



# THE ACADEMIA

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# THE ACADEMIA

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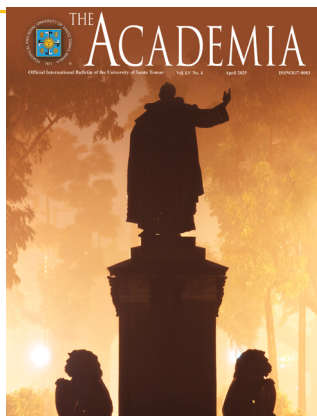
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## About the Cover

The month of April holds great significance for the University, as it marks its founding anniversary every 28th of the month. Featured on the cover is the statue of Archbishop Miguel de Benavides,

the third Archbishop of Manila and the founder of the University of Santo Tomas. What began as a colegio seminario (seminary college) has grown into a comprehensive university with 22 degree-granting programs and serving nearly 40,000 students. The statue, which survived the Intramuros bombing in 1945, stands proud at the Sampaloc campus—a lasting symbol of the University's enduring legacy and rich history that continues to inspire generations of Thomasians.

*Photo from alumnus Paul Quiambao*

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## Times Higher Education's Asia Rankings recognizes UST as #2 in PH; CHED fetes UST's teacher education programs

The University of Santo Tomas obtained second place among Philippine universities ranked by Times Higher Education (THE) for its Asia rankings, released on April 24, 2025

UST also ranks second in the Philippines for the THE World Rankings by Subject 2025, particularly for Medicine and Health, placing at the 601st to 800th bracket.

THE used 18 calibrated performance indicators for the rankings, which were grouped into five areas: Teaching (the learning environment); Research environment (volume, income and reputation); Research quality (citation impact, research strength, research excellence and research influence); International outlook (staff, students and research); and Industry (income and patents).

Compared to its 2024 figures, UST improved in the Research Quality, Research Environment, and Teaching metrics even as it maintained its place in the 601st to 800th bracket.

Along with UST, De La Salle University - Manila, Mapúa University, and the Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology also placed in the 601st to 800th bracket. Six Philippine HEIs were ranked, with 15 more Philippine HEIs obtaining a 'reporter' status that indicates that a university has submitted data for the rankings.

According to the Presidential Communications Office, as of 2024, there were 1,977 HEIs in the Philippines, including 113 state universities and colleges (SUCs), 137 local universities and colleges (LUCs), 1,714 private HEIs; and 13 other government schools (OGS), CHED-supervised institutions, and special schools.

Earlier in the same month, teacher education programs from the UST College of Education were recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) through the Excellence in Quality Assurance in Teacher Education (EQUATE) Awards given on April 2, 2025.

UST's teacher education degree programs include: Bachelor of Secondary Education (with majors in English, Filipino, Mathematics, Religious and Values Education, Science, and Social Studies); Bachelor of Early Childhood Education; Bachelor of Elementary Education; and Bachelor of Special Needs Education.

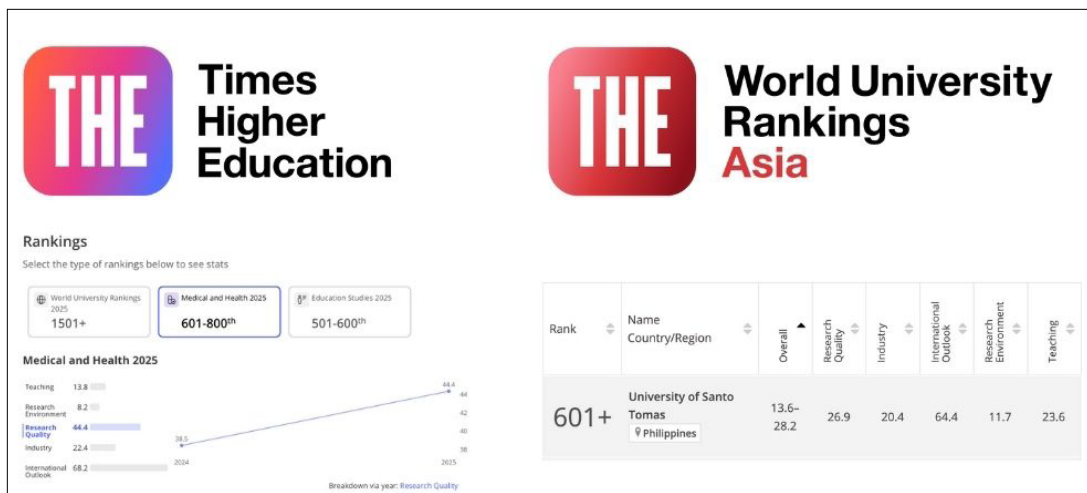
The award "is a recognition of your institution's consistent upholding of the highest standard in ensuring the quality of pre-service teacher education programs, following the CHED minimum standards, program accreditation, and excellent performance in



UST Vice Rector for Academic Affairs Prof. Cheryl Peralta, DrPH (second from left), College of Education Dean Assoc. Prof. Pilar I. Romero, Ph.D. (third from left) Assistant Dean Asst. Prof. Louie B. Dasas, Ph.D. (leftmost), and Elementary Education Chair Asst. Prof. Vincent V. Caparas

the Board of Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers," wrote then CHED Chairman J. Prospero E. De Vera III in a letter dated March 28, 2025.

The EQUATE award is the latest recognition of these programs, as CHED has recognized the Elementary and Secondary Education programs since 2008 as two of UST's 13 Centers of Excellence, while the Professional Regulation Commission has repeatedly recognized the University for being one of the top performing schools in the respective licensure exams. The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) also accredited BSEd and BEEd at the highest level of IV. Internationally, the ASEAN University Network - Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) has also certified the Bachelor of Secondary Education and Bachelor of Special Needs Education, effective until 2028. ■



UST placed in the 601st to 800th bracket of the THE Asia Rankings (right) and the World Rankings by Subject 2025, particularly for Medicine and Health. It is also within the 501st to 600th bracket for Education Studies.



# UST commemorates its 414th foundation anniversary with wreath-laying ceremony

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) honored its founder, Msgr. Miguel de Benavides O.P., third Archbishop of Manila, through a solemn wreath-laying ceremony on its 414th anniversary on April 28, 2025, at the Archbishop's namesake garden and statue.

UST Vice Rector for Religious Affairs Rev. Fr. Pablo Tiong, O.P., led the rite, while the wreaths were offered by Secretary General Rev. Fr. Louie Coronel, O.P., EHL, representing the University administration, renowned sculptor Mr. Ramon Orlina representing alumni, Central Student Council (CSC) Secretary Ms. Meckia Villanueva representing students, and Ms. Joshua Dizon representing the support staff. The bronze statue of Msgr. Benavides at the heart of the UST Manila campus was made by French sculptor Tony Noël in 1889.

Faculty of Arts and Letters Dean Prof. Melanie D. Turingan, Ph.D. gave a short overview of the life and ministry of Archbishop Benavides, while UST Miguel de Benavides Library Chief Librarian Ms. Ma. Cecilia Lobo shared her insights on how the Archbishop's bequeathal of his personal collection of books and the ongoing operations of the library, named after the founder, continue to play a pivotal role in the academic landscape.

The ceremony was a meaningful capstone to the University foundation month as April was filled with many initiatives from the academic units and administrative offices, all aligned with the theme "Keep us in Beauty," a line taken from the University hymn. ■



*Fr. Tiong reflects on the legacy of the University founder*



*Representatives of the Thomasian community led by Rev. Fr. Louie R. Coronel, O.P., UST Secretary-General, pay their respects and stand by their wreath in front of the statue of Archbishop Benavides*





Pope Francis entered the Arch of the Centuries upon his arrival and wrote on the University guestbook, witnessed by then UST Rector Very Rev. Fr. Herminio Dagohoy, O.P., Ph.D. (leftmost), then Archbishop of Manila Most Rev. Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, D.D., and then Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of the Philippines Very Rev. Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, O.P. [Photos by Paul Quiambao]



The University of Santo Tomas  
commemorates the life of

## HIS HOLINESS † POPE FRANCIS

(Jorge Mario Bergoglio, SJ)

17 December 1936 - 21 April 2025

a humble and merciful shepherd of the Church  
who visited this Pontifical University on  
**18 January 2015**

and inspired many Thomasians in his flock  
to live lives of competence, commitment, and  
compassion as they work toward a culture of  
encounter.

With deep gratitude, The Academia looks back  
on his historic visit.



May He love bless all those studying and working for a culture  
of encounter.

