My Plans and Vision for UP NCPAG: Reclaiming NCPAG’s Leadership in Shaping PA Communities of Scholars and Practitioners for Good Government, Governance, Reform and Development

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Vision

The National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) has been the pioneering leader of the discipline in the Philippines and in Asia since its establishment as the Institute of Public Administration in 1952 (www.up-ncpag.org/overview) Its tradition of leadership, excellence, public service and constructive social critic continues to inspire awe and admiration.

However, in this changing and more competitive political world, other ‘greater’ universities and institutions here and in the region have aggressively challenged its leadership position and to a large extent, succeeded. To wit, the Eduniversal Best Masters Ranking Worldwide 2012-2013 (Public Administration/Management graduate programs) put the NCPAG’s MPA in the 21st spot as against the University of Sto. Tomas’ 17th spot, the National University of Singapore’s 3rd, and the Tsinghua University in the first (http://www.best-masters.com/ranking-master-public-administration-management/far-eastern-asia/university-of-the-philippines-up-master-of-public-administration.html). In addition, in terms of research and publication productivity, as well as enrollment figures, it has paled in comparison with other units in UP Diliman (Saloma 2012).

The latter are natural challenges to an evolving and transforming institution, which has suffered setbacks in terms of decreasing faculty complement (with pillars who because of age and other reasons, have orphaned the institution), weakness of leadership, and seemingly un-orchestrated good intentions and plans. This situation has led to disjointed strategies, cracks in the unity of the College and atrophy in opportunities and spaces to contribute to nation building and sustain the gains its predecessors have painstakingly built.

It is now time to unite the college and shepherd energies and resources to reclaim NCPAG’s leadership role for good government, good governance and relevant reforms towards sustainable, resilient inclusive development. This could be achieved if we collectively strategize and work together and live the values we should be living with-participation, consultation, transparency, accountability, predictability and ethical administration- to become a Center of Excellence in PA Education, Research, Training and Public Service (which does not necessary mean the CHED’s classification; but if this can be done, why not?) and more. This basically requires becoming and being a national standard in terms trailblazing PA education programs, resource materials and faculty (and other academic staff’s) expertise, research, training and public service.

Being the leader is a tall order. Losing it is disappointing and equally challenging. Reclaiming, regaining and sustaining it for good governance,
reform and development is daunting. But the latter can be done with everyone’s help and cooperation. More is expected of us and we should not fail.

Flagship Programs

1. Academic Excellence

   a) **Quality Assurance in the PA Programs.** This would mean, among others, more quality assurance measures and 1.1) revisiting the PA curriculum to reinvigorate the executive leadership role in the MPA Plan C and the new emerging movements and sub-disciplines of the field, e.g., resiliency and climate change, e-governmentability, in the MPA Plan B; 1.2) repositioning the knowledge creation and contributions to the discipline of Public Administration of the newly revised BPA and MPA Plans A and B, and 1.3) revising the DPA to enhance its relevance and value added contributions in good governance.

   b) **Internationalization.** More International Exposure for Faculty and Staff and Students. This would mean working out partnerships and collaboration, initially with existing international partner universities in Japan, Thailand, Korea, Indonesia, Australia, for a more regular program of exchange, research collaboration, study visits and the like to enhance exposure to international best practices, broaden perspectives and thicken discourses and research on PA, reform and development concerns. This would also mean sourcing financial support for these endeavors, particularly for research dissemination and presentation at international conferences and other venues for intellectual academic exchange, and if possible, for visiting fellows, professors as well as fulltime advance graduate studies on scholarship, for junior non-PhD holder faculty members.


   a) **Knowledge Hub.** This would require becoming a bustling hub for basic and applied researches that would become a repository of information and resource materials for teaching and learning, policy and program-decision making and public sector reform (at a relatively more accessible mode, e.g., at a click of a finger). Its various centers would be encouraged to engage the bureaucracy and other governance stakeholders in coming up with situationers, issue analyses, policy studies and reform recommendations to improve public service and development initiatives. This could be translated into such programs as ‘Bureaucracy Watch’, ‘The State of the Nation’, ‘Policy Issues and Governance Forums’ which would contribute to the revival of the intellectual ferment and discourses on public administration concerns as well as help government and other governance institutions and actors do public service better.
This would also include upgrading the library and the computer lab of the College as well as the digital literacy and handle of the faculty and staff.

