

SDG 9 - Building Bridges to Innovation: UST's Commitment to Industry and Infrastructure

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) has long been a beacon of academic excellence and institutional resilience. Under the leadership of the Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P., Ph.D., UST has expanded its footprint and fortified its role as a hub for innovation, education, and infrastructure development. This narrative report highlights UST's alignment with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, as demonstrated by its strategic initiatives, interdisciplinary collaborations, and investments in cutting-edge facilities.

1. Community Engagement and Outreach

UST has a history of engaging with local communities through outreach programs that focus on providing educational resources and support to impoverished areas. These programs often include workshops, seminars, and direct assistance aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of participants.

1.1. Tulong Tomasino Relief Operations

2. Leveraging Infrastructure for Research and Innovation

2.1. New Campuses: UST Santa Rosa and UST General Santos

UST's expansion to Santa Rosa, Laguna, and General Santos, Mindanao underscores its commitment to making quality education accessible while driving regional development.

2.1.1. UST Santa Rosa

Envisioned as a technological and innovation hub, Santa Rosa features state-of-the-art facilities like the Tony Tan Caktiong Innovation Center, which serves as a center for innovation, food product development, and startups.

The forthcoming Dr. William T. Belo Interdisciplinary Research Institute will bolster UST's capacity for cutting-edge research, particularly in fields like food technology and engineering.

2.1.2. UST General Santos

The 82-hectare campus focuses on agri-tech education, addressing the agricultural needs of Mindanao while promoting sustainable practices in food production and rural development.

2.1.3. Henry Sy Sr. Hall: Medical Innovation

At the Manila campus, the soon-to-be-inaugurated Henry Sy Sr. Hall is designed to redefine medical education. Equipped with simulated emergency rooms, surgical suites, and ICUs, it reflects UST's commitment to healthcare innovation and state-of-the-art learning environments.

3. Advancing Innovation through Research

UST has made substantial strides in enhancing its research ecosystem, in line with Fr. Ang's vision to position UST as one of the rising research universities in the Asia-Pacific.

3.1. Research Productivity

2022 marked UST's most productive research year, with 354 Scopus-indexed publications and notable contributions from the UST Hospital.

Recognized as a top research-intensive university in the Philippines, UST excels in medical research, which accounts for nearly 500 publications over the past five years.

3.2. Interdisciplinary Collaboration

UST fosters partnerships across disciplines, emphasizing the complementarity of natural sciences and humanities. This synergy is critical for solving real-world problems, such as addressing energy sustainability through innovative projects like the Syngas Refilling Apparatus for Cooking Applications, which incorporates biochar and bio-oil production.

4. Building Industry Partnerships

UST's partnerships with industry leaders and alumni are key drivers of innovation and infrastructure development.

4.1. Industry-Academe Collaboration

Facilities like the Tony Tan Caktiong Innovation Center reflect the success of collaborations with industry experts, providing spaces for startups and research commercialization.

Plans for the Dr. Ricardo S. Po Sr. Integrated Innovation and Research Laboratories in Mindanao aim to bridge gaps between research and practical application in agriculture and technology.

4.2. Alumni Engagement

UST's ability to harness alumni support, such as the contributions from industry icons like Tony Tan Caktiong and Dr. William T. Belo, ensures sustainable growth and the realization of long-term projects.

5. Technology Integration in Education

UST's response to the digital age is a testament to its resilience and adaptability.

5.1. Hybrid Learning and IT Systems

The transition to Canvas and the revamping of the MyUSTe portal illustrate how UST leverages technology to enhance educational delivery.

By maintaining hybrid learning models, UST maximizes the benefits of both virtual and in-person instruction.

5.2. Research-Based Solutions

Innovative projects like the Syngas Refilling Apparatus demonstrate UST's ability to develop sustainable energy solutions that align with both industry needs and environmental goals.

6. Sustainability and Strategic Growth

UST's infrastructure initiatives are deeply rooted in the principle of sustainability. By expanding strategically to underserved regions like Mindanao and developing campuses that cater to regional needs, UST exemplifies its dedication to inclusive growth and environmental responsibility.

6.1. UST General Santos: Agricultural Focus

With an emphasis on agri-tech education, the General Santos campus supports sustainable farming practices and the development of rural industries.

6.2. Green Infrastructure

UST's designs for new facilities incorporate eco-friendly practices, ensuring that innovation does not come at the cost of environmental sustainability.