Manila, the 18 January 2015

Francis

Pope Francis's handwritten message on the  
University guestbook

## Special Feature



From April 22 to 26, 2025, in the sede vacante period, the University, through the UST Museum, held an exhibit of memorabilia from the late Holy Father's visit. This included the papal chair, with the inscription "Pastor Bonus" (Good Shepherd); the UST ID, which he wore as this Pontifical University's highest administrator, the pen and signed guestbook, and the "Pope Francis @ UST" coffetable book produced by the Office of Public Affairs [Photos by Hans Malgapu of the Communications Bureau]



Pope Francis had his encounter with the youth at the grandstand, with thousands of people watching from the field. His speech from the heart, which he delivered impromptu upon being emotionally moved by a young girl's question, is recorded on the Vatican website [link] and can be read alongside his prepared speech. [Photos by Marc Henrich Go and Paul Quiambao]



## Toledo of AB receives *Gawad Pambansang "Alagad ni Balagtas"*

**M**r. Joel Toledo, M.A., of the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters' Department of Creative Writing, was conferred the *Gawad Pambansang Alagad ni Balagtas* by the *Unyon ng mga Manunulat ng Pilipinas (UMPIL)* during its 51st National Writers' Congress held on April 26 at the Gimenez Gallery in the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman.

Toledo was recognized for his outstanding contributions to Philippine literature, particularly in English poetry. He is the author of six poetry collections, including *Chiaroscuro* and *Planet Nine*, both published by UST Publishing House. A former literary editor of the *Philippines Free Press*, he is also a recipient of the 2006 National Commission for Culture and Arts' Writers Prize and multiple honors such as the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Award, Meritage Press Poetry Prize, and Bridport Prize.

Toledo was a poetry fellow at the 2011 International Writing Program at the University of Iowa and has received Rockefeller Foundation residencies in Bellagio, Italy, in 2011 and 2023. His work has been featured in leading literary journals, including *The Iowa Review*, *ZYZZYVA*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *UP Likhaan*. He has also co-edited both local and international poetry journals and anthologies, including *Caracoa*, *Under the Storm*, and *Cordite Poetry Review*.

UMPIL's *Pambansang Gawad ni Balagtas* honors Filipino writers who have made lasting contributions to the country's literary tradition.

Toledo teaches Poetry, Advanced Poetics, and Shakespeare at the Department of Creative Writing of the Faculty of Arts and Letters. ■



*Toledo (center) receives his accolades*

## Architecture alumna Mangalino-Ling named 18th LIKHA Gold Medal Awardee



*Ar. Mangalino-Ling (fifth from left) and Ar. Jose Siao Ling (sixth from left)*

**A**r. Ana Mangalino-Ling has been honored as the 18th recipient of the LIKHA Gold Medal Award, the highest distinction conferred by the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) to its members. The awarding ceremony took place on April 10, 2025, at the SMX Convention Center during the UAP National Convention.

Ar. Mangalino-Ling earned her degree in Architecture from the University of Santo Tomas (UST) and graduated in 1980. She is the co-founder of JSLA Architects, a top-ranking and multi-awarded architectural firm in the Philippines, which she established alongside her husband, Ar. Jose Siao Ling—also a UST graduate and a LIKHA Gold Medal Awardee in 2022.

As a recipient of the LIKHA Gold Medal, Ar. Mangalino-Ling exemplifies the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct, practicing architecture with excellence and distinction. She has made significant contributions to the UAP, and has demonstrated outstanding achievements and active involvement in service to the community, government, and nation.

In addition to this prestigious recognition, Ar. Mangalino-Ling and her family were also honored with the Thomasian Family Award during the 2024 TOTAL (The Outstanding Thomasian Alumni) Awards. ■

## Herrera of Architecture joins UAP College of Fellows

**A**sst. Prof. Henry Felix Herrera, M.E.M., was elevated to the United Architects of the Philippines College of Fellows (UAP COF) in April 2025 during the 50th UAP National Convention. Herrera has been a practicing architect for more than 28 years.

His work experience includes practice from a family-owned real estate and construction company, at the government, in projects under the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, other privately-owned firms, and personal engagements. All these while working in the academe for more than 15 years.

He is a firm believer that values form men and he correlates this to his design philosophy that “All spaces have tangible or intangible functions that consequently produce values.” He continues to share this philosophy to students and mentees under his helm at his alma mater, the University of Santo Tomas (UST) College of Architecture.

He was a research fellow of UST Research Center for Culture, Arts, and Humanities, and a candidate this year for Doctor of Philosophy major in Development Studies from the UST Graduate School.

UAP is the integrated and accredited professional organization of architects. ■



*Ar. Herrera (center) receives his certification*

## CTHM wins THE-ICE int'l contest on revenue management

**N**ow in its fifth year, the Tourism and Hospitality Education International Center of Excellence (THE-ICE) Global Revenue Management (GRM) Challenge brings together students and staff across their global network, providing an opportunity to engage and build international skills and experience.

The THE-ICE GRM Challenge 2025 attracted 52 students and 14 academic staff representing seven different institutions, who were grouped into international and inter-institutional teams. Together, they competed in an innovative challenge designed to test and develop their hospitality and tourism revenue management skills.

This year's winning team included Ms. Charisse Lee, a Thomasian sophomore student from the BS Hospitality Management major in Hospitality Leadership program. Other members of the winning team include students from Lyceum of the Philippines University, Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School of Australia, and Mae Fah Luang University of Thailand. They each received an AUD 1500 bursary toward study, among others, as their prizes.

Other students from the University of Santo Tomas who participated in this annual event are Ms. Carlene Mae Dela Cruz and Ms. Aien Soliel D. Limon. Mr. Christiann Kevin Enriquez, another student, was able to clinch 4th place. ■





# UST scholars explore gene editing for rare diseases in the Philippines

**A**n interdisciplinary study by scholars from the University of Santo Tomas is shedding light on how cutting-edge science and Catholic ethics can come together to offer hope for Filipino families battling rare genetic diseases.

Published in the *Journal of Religion and Health*, a Q1 Scopus-indexed journal by Springer Nature, the paper titled, “Theological and Ethical Perspectives on Gene Editing and the Sanctity of Life,” explores the promise of gene editing technologies like CRISPR-Cas9 in treating genetic conditions such as Hereditary Tyrosinemia Type I, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, and Hunter Syndrome – all of which have a documented presence in the Philippines.

The authors, Assoc. Prof. Mary Anne Chiong, M.D., MSc, FPPS, from the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery and UST Hospital and Assoc. Prof. Allan Basas, SThD, from the Institute of Religion began their discussion with a scientific overview of gene editing techniques and their potential to treat rare diseases. They featured three specific genetic conditions affecting Filipinos as models to explore real-world applications.

Beyond the science, the paper delves into the ethical and theological dimensions of gene editing. Emphasizing the doctrine of Imago Dei (the image of God), the authors argue that any intervention in human genetics must uphold human dignity and moral responsibility. The paper contrasts therapeutic somatic gene editing — which treats disease in individuals — with germline editing, which alters inheritable DNA and raises significant ethical concerns.

Using the See-Judge-Act framework inspired by Catholic social teaching, the authors evaluate gene editing in light of Church teachings on human dignity, offering practical insights for responsibly applying these technologies. The study ultimately encourages the pursuit of healing while safeguarding life’s sacredness.

The study shows that gene editing presents not just medical hope but a profound ethical responsibility. The authors emphasize that rooted in faith, science must always serve the person and the common good.

In a country where healthcare inequalities persist and faith plays a central role, the study urges collaboration among policymakers, medical professionals, and faith communities. Strengthening the implementation of the Rare Disease Act and investing in ethical gene therapy could transform care for the most vulnerable. ■

Read the full article here: [Link](#)



*Assoc. Prof. Mary Anne Chiong, M.D., MSc, FPPS*



*Assoc. Prof. Allan Basas, SThD*



## Dominican canonists convene at UST for Global Ecclesial Mission

The Canonistae Assembly, convened jointly by the University of Santo Tomas and the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), welcomed Dominican friars from across the continents, each engaged in the canonical ministry of the Order of Preachers, at the Bl. Buenaventura García Paredes, O.P., building from April 22 to 25, 2025. Their mission was to renew, study, and coordinate the evolving ecclesiastical juridical frameworks by which the Dominican charism serves the People of God.

In an age when law is sometimes reduced to instrumentality or drowned in ideological abstraction, this assembly recalled Cicero's admonition that "We are servants of the laws so that we may be free" (Pro Cluentio, XXV.67). The atmosphere of the conference echoed this classical vision—a communion of minds disciplined by the demands of justice, hearts shaped by religious life, and intellects refined by the Thomistic synthesis.

