired by Fr William Masterson SJ during the hard pioneering years of the College of Agriculture as his first secretary, office librarian, store keeper of Agriculture as his lone secretary, driver and overall assistant in the pioneering years of the College of Agriculture; to our Jesuit professors Fr Antonio Bautista, Fr Coroase and our beloved Fr Robert Cunningham, our I.A moderator, to our lay professors Mr Ezequiel Valmores (Math), Mr Manuel Qusumung (Science), Mr Pio Roa (Philippine History), Mr Aristarco (Spartan) and Mr Venancio Romanin (Phil.).

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And last but not the least, to my family, my wife Fe, daughters Marie Gay, Juniefer, Mariecel and son “Cocoy” Emmanuel, my love to you all.
In the face of globalization, being competitive must also mean being adept in our own culture, being able to hail it to the world as a treasure etched in our identity as Filipinos.

It is the Xavier Center for Culture and the Arts (XCCA) battle cry to boost and constantly nurture not just the Cagayan de Oro City but the Mindanao cultural and performing arts setting.

“When we globalize, it doesn’t mean we have to lose our identity,” says Hobart Savior, XCCA director.

With the emphasis on the Center’s role in engaging Ateneans in cultural and artistic endeavors, Savior says, “A graduate of Xavier must become more prepared for a multicultural environment, he needs to be equipped with knowledge of his own culture, a sense of pride and love of country.

“When he knows his own identity, he will not be an outcast in his own culture. There will be understanding and he becomes more sensitive to other cultures.”

XCCA heights commitment to Filipino identity with MetamorphoSix
by Stephanie Penzoa

XCCA’s 6th Cultural Season
Redefining Culture and Arts

Playwriting

Playwriting

Armed at establishing a playwriting development program in Mindanao, Sulat Dula 9, a bi-annual playwriting workshop was held in October. Writer’s Bloc, the group of playwrights behind the Virgin Labfest, frontlined this project.

Sulat Dula 3 brought together seasoned playwrights, Dr Steven Patrick Fernandez, Rodolfo Rody, Verona and Prof Layeta Bucay. The participants went through workshops conducted by the resource playwrights and submitted a short one act play at the end of the event.

Yamug 6

Yamug 6, a culture-based education symposium, also transpired in October. More than 100 students from different schools in the city, including from the Caraga region, attended the event. The topics and speakers were “Philippine Culture and the Arts: Effective Tools for Teaching and Learning” by Prof. Ricamela Palis from Colegio de San Juan de Letran, “Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education in the Philippines” by Dr. Joy M Peregrino of University of the Philippines-Diliman, and “Mindanao Folk Literature: A Cultural Wealth and Knowledge” by Dr. Christine Godinez-Oreta of Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT). Discussions like these efforts of XCCA to strengthen the University’s identity as a Filipino institution.

Cultural dances

XCCA’s 6th cultural season was also marked with presentations of cultural dances from various elementary, high school and tertiary schools in Cagayan de Oro City. They came together for Sulyap Sayaw repertoire featured danced such as Pandanggo sa Ilaw and Tinling for the Barnito Suite, and Kazuduratan and Singkling for the Muhlubian Suite.

Music to remember

Xavier Philharmonia showcased a two-hour grand performance, “Music to Remember: A Recital on Strings and Keys” featuring four ensemble players on violin, two piano solos, one piano duet, one instrument trio performance, one guitar solo, as well as an ensemble encore number. Together with their artistic director, Joshua Arribaca, and concertmaster, Ian Rupert Allecce, the group filed the XU Little Theater with memorable film soundtracks and well-loved classical compositions. The recital also featured soloists from the XU Glee Club and introduced new members of Xavier Philharmonia.

Showstoppers at the Akapela Open

The XU Glee Club Showstoppers made it to the finals of the Akapela Open, a contemporary a cappella ensemble competition dubbed to be the first of its kind in the country, held on Oct 30 at the Meralco Theater. The Music School of Ryan Cayabyab, in cooperation with the PLDT-Smart Foundation and One Meralco Foundation, spearheaded the project for the appreciation of vocal harmony performances and promotion of learning opportunities for singers and arrangers.

Film festivals

Film fanatics were treated to two foreign films festivals, namely the Goethe Institute Science Film Festival and the Japan Film Festival: Overcoming the Disaster: Gratitude from Japan to the World.

Ateneo’s 3rd Theatre Season

Xavier University’s Dulaang Ateneista hosted the first-ever Ateneo Theater Festival on Nov 20-22 as one of the highlights of their 3-year anniversary celebration. The event drew theater companies from Ateneo de Manila, Ateneo de Davao, Sacred Heart School-Ateneo de Cebu and Xavier University High School.

These were shown during the Xavier University Festival Day in December.

Under the curatorship of Dr Erlinda M Burton, the Center plans to feature a special corner for the collection of Fr. Francisco R Demetrio SJ, author of numerous books on myths and symbols of Philippine culture. Meanwhile, the “digitization” of archives is ongoing. XCCA hopes that the changes in the museum will engage more Kagay-anons, especially the youth, to look back on the rich history of the city and appreciate our treasured culture and artifacts.

1st Ateneo Theater Festival

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Sneak peek to the 2014 cultural season

In 2014, the Center commits to provide a more vibrant year for arts as TKS will stage Teatro Aniculus, CINEMAGIS: 6th Digital Short Film Festival in Northern Mindanao from January 22-31 and Teatro Aniculus, 6th Digital Short Film Festival in Northern Mindanao from January 22-31 and “Disaster: Gratitude from Japan to the World.”