b) **Doing More of What We Have Been Doing.** This would require more cutting edge, relevant and effective training and technical assistance programs that would really engage the public bureaucracy- executives, legislators, administrators, academicians, communities, institutions- for better public service. This would mean the Centers’ continued assessment and redesign of their regular training courses and public service programs. This would also mean their more proactive role in providing technical assistance and ensuring doable public service reforms that matter, e.g., ‘Adopt an Agency/LGU’, ‘Scorecards Assessment’, ‘Innovative and Good Practices Award’, etc. In addition to doing this, a culture of sharing with the NCPAG community of knowledge outputs from these activities has to be encouraged to instill public accountability beyond the programs or the program donors.

c) **Publishing and Dissemination to Advance and Share Knowledge in PA.** Efforts to make the issue release or publication of the Philippine Journal of Public Administration (PJPA) more regular and work for its listing in the Thomson and Reuters, GoogleScholar, Scopus or other ISI-bodies will be targeted. Students and other academics and practitioners will be more regularly invited to discussion forums in the College. Colloquia will be more regularly held and outputs from these activities, as well as from the researches of the academics and practitioners, students and staff of the College will be considered for publication and dissemination.

d) **Governance Networking for Public Service Engagement.** This would mean more engagement and networking, not only with academic institutions, the government and other existing partners, but also with the private sector, the civil society groups, including development organizations like the UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM), foreign development organizations (USAID, AusAid) and institutions the NCPAG has been nurturing over the years (ASPAP, PSPA, EROPA, AGPA, NCPAGAA) and new partners and allies for mutually beneficial ventures like collaborative researches, scholarships, fellowships, professorial chairs and others. We need a pool of allies to keep us going.

Transition and Other Plans

These vision and flagship programs may be more successfully achieved if we harness the strengths and support of the College constituencies, more importantly, the faculty, REPS, administrative staff, retired members, alumni, students, partners and friends, and other stakeholders. We also do these slowly but surely, consulting with them and conversing with them, believing in
everyone’s competence and trusting they will be agents of transformation, as our older predecessors have done. We will draw their voices in the issues that concern the governance of the College so that there will be more participation and ownership of common grounds, to harmonize and unify the hurting factions, for the interest of the College.

The Plan consists of the following:

Year 1: Housekeeping, Consultation and Team Building and Building on What Exist. What exist in terms of people, systems and procedures, among others, should be rationalized, streamlined and enhanced. Faculty and staff development plan should be revisited so that vacant items will be filled out and other requirements attended to. Physical plans (building, vehicles, equipment, etc.) have to be revisited as well in order to attain more optimal use and maximize gains in these.

More consultation and open lines shall be in place to gather support to the proposed vision for NCPAG. More regular meetings among the faculty and staff should be done to increase the sense of belonging and oneness with the College. The College should be a refuge and source of happiness, productivity and inspiration. It should not just be a place of work or a war zone.

Strategic planning and other visioning exercise, e.g., teaching, research and extension thrusts, should be collective. Team building activities will be done. Incentives for productive endeavors will be secured - research dissemination grants, employee computer investment, etc.

Networking and partnership negotiations will be continued in order to secure support for college endeavors.

New set of administrators in the units of the College will be designated by November or earlier (the center directors and other officials of the College have terms expiring on October 31 to enable smooth transition and continuity of operations within the academic year, 1st semester), after consulting with the Center staff.

The latter part of the first year should be on building on the regular activities of everyone and the Centers’ by venturing into new programs and proposed activities.

Year 2: Assessment of Accomplishments of Year 1 and Continuation of Year 1 and New Activities and Programs, e.g., a little more of Housekeeping, plus Doing More, e.g., More Aggressive Implementation of Academic Program Reviews, Internationalization Programs, Reform Programs (Forums, Colloquia, Bureaucracy Watch, State of the Nation, etc.), Policy Advocacy, Technical Assistance, Training and Research Programs, Publication and Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination.

Year 3: Continuation of Year 2 Activities plus more Governance Networking, PJPA as ISI-listed, More Research on Emerging Concerns and Sub-
disciplines, and Identification of Successor Administrators. The last part is very important because I believe administrators should mentor the successor generation and include them in the activities now.

The NCPAG is my home and her interests are always in my mind, heart and work. I wish to help her better do what she has been known for and reclaim her leadership role to serve public interest more effectively, fairly and responsibly. I cannot do it alone. I need the support and cooperation of everyone whose ideas, roles, responsibilities, passion and commitment are all important in achieving our vision and plans in the next three years.

Let us work together as one college, one NCPAG- the leader, the servant and the best.