The Canonistae 2025 Assembly opened with a liturgical celebration presided over by the Master of the Order Very Rev. Fr. Gerard Francisco P. Timoner III, O.P., whose welcome remarks established the conference's rationale. He reminded participants that the essence of canon law is not legalism but charity: a humble ordering of ecclesial life for the salvation of souls. Present also were high-ranking friars including Socius for Asia-Pacific Rev. Fr. Jamshed Gill, O.P., Vicar of the Master Rev. Fr. Pablo Sicouly, O.P., and Prior Provincial of the Philippine Province Rev. Fr. Filemon de la Cruz, O.P. These leaders underscored that the Dominican apostolate in law is one of unity: between cloister and curia, tradition and aggiornamento (keeping up to date), local fidelity and universal service.

Sessions began with a fraternal overview of the two Faculties of Canon Law at UST and the Angelicum. The Prior of the Convent of Friars of Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum)

and Dean of the Faculty of Canon Law Rev. Fr. Loïc-Marie Le Bot, O.P., of the Province of Toulouse, offered a theological grounding in the intersection of law, justice, and grace, presenting a Thomistic defense of canonical rationality. Meanwhile, Rev. Fr. Julius Factora, O.P., on behalf of Vice Rector Rev. Fr. Isaías Tiongco, O.P., detailed the composition and pastoral ethos of UST's faculty, rooted in its centuries-old dedication to the study of ecclesiastical law in the Philippine Church.

Procurator General of the Order Rev. Fr. Benjamin Earl, O.P., took center stage with a trilogy of interventions that anchored the canonical discussions. His first address, "On Presenting Cases to the Curia," emphasized clarity and simplicity in legal communication, outlining eighteen principles—humorously called "commandments"—to guide friars in forwarding cases. His second session explored canons 684–687 on separation from the Order. With pastoral realism and juridical sobriety, he highlighted the importance of establishing causa, safeguarding the right of defense, and attending to the spiritual gravity of departure from consecrated life.

The third case, presented with striking candor, was that of a friar from the Province of Antarctica—a fictional setting employed as a didactic narrative. Here, Fr. Earl demonstrated canonical procedures for dismissal following illegitimate absence and requests for dispensation. The tone was at once serious and humane, signaling the balance of rigor and mercy proper to ecclesiastical law.

Afternoons were devoted not only to academic exchange but to cultural and fraternal immersion. Delegates visited historical landmarks within Intramuros—the Manila Cathedral, San Agustin Church—and later the Dominican centers at the Convent of St. John Lateran and the Colegio de San Juan de Letran. At each site, they were greeted with warmth and reverence, sharing meals and



(Front row, from left:) UST Central Seminary Acting Rector Rev. Fr. Clarence Marquez, O.P., Socius for Asia-Pacific Rev. Fr. Jamshed Gill, O.P., UST Vice Rector Rev. Fr. Isaías Tiongco, O.P., Master of the Order Very Rev. Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, O.P., Socius for the Apostolic Life Rev. Fr. Florentino Bolo, O.P., Procurator General of the Order Rev. Fr. Benjamin Earl, O.P. and Prior of the Convent of Friars of Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) and Dean of the Faculty of Canon Law Rev. Fr. Loïc-Marie Le Bot, O.P., with Dominican friars and Central Seminary brothers

DOMINICAN CANONIST FROM PAGE 10

witnessing the vibrancy of Dominican educational and pastoral outreach in the Philippines.

The third day continued with significant contributions from the former Provincial of South Germany and Austria Rev. Fr. Christophe Holzer, O.P. His lecture on canonical accompaniment of nuns underscored the need for juridical structures to uphold the integrity and autonomy of contemplative communities, particularly amidst pressures to secularize religious governance. His call for renewed attention to female consecrated life was complemented by Fr. Earl's exploration of the canonical and spiritual resources necessary for such accompaniment.

Rev. Fr. Gregory Pearson, O.P., and Rev. Fr. Mirosław Sander, O.P., brought further depth. Fr. Pearson addressed the delicate intersection of preliminary investigations and vocational formation, warning against a juridicism that undermines the spiritual discernment necessary in addressing crises or complaints. Fr. Sander, in turn, drew from his work in Rome as Delegate for the Protection of Minors, presenting the Order's protocols in safeguarding and pastoral accountability—an increasingly urgent concern for the Church.

Throughout the conference, participants expressed gratitude not only for the sessions but for the brotherhood they rediscovered. Vespers and fellowship at the Santo Domingo Convent and Bahay Dominiko offered sacred rhythm to each day's intellectual rigor.

This international convergence was not merely a juridical colloquium. It was an ecclesial act—a renewal of the Order's service to the Body of Christ through the humble, precise, and pastoral work of canonists. The assembly reaffirmed that canon law, far from being a dry discipline of prescriptions, is a theology of communion. Its language, at once technical and theological, bears witness to a Church that governs not to dominate but to serve. ■



*Master of the Order Very Rev. Fr. Gerard Francisco P. Timoner III, O.P., (left) and Socius for Asia-Pacific Rev. Fr. Jamshed Gill, O.P. (right)*



*Procurator General of the Order Rev. Fr. Benjamin Earl, O.P.*



*Vicar of the Master Rev. Fr. Pablo Sicouly, O.P. (right) and Socius for the Apostolic Life Rev. Fr. Florentino Bolo, O.P. (left)*



*Prior Provincial of the Philippine Province Rev. Fr. Filemon de la Cruz, O.P.*



## UST Office of Public Affairs hosts 7th MLLS to empower Thomasian electorate

The University of Santo Tomas (UST), through the Office of Public Affairs (OPA), hosted its 7th installment of the Media Leadership Lecture Series (MLLS), focusing on voter empowerment and education. Titled “Our Vote, Our Future: An Exploration of the Shared Role of the Academe, Media, and Government for an Empowered Electorate,” the event was held at the Dr. Robert C. Sy Grand Ballroom in the Bl. Buenaventura Garcia Paredes, O.P., building on April 3, 2025.

The lecture series involved experts in the field of election law and journalism — speakers such as the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) Chair Hon. George Erwin Garcia, Manila Bulletin Publisher Sec. Herminio “Sonny” Coloma, Jr., and panelists GMA Integrated News Senior Reporter Ms. Sandra Aguinaldo, ABS-CBN Senior Reporter Ms. Victoria Tulad, and TV5 Digital Growth Editor for News Mr. John Reczon Calay.

In his talk, Hon. Garcia encouraged the Thomasian community to combat misinformation and make more informed votes in the upcoming elections. Hon. Garcia firmly believes that it is the COMELEC’s responsibility to inform Filipino citizens of election-related issues and concerns; he recalled an incident regarding a person’s lack of knowledge about the COMELEC which resulted in an informative tour within the commission’s office.

Hon. Garcia also highlighted that one of the ways to improve information dissemination is through partnering with schools and universities for voter education. The lecture series, according to Hon. Garcia, is an “opportunity... for us to encourage you [students]... to vote,” as a shared goal of the academe and the COMELEC during election season. “Voters’ education is the key to the problems of this country,” he said in light of the ongoing national concern of information disorder, especially in social media. He also underscored the value of caution in the use of social media as a source of news despite its validity as a new medium for procuring information.

Hon. Garcia expressed his hope towards the current generation of voters near the end of his piece, telling the audience, “the future is in their hands,” reiterating his stance on researching candidates to make informed votes in the upcoming elections.

Concerns such as the involvement of voters in elections and journalistic practice during the election season echoed in the panel discussion with journalists from different broadcasting networks, joined by Faculty of Arts and Letters Faculty Secretary Asst. Prof. Louie Benedict R. Ignacio, Ph.D., and student leaders Mr. Ramon Ellis Francisco and Ms. Elizabeth Alejandro from the Central Student Council (CSC) and Student Organizations Coordinating Council (SOCC), respectively; the discussion was moderated by OPA Assistant Director Ms. Katherine Patrice B. Sibug.

The panel discussion commenced with a question on the state of each person’s respective offices during elections; commonly mentioned was the hectic nature of the panelists’ workplaces. Calay added that the opportunity to cover elections or any national event is considered a milestone for a journalist, resulting in lively newsrooms during such days.

In relation to the academe, Ms. Sibug raised the question of whether timely election-related content is integrated into discussions; Ignacio stated that the use of current events are most useful in the social sciences, giving students better understanding of the theories discussed in class. Alejandro added that the Central Student Council (CSC) has been making efforts to educate the



*Hon. Garcia during his talk on voter education*

Thomasian voters on national and local elections, in collaboration with the COMELEC.

In light of modern media, news outfits have also adapted to using social media for news updates since students and other younger audiences rely more on the internet to obtain information; voter education has now also adapted to online platforms to sustain coverage for a wider audience. Social media as a source of information for class discussions is then seen as “both an advantage and a risk,” according to Ignacio, because of the variety of content one can be exposed to and influenced, whether verified or not.

Due to the ongoing concern of fake news and biased information, Ms. Sibug raised the question of how journalists face the challenge of balancing unbiased truths among the sea of unregulated, biased content. Panelists agreed that persistence in spreading well-researched and unbiased news is the most important method of combating misinformation: “arm yourself with the truth, so when people question you, you have ammunition,” in Tulad’s words.