“Our cultural initiatives have grown. We offer a plurality of arts, cultural opportunities must be sustained for educational growth, artistic collaboration and presentations that will always remind us of how rich and diverse our culture is. After all, as Savior states, ‘Art is the visible precursor of culture.’

Revamped Museo de Oro

A more interactive and contemporary Museo de Oro will re-open in time for the 2014 City Fiesta, following the renovations in the museum’s interior and exterior designs.
Recalling the massive destruction and remembering the weeping woman at the entrance of the Palo Cathedral, I cannot help but ask the existentialists’ questions...

**A recollection of our mission to Leyte**

by Michael M Acenas

**The preparations**

Embarking on a mission to a disaster afflicted area takes a great deal of preparation both internal and external. Internal preparation means being equipped with the necessary skills, and a wide-open attitude toward discomforts and surprises. Externally, it means preparing the budget, establishing contact persons in the mission area, composing a team, finalizing the schedule, getting tetanus shots, and organizing pre-departure meetings and orientations.

The idea for a Xavier University team to sail for a mission to Leyte was actually conceived four days before Typhoon Yolanda hit the Visayas. While Yolanda was brewing in the Pacific, a group of XU volunteers and staff was stranded for some hours in Tacloban City due to typhoon Wilma. The team just came from the town of Loon, Bohol to give medical and psycho social assistance to an earthquake stricken barangay in Causi, Loon.

Our relatives and friends on Facebook were updating us on the direction of Wilma and the oncoming super typhoon Yolanda. At that time, Victoria Meliza Pulido, a team member from the Kristohanong Katilingban ng mga Pagpatuladana (KKP) office prophesied about the impact of the typhoon and then set the dates for our possible mission. Ideally, psycho social support comes to a disaster area about three weeks after relief assistance has been given to the survivors. So, it was Ms Pulido who suggested the dates to be anytime between Nov 29 and Dec 5.

Typhoon Yolanda came. True enough, the magnitude of devastation was unimaginable. Just like what we did for the survivors of typhoon Pablo in Cateel and Baganga, Davao Oriental in December 2012 and then for the earthquake survivors in Bohol in October 2013, we called for a greater number of volunteer medical doctors and counsellors for medical and psycho social support for Yolanda survivors. After three days of sending text messages to former students and friends, a good number of doctors, faculty and staff representing various formation units such as Campus Ministries, KKP, Mission and Ministry, Guidance and Counselling, First Year Formation Program and the School of Medicine responded to the invitation. The final number of volunteers was 33, consisting of 18 faculty/staff members, 7 physicians, 6 students and 2 security guards.

The mission areas of Palo and Tanauan, Leyte were recommended by Ms Myrna Sose, a pastoral worker with the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro who did an area mapping, and Mr Ariel Tecson, a former XU guidance counsellor and a native of Tanauan. It was pre-arranged that the receiving parties in the areas would be parishes there.

As a precautionary measure to perceived health hazards, the team submitted to an anti tetanus vaccination at the city health center. The psycho social team underwent skills retraining by Dr. Joy Jingona as resource person.

**The route**

From Cagayan de Oro, we trooped a ferry to Cebu, arrived early morning after a night’s travel, and took a fast craft toOrmoc. At noon, the team had safely arrived in Ormoc City. Tattered covered walls, roofless buildings, crumpled ceilings lying on the ground and debris greeted us upon entering the port. It was a good thing that commercial activity had resumed in the city.

Traveling from Ormoc to Palo took another two hours by van. All the towns we passed by from Ormoc to Palo had suffered from the fury of the super typhoon. Houses made of light materials had become rubble. The mountain ranges in the far distances had turned into brown barren mountains. We could see people assembling along the road waiting for relief goods, children extending their hands for coins from passing vehicles.

It was almost dark when the group arrived in Palo. Desolate scenes welcomed us. Most houses along the highway had been flattened. Only a few people could be seen along the road. The Cathedral which was said to have been newly renovated, was now roofless. At the entrance of the Cathedral, I saw a woman weeping. I wish I had gotten the chance to know her story.

**The mission**

Our group split into two. One team went to Tanauan. My team went to Barangay Pawing, Palo. Each team was composed of 17 members. After a night and a day’s travel by boat and by land, we arrived at a parish in Pasing and was welcomed by the assistant parish priest Fr Jun Carreon. He permitted us to place our tents inside their roofless church. With our assembled tents, the place of worship of the community was reduced to our camping site. Through the roofless church, we could gaze up the evening skies and watch the beautiful constellations of stars. The absence of electricity magnified the beauty of the skies.

As if no storm had happened three weeks ago.

Then the actual mission began. For team Palo, the first area was Barangay San Fernando. It was near the coast and the historic Leyte landing site of Gen Douglas McArthur. The reported number of deaths and missing persons was high in this place because the residents did not only battle winds but also contended with the storm surge. While adults and children waited in line for a medical check-up, we organized them into small groups for the psychological first aid. As the mission progressed that day, we found out that almost ninety percent of the residents in the area had filed their destroyed houses. Thus, only the few who had chosen to stay recovered our services. The second day of mission was spent at the parish.

