

**MISSION-VISION STATEMENT**  
*of*  
**ATTY. ANGELO AZURA JIMENEZ**

*Asking the big questions, solving the problems of the nation and the world!*

***Big Vision: We must strive to become a global university that asks the big questions of our time and, acting locally, strive to solve the problems of the world.***

We must ask the big questions because it is what defines a community of scholars and learners. The answers to them lead us to the smaller questions that make us directly relevant to our communities and people.

We must strive to be global because the problems of our people are the problems of all peoples, and it works both ways.

The global pandemic, climate change, and a distant war causing a global energy and food crisis felt around the world, among just a few, palpably demonstrate today that we have already become, truly, one world.

Our vision must transcend UP's colonial past, encompass our people's national aspirations and enable us to develop a philosophy of action that creates the future we want.

A scientific turn of mind helps us know, developing a speculative turn of mind helps us imagine what we don't, as yet. The former solves problems, the latter tells us what problems to solve. Both are inseparable and must be promoted together.

In short, our primary role is to produce ideas and knowledge that serve humanity. It is our best contribution to the world.

**General Mission: To lead.**

UP has a three-fold general mandate—teaching, research, and extension—but it has one basic mission and that is to lead.

**Research Power: Focus on graduate and post-graduate programs**

We are a research university. We must work to become a regional and international center of excellence. With over twenty percent of the nation's budget for SUCs, we are the only institution in the country that realistically can. Aspiring to be the nation's premier HEI is already meaningless. Today's competition is global. This has to be stressed in resource generation and allocation.

Graduate and post-graduate programs are of maximum yield for our people—through research utilization and innovation that benefits the economy and their overall well-being.

Academic linkages with top SUCs should be enhanced, expanded and, where needed, established. Balanced resource-sharing and allocation based on national and regional priorities and the needs of participants are required. This will not only improve capacity through resource-sharing and other efficiencies but, more significantly, broaden the talent pool for higher studies in all.

#### **Extension service as the test of relevance**

The effectiveness of our extension function is a major test of our relevance. It is the natural extension of research power without which the public will not benefit from the labors of our minds.

#### **Academe meets government**

As a public research institution, UP does not only provide extension services to the government but, directly and not just indirectly, to the private sector as well. The scale of collaboration is extensive, from research and development and policy advice on public health, disaster risk reduction and resilience to urban planning, space utilization, and maritime domain protection and exploitation. It covers the entire range of public policy, the metes and bounds of which are difficult to draw.

To fully maximize this partnership, we must take the initiative to institutionalize a programmed and purposive engagement with government. The main aim is to develop a strategic research agenda and achieve better and wider utilization of outputs, as well as greater resource allocation efficiencies—in short, maximum and responsive outcomes for the benefit of our people.

#### **Academe meets industry**

As important as tighter engagement with government is tighter collaboration with industry. They are not only a source of research funding but are both source and seeker of innovation, as a matter of survival. The harsh discipline of the market is unforgiving to those who fail to innovate.

Private research funding, so long as it meets the public good criteria, has long been a driver of industry and economic growth. Close collaboration with the private sector, along with government, must inform our research agency to truly craft relevant and effective research.

## **Open Data**

Publicly funded research must be widely disseminated and available to allow maximum utilization and the buildup of a knowledge base. Towards this, a public research university must promote an Open Data Policy so that research outputs themselves become a driver of further research.

## **Closing the quality gap is key to democratic access to UP**

Undergraduate programs and the teaching function are essential parts of a modern university. In addition, UP undergraduate programs were also intended, historically and by the growth of tradition, to produce public leaders who are steeped in the values of service to the nation. This should be kept.

Along with continuous improvement and quality assurance in teaching and learning, it is important to close the observed quality gap in undergraduate programs among and within UP's eight autonomous units. Ideally, one campus, and every program, should be as good as their equivalent, in others.

The next step should be to help raise the quality of undergraduate education in other SUCs, starting with well-established centers of regional excellence in higher education, and down the line. This is a multi-year endeavor that should straddle several terms but UP should exercise its mandate to lead this, together with the CHED.

Once the gaps in quality are closed within UP, and between UP and other SUCs, then the best candidates who desire admission to UP need no longer be in UP to get a UP education. It would provide the best talents an incentive to remain in their regions and help the dispersal of development through better local retention.

This will not happen automatically. There are other motivating factors to get into UP. But this may help keep and even improve the quality of teaching in UP and enhance its research through easing teaching loads. This is a burden that comes with the gradual accretion of numbers of enrollees over the decades.

Raising the quality of undergraduate education outside UP will also have the added benefit of expanding it as a feeder for higher studies programs, not only for UP but other schools, as well.