“There may be noise, *pero malaki ang espasyo natin para magbalita* (but we have a wider space to deliver news)...” said Calay on addressing fake news in social media, using biased comments as an opportunity to correct information.



UST OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS FROM PAGE 12



*UST OPA Director Ms. Michaela O. Lagniton, M.A., UST Student Organizations Coordinating Council (SOCC) President Mr. Ramon Ellis Francisco, UST Central Student Council (CSC) Coordinator to the Office of the President Ms. Elizabeth Alejandro, TV5 Digital Growth Editor for News Mr. John Reczon Calay, GMA Integrated News Senior Reporter and News Anchor Ms. Sandra Aguinaldo, ABS-CBN News Senior Reporter Ms. Victoria Tulad, UST Faculty of Arts and Letters Secretary Asst. Prof. Louie Benedict R. Ignacio, Ph.D., and UST OPA Assistant Director Ms. Katherine Patrice B. Sibug.*

On the one hand, to aid in educating and informing those in the academe, Francisco mentioned the creation of guides for student organization public relations officers in creating and organizing content for the student body, where voter education materials may be distributed between organizations in varying forms of content for easier digestion. On the other hand, fact-checking is under the responsibility of the CSC's research and publication committee, ensuring that all content would undergo multiple levels of scrutiny, from students up to their advisers.

To conclude their discussion, the panelists shared their thoughts on the collaborative process of voter education, through the partnerships between the University and media outfits and personal research rather than getting absorbed in one's algorithm.

To end the series of talks for the event, Sec. Coloma introduced the Manila Bulletin "Matalinong Boto" Campaign, advocating for safe, fair, and honest elections. He delved into topics such as engaging in respectful discourse between peers, avoiding smear campaigns among candidates, and ensuring that information shared is truthful and researched. Afterwards, students took the pledge towards Matalinong Boto, in reflection of St. Thomas Aquinas' teachings on Veritas (truth), as all truths come from God and correspond to reality.

Overall, the 7th MLLS has given students the opportunity to gain insights from specialists and fellow Thomasians on becoming more informed and responsible citizens during the elections.

Previous MLLS installments touched on topics including but not limited to information disorder, health communications, media in evangelization, among many others. ■



*Sec. Coloma discussing their "Matalinong Boto" campaign*



## UST English Department, PIFSA conduct training on ethical investigative interviewing

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) Department of English, in partnership with the Philippine Investigation and Forensic Science Academy (PIFSA), held the *Linguistically Advanced Informed Investigative Interviewing Training* from April 10 to 12, 2025, at the Thomas Aquinas Research Center (TARC) Auditorium.

The event gathered language experts, criminologists, investigators, and academics to discuss and practice ethical and evidence-based approaches to interviews conducted in legal and criminal justice contexts.

The program opened with remarks from Prof. Marilu Madrunio, Ph.D., former dean of both the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters and the UST Graduate School, who emphasized the increasing relevance of forensic linguistics in the Philippines.

Prof. Rachele B. Lintao, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of English, delivered a two-part lecture on the evolution of investigative interviewing, highlighting the shift from traditional interrogation methods to science-based, ethical approaches. She covered the historical development of the practice and introduced participants to the PEACE model, which promotes ethical interviewing through stages of preparation, engagement, account, closure, and evaluation. Lintao also explained the Méndez Principles, a United Nations framework aimed at safeguarding human rights and preventing coercive interrogation tactics.

Lintao cited the importance of keeping the interviewer's tone "neutral, curious, and non-threatening," explaining, "The goal is to build rapport, gather facts, and encourage open communication."

"By providing these safeguards, we directly actualize the values of objectivity, dignity, and respect — essential in promoting procedural fairness, building the legitimacy of the process, and in turn achieving the willing compliance of those being interviewed," she said.

On the second day, Prof. R. Dian Dia-an Muniroh, Ph.D., from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia led a talk on cognitive interviewing techniques designed to enhance memory recall and improve question framing, wherein memory and language work to ensure interviews are interviewee-led and personalized. The guest speaker also stressed the necessity of considering the physical and mental state of interviewees to avoid "cognitive fatigue," especially when interviewing children.

The final day featured a simulation-based workshop led by veteran criminal investigators Rudy Gahar and Pablito Kempis, focusing on the simulation of "custodial investigation," a term more appropriate than "interrogation" to align with human rights standards. Through a walkthrough of ocular inspection and scene reconstruction, as well as legal parameters that define a custodial investigation, the session provided practical applications of core competencies such as active listening, rapport-building, strategic questioning, and interview planning, and considering factors like gender, culture, timing, and venue.

The three-day training attracted police investigators, language enthusiasts, criminology students and practitioners, academicians, and UST English Language Studies students.

Focusing on rapport-building, objectivity, and respectful communication, the event highlighted the role of linguistically informed, non-coercive investigative interviewing in advancing a more just and humane criminal justice system in the Philippines. ■



Mr. Pablito Kempis, Prof. Rachel B. Lintao, Ph.D., Prof. R. Dian Dia-an Muniroh, Ph.D., Prof. Marilu Madrunio, Ph.D., and Mr. Rudy Gahar



## Belgian Ambassador H.E. Michel Parys headlines cross-cultural learning session at UST



*H.E. Michel Parys (center), with student participants and officials from the OIRP, OPA, and College of Science*

The University of Santo Tomas (UST), through the Office of Public Affairs and the Office for International Relations and Programs in collaboration with the College of Science, held the 3rd “UST World Lenses: A Cross-Cultural Dialogue with Students”, with His Excellency Michel Parys, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to the Republic of the Philippines. The lecture was held at the Dr. George SK Ty Hall on April 28, 2025, which coincides with the 414th anniversary of the foundation of UST.

Ambassador Parys, in his lecture, shared insights on Belgium’s circular economy framework, with a special focus on its intersection with public health initiatives, fostering awareness and critical thinking on sustainable and health-conscious economic practices.

The circular economy is a model of production and consumption that is sustainable and waste reducing since it extends the lifecycle of products in such a way that materials are shared, leased, reused, repaired, refurbished, or upcycled rather than immediately disposed after one use.

Students from the UST College of Science, which is set to celebrate its 100th foundation anniversary next year, served as the main participants of the event with the Ambassador.

UST World Lenses is an academic gathering that highlights the power of education in fostering international understanding and cooperation through connecting students with experts from various countries. This ongoing initiative is a partnership among the UST Office of International Relations and Programs, UST Office of Public Affairs, and for this year, the UST College of Science.

Previous sessions of the UST World Lenses featured Trade Section Head Ms. Ana Clara Pianezza and the Third Secretary and Consul Mr. Fabricio Sordoni from the Embassy of Argentina

in Manila, who discussed the history, economics, and tourism of their country, and renowned paint conservator of the Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika (UMK) in Poland, Dr. hab. Mirosław Wachowiak, who emphasized the crucial role of interdisciplinary collaboration in the realm of art restoration. ■



*Belgian Ambassador His Excellency Michel Parys delivers his lecture on the circular economy.*



## Tarrayo advocates for equity in Language Teacher Education through intersectionality in keynote lecture at TILTED 2025

In a keynote lecture that challenged the educational status quo, Prof. Veronico N. Tarrayo, Ph.D. of the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Arts and Letters and the UST Graduate School called for a radical reimagining of language teacher education (LTE) through the lens of intersectionality during the Second Online “TILTED (Towards Intersectionality in Language Teacher Education)” Conference hosted by the Moray House School of Education and Sport of The University of Edinburgh on March 28, 2025.

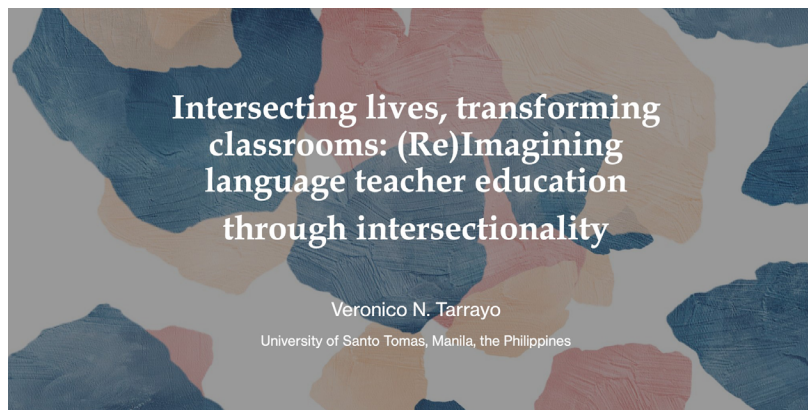
His talk titled, “Intersecting lives, transforming classrooms: (Re)imagining language teacher education through intersectionality,” was delivered to a global audience of teacher educators, researchers, and graduate students deeply engaged in equity and inclusion in education. The lecture can be accessed through the TILTED YouTube channel.