The other team that went to Tanauan covered five Barangays, namely: Solano, San Miguel, Caramoan, Lico & Camvi. Teams Palo and Tanauan attended to a total of 702 patients for the medical check-up and 352 individuals for the psychological first aid. On the fourth day, the two teams reunited in Palo before travelling back to Ormoc. After a couple of days of not having anything cold to eat or drink, everyone was excited to eat ice cream and drink iced coke as we went on while carrying our different stories of mission.

And while it might be consoling to find deeper meaning and answers to our vulnerabilities, at some moment, the understandings are far more important than the answers.

Michael Acenas is a campus minister and erstwhile editor of Gardener, the official magazine of the Campus Ministries Office.
Even without the storm: The XU DRRM story

Project Twin Phoenix: Enabling the Cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, the provinces of Compostela Valley and Davao Oriental to Cope with Climate Change

XU-GLI Going Full Force Ahead

If it’s going to rain, expect an uphill struggle. "Our driver Edgar worried as he switched on the windshield wiper to sweep tiny beads of rain. From inside the van, it was difficult to see if a downpour was imminent—this despite our headlights slicing through the stillness of the Maramag-Maradagao Road, which we were navigating at 7 a.m. The ‘uphill struggle’ is a private joke, a reminder of the trip we—my project staff and a group of DevCom students—made a year ago to upland Sitio Batangasan in Lantapan, where our van got stuck in mud during our slippery ascent to visit a cadre of coffee growers and to video document their farming experiences.

Amid the gloomy weather of Bukidnon at this time of the year, we dreaded a repeat of this experience in an activity that would now take us to another cluster of coffee growers in Pitsuaran—an upland barangay that lords over a well-kept mountain secret below it: the majestic Lake Napall, a 16-hectare body of water that laps the foot of the Kalatungan range in central Bukidnon.

At 4 a.m., we arrived in Barangay Bayandao at a crossroad some ten kilometers away from the lake. We met up with Ian, the motorcycle-riding marketing officer of the Diocese of Malaybalay Social Action Center (ODASC) who would double as our guide. We searched the heavens for signs of comfort: the stars had remained hidden but the drizzle had stopped. We continued to race towards our destination before the break of dawn. But, just when we were about to enter the village at the foot of a hill, we halted on our track to face the very thing we dreaded most: deep impassable muddy trail! There would have been no way for our vehicle to negotiate this had we not made prior arrangement with our village host to send their monstrous ten-wheeler truck, which—at the nick of time—came to tow us safely past this quagmire. Ah, such are the hurdles—and thrills—that some students and teachers occasionally encounter in the conduct of area visits to far-flung farming communities that the XU FARM Project facilitates.

Short for Xavier University—Fellow Architects for Resource Strengthening and Marketing, the XU FARM Project is a partnership project with the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), an international non-governmental organization that has engaged the university in an agri-enterprise promotion program aimed at boosting small farmers’ competitiveness in the agriculture value chain. Underlying this push for competitiveness is the need for improvement in farming productivity and reduced vulnerability to climate change through research and capacity building. The university’s Research and Social Outreach (RSO) Unit has thus organized a multidisciplinary research and extension program that builds into the academic curriculum and training of students and faculty members to encourage them to produce research-based outputs that would contribute to the capacity building and agri-enterprise development of small farmers in Mindanao. This, too, is in line with its thematic area that pushes the promotion of food security in the island.

Overseeing and tying cohesively the engagements of various departmental and college-based units is the Krisftranong KatilingbantaPagsapakabana (KKP), which administers the Collaborative Service Learning Program (CSLP) in its bid to strengthen the participatory collaboration between students and teachers, and between the academe and farmer beneficiaries, following a mentor-mentee learning approach.

In the past year of project implementation, the CSLP has, for instance, engaged the College of Agriculture in the research of best farm models; the College of Computer Science in the development of a Virtual Hub hosting price monitoring, e-learning, e-training, and e-marketing web-based programs designed to capacitate small farmers through technology applications of online services for improved production efficiency and production supply monitoring; the College of Engineering in conduct of area mapping activities in select cluster areas to aid in infrastructure and project planning decisions that are facilitated by information fed into the Virtual Hub; the College of Arts and Science (particularly the Economics and Sociology departments) in the documentation of best farmers’ practices that include a study of how economic capitals—from social to natural—affect farming productivity.

This most recent trip has brought in Mr. Evans Yonson, a professor of the Department of Development Communications of the College of Agriculture, and his pool of DevCom students and XU Press Staff to photo-and video document the experiential learnings of small coffee farmers in Pitsuaran and in Bagong Silangan, another upland village in the neighboring municipality of Maramag, which the group visited the next day.
On a sunny and clear day, the aerial view of the Macajalar Bay coastline along the newly-operated Lagundin-gan Airport is beautifully blue and clear. The presence of the Macajalar Bay Development Alliance (MBDA) indeed increases the percentage that this pristine ecosystem will be preserved even with the anticipated development of the Cagayan-Iligan Corridor. One of the active programs of the MBDA is on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the status of the Macajalar Bay, which encompasses 14 municipalities in Misamis Oriental and Cagayan de Oro City. Composing the M&E teams are the MBDA-member LGUs’ personnel trained in Participatory Coastal Resource Assessment (PCRA).

