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# IN THE SERVICE OF THE NATION

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION: The UP College of Architecture Today**

The UP College of Architecture is proud to be the premier institution in architectural education in the country today. After only 40 years of existence, it has earned the distinction of producing graduates who have excelled in and continue to excel in their careers in the academe, in architectural practice, as officers in professional organizations, and in various capacities of service in the government. As a matter of fact, the College has contributed to the following firsts in the Philippines:

1. The offering of the 2-year Master in Architecture (M.Arch) Program in 1971, with specializations in Design, Community Architecture, Architectural Science and Housing.
2. The offering of the 4-year Bachelor in Landscape Architecture (B.LA) Program in 1975, the only such program in the Philippines.
3. The development in 1982 of the ladder-type curriculum in Architecture which DECS has adopted for compliance by all other schools of architecture in the Philippines.
4. The offering of the 2-year Master in Tropical Landscape Architecture (M.TLA) Program in 1985, the only such program in the world.
5. The creation in 1985 of the Building Research Service (BRS) jointly administered by the Colleges of

Architecture and Engineering and the Institute of Planning, dedicated to the study of building materials.

6. The offering of a short course on architectural education attended by faculty of other schools of architecture in the Philippines.
7. The initiation of the annual National Symposium on Filipino Architecture and Design (NSFAD) in November 1995.
8. The distinction of having consistently led all other architectural schools in the Philippines in topping the rate of passing the board examinations of Architecture.

This sterling performance and many more, recently earned the College of Architecture the honor of being adjudged a Center of Excellence in Architecture by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) last April 1999. This honor brings about the added challenge for the College to relentlessly pursue research endeavors and link with other institutions of higher learning and the private sector in the sharing of expertise to develop new technologies. And this challenge necessitates the conception of a new vision for a more involved focus on our PEOPLE and a more intensified direction towards the betterment of the QUALITY OF FILIPINO LIFE.



## **2.0 BACKGROUND: The Framework for Planning the College's Future**

### **2.01 The Status of the Built Environment**

The status of the built environment is veritably the ultimate indicator upon which an architect should be judged. Where the success of lawyers is indicated by the state of the justice system in the community, and doctors in the state of the health of the people, that of architects must be in the physical state of the community in which we live. The role of the architect goes beyond providing shelter for a single client because he must also see to it that the building he designs is people-oriented, place-oriented, blends well with nature and the environment and is technologically efficient and sound.

The question therefore is: are we satisfied with the place we live in? Rating places through the use of statistical indicators can give a good impression of one's view of a city. Certainly it would be good to compare places using such physical indicators as: condition of the built environment, travel time to work, to school, to church, and to the park, adequacy of infrastructure and utility systems and others. In a recent survey, the desirability of living in Metro Manila ranked only 18<sup>th</sup> in the among the best Asian cities. Filipino architects still have a long way to go in improving the quality of our built environment.

In a finer sense, the quality of our environment reflects on the institutions which molded our present professionals. It is important to inculcate in our graduates an enriched version of love of country through design of the built environment by "promoting the value of

beauty in our society, the rebirth and preservation of our cities, the need to build for human needs and happiness, and the creation of a healthier, more environmentally sustainable architecture that respects precious resources."<sup>1</sup>

### **2.02 Globalization, Nationalism and Architecture**

The transition between the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the third millenium has been characterized by the freer flow of goods, services, products, and capital in the global market. Consequently, in architecture and real estate development, it resulted in a market increase in the number of foreign professionals offering their services and technological know-how in almost all aspects of architecture and development. Although the competition is welcome, it is obligatory to ascertain that these foreign technology and design techniques are adaptable to our culture and to the physical/environmental conditions of our country. Lamentably, it has not been so, as evidenced by the plethora of American colonial houses and European villas in the Philippine setting, which, in architectural terms, offers insignificant social, cultural, environmental, as well as functional values. How much longer will this dilemma last? What measures should be taken to curb it?

The academe obviously has an urgent role to arrest this colonial mentality by harnessing and uplifting the talent and creativity of the Filipino architect to compete in the global stage, with a crystal-clear version of what is a truly Filipino architecture, firmly founded on a cultural agenda that deserves to be promoted.



### **2.03 Aligning our Plan with the National Plan and U.P. Plan 2008**

There are two compelling plans that serve to direct our course of action. One is the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 1999-2004 which "promulgates the overarching objective of economic growth with social equity attained through a multi-stakeholder approach involving a dynamic and internationally competitive business sector, a vigilant and responsive civil society and an efficient and impartial government."<sup>2</sup> The second, UP Plan 2008, also believes in leading and supporting national development – that "its growth and that of the nation are inextricably intertwined and its efforts in public service and national development are constant and continuous."<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the success of these plans shall be "measured by its achievement in uplifting the masses of our people, reducing poverty, generating employment and concretizing the government's preferential option for the poor."<sup>4</sup>

In the architectural sense, it means translating into physical terms the delivery of basic social development services in health and nutrition, education and training, housing and social welfare, and in developing infrastructure especially in the rural areas. It further means affordable housing, responsive health care units, more efficient schools. The architect must be trained not only to be aware that housing the poorest of the poor is a main social concern, but to also use his talents in actively seeking housing systems which are functional, affordable and accessible to the masses. The architect in the course of his work must not forget the underlying duty of service to the community. He must have a social conscience and use it.