The TILTED conference, in its second year, has become a critical platform for educators exploring the overlapping identities that shape both teachers and learners. In his lecture, Prof. Tarrayo underscored a compelling premise: “If we are committed to equity in language (teacher) education, we cannot afford to ignore intersectionality. Our classrooms—and our students—deserve more.”

Drawing from a rigorous systematic literature review, Tarrayo framed intersectionality, first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, as more than a theoretical concept. Instead, he positioned it as an urgent pedagogical imperative in LTE. According to Tarrayo, the intersection of identities—race, gender, class, sexuality, language, ability—must be understood as fundamentally shaping teachers’ and students’ experiences.

He argued that intersectionality acts as: (1) a tool for critical reflection, enabling educators to confront their own privilege and positionality; (2) a framework for social justice pedagogy, ensuring inclusive, anti-oppressive practices; and (3) a disruptor of hegemonic narratives, especially those upholding native-speakerism and racial hierarchies in LTE.

Through case studies and critical research, Tarrayo spotlighted real classroom struggles—from immigrant mothers of color negotiating linguistic legitimacy (Lee-Johnson, 2023), to queer educators resisting institutional erasure (Riquelme-Sanderson & Longoria, 2023), to teacher candidates in Costa Rica and the U.S. grappling with ‘raciolinguistic’ shame (Vega & Fallas-Escobar, 2024).



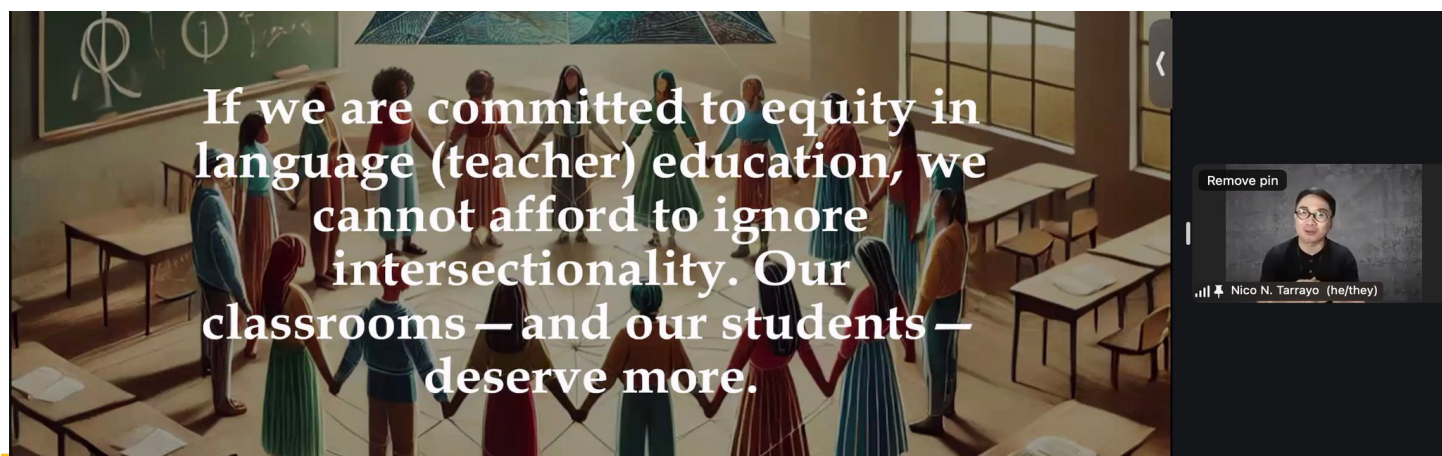
While praising the growing international interest in intersectionality, Tarrayo highlighted that most research and policy discourse remain concentrated in the U.S. and parts of Europe. The global South—and its unique sociopolitical realities—continues to be underrepresented.

“Embedding intersectionality into LTE is both necessary and difficult,” he admitted, “but the cost of ignoring it is far greater.”

The talk concluded with concrete strategies for educators and institutions alike: (1) embed intersectionality into teacher education curricula using identity mapping, diverse case studies, and autoethnography; (2) diversify reading lists and teaching materials to include LGBTQIA+, indigenous, and Global South voices; (3) challenge ‘native-speakerist’ and Eurocentric ideologies in assessment and pedagogy; and (4) support marginalized educators through safe spaces and professional development in anti-oppressive pedagogy.

Tarrayo emphasized that intersectionality not only equips educators to teach more justly; it transforms classrooms into spaces of recognition, resistance, and radical care.

As the call for equity in education grows louder, Tarrayo’s keynote delivers a resounding reminder: language teacher education must not only teach what we say—it must reflect who we are. ■





## Thomasiens practice online fact-checking in “*Halalan 2025: I-Tsek ang Boto*”

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) Office of Public Affairs (OPA), in partnership with ABS-CBN News, hosted a fact-checking lecture-workshop titled, “*Halalan 2025: I-Tsek ang Boto*,” on April 10, 2025 at the George SK Ty Function Hall of the Bl. Buenaventura G. Paredes, O.P. Building. The workshop addressed information disorder, especially during the campaign season.

The workshop, shortly transpiring after the 7th installment of the Media Leadership Lecture Series, delved into the same societal concern, this time with students practicing fact-checking and learning how to identify and address misinformation on social media and other platforms.

The workshop began with an interactive discussion by ABS-CBN News Chief Content Aggregator and Training Officer Ms. Dabet Panelo on the history of Philippine elections. Students were given the opportunity to ask questions and share their insights during the discussion, providing a space where they could learn more about how the elections developed in the Philippines as well as the technology which evolved alongside it. Topics on election laws and regulations were also discussed with the Legal Network for Truthful Elections’ (LENTE) Junior Program Officer for Election Reforms Ms. Alexa Yadao as speaker. During her session, Yadao led participants in a discussion about various issues they may have encountered in their own localities in relation to violations of the regulations for elections.

After the interactive discussion, the students then engaged in workshops where they shared their local experiences related to the campaign period, checked and utilized websites such as TinEye and WeVerify to conduct their fact-checking activities. These tools are readily accessible to anyone with an internet connection, which allows a wide range of individuals to fact-check on their own without further assistance.

In the continuously growing online landscape, people must be well-equipped with the proper tools to decipher information that seek to misinform the masses — “*I-Tsek ang Boto*” has provided Thomasiens with the knowledge and skill to combat the ongoing crisis of misinformation with the help of ABS-CBN’s school-based fact-checking campaigns, particularly before the Midterm National and Local Elections set on May 2025. ■



Ms. Dabet Panelo



Ms. Alexa Yadao



Participants sharing their local experience on campaign season



Panelo (lower center) with UST-OPA and the Thomasian community



## UST GS hosts expert-led webinars on global issues

In celebration of the University of Santo Tomas' 414th founding anniversary, the UST Graduate School hosted a series of academic lectures and webinars throughout April 2025, spearheaded by its various program clusters.

April 5 marked the fourth installment of the Geopolitical Field Research for Peace Studies series. Held virtually, the session featured Rear Admiral Rommel Jude G. Ong of the Philippine Navy as guest speaker. Now a Professor of Praxis at the Ateneo School of Government (ASOG), Rear Admiral Ong discussed China's political warfare strategy within the broader context of U.S.–China geopolitical rivalry. He outlined Beijing's United Front Work (UFW) tactics, which aim to suppress criticism of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), promote pro-China narratives, and sway public opinion in democratic nations. His talk was followed by a panel discussion with members of the UST GS academic staff.

On April 12, the Psychology and Guidance and Counseling Cluster organized a webinar titled New Trends in Counseling, Personality, and Clinical Psychology. The session featured two esteemed international experts: Dr. Christian Scott, a Fulbright scholar, and Dr. Majeed Khader, a pioneering forensic psychologist from Singapore. Dr. Scott explored the psychological dynamics of family structures, with a particular focus on single parenthood. She highlighted the emotional and social challenges faced by single mothers and their potential effects on children's behavior and development. Dr. Khader discussed the role of forensic psychology in high-stress environments, particularly in criminal investigations. Participants appreciated the relevance of these insights, particularly in relation to local contexts and research applications.

Later in the month, the GS Human Resource Cluster held an academic forum titled Human Resource Management at the Forefront of Digital Transformation on April 26. The event featured Mr. Eugene Jerome Carlino, Assistant Professor at National University, and Mr. David G. Romano, Assistant Vice President for Organizational Development and Culture at Chroma Hospitality. Carlino examined evolving HR functions amid digital transformation, with emphasis on talent management and recruitment. Romano discussed the integration of artificial intelligence into HR practices, sharing innovative approaches to talent acquisition and organizational development.

