

SDG 8 - Empowering Communities and Driving Economic Growth: UST's Commitment to Sustainable Development"

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) has consistently demonstrated its commitment to advancing societal development and contributing to the achievement of global goals, particularly in promoting ****Decent Work and Economic Growth**** (SDG 8). Across various initiatives, the university has engaged in research, policy development, and partnerships that not only aim to enhance the academic landscape but also foster sustainable and inclusive growth. This report highlights the significant actions and milestones UST has achieved, connecting these efforts to the larger goal of promoting decent work and economic growth.

1. Promoting Decent Work Through Research and Innovation

In alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8, UST has made notable strides in enhancing research and innovation. As part of its [Vision 2028](#) agenda, UST's Rector, Fr. Richard Ang, emphasized the importance of strengthening research outputs and innovation across its various campuses. One of the most impactful initiatives is the [P16.5 million environmental grant](#) awarded to UST REFI (UST Research Center for the Environment and Industrial Development) for a project focused on making **Siquijor a zero-waste island**. This project aims to create jobs in environmental conservation and waste management while fostering a sustainable local economy. These efforts resonate with the principle of decent work, as they aim to create environmentally-friendly jobs and improve local economic conditions, particularly in underserved areas.

In addition to environmental sustainability, UST's dedication to research excellence was highlighted when [UST was named one of the top five Philippine universities in research productivity](#), a recognition from the **Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II)**. Such achievements elevate UST's role in economic growth by ensuring that high-quality research translates into innovations that drive industry development. By increasing the number of publications and citations in reputable journals, UST aims to inspire high-quality research in areas that significantly impact global challenges, contributing to economic growth through knowledge and innovation.

2. Sustainable Tourism and Economic Growth

UST's efforts extend beyond research into policy development. For instance, [Asst. Prof. Dr. Jinky Rose P. Gino-gino's](#) presentation of a sustainable tourism plan for ASEAN's UNESCO Marine World Heritage Sites underscores the importance of sustainable practices that can drive economic growth in tourism-dependent areas. This initiative directly supports SDG 8 by advocating for tourism strategies that balance environmental preservation with local economic development. Sustainable tourism not only creates jobs but also fosters long-term economic growth by ensuring that tourism practices are sustainable, inclusive, and beneficial to local communities.

3. Capacity Building and Teacher Education

In its pursuit of improving the quality of education and promoting decent work, UST hosted the [4th PSALM International Conference on Teacher Education](#). This conference, which gathered over 400 educators, focused on "Transformative Teacher Education," emphasizing the development of competencies in teaching that prepare future generations for the demands of the workforce. By equipping teachers with the tools to foster innovation and creativity in students, UST is contributing to the broader economy by ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for a rapidly changing job market. The conference aligns with the goal of promoting decent work by focusing on developing a skilled workforce capable of adapting to new challenges and contributing to economic growth.

Additionally, UST's new [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) with the Samahang Manggagawa ng UST highlights the institution's commitment to improving the welfare of its support staff. By ensuring fair wages and providing incentives for continued professional development, the agreement directly supports SDG 8's aim of securing decent work and economic security for all workers. This agreement contributes to the university's vision of creating an inclusive and thriving workplace where everyone has the opportunity to grow professionally and economically.

4. Building Strong Partnerships for Sustainable Growth

A key component of UST's strategy for fostering economic growth is its focus on ****collaborations with industry and government****. For instance, UST's partnership with the [Climate Change Commission](#) focuses on climate change mitigation and sustainability, which plays a vital role in economic growth by ensuring that industries and communities are resilient to environmental challenges. The partnership will also contribute to policy development in the country, fostering an economy that is both sustainable and prepared for future challenges.

Moreover, UST's engagement with the [Cultural Center of the Philippines](#) to enhance arts training for Senior High School students ties into economic growth by nurturing a creative economy. By investing in the arts and culture, UST supports the development of sectors that generate employment opportunities and cultural innovation, driving economic activity in the creative industries.

5. Fostering Economic Growth Through Education and Innovation

In addition to the above, UST has actively promoted economic growth through the launch of initiatives like the [BiblioTech Ai Library](#) at the College of Information and Computing Sciences (CICS). This library, designed to support students with diverse

resources, will help foster skills in technology and innovation, preparing students for the future economy. It complements UST's ongoing efforts to prepare students for careers in fields such as information technology, engineering, and business, all of which play crucial roles in driving economic growth.

Lastly, UST's [Professorial Chair Award Donation](#) from Analog Devices Inc. (ADI) and the [Dr. Michael Purvis Award for Sustainability Research](#) further demonstrates UST's focus on building an innovation-driven economy. Through these awards, UST encourages faculty to engage in high-impact research that addresses key challenges in sustainability and technology, areas vital for economic growth in the modern world.