### **3.0 OUR VISION: In the Service of the Nation**

Therefore, the vision of the U.P. College of Architecture is to be "**the acknowledged leader in the enhancement of the designed and built environment for the upliftment of the quality of life of our people.**" This is the core purpose of the U.P. College of Architecture.

### **4.0 OUR MISSION: Agenda for the Short Term (2000-2003)**

With this vision in mind, the agenda of the College for the next three years is as follows:

#### **1. The Basic Mission: IMPROVEMENT OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

The first important step the College will take towards addressing the issues discussed above will be the offering of a revitalized curricular program through the amendment of existing programs, as well as the opening of new programs. This revitalization will be based on the following guiding principles:

- Nationalistic Culture
- Advanced/ Futuristic Technology
- Sustainable Development
- Economic Equity
- Social Harmony
- Ecological Balance
- Human Productivity
- Cultural Strength
- Aesthetic Excellence



In detail, the proposed amendments to the existing programs will include the following:

- a) The introduction of a more dynamic and comprehensive teaching methodology within the existing Bachelor of Science in Architecture (B.S.Arch) Program to encompass in a wholistic manner the inputs of the various sectors of the community such as sociologists, anthropologists, artists, cultural and community workers, administrators and managers, scientists and engineers.
- b) The development of new and diversified science-based training courses in the Bachelor in Landscape Architecture (B.LA) Program necessitating the conversion of the program from a 4-year to a 5-year art and science degree.
- c) The conversion of the Architectural Design major in the Master in Architecture (M.Arch) Program to a more specialized course focused on specific building types, such as hospitals and multi-story buildings (skyscrapers) where faculty expertise is already available.

On the other hand, new offerings are designed to include the following:

- a) A second stream 6-year B.S. Arch program leading to M. Arch which will offer a second option for prospective students with the inclination and drive towards research undertakings to focus on their research and proceed to a masters degree with emphasis on laboratory work.
- b) A Master in Interior Architecture (M.IA) Degree which will offer to

students in architecture the option to study space planning, the design of interiors with emphasis on functional and activity analysis, the layout of furniture and equipment and the provision of utility systems according to actual space occupancy.

- c) The development of a new Master Degree in Urban Design and Development (M.UDD) to fortify the expertise in the design of towns and cities.

## **2. The Process: COMPUTERIZATION**

The reality of computers being increasingly used in university design studios and in office practice not only for presentation but also for efficiencies in analyses, conceiving design hypothesis, structuring simulations and models, and evaluating alternatives, shall be seriously pursued and achieved in the College. The measure of success shall be gauged by the graduates' computer literacy and proficiency, and the speed and accuracy at which decisions are made, reproduced, published and communicated to the beneficiaries.

## **3. The Organization: SETTING UP OF LABORATORIES**

The organization upon which the College will function in the future will revolve around the initial six (6) laboratories which will be set up according to faculty specialization: Architectural Design, Presentation, Urban Design, Building Science, Landscape Architecture, and Practice and Management. The operation of these laboratories is anticipated to jumpstart the College into developing and nurturing a "culture of research" among its constituents and amplify the



College's basic functions of teaching, research, and extension services.

#### **4. The Expertise: PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE**

The means to expanding and strengthening faculty specialization shall involve the following:

- a) Inviting experts of field studies not found within the College to team-teach or do research on their topic of expertise, such as historic preservation, urban renewal, acoustics, design of transportation ports and terminals.
- b) Motivate existing faculty to attain Doctorate degrees through scholarships or exchange programs with universities with universities which are currently under Memoranda of Agreement with UP.
- c) Offering incentives to faculty and staff for meritorious work in research and extension services.

#### **5. The Ultimate Goal: DEVELOPMENT OF LINKAGES AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER**

The College's ultimate goal is to discharge our duty to impart the knowledge and expertise in building and landscape design to a beneficiary nation through studio and research projects which are geared towards assisting Philippine towns and cities in a manner that will improve the quality of life of the Filipino. This can be achieved through:

- a) The publication and dissemination to the public of research works that advance invention

and technologies in design and construction industry.

- b) The conduct of seminars and workshops designed to foster interaction not only between multi-disciplinary experts but most especially between the designers and the beneficiaries.
- c) The propagation of the concepts and style of Filipino architecture and design through the annual National Symposium of Filipino Architecture and Design (NSFAD) which was started by the College in 1995.

#### **5.0 CONCLUSION**

The prestige of being a designated Center of Excellence in Architecture can be secured only when the College will be affirmed by the public as the Center of the Designed and Built Environment, and when the service to the nation will have achieved the distinction of having towns and cities with the most humanized livable spaces and the most desirable quality of life by any available measure. When this happens, our mission will have been accomplished.

#### **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>Ernest L. Boyer, and Lee D. Mitgang, Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education and Practice (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: 1996).

<sup>2</sup>The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan 1999-2004 (National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA): 1998)

<sup>3</sup>UP Plan 2008: Gearing the University for its Second Century (UP System: 1998).

<sup>4</sup>Medium Term Philippine Development Plan