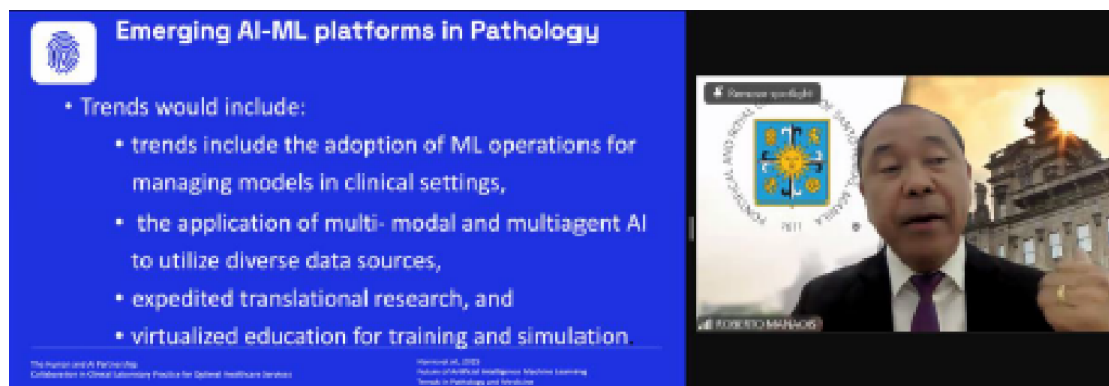
Also on April 26, the GS Food Science Program hosted the second episode of its Food for Thought series. The session spotlighted two speakers: Ms. Michelle Esteban, Division Chief of the Laboratory Accreditation Trade Industry Development Division



Rear Admiral Ong talks about political warfare



One of the webinars focusing on industry standards for food



Assoc. Prof. Manaois

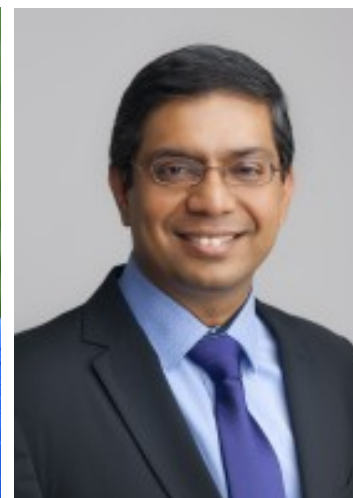


## USTGS HOSTS FROM PAGE 17

at the Department of Trade and Industry – Philippine Accreditation Bureau, and Mr. William F. Mugot, Chief of the Plant Product Safety Services Division at the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI). Esteban stressed the role of accreditation in ensuring credible and reliable food testing services. Mugot presented the challenges facing local agricultural exports, noting a decline in export volume due to inspection failures linked to insect and pesticide residue. He emphasized the need to revisit and streamline regulatory policies to support farmers, exporters, and manufacturers.

On April 28, the GS Medical Technology cluster held a webinar tackling the contributions of artificial intelligence in healthcare services particularly in diagnostics. This webinar was held in collaboration with the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists, Inc. Asst. Prof. Roberto G. Manaois, DBA, RMT who is President of Scientific Biotech Specialties, Inc. served as speaker for the event. Manaois emphasized that the use of AI today in clinical laboratory practice is inevitable, as it improves the analysis and processing of clinical data. He underscored the importance of embracing AI tools, not as replacements but as partners in achieving precision and efficiency in laboratory medicine. The speaker also tackled ethical and practical considerations for integrating AI into clinical laboratories. He addressed critical issues such as data privacy, diagnostic accountability, and the evolving role of medical technologists in AI-assisted environments.

These academic initiatives underscore the UST Graduate School's unwavering commitment to the advancement of knowledge through the integration of theory and practice, reaffirming its vital role in scholarly discourse and professional development. ■



*Dr. Christina Scott and Dr. Majeed Khader, speakers for the Global Trends in Psychology webinar*



*The organizing committee and the HRM speakers*



## CTHM wins research awards in KainCon 2025

**T**he University of Santo Tomas, through the College of Tourism and Hospitality Management and under the mentorship of Asst. Prof. Jame Monren T. Mercado, won Champion and First Runner-Up for Best Research Paper at the Kain Conference (KainCon) 2025.

Having presented their studies live via Zoom, Rod Fredric S. Villamarin, along with Lovely Dolina B. Cumla, Mikaela Margaret N. Dimaano, Janella Anne Mae P. Flavio, Sophia Isabelle V. Hernandez, and Danica A. Lara won the Best Research award for their study titled, "*Kusina han Dalan*: Elucidating the Culinary Significance and Safeguarding Cultures of Catbaloganon Street Food using the Value-based Approach," which aims to unravel and preserve the culinary significance and cultural heritage of Catbalogan's street food. The output of the study was a proposed interpretational tour plan that highlighted key locations, recognized community stakeholders, and emphasized the collective responsibility to safeguard this traditional heritage for future generations. The project was in partnership with the City Government of Catbalogan, Samar.

Another group of students bagged the First Runner-up title for their research titled, "Rekadong Legado: Unraveling the Narrative of Sampalukin Heirloom Familial Cooks on Safeguarding the Culinary Heritage Significance." The research team was composed of CTHM students led by Anna Karissa P. Borromeo, along with Ma. Sophia Lorenz P. Aga, Chad Allaric R. Dela Cruz, Andrea Isabel C. Dionisio, Maverick Justine L. Padicio, and Sofia Angela M. Paja. The students' study highlighted families as key factors in the preservation and continuation of Sampaloc, Quezon's culinary heritage through the transmission of the locals' knowledge and skills from one generation to another. Furthermore,

the group intends to collaborate with the Municipal Government of Sampaloc, Quezon to create and publish a coffee table book that documents the mapped dishes of the study site.

Additionally, a collaborative research team between students and academic staff was one of the finalists under the student category with their research titled, "Langkatulad!: The Purchase Intention in Developing Jackfruit Seed-Based Chocolate Spread." The student researchers were Emilio Andres P. Aganinta, Adrienne Grace R. Alvarez, Lourice Nicole M. Domingo, Josh Kane R. Guevarra, and Maybelle Ann Waynely S. Narnola. Their adviser and co-author is Ms. Ramona Olga D. Ko.

The KainCon is an annual academic conference jointly organized by the Philippine Culinary Heritage Movement (PCHM) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). Serving as a significant platform for researchers, scholars, and food enthusiasts nationwide, it facilitates sharing insights on gastronomy and the local food sector. Coinciding with Filipino Food Month in April, KainCon is dedicated to exploring and promoting the rich culinary heritage of the Philippines. The conference is acknowledged for its crucial role in celebrating Filipino cuisine's history and cultural significance, fostering a sense of community among food advocates, and contributing to both the preservation and innovation within the culinary arts. These remarkable achievements not only bring pride to the university, but also inspire young researchers and imparts them with dedication and the innovative spirit to make significant contributions in their respective fields. These honors celebrate hard work and embody the Thomasian spirit of showcasing world-class standards in both academic and extracurricular activities. ■



*Team Sampalukin*



*Team Karasa Kainan*

## National Artist Virgilio Almario delivers 2025 St. Antoninus lecture



*Virgilio Almario*

**N**ational Artist for Literature Virgilio S. Almario delivered the 38th Saint Antoninus Lecture titled, “*Ang Kabuluhan ni Balagtas sa Himagsikang 1896*,” on April 26, 2025. The event was held at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex and was well-attended by graduate students and faculty members from different disciplines.

Almario discussed the lasting impact of Francisco Balagtas on Philippine revolutionary thought and literature. He also pointed out the intricate connections between old Tagalog poetry and poetry produced by the Spanish missionaries.

The Saint Antoninus Lecture, named after Saint Antoninus of Florence, is an annual event organized by the UST Graduate School that features individuals who have significantly contributed to the research and discourse in their disciplines. It is a continuing testament to the University’s commitment to disseminating knowledge and promoting interdisciplinary engagement with Filipino culture, history, and intellectual heritage. ■



*Dean of the Graduate School Prof. Michael Anthony Vasco, Ph.D. (leftmost) and Graduate School Assistant Dean Prof. Camilla Vizconde, Ph.D. (right) award a plaque to National Artist for Literature Virgilio Almario.*



## UST CTHM is official school partner for 17th Philippine Food Expo 2025

The 17th Philippine Food Expo (PFE), a vibrant three-day showcase of Filipino culinary artistry, was held at the World Trade Center Metro Manila from April 4 to 6, 2025. Organized by the Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organization (PHILFOODEX), this year's theme spotlighted the rich culinary heritage of the Ilocos Region, highlighting its unique flavors, ingredients, and time-honored cooking traditions. Over 300 exhibitors from across the country gathered to present their food products, culinary innovations, and regional delicacies to the public. For the 17th edition of the expo, UST serves as its official school partner.

