Navarro is one of UPAA’s Distinguished Alumni Awardees

Dr. Mariechel Jamias-Navarro, an alumna of the College of Development Communication (CDC) (BSDC ’77, MSDC ’83, PhD ’92), was conferred the Distinguished Alumna Award by the University of the Philippines Alumni Association (UPAA) for her excellent contributions in the field of educational innovation.

Dr. Navarro, together with the other 48 awardees, was honored during the 2014 UP Grand Alumni-Faculty Homecoming and Reunion themed “Bagong Tagsibol” (a new spring) on June 21 at the Bahay ng Alumni, UP Diliman Campus, Quezon City.

Dr. Navarro, director of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications’ (ISAAA) Global Knowledge Center on Crop Biotechnology, is well known for her contributions in crop biotechnology education.

Meanwhile, UPAA’s Lifetime Achievement Awardees include Dr. Manuel S. Alba, AA’55 (with honors); BSBA’57 cl; Engr. Claudio B. Altura, BSCE’57; and Dr. Jesusa Bagan-Lara, BSN’54 cl.

Dean Velasco delivers talk on devcom at intl confab

Dean Ma. Theresa H. Velasco of the College of Development Communication (CDC) talked about communication and development during the international conference titled “Engaged Learning and ICT for Development in the University Curriculum” at the Concorde Hotel Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia on June 3-5.

The conference provided a venue for the discussion, sharing of experiences and presentation of case studies in various countries on “engaged learning.” This type of learning refers to the integration of field experience into the student’s information and communication technologies for development (ICTD) academic program. Recommendations on how “engaged learning” can be institutionalized in university courses were also discussed.

The conference aimed to give greater visibility to the importance of introducing ICTD into the university curriculum, primarily to promote “engaged learning.”

Dean Velasco is positive that her participation in the conference will contribute further to the development of CDC’s curricula for...
Chico appointed director of UPLBLRC

aProf. Mark Lester DM. Chico of the Department of Development Broadcasting and Telecommunication (DDBT), was appointed as the new director of the Learning Resource Center (LRC) of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), effective February 6, 2014.

UPLB LRC handles programs for students which include the Agricultural and Rural Development Scholarship program; Bridge Program in Mathematics and English; Training Program for Local and International Exchange Students; and tutorial programs. It also provides support to the internationalization efforts of UPLB.

Prior to being the LRC director, aProfessor Chico also served as the head of the Student Organizations and Activities Division of the Office of Student Affairs from April 2011 to May 31, 2014.

Living and loving DevCom

By Heidi Daniella L. Mercado (Reprinted from Devcommail, July 2009)

“...I would also like to acknowledge DevCom for what I am...I think it’s also nice to look back at what I went through, and to at least recognize the very crucial role of DevCom for me...”

Dr. Navarro is not merely paying lip service when she says that the College of Development Communication played an important part in her life. She got all her educational degrees from CDC – her undergraduate in 1977, master’s in 1983, and PhD in 1992. However, DevCom was not her original major during her undergraduate years. So, what made her shift to DevCom?

Inspired by her father

“My father...I saw him writing. I saw him being happy every time he got something published. But he never pushed me...”

Any DevCom student and/or graduate worth his salt would recognize Dr. Jamias’ maiden name. Her father was Dr. Juan F. Jamias, who used to be a faculty member, and chair of the then Department of Agricultural Communication. Dr. Navarro said that she has always loved and enjoyed reading and writing, and thought how she would enjoy DevCom, seeing how her own father enjoyed his own work. So, taking inspiration from her own father, she made the shift, and started her lifelong affair with DevCom.

Dr. Navarro recounts that she did not really have any idea what she was getting into when she shifted to DevCom. But she had the best teachers –Dr. Nora C. Quebral, Dr. Ely D. Gomez, Dr. Remedios Orozco, Dr. Felix Librero, Dr. Madeline Suva, etc., to name a few. She did not let having a faculty member for a father pressure her in any way. She just let herself enjoy her student years.

And enjoy them, she did!

The making of a development communicator

For a recent video production of the College, she was asked what was her fondest memory of DevCom, she answered, “I got a boyfriend!” So aside from the boyfriend, she joined a sorority, the UPLB Writers Club, the UPLB Perspective, and the UPLB Development Communicators’ Society, where she wrote for their newsletter “Noise.” These extra-curricular activities, she says, “...gave me something extra, and enhanced my writing and interpersonal skills.” She may not have graduated with any honors, but she has no regrets about that. Her participation in her extra-curricular activities was “unforgettable and helped me to be what I am now.” She would even say that her batch in DevCom, to her recollection, did not produce any “laude,” but most of them are doing well in their respective careers. It is interesting to note that her distinguished classmates would include Dr. Rex Navarro (the then-boyfriend, who is now her husband, and also a former faculty member of CDC), and our very own [former] Dean Cleofe S. Torres.