PCRA is a science-based methodology of collecting data on key coastal resources and analyzing them to determine the status and health of the marine ecosystem. As part of the ER-PROGRAM Project of Xavier University, currently the Project Management Office (PMO) of MBDA, a PCRA training course was conducted. The training aimed to enhance the capacities of the MBDA Technical Working Group (TWG) to efficiently manage the Macajalar Bay and the resources therein. The course was composed of five training activities which included indoor lectures, hands-on activities, actual field work and data sampling, mentoring and community reporting.

XU partnered with The Samdhana Institute, a regional non-profit organization which actively works on the Ridge-to-Reef landscape, in carrying out the PCRA training course. The first training activity started in June 2012, and the culmination activity and graduation of the PCRA trainers took place on June 21, 2013 at Jasaan, Misamis Oriental. The training banked on the expertise of the XU Faculty Members from the Biology Department, in particular Dr Dulce R Dawang, Ms Elaine Villaluz, Ms Anita Malabo, Ms Lola Martinez, Ms Gertrude Garcia, and Mr. Fra and Quinpo, who served as trainers. Lectures and majority of the field work were conducted in Lagundungan. The 25 trainers who completed the course were LGU personnel, mostly from the agriculture and fishery offices of the municipalities in the MBDA. Despite uncontrollable weather disturbances, including the passing of Super Typhoon Bopha (Bagyong Pablo), personal concerns of the trainers and other challenges in organizing and bringing together the activities, the PCRA Training course was successfully completed.

The PCRA training provided the basic knowledge on the coastal ecosystem, and the skills and methodologies for identifying, assessing, recording and reporting data on the coastal resources, specifically on mangroves, seaweeds, seagrasses, macro-invertebrates, fishes and corals. The trainers spent considerable time under the sun and in the water for hands-on practice and actual data-sampling. The training also proved to be a conducive venue for the trainees, most of them LGLU officers who were already conducting similar duties such as being members of the Bantay Dagat, to raise practical issues andayan de Oro. They posed the recommendations to improve or to maintain the health of their coastal resources. The new PCRA experts were warmly welcomed by the MBDA TWG which expressed its appreciation to the new team members who will significantly beef up the monitoring and protection initiatives for Macajalar Bay.

The PCRA training was a crucial step in the formation of the Macajalar Bay Development Association (MBDA) Technical Working Group (TWG) to efficiently manage the Macajalar Bay and the resources therein. The PCRA training provided the basic knowledge on the coastal ecosystem, and the skills and methodologies for identifying, assessing, recording and reporting data on the coastal resources, specifically on mangroves, seaweeds, seagrasses, macro-invertebrates, fishes and corals. The trainers spent considerable time under the sun and in the water for hands-on practice and actual data-sampling. The training also proved to be a conducive venue for the trainees, most of them LGLU officers who were already conducting similar duties such as being members of the Bantay Dagat, to raise practical issues andayan de Oro. They posed the recommendations to improve or to maintain the health of their coastal resources. The new PCRA experts were warmly welcomed by the MBDA TWG which expressed its appreciation to the new team members who will significantly beef up the monitoring and protection initiatives for Macajalar Bay.
The first five years and beyond

In 2006, the XU College of Engineering held a 5-Year Strategic Planning Session. One of the items repeatedly highlighted was for the College to also function as a “resource center to spearhead industrialization by providing a pool of experts and facilities” (Engg VMO 2007).

About two years later, on Feb 14, 2008, then Dean Engr Alma P. Eudinado conceived the Xavier University Engineering Resource Center (XUERC), assigning Engr Dexter S. Lo as coordinator. A year later, during XU’s Diamond Jubilee, coincident with the year later, during XU’s Diamond Jubilee, coincident with the year later, XUERC’s Anniversary, the center reinforced its commitment to technical service built upon a high level of excellence, as articulated in its revived mission statement, “Developing Engineering Solutions with the Community.”

The center’s program on Mindanao Urban Development spearheaded several undertakings, among them Emissions Inventory in Cagayan de Oro City, a Budget Transparency Initiative for Infrastructure Projects in the Province of Misamis Oriental, and a Road Watch Program forRegion 10 where Civil Society Organizations openly discuss with the Department of Public Works and Highways on public infrastructure concerns.

In 2013, on the occasion of XU’s Ruby Jubilee, and XUERC’s 5th Anniversary, the center reinforced its commitment to technical service built upon a high level of excellence, as articulated in its revived mission statement, “Developing Engineering Solutions with the Community.”

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Even before most Kagay-anons realized the need to take care of nature by harmonizing their activities with it, a few groups in the city already saw the importance of taking care of the river basin. The Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro headed by the Archbishop himself, Most Reverend Antonio J. Ledesma, S.J. forged a governing body with national and international partners for the advancement of engineering research and development.

XUERC currently sits in various government councils and technical working groups, serving as the beacon of science and technology for many development activities in Mindanao. It has also maintained strong ties with national and international partners for the advancement of engineering research and development.

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XUERC remains steadfast in facilitating a scholarly training experience for the students and faculty members of the XU – College of Engineering; developing professionals with global visions, and with deeply rooted Christian morals which are exemplified in local communities.

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The Cagayan de Oro river basin has a total land area of 157,954 hectares. It has eight tributaries from six municipalities and cities namely, Cagayan de Oro City, Libona (Bukidnon), Baungon (Bukidnon), Talakag (Bukidnon), Iligan City (Lanao del Norte) and Bubong (Lanao del Sur).