Preparatory events were held in the weeks leading up to the expo. The Culinary Challenge Competition Briefing took place at the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Bl. Buenaventura Garcia Paredes, O.P. (BGPOP) Building's Multifunction Room last March 1, while the Food Styling & Photography Competition was held at the BGPOP Lobby and Mezzanine last March 22.

Throughout the expo, a lineup of exciting culinary competitions engaged the audience. Events included the Ilocano Table Setting Competition, Kitchen Masters, PINASarap Almusal, Modern Ilocano Dessert, Healthy Heritage Dishes, Mystery Ingredient Challenge, and the UST Dream Team Showdown. The Dream Team competition, featuring 2nd and 3rd-year students from Culinary Entrepreneurship and Hospitality Leadership, highlighted the creativity and potential of future hospitality professionals from UST. As the PFE's official partner school, UST was given a unique platform to showcase its student talents. The PFE Knowledge Challenge also tested students' expertise in culinary arts, nutrition, and food safety.

Within the expo, a seminar took place that featured speakers invited from Ilocos with the support and assistance of UST Sentro Turismo. The session opened with a talk by Mr. Jose Pepito Alvarez on Ilocano culture and heritage, offering insightful perspectives on Ilocano history and identity. This was followed by a discussion led by Mr. Richie Gielbys B. Cavinta on the Municipality of San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte, highlighting the culture-based governance initiatives and the integration of heritage into sustainable public development.

The three-day event concluded with a festive awarding ceremony that recognized outstanding student contestants and institutions for their innovation and culinary excellence. ■



UST Secretary-General Rev. Fr. Louie R. Coronel O.P., EHL (right) and CTHM Assistant Dean Assoc. Prof. Evangeline E. Timbang, Ph.D.



1st placers of the PFE Dream Team Showdown



# Household financial management amidst inflation tackled in UST GS webinar

In a proactive response to rising inflation and its impact on families, the UST Business Society and the UST Graduate School Community Development Office organized a timely webinar on Household Financial Management. The initiative underscored the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as an integral part of academic and professional engagement. Among the chosen beneficiaries were the Dominican Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and an partner community in Pasay.

The event aimed to strengthen the University's commitment to community service by integrating social welfare projects into academic pursuits. At the heart of the initiative was a webinar specifically designed to address the economic pressures brought about by inflation. Led by Ph.D. students with support from MBA courses, the program sought to create positive social value by equipping families with practical budgeting and financial management skills.

Mr. Daniel Gonzales, a college lecturer and faculty researcher with expertise in microeconomics, macroeconomics, monetary economics, and environmental economics, delivered a compelling talk on inflation and its consequences on household finances. His presentation helped the Malibay community and other attendees understand and navigate the financial challenges brought on by the current economic climate.

Gonzales identified three primary causes of inflation: Demand-Pull Inflation, which occurs when consumer demand exceeds supply; Cost-Push Inflation, which results from rising production costs; and Built-In Inflation, driven by wage increases that perpetuate a cycle of rising expenses. He emphasized inflation's negative impact on households, including reduced purchasing power, increased costs of basic commodities, diminished value of savings and investments, and higher interest rates on loans and credit cards.

To promote financial stability, Gonzales proposed practical strategies such as budgeting, smart purchasing, and strategic meal planning. He also discussed debt management techniques like the Snowball Method (prioritizing smaller debts for motivational gains) and the Avalanche Method (targeting high-interest loans to minimize long-term costs). He advocated for income diversification through part-time jobs, freelancing, or small businesses; emergency fund creation to cushion financial shocks; and small, low-risk investments as a hedge against inflation. Gonzales stressed the importance of financial discipline and education in cultivating sustainable financial habits at home.

He also shared his personal approach to financial management, highlighting the importance of tracking expenses and improving lifestyle through mindful saving and spending. He emphasized that insurance is a critical component of long-term financial security. His insights resonated with the audience, encouraging proactive financial planning.

The session concluded with an engaging Q&A, where participants asked insightful questions about insurance options and budgeting practices, reflecting their eagerness to apply what they had learned.

Assoc. Prof. Emmanuel Batoon, Ph.D., delivered the closing remarks, summarizing key insights on inflation, financial management, and community resilience.

Through this webinar, the University of Santo Tomas reaffirmed its commitment to both academic excellence and social responsibility. By equipping communities with essential financial management skills, the program addressed urgent economic issues and promoted long-term financial empowerment among Filipino families. ■



Gonzales discussing inflation in his talk



## Future of Philippine healthcare highlighted in Manila Bulletin sustainability gathering at UST

**A**ffordable health services and sustainable nutrition options were key topics in the second Manila Bulletin Sustainability Focus Session on April 30, 2025, at the Dr. Robert Sy Grand Ballroom at UST Manila. Held with the theme “Envisioning the Future of Healthcare,” the event brought together healthcare providers, nutrition experts, and local health advocates to discuss actionable steps for a more inclusive and sustainable healthcare landscape in the Philippines.

The Department of Health (DOH) Secretary Dr. Teodoro Herbosa, in his video message, highlighted the eight-point action agenda for a healthy Philippines, which focuses on ensuring accessible healthcare for every Filipino, delivering safety and quality services, driving technological progress, improving crisis preparedness, preventing illness, supporting mental and physical wellbeing, upholding the safety and rights of health workers, and protecting people from pandemics.

DOH Assistant Secretary for Universal Health Care - Policy and Strategy Dr. Albert Domingo echoed Dr. Herbosa’s call and encouraged students in the medical and related fields to build their careers with a strong focus on sustainability.

UST Secretary-General Rev. Fr. Louie R. Coronel, O.P., EHL, in his welcome remarks, emphasized that sustainability is a moral imperative, and that “When we nourish bodies, heal the sick, and protect the vulnerable, we fulfill our vocation as stewards of creation and defenders of human dignity.”

For his brand talk, Healthway Cancer Care Hospital Medical Director Dr. Jose Sollano, Jr., an alumnus and current academic staff of the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, shared advice on how the next generation of medical professionals can build careers rooted in purpose, guided by sustainability, and committed to care that reaches every Filipino.

Mesa ni Misis Founder Juana Yupangco-Manahan advocated for locally sourced fruits and vegetables, noting that some have natural medicinal properties. Manahan noted that food security and sustainable nutrition have considerable impact on the planet. She recommended locally sourced food, as it has less carbon footprint since less energy and resources are spent on packaging, importing, and processing. These are detailed in Mesa ni Misis’ cookbook titled “A Guide to Cooking and Enjoying Native Filipino Vegetables” with 40 healthy and affordable recipes. The non-profit has also created a plant-based menu for The Medical City to push healthier food choices.

UST Hospital Chief Dietitian Maureen Sarmago emphasized personalized nutrition management, noting that every patient is different. She explained that their nutritional status, diagnosis, medical condition, food preferences, and cultural beliefs are all key factors that must be considered.

Updated guidelines and evidence-based recommendations from credible medical and academic organizations should be followed when creating nutritional plans, said Sarmago, and she also shared the programs of USTH focusing on preventive nutrition, which promotes healthy eating habits, lower fast food consumption, and increased intake of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Maxicare Chief Strategy Officer Kurleigh Gacutan shared plans to make healthcare more accessible through their 35 primary care clinics, with 20 more currently rising.

The Generics Pharmacy Corporate Affairs Head for Robinsons Retail’s Drugstore Segment Carole Cabahug-Malenab detailed



*UST Secretary-General Rev. Fr. Louie R. Coronel, O.P., EHL, delivers the welcome remarks*



*UST Department of Nutrition and Dietetics Chair Asst. Prof. Kathleen N. Cruzada (second from left) and UST Nutrition and Dietetic student Matea Zamantha Marasigan (fifth from left) join (from left:) host Aziza Mondoneda, speakers Kurleigh Gacutan, Carole Kaye Malenab, Juana Manahan Yupangco, Maureen Sarmago, and MB Sustainability Focus Session Project Lead Philip Cu-Unjieng*



*MB Sustainability Focus Session Project Lead Philip Cu-Unjieng (leftmost) and UST Secretary-General Rev. Fr. Louie R. Coronel, O.P., EHL (sixth from left), with the panel discussants and keynote speakers, along with officials of Manila Bulletin and UST administrators UST Office of Public Affairs Director Ms. Michaela O. Lagniton (second from left), and UST Department of Nutrition and Dietetics Chair Asst. Prof. Kathleen N. Cruzada (ninth from left)*



## FUTURE OF PHILIPPINE HEALTHCARE TO PAGE 23

how making quality healthcare affordable can be sustainable to all Filipinos, and shared how The Generics Pharmacy aided that endeavor since 2001.