Her student years were also good years to be a DevCom student, she says. For her and her husband, it meant a lot that those years, the 70s, were the height of student activism. They understood and felt what development was “without even memorizing...because you saw the things around you, the situation was excellent. Everything was multi-faceted and I think the environment then, favored DevCom, not to say it’s not favoring it now, but just saying it was so relevant then.”

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More than pure luck

Dr. Navarro would always remark that in her career, it would always be a case of “being at the right place at the right time.” Even before she graduated, she did not have to look for a job, but instead, she was recruited by Dr. Rogelio V. Cuyno to work at the newly established Philippine Training Centers for Rural Development, which was then housed at the basement of the UPLB auditorium. There she had her first foray into development work, such as traveling alone for the first time to places, such as Tacloban, for a month. During that time, it was very difficult, and she would cry about her situation, but she now realizes that those times were excellent learning experiences for her.

Even in her work as the Manager of the Global Knowledge Center on Crop Biotechnology (KC), she says it was also a matter of “being at the right place at the right time.” That adage however does not mean that everything was smooth sailing and not without hitches on her side.

Years ago, Dr. Navarro was all set and ready to go to the US for training and eventual graduate studies on a scholarship. She got the scholarship during Pres. Ferdinand Marcos’ time, but when Corazon Aquino took seat, the said scholarship got rescinded all of a sudden and without warning. “I was already leaving that Saturday.” Depressed and wanting to start afresh, she quit her job, moved back to UPLB, and swore to accept the first job that she would get whatever it may be. So it was the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (BIOTECH), which got her as an extension specialist, where she headed the extension and communication unit. She worked at BIOTECH for some years, before being offered to join KC.

She says again that her job came “at the right time” when she felt the need for a change. The job at BIOTECH gave her a very good foundation, and opened up new fields for her. She has been with KC ever since its beginning in September 2000. KC is the knowledge and experience sharing initiative of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA). The KC was born out of a demand from policy and decision-makers in developing countries for an institution that will give credible information regarding crop biotechnology, so as to help stakeholders in the facilitation of transparent decision-making processes. Dr. Navarro describes her job as “very DevCom…this is real DevCom, and if you want to be more specific, SciCom and Development Journalism…”

Another feather in her cap is the launching of the book published by her office, “Communicating Crop Biotechnology: Stories from Stakeholders,” on July 21 [2009]. The book is a collection of 49 stories or narratives from the stakeholders themselves, who come from 14 countries.

The stories of the stakeholders aim to give the readers a better understanding of their thoughts, feelings, and dreams, and hopefully create more understanding and awareness about crop biotechnology in all its aspects in many countries.

What then would she advise people who would like to get in her field of work, or to the Devcom students these days?

Dr. Navarro says sometimes they get DevCom interns at her office, and she often gets surprised if the interns confess an aversion to writing. She advises that writing skills are very important. “…whatever institution you go to, whatever your job, writing is very crucial…there's no DevCom [student/graduate] who does not know how to write…and being able to communicate your ideas.” And of course, “…to never stop learning. Think outside the box and make the job exciting for you.”

She has definitely made the field of development communication richer and more exciting. DevCom is proud of this alumna.
**Dito sa Laguna kicks off 2nd season with episodes on the envt**

The development-oriented cable TV program, *Dito sa Laguna* (DSL), produced and managed by the Department of Development Broadcasting and Telecommunication (DDBT), in partnership with the Community Cable Vision Channel 8, aired its first episode for its 2nd season on June 21. The episodes focusing on the environment- and disaster-related concerns were done in coordination with the School of Environmental Science and Management, University of the Philippines Los Baños (SESAM, UPLB).

In one of its episodes, Dr. Gigi Colladila of SESAM discussed about climate change adaptation and other concerns related to the changing weather and climate. Dr. Leonardo Florece, dean of SESAM, and Dr. Antonio Alcantara, former dean of SESAM and current designated head of the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office of Los Baños, were also invited as guests on separate episodes and shared about forest fires and solid waste management, respectively. Dr. Decibel Eslava was also featured during the episode on disaster risk management.

Dr. Cleofe S. Torres, former dean of the College of Development Communication, and aProf. Sherwin Felicidario of DDBT are the hosts for DSL’s 2nd season.

The first season of DSL had a total of 13 episodes and was first aired on March 1, 2014. It was hosted by aProf. Mark Lester DM. Chico of DDBT and aProf. Mildred O. Moscoso of the Department of Educational Communication.

DSL airs every Saturday at 10 am via Community Cable Channel 8. Replays are every Monday at 2 pm, Wednesday at 4 pm, and Friday at 10 pm.

For comments and suggestions on their episodes or program, visit their Facebook page at fb.com/DitoSaLaguna. The production team can also be contacted thru these numbers: 536-2433 or 0916-188-DZLB (3952).

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**Dean Velasco delivers... continued from p. 1**

its undergraduate and graduate courses through ICTD.

The conference was jointly sponsored by the Asian Institute of Development Communication and University of Selangor, Malaysia in collaboration with Cornell University of USA and the United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Center for ICT for Development (UN-APCICT).