## **Digital transformation to serve humanity**

The digital age disrupted our face-to-face lives with the ferocity of a pandemic. We cannot afford to wax nostalgic and cling to old assumptions of a world that are gone, never to return. The big question now is how we should respond to it and make it serve and advance the cause of humanity and not degrade it.

As an institution of higher learning, we must ask: what is the future of learning in the digital age?

### **In learning**

By contemplating the essence of pedagogy in this new age, we could raise the quality of the current debate about learning delivery systems—face-to-face, hybrid, and blended. The truth is, it has been all of these ever since, and digital technology is ever-present today.

Digital technology in education is not new. Even before COVID, it has already been making transformational changes that have improved access to education resources, modularized teaching, and personalized learning, among others, raising learning outcomes overall.

Digital transformation requires a change of culture itself, faces many obstacles, most especially resource generation, and cannot be achieved in one term. In UP, we must immediately deal with the issue of equity of access to digital pathways, equipment, and internet connectivity.

### **In management**

Digitalization is not only relevant in learning management systems but the management of the UP system itself. We must work towards building a whole environment that can take full advantage of the “internet of things,” in administering UP, from admissions to personnel management and security to maintenance.

We must ensure, however, that digital transformation is humane, and is aimed at improving work. Change is unavoidable and affects jobs. We should resort to retraining and upskilling and build new career pathways for administrative staff not just to preserve vital human resources but improve their value and, therefore, their compensation and benefits in many ways.

### **Academic freedom not just defended but enhanced**

Ideas are the lifeblood of the university and academic freedom is the heart that pumps them into the cardiovascular system of learning. Without academic freedom, the liberal philosophy that undergirds the viability of the modern university cannot exist, along with education as a human enterprise. It is *sine qua non* for UP and must not just be defended but enhanced.

Academic freedom cannot just be defined in its narrow legal meaning as the freedom to choose who to teach, what to teach, and how to teach. It is, essentially, the freedom of the scholar and learner to pursue and spread knowledge and understanding in a disciplined and rigorous manner in pursuit of human good.

It is the free competition of such pursuits that makes a university. The introduction of fear of reprisal or harm, in any way and form, which gives pause to a scholar in the exercise of academic freedom, must be resisted.

**Why not? and what do I bring to the table?**

I have no personal vested interest in UP, only service. I enjoy the independence that is crucial in balancing competing interests and making fast and hard decisions.

I have experience teaching law and have been a regular lecturer at the UP Law Center's Mandatory Continuing Legal Education for several years now. I know what it requires to teach.

I am a researcher and published writer, one of my works was published in the World Bulletin Journal of the UP Law Center. I understand UP research work.

I was the principal author of an action-research paper concerning the Philippine policies, practices, and processes on migration of the UP CIFAL for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Blas Ople Foundation. It has been used for the national action planning of the IOM. I am familiar with UP's extension work.

All of these are rigorous enough as works of scholarship to gain important insights at the executive level on UP's three main mandates.

I have been a long-time member of the Board of Regents, including my stint as Student Regent in 1992 when I was Chair of the UP Diliman Student Council, and I believe those years gave me a very strong systems perspective necessary as chief executive of UP.

I have sectoral experience and long-established good and friendly relations with all the sectors and appreciate their needs. My experience as a Presidential appointee in the Board has gained me insights in representing the people's interest in UP through the highest executive of the land.

I believe that UP at the systems level is primarily a management challenge that protects its academic mission.

The President is primarily an executive post and I believe I have enough experience in management and higher decision-making at the executive level as a long-time Labor Attaché

in Japan, Kuwait, and Iraq, and in managing international operations in 33 offices all over the world and over a dozen regional and provincial offices as OWWA Deputy Administrator.

The management challenges presented by these offices range from promoting Philippine labor overseas, providing legal and diplomatic representations to war-time contingency planning and execution, and other special responsibilities like assisting in the delivery of personal messages from the President to a foreign monarch in commutation cases for OFWs facing death sentences abroad to hostage negotiations from Iraq and the Somali coast to the Niger Delta.

I have a professional understanding of national and international labor markets that provides insights on the quality of UP education in different economies and cultures.

I bring a global perspective to the job with close to a decade's experience representing the Secretary of Labor in several diplomatic posts overseas and managing the nation's premiere OFW service organization worldwide.

I have experience in high political stakes decision-making under extreme, even life-and-death, behind-enemy-lines pressure, in my executive brief.

As a private lawyer and consultant, I have developed strong relations with industry and government to enhance and advance UP's interests, especially in resource generation.

I want to serve UP.