Watsons AVP for Watsons Own Brand Health, Exclusives, and Business Development, Blesilda Espin shared her insights and personal experiences, emphasizing the value and practicality of maintaining and improving health.

UST Department of Nutrition and Dietetics Chair Asst. Prof. Kathleen N. Cruzada and UST Nutrition and Dietetics student Matea Zamantha Marasigan also joined the keynote speakers and the MB Sustainability Focus Session Project Lead Philip Cu-Unjieng in a panel discussion.

Over 400 students from the College of Rehabilitation Sciences, the Faculty of Pharmacy, the College of Tourism and Hospitality Management, the College of Education, the College of Nursing, and the SHS Health Allied strand attended the morning and afternoon sessions.

Manila Bulletin's event was held in partnership with the University of Santo Tomas through the Office of Public Affairs. Earlier that month, UST Rector Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P., Ph.D. and Manila Bulletin Executive Editor Mr. Ed Bartilad signed a Memorandum of Agreement on April 8, 2025. ■



(From left:) Manila Bulletin Brand and Marketing Manager Mr. Leslie Araujo, Manila Bulletin Executive Editor Mr. Ed Bartilad, UST Rector Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P., Ph.D., and UST Secretary-General Rev. Fr. Louie R. Coronel, O.P., EHL, present the signed Memorandum of Agreement



From the Department of Health, the Honorable Secretary Dr. Teddy Herbosa and ASec. Dr. Albert Domingo deliver their messages.



A student asks questions during the open forum

## Internationalization

### CTHM BS HM students conduct international study tour in Vietnam

Third-year students from the University of Santo Tomas College of Tourism and Hospitality Management traveled to Vietnam for an International Study Tour held from April 21 to 25, 2025. The activity took place in Hanoi and Halong Bay, Vietnam and was joined by students from the Culinary Entrepreneurship and Hospitality Leadership majors under the BS Hospitality Management program.

The study tour was a major academic component for courses such as International Cuisine, Strategic Management, Entrepreneurship, and Revenue Management. Students from six sections took part in the international engagement.

During the trip, students visited cultural sites, local culinary establishments, and hospitality enterprises, allowing them to experience firsthand the tourism and hospitality industry of Vietnam. These activities supported their classroom learning by exposing them to regional practices, emerging industry trends, and operational strategies in hospitality and tourism.

The international study tour also highlighted CTHM's continuing efforts to provide global learning opportunities and develop industry-ready Thomasian professionals equipped with relevant skills and insights in the international tourism and hospitality industry. ■



CTHM students at the St. Joseph's Cathedral, Hanoi, Vietnam



## CRS conducts parent coaching for families of children with communication needs in Samar

The College of Rehabilitation Sciences, through the Department of Speech-Language Pathology (SLP), continues its commitment to community service and accessible communication by conducting a series of seminar-workshops and parent coaching sessions in partnership with the Samar Center for Developmental Pediatrics.

On April 14, 2025, Ms. Mary Ann Gisselle Esguerra, M.H.P.Ed., RSLP, conducted a parenting seminar-workshop titled, “GABAY: Gawi at Gawain sa Bahay para sa mga Batang may Kahirapan sa Pagsasalita at Komunikasyon.” This aimed to empower parents with tools and techniques to support their children with communication difficulties.

Meanwhile, on April 25, 2025, the department held an online webinar and parent coaching session titled, “Words that Work: Parent Coaching and Seminar for Effective Communication at Home.”

In the morning session, Ms. Pia Angela Blanco, M.L.I., RSLP, delivered a webinar for parents of children with communication needs. In the afternoon, SLP interns facilitated one-on-one online coaching sessions to provide personalized guidance and support.

These initiatives reflect the college and department’s strong advocacy for accessible and community-centered services, particularly in underserved areas where SLP services are limited. ■



*Attendees during the seminar-workshop*





## ELS students conduct service-learning project on detecting deception for Caloocan SHS students

The third year English Language Studies (ELS) students from the Department of English Faculty of Arts and Letters carried out a service-learning activity on detecting online deception and navigating an increasingly complex digital information landscape on April 2, 2025 at the Macario B. Asistio Senior High School in Dagat-Dagatan, Caloocan. Organized by the Department of English and in partnership with the English Language Studies Society, the event focused on enhancing senior high school students' ability to evaluate misleading language used in digital spaces.

Group discussions were facilitated by third-year ELS students. Discussions and exercises focusing on detecting fake websites and misleading information were done. Real-life cases involving deception such as phishing scams, misleading emails, and deceptive statements in court were also examined. The senior high school students were provided practical experience in critically evaluating messages, spotting linguistic red flags, and uncovering hidden meanings often masked by persuasive language.

The initiative comes amid the growing challenges brought by the digital age. While digital media has improved access to information, it has also enabled the rapid spread of fake news and the manipulation of public discussions through strategic language. In this landscape, language becomes a powerful tool, a weapon that can inform and connect, but also mislead and distort.

The activity hoped to champion linguistic awareness by empowering audiences, particularly the youth, to become more critical and discerning of the language they encounter online. Rooted in Thomasian values of truth, competence, and compassion, the initiative reflects the commitment of UST students to use their knowledge in service of the greater good. The project reinforced a core Thomasian ideal: that language, when used with integrity and purpose, can not only inform—but also transform. ■



*ELS students facilitating the discussion*



*ELS students at the Macario Asistio Sr. High School*



## SITE leads computer literacy seminar for partner communities in Tarlac, Caloocan

The UST Society of Information Technology Enthusiasts (SITE), in partnership with the UST SIMBAHAYAN Community Development Office, conducted a two-part seminar titled “CompuCore: Building the Foundations of Digital Literacy” at Learning Studio 1 and 2 of the Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati Building. The seminar reflected the organization’s strong commitment to community development and digital empowerment. Community members from Sitio Malasa, Sitio Mabilog, Sitio Buok, Sitio Sta. Rosa, and Sitio San Martin in Bamban, Tarlac, as well as members of the Ministry of the Urban Poor in Caloocan, attended the sessions held on March 29 and April 12, 2025.

The first part of the seminar-workshop, held on March 29, focused on guiding participants in creating Gmail accounts and navigating Google Workspace—particularly Google Docs and Google Meet. Attendees had the opportunity to explore the features of these tools, followed by a session on Canva, a graphic design platform. Participants were then asked to create an infographic or poster aligned with their interests. Mr. Edwin S. de Guzman, MSIT, MCP, served as the resource speaker for this session.

The second part of the seminar, conducted on April 12 with guest speaker Dr. Arlene Zamora, focused on creating presentations using Google Slides. Participants were given time to craft a three-slide presentation on a topic of their choice. The session concluded with an introduction to the basic functions of Google Sheets, culminating in an activity where participants developed a simple expense tracker using the platform.

Through this initiative, partner communities were equipped with essential digital skills to help them adapt to ongoing technological advancements. The seminar ultimately aimed to promote equitable and inclusive education, especially for marginalized sectors of society. ■



*Community partners and organizers*



*Student volunteers assist the partner community*



*Mr. Edwin S. De Guzman conducts the discussion and workshop proper*

## MR. STANLEY CO

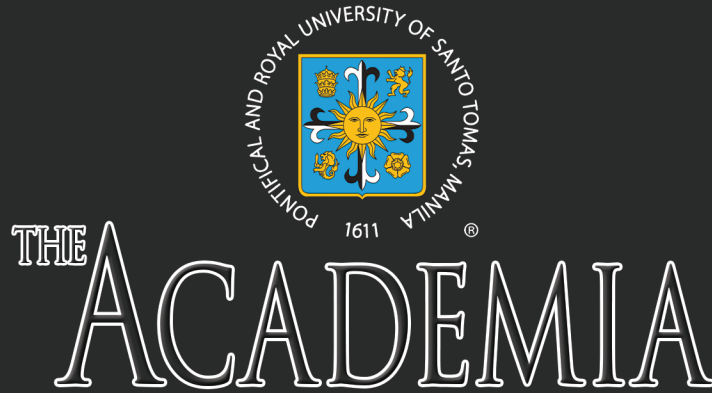


*Robinsons Retail Holding, Inc. President and CEO Mr. Stanley C. Co (left), an alumnus of the College of Commerce and Business Administration from the University of Santo Tomas from the Class of 1998, returned to his alma mater on April 24, 2025, for a courtesy call with the UST Rector Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P., Ph.D. (right).*



*Mr. Co (eighth from left) also met with the UST Secretary-General Rev. Fr. Louie R. Coronel, O.P., EHL (seventh from left), officials of the College of Commerce and Business Administration led by the Dean Assoc. Prof. Al Faithrich Navarrete, Ph.D. (tenth from left) and Regent Rev. Fr. Senen Ecleo, O.P. (ninth from left) and select students from CCBA.*





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