The Management Council is also composed of Technical Working Groups (TWG), namely: Rehabilitation, headed by DENR 10, Local Governance, headed by Safer River Life Saver Foundation (SRLSF). On November 2011, Xavier University became the CDORBMI’s secretariat which handles Resource Management, through Xavier University – Research and Social Outreach (XU-RSO) and the McKeough Marine Center (MMC), with funding from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

How the TWGs work

The Community Development TWG ensures that all social processes are observed in the Council’s programs and projects and that there is community participation in the Council’s plans and programs.

The Local Governance TWG does the inventory of all bodies, agencies – government, non-government, private-public institutions – including present programs, projects and activities in the CDO river basin. It reviews laws, policies and ordinances overcomes overlaps, identifies gaps and proposes policy recommendations (eg. disaster risk management, environmental code, etc), ensures implementation of policies and laws. It conducts Information Education Campaign (IEC) and also coordinates all agencies to harmonize efforts and to help capacitate existing structures, especially the ALCS and BDCs’ participation of multi-stakeholders in the barangays. The Rehabilitation TWG conducts IECs, provides seedlings/planting materials, as well as technical assistance on tree growing, develops infrastructure, constructs flood control structure and implements development activities.

The Resource Management TWG, gathers information and technical references on existing land and water resources use from and in coordination with different LCGs, government agencies, various universities/institutions, inventories or collects data from various universities or institutions and performs databanking, management or repository of data. It also conducts IECs, information sharing of policies and advocacy network or partnership building in relation to river basin concerns. It also handles the river basin resource management.

Strengthening the CDO-RBMC

One project of the MMC as supported by Ecosystem Alliance – International Union for the Conservation of Nature (EA-IUCN) is strengthening the Ridge to Reef Ecosystem Management Approach in Mindanao. Its main goal is to enhance sustainability of natural resources through alternative livelihood and protection of critical coastal ecosystems, strengthening management capacity and policy.
Heeding Mother Nature (from page 3)
formation. One of its objectives is to strengthen the Cagayan de Oro River Basin Management Council.

The Ridge-to-Reef Approach
The chosen management approach is called the Ridge-to-Reef, aimed at harmonizing human activity from the ridge, to the river basin, down to the reef. The said approach has four components. First is the strengthening of the management bodies: for the Upland Management, through the Kitanglad Integrated NGOs (KIN), for the river basin management, as organized by the CDO RBMC; and for the reef management, through the Partnership in Rural and Technical Services (PARTS) in Zamboanga City, a project handled by XU-MMC, in collaboration with the German organization Deutsch Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and through the Macapagal Bay Development Alliance (MBDA), an alliance that implements bay wide integrated coastal management (ICM) for the protection and development of coastal ecosystems and resources.

The second component is the Policy making body as handled by the Xavier University – Governance and Leadership Institute (XU-GLI). It examines the gaps on laws governing the environment, from national down to the barangay level, and makes recommendations to the different LGUs on their Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP).

The third component is maximizing the resources from the ridge to the reef by looking for means of livelihood for the people living in the said area. One project funded by the DOST examines farming, processing up to marketing. This project is being done in partnership with Xavier University’s College of Agriculture, particularly the Food Technology and Agricultural Business Department.

The last component is the IEC, on ridge to reef and COORDRM handled by the XU Development Communication Department. At present, their campaign focus is on the need to strengthen the Cagayan de Oro river basin, a need considered urgent in light of the recent disasters caused by the overflowing of the river.

The need to do it right and now for tomorrow
When hundreds of lives, and homes were destroyed, it wasn’t just the people themselves who were greatly affected but also the harmony of nature. As humans are responsible for taking care of nature, it is but proper to do it right and now. COORDRM and its various stakeholders, consider it imperative to harmonize local activities to show care for the Cagayan de Oro river basin.

However, it is not just the job of the said council but also of all Kagayanons to see to it that we live in harmony with the environment. Such act will not only be beneficial to us, but also to the future generations. We inherited the Earth from our past, but it is our obligation to pass it on to our future generations. Thus, it is in the barangay level where the measures needed to prevent the same tragedy from occurring and it found out that the city and the region have the capacity to at least minimize the damage of disasters. However, it learned that it is in the barangay level where training in disaster mitigation is greatly needed.

December 2011, the world saw Cagayan de Oro City on bended knees. Sending with its unimaginable horrors—thousands of lives were lost, billions worth of infrastructures were destroyed and dreams were shattered. Two years after that fateful tragedy, have we learned enough to prevent another Sendong?

The concept of “disaster” used to be an unfamiliar reality to Kagayanons. Nobody seemed to care; nobody seemed be able to relate to what used to be a phenomenon that usually happened up north. We were complacent.

It was in 2009 when our city first hit by a flood. There wasn’t a great deal of damage then, though a few lives were lost and some infrastructures were destroyed. The event did not alarm Kagayanons nor cause them to prepare for a more destructive flood.

On the dawn of December 17, 2011, the Christmas season was marred with despair. People were caught off guard as flood waters surged into the city’s lowlands. On the other side of the story, Kagayanons showed resiliency and stood up against these adversities. Aid was given to the victims and rehabilitation assistance came left and right and continues even until today.

