

# At the Beginning, an Introduction

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The University of the Philippines Charter (Republic Act 9500) articulates some of the key purposes of the University to “lead in setting academic standards and initiating innovations in teaching, research and faculty development” and to “serve as a research university in various fields of expertise and specialization . . . contributing to the dissemination and application of knowledge.” Toward these same goals, Chancellor Fidel R. Nemenzo’s vision “to cultivate the spirit of critical inquiry and challenge the [UP Diliman] community to seek new ways of seeing and solving problems, guided by a strong moral compass” (2020) provided fertile ground to establish *Dúnong: UP Diliman Journal of Student Research*, the first peer-reviewed journal for student research that publishes the best of undergraduate and graduate research in UP Diliman.

Toward developing a culture of research and critique, *Dúnong* came to be with the same objectives as many undergraduate and student research journals emerging in universities across the world:

- (1) to publish the best of emergent and interdisciplinary student research in UP Diliman in an open-access platform;
- (2) to promote the diverse range of critical student research produced by students;
- (3) to encourage students to publish their research and, vice versa, to read research *by* other students and *for* students; and
- (4) to introduce young researchers to the editorial process toward cultivating an ethical culture of critique in the university.

These aspirations resonate and align with “a ‘clear movement’ on the international stage toward the recognition of the importance of the publication of student research” (Stone et al. 2016, 149), and contribute to emerging efforts to link teaching and research in novel ways.

The quest to nurture creativity and imagination must always go hand in hand with rigorous interrogation and dialectical substantiation in a climate of freedom and non-discrimination. To hark back on the fundamental values of the university as an institution, Derek Bok (1991) reminds us that the elemental freedom and public trust in academic institutions are given to honor creativity and imagination in formulating new hypotheses, new connections, ingenious methods for testing theories and searching for knowledge. But they also require that new ideas be tested, insofar as possible, by accepted standards of logic, internal consistency, clarity of expression, and correspondence to known facts. (2)

In the Philippines, undergraduate research is rarely, if ever, published in peer-reviewed journals. This is certainly due in large part to greater competition with more experienced researchers in established journals as well as the lack of opportunities to develop and hone student work into a “proper” article after the conclusion of a class, project, or thesis. However, among the casualties of such necessary rigor has been for much of data from student research projects to, at worst, be lost to intellectual history or, at best, to lavish in the annals of library archives. *Dúnong*, like other student research journals, creates a “pathway” for student work to reach a wider audience and broadens the opportunity for these to “[be] communicated to the academic and practice communities” (Stone et al. 2016, 157) through an open access strategy of dissemination.

The professional incentives and opportunities granted to students by having a published work are secondary, albeit material, to the nobler mission to cultivate a culture of publication, research, and critique. We envision that such a culture would foster openness, criticality, and humility that create pathways, not only to broader distribution of research data, but to richer intellectual practices, collaborative

approaches to knowledge production, and interdisciplinary modes of inquiry, writing, and review.

The maiden issue of *Dúnong* publishes seven articles from an initial list of 32 submissions, with two written by undergraduate students and five by graduate students. These were culled from an open call for papers that received submissions from all four academic clusters of UP Diliman: arts and humanities (9), social sciences and law (19), science and technology (1), and management and economics (3). The articles here, *written in English or Filipino*, yield valuable insight into the range of research modalities and expressions offered by UP students.

As the journal envisions itself to be one written by UP students for other UP students and the UP community at large, it aims to provide space for an immediate interrogation of the contexts that the students are immersed in and are responding to. In “Ang Bisa ng Talaban, Ang Ugnayan ng mga Pananaw,” Ivan Emil Labayne engages in a reflexive critique of the Philippine Studies Program, specifically the ways in which different perspectives are used to frame existing and emerging discourses in the study of Philippine society and culture. By drawing on personal narrative and then situating it alongside the intellectual history of Philippine studies, the article argues for a more robust re-examination of the goals and objectives of the field to transcend beyond the confines of the university.