Learning from the past
Hearing a lot from Sendong, Xavier University – Engineering Resource Center (XU-ERC) and the XU Research and Social Outreach (XU-RSO) cluster, in partnership with the Department of Interior and Local Government Region X (DILG X) and the Local Government Unit of Cagayan de Oro City, forged a program aimed at arming the locals from riverside villages with knowledge on disaster risk management and precautionary measures, among others.

Thus, training on disaster preparedness was begun for the 80 barangays in the City.

The training was completed by end of 2011, and was attended by participants from the different barangays in batches.

The first batch of participants came from 36 barangays identified to be vulnerable to flooding.

Representatives from each barangay were taught why disasters happen, and, from that, how to ready the residents in times of disaster.

Each participating barangay is expected to come up with a comprehensive Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management (BDRRM) plan for the next three years at least, as well as a contingency plan during disasters.

To effectively implement the training program, it was done using a modular approach: Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Training Module 1 tackles the preliminaries of Disaster Risk Reduction Management: BDRRM Strategic Planning Workshop and BDRRM Plan Template. Speakers came from the DILG, City Engineers Office and XU-ERC.

Module 2 dealt on Governance and Leadership in DRRM, Risk Assessment, DRRM Legal Basis (RA 10121 and RA 9725), Seal for Disaster Preparedness and DRRMCA Planning, with speakers from DILG X, OCD X and XU-ERC.

It is believed that education, backed by political will in the grass roots level is the best springboard to prevent severity in times of disasters.

In the meantime, XU-ERC is also working closely with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB), the City Planning and Development Office (CPDO) and other partners to come up with better recommendations for the city’s comprehensive land use plan, which will then be filed as a city ordinance.

Upholding Resiliency: Harnessing barangays for disaster risk reduction management
By Charisse Salarda

Xavier University – Governance and Leadership Institute (XU-GLI), a component of RSO, tackled Republic Act (RA) 10121. RA 10121 is also known as The Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (PDRRMA) of 2010 and it mandates LGUs and different agencies to strengthen the DRRM councils and offices from the National level down to the Barangay level.

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Reflecting on what happened during Sendong, Xavier University – Governance and Leadership Institute (XU-GLI) is a component of the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (CDORRMC) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB), the City Planning and Development Office (CPDO) and other partners to come up with better recommendations for the city’s comprehensive land use plan, which will then be filed as a city ordinance.

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Since the early 1990s, Xavier University has been involved in various disaster response activities—organizing networks of donors and delivering relief goods to disaster-stricken communities. This has been exemplified in the past months by the series of tireless relief operations led by the Kristohanong Katilingban sa Paggakabana—Social Involvement Office: Tabang Zamboanga, Tabang Bohol, and Tabang Visayas. Through the years, XU has proven itself worthy of the trust and confidence of generous donors from many parts of the world.

Recently, XU sent two multi-disciplinary teams for special missions to selected areas in Visayas affected by the deadly Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan).

The outreach programs of the university have been institutionalized under the Vice President for Research and Social Outreach (DRRM) Councils. The XU DRRM Program is another pioneering commitment of Xavier University in “Leading the Ateneo Way” within and beyond the campus walls. It is inspired by the three virtues of grace, gratitude, and generosity: for having sustained the passion in the past 80 years; gratitude for being part of God’s mission; and generosity to live with compassion for the poor and the lost in the frontiers.

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The XU DRRM Story

by Dexter S. Lo

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The teams were composed of
medical doctors, psychologists,
counselors, sociologists,
engineers, journalists, students
and volunteers coming from
various units of the university,
exemplifying a truly competency-
based response to disasters.

Over the past decade, the
university’s disaster-related
activities have evolved into
more proactive approaches. In
2002, the XU Civil Engineering
Department did a fire hazard
mapping of the Poblacion area
in Cagayan de Oro. In 2008, the
XU Engineering Resource Center
partnered with Barangay Carmen
to develop methodologies for
disaster risk assessment and
mapping for various hazards at
the local level. The project was
recognized with several awards
as a pioneering effort in reducing
risk to disasters at the community
level. Various other projects
and researches in partnership
with other university units then
followed.

When Tropical Storm Sendong
(Wash) hit the city in 2011, Xavier
University served as a hub for
both scientific analysis, as well as
for various relief and rehabilitation
operations.

XU shared a detailed scientific
documentation of the deadly
flood at the pre- and post-disaster
stages. XU also immediately
published flood maps which have
been exhaustively used in relief
operations, debriefing sessions,
and technical evaluations of
international media and experts.

As a serious commitment to
disaster resiliency, XU partnered
with the city government and
various local and international
donors in providing new homes
for more than 500 families
who survived the flood. Various
community building and
sustainable livelihood programs
have been introduced and
integrated to this new community
called Xavier Ecoville. The mission
was clear: “We are not just
building houses. We are building
communities.”

As an educational institution, XU
continuously works on various
capacity building activities,
including a series of Training
for Trainers for Civil Society
Organizations and Government
Line Agencies on Disaster Risk
Reduction and Climate Change
Adaptation with the Philippine
Government’s Climate Change
Commission. XU is also currently
assisting 36 riverside CDO
barangays to come up with
their Barangay DRRM Plans;
and training local planners and

DRRM officers of selected LGUs
in Region-10 on GIS to effectively
integrate DRR-CCA in their land
use plans and development
programs. XU also serves as
technical resource in various
DRRM seminars and workshops,
including a customized training
for 400 public school teachers
in the Province of Misamis
Oriental. XU has also already
started formal integration of
DRRM courses to the curriculum
in selected graduate and
undergraduate courses.