A point of interest in this selection is also the opportunity to publish data about UP Diliman itself and its own community. One such article is “Vote or ADstain: The Effect of Repetitive Exposure and Type of Advertisement on the Inclination to Vote for a Presidential Candidate” by Dominique Cadiz et al., which provides insight into voting behavior among undergraduate students of UP Diliman. While limited in scope, the case study notably addresses a gap in published studies of voting behavior in the University, and provides important data on the digital turn in electoral processes and the place of emotional advertising in a space of intellectual exercise.

Going beyond the university, Fame Pascua and Gerrilyn Sandocal historicize the forces that have shaped language policies and use in the Philippines, specifically by locating these in higher education institutions. In “Ang mga Wika at mga Institusyon ng Mas Mataas na Edukasyon sa Lipunang Pilipino: Saysay, Kasaysayan, at Kinabukasan,” they show that differentiations in language use—as common tongue, as pedagogical tool, as opportunity for economic mobility, or even as a nationalistic endeavor—provide an instance in which this history can be traced. Rather than seeing language as instrumental only to higher education as a medium of instruction, the authors argue that Philippine universities have also shaped the way language is made functional to respond to different historical contexts in the Philippines.

The interrelations of language, culture, and history are also explored in Rolien Mark M. Balisi’s “The Olfactory Sense and Its Manifestation in Philippine Languages,” which makes an interesting method of research in harvesting “an olfaction dataset” with lexical items from 25 Philippine languages through methodical “sweeps” of digital dictionaries and resources. The study benefits from both an archival and cultural impulse, as it strives to document the ephemeral, oft-overlooked sensation of smell and reveals compelling intersections in cultural articulations of scent across indigenous languages.

Leila Crisostomo et al.’s “Salin-Salamin: Ang Pagsasa-Filipino ng mga Banyagang Programa” addresses a gap in translation studies, specifically in terms of the intersections between language use and its transmedial afterlives. It takes dubbing as its critical object of study to understand the strategies used by Filipino voice actors, scriptwriters, and directors when undertaking the thorny task of translation. It also examines the policies and guidelines that are commonly taken as industry standards to further gain insights on the artistic choices one has to make in order for translation to work effectively to its target audience. Dubbing-as-translation in this case, the article argues, creatively reworks and enriches the dynamism of the Filipino language.

The increasing connectedness of humans in the contemporary digital culture has reworked the way we interact with each other. Its pervasiveness (and even perversity) begs the question: how does one think about and enact intimacy in these digital spaces? In “It’s Not Just About Sex: Understanding the Experiences and Motivations of Twitter Alter Users in Metro Manila” by Ruth Magdalene Castro et al., the problem of anonymity further complicates this question and the article is especially interested in the motivations and issues that alter users have in maintaining their online presence, specifically in the exploration of sexuality/ies and the fulfillment of sexual desires.

Finally, Aaron Philip Dela Cruz’s “Lacan: A Zoontology (or How My Dog and I Figure in the Anthropocene)” attempts a unique approach at scholarly writing in enfolding autobiography with anthropology. In the same breath that it narrativizes the historical domestication and cultural significance of dogs in the Philippines, it intellectualizes the mutual domestication of the writer-researcher and his pet dog, Lacan. In its anthropological moorage, literary reflexivity, and poetic psychoanalytical impulse, the essay embodies an interdisciplinarity that manages to be a fresh voice in academic literature.

Taken together, these articles showcase the intellectual curiosity and rigor of UP students, and it is this kind of vibrant research community that the journal hopes to foster. The student researchers featured in this issue take to heart the mandate of the national university to cultivate knowledge production that makes sense of our own Filipino experience. It is hoped that this journal can be that space where ideals that UP holds dear—academic excellence animated by a strong moral compass to serve the people—are exemplified and, most importantly, celebrated.

## REFERENCES

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