To facilitate and sustain
these engagements, the XU
DRRM Program was formally
institutionalized under the Vice
President for Research and Social
Outreach in 2013. The five major
components of the program
are: (1) Research—led by the XU
Engineering Resource Center;
(2) Capacity Building—led by the
XU Governance and Leadership
Institute; (3) Advocacy—led by the
XU Press; (4) Response—led by
the Kristohanong Katilingban sa
Paggakabana—Social Involvement
Office; and (5) Rehabilitation,
such as Xavier Ecowall. However,
the program and its activities are
not exclusive to the units under
the Research and Social Outreach
Cluster; in fact, synergized
efforts from various academic
units are already being done
and are highly encouraged. For
Internal Crisis Management, the
University Safety, Security and
Health Committee had also been
formed.

Because of these multi-
faceted engagements from
research on prevention and
mitigation, to enhancing
community preparedness, to
swift and sustainable response
mechanisms, and to committed
actual rehabilitation programs,
XU has been recognized as
a member of the Regional,
Provincial, and City Disaster Risk
Reduction and Management
(DRRM) Councils.

On its 80th Ruby Anniversary,
Xavier University remains
steadfast in actively responding
to the needs of the nation,
particularly in Mindanao.
Other than its primary mission
of training students, XU has
also been doing breakthrough
researches that are significant
to the region’s development.
The outreach programs of the
university are institutionally
coupled with researches to
address issues with scholarly
technical analysis and deep sense
of discernment as a manifestation
of social apostolate inspired by
the Ignatian tradition.
What Medellin Mayor Ricardo Ramirez said caught the XU DRRM 43-person team by surprise. Here we were after so much preparation back home and several hours of travel, excited for the first wave of relief operations, and this was the welcome message we got.

“We already have enough relief goods that would last us for the next two months,” Mayor Ramirez said, emphasizing that although the mission of the team was very welcome, he believed that the goods would have been more needed in Leyte.

He related to us the gruesome aftermath of super typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) when it hit Northern Cebu including Bogo City, and the municipalities of Daanbantayan, San Remigio, Bantayan Island, Santa Fe, and Madridejos. Casualties, however, were minimal, and immediate support came overflowing to these municipalities.

To salvage the raisons d’être of our mission – and to boost the falling spirits of the team – the different components of the operation were explained, presenting the engagements beyond the distribution of relief goods. And a toilet bowl got the ball rolling again.

The mayor expressed that the municipality, which even before Yolanda was already having problems with human waste disposal, could definitely use the waterless toilet bowls more sophisticatedly known as UDDT (Urine Diversion Dehydration Toilet) bowls the WASH Team lugged with them.

Mayor Ramirez also acknowledged the fact that the Department of Education had been wanting a stress debriefing for their students but they did not have the capacity to do this. Thus, in the end, we got an audience with some of his municipal leaders, the DepEd district supervisor, the health officer and two other municipal officers.

“If you didn’t notice on your way to Medellin, our children are out there begging,” DepEd supervisor Rosanna Godinez said.

Estimating that only 70% of the children had gone back to school, Ms. Godinez explained that the resumption of classes was important to take the children off the streets. It was also supposed to help debrief the students. “Those who are back are sometimes very silent, still oblivious of the reality around them,” Ms. Godinez added.

Unfortunately, the trauma had also been felt by the teachers who were supposed to do the debriefing. Some teachers would even cancel classes when it rained, fearing another storm themselves.

The XU DRRM Team, after further consultation came up with a plan to conduct full relief operations (including medical mission, WASH orientation and setting up of sustainable sanitation toilets, psycho-social debriefing, and relief goods distribution) in the barangay island of Gibitngil.

This was in addition to the psychological stress debriefing sessions and trainings for the municipal teachers, and a medical operation at the Rural Health Center.

In sum, the WASH team was able to put up two model installations of the UDDTs – one in barangay Gibitngil and another in Caputatan Sur – while eight more were left to the communities. Around 40 residents in Gibitngil, including barangay officials, were oriented about the use of the UDDTs and 17 families enlisted for installations.

Around 40 residents in Gibitngil, including barangay officials, were oriented about the use of the UDDTs and 17 families enlisted for installations.

At the end of our mission, another of Mayor Ramirez’s statements during our first meeting in Medellin came to mind.

“I was one of the municipal mayors of Cebu province to have responded to Cagayan de Oro’s call for help after Sendong,” Mayor Ramirez said.

After all that was said and done, our mission to Cebu was a way of paying it forward.
The Philippines is one of the world’s most disaster-prone nations and typhoon is one of the disasters that frequently visit the country. These typhoons have caused the destruction of communities, death of millions and an end to people’s livelihoods. The typhoons that hit Mindanao, particularly Northern Mindanao, served as a wake-up call for its cities and communities to continually strengthen their capacity to anticipate, cope and recover from a storm’s negative impacts.

Help and assistance in the form of various projects and programs from both government and non-government agencies have poured into the two big cities of Northern Mindanao (Cagayan de Oro City and Iligan City). One of these is the Climate Change Commission’s Twin Phoenix Project. One of the components of this project is focused on the training of trainers and champions of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation (DRRCCA) both in government and non-government organization.

The Twin Phoenix Project has trained trainers from both Xavier University – Ateneo de Cagayan (XU) and Mindanao State University – Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT), and honed them to rework capacity building topics to the Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Civic Society Organizations (CSOs) and the like in both Iligan and Cagayan de Oro cities. The training reecho is necessary to enhance awareness and competency of local stakeholders in mainstreaming climate change adaptation and disaster risk management in the development and regulatory processes. Furthermore, the training will develop climate and disaster risk knowledge management that will enable the communities to be better resilient against natural and man-made disasters.

The objectives of the project were: a) to broaden the knowledge and understanding of key concepts, principles and elements of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (CCDRR); b) to comprehend the interrelationship between Climate Change and development; c) to understand the various kinds of hazards the communities are faced with; d) to understand the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan and its legal background; e) to understand Climate Change and its projections; f) to outline key elements to mainstream DRRCCA in development plans; g) to share good practices and approaches on risk reduction to guide LGUs in crafting DRRM action plans; and h) to enable participants to create a draft IEC design and DRM plan.

The first Training of Trainers (TOT) happened on Sept 16-20, 2013 and was participated in by the various NGOs and CSOs coming from Cagayan de Oro and Iligan Cities with environmental disaster risk reduction initiatives. The second TOT for various government and line agencies happened on Oct 16-18, 2013. Both TOTs were held at Chai Beach Resort in Caguman, Cagayan de Oro City.

Each TOT was divided into four modules: General Introduction to DRRCCA, Geologic and Hydro-Meteorologic Hazards, Climate Change Adaptation and Climate/Disaster Risk Assessment and Mainstreaming Tools. Under the General Introduction to DRRCCA Module 1), were topics on the interrelationship of Disasters, Climate Change and Development. The Geologic and Hydro-Meteorologic Hazards (Module 3) covered topics on the Science of Disasters, Geologic Hazards, Hydro-Meteorologic Hazards and Flood Modelling and Simulation. Under the Climate Change Adaptation Module (Module 3) were Climate Change Projections and Hazards, Exposures, Vulnerabilities and Risks Assessment. The Climate/Disaster Risk Assessment and Mainstreaming Tools (Module 4) discussed the DRMMS and DRRCCA, DRM Planning, Workshop/Information, Education Campaign (IEC), and Development and Mainstreaming DRRCCA in Development Plans.

Disasters can be the country’s worst nightmares but if committed individuals and organizations working in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation steadily come together toward integrated climate risk management, then the impact of disasters will be lessened and this will help give communities a broader understanding of their vulnerabilities, while at the same time expanding effectiveness by working with partners in the fields of development, environment, poverty reduction, financial planning, and health. By focusing on decreasing vulnerabilities to current weather and climate related risks, communities will be better prepared for the risks posed by climate change.

Since my joining the XU-GLI office, I can only count with one hand those days when all members of our staff are having an easy or relaxing day in the office. To start with, Dr Dixon Q. Yasya, GLI Director, is too busy with his GLI commitments, either facilitating our own good governance-related trainings, workshops or seminars or attending to out-of-town engagements as a resource speaker for capacity building programs all over the country, even to far-flung areas. It is no longer a surprise for us if Dr. Yasya is taking his breakfast in one city, his lunch at another and, finally, dinner with his staff in Cagayan de Oro. His passion for sharing his experiences and talents just so he could convey to the LGUs, the ideals of good governance and leadership is unceasing.

With his limited presence in the office, one would think that the staff would have free time on our hands–wrong! During monthly meetings, we are all handed our weekly assignments and deadlines so that even if Dr. Yasya is not around, we are busy. He constantly keeps us on our toes with his texts, either giving instructions for the next work commitment or asking us for office updates. Jojo Mantiza, Roland Barangot, Jhenebeth Rejas and myself are also assigned to attend to any invitations from government agencies thus particular fields of interest on leadership and good governance.

The first and second weeks of October 2013 found Dr. Yasya facilitating trainings on Newly Elected Mayors, otherwise known as ONE-M, for Visayas and Mindanao; and for Luzon, held in Iloilo City and Manila, respectively. A Leadership Training for Police Officers was held at the AVR1, Xavier University last October 14, 2013 and this was followed by a Seminar on Barangay Governance last October 19, 2013. Both were heavily attended even at the peak of the barangay election campaigns. Then, on October 24, on the occasion of the 22nd anniversary of the passage of the Local Government Code, Dr Yasya was invited by DILG, Iloilo to be the resource speaker on the topic “Promoting LCU Competitiveness through LED”. Engr. Gail de la Rota of the XU RSU, was also there to grace the occasion.

In November, XU-GLI was still in full force with its activities. On November 12 to 14, 2013, we were tasked to do process documentation of the “Municipal Leadership and Governance Program” of the DILG in partnership with Zuellig, attended by Municipal Mayors of Region X and their respective MHOs, at Dynasty Hotel, Cagayan de Oro City. Jason Manaos of the XU Psychology Dept. acted as one of the facilitators. On November 19 and 20, 2013, Dr. Yasya attended a municipal consultation with the Municipality of Esperanza, Agusan del Sur. He then came for the Full Council Meeting of the Regional Development Council X at Marco Hotel, Cagusa, CDO.

When I glanced over our December schedule, there were activities slowly accumulating, waiting to be put up on the white board, and I pondered Christmas Break, anyway.