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**UNIVERSITY OF BATANGAS
SCHOOL HISTORY**

The years after the Second World War was the period of recovery from the ravages of war, a time for reconstruction and recovery from the remnants of the devastation. For the optimists, 1946 was the period of independence and change. It was, for the hopeful, a year for re-building and rehabilitation. Despite knowing that it would definitely be a gargantuan task to rebuild the society, deep in their hearts, the people believed that there is hope. Such an idea was conceived by six valiant men who were so obsessed with the establishment of an educational institution that will be helpful in reconstructing the society and giving hope to the youth. Through education, happiness and a sense of accomplishment can be achieved.

It was in early 1946 that Mr. Juan Y. Javier and Atty. Jesus Lorenzo A. Arguelles decided to open a school. Their decision was borne out of their desire to open a school that will provide for the educational needs of Batangueños, especially those who were eager to study but could not afford the high cost of education in Manila. In order to realize this vision, they invited other prominent people who had the same vision and can heartily share their own personal resources to help start this important undertaking.

The two friends, Mr. Javier and Atty. Arguelles, knew that they would need people with integrity, courage, dedication, perseverance, leadership... individuals who have a very high regard for education. They invited Rev. Father Vicente R. Catapang, a noted educator from Taal; Atty. Francisco G. Perez, a senior Provincial Board Member of Batangas; Mayor Roman L. Perez of Batangas; and Atty. Pablo C. Umali, a businessman-educator from Lipa. They pooled their resources together to be able to establish an educational institution. Arm in arm, these six valiant men laid the foundation of Western Philippine Colleges.

Past records indicated that WPC officially started its operation in 1946, considered as a period of great uncertainty among Filipinos who were slowly picking up the broken pieces of their lives, and recovering from unspeakable pain from the cruelty of war. With the

aftermath of the long Spanish colonial period, followed by the American and Japanese invasions, many Filipinos doubted if the pain of being taken advantage would ever be healed or would only be re-opened with each foreign invasion.

It was the vision of WPC's six founding fathers to awaken among the Batangueno youth a deep sense of nationalism and moral consciousness to participate actively in rebuilding the Filipino nation with enthusiasm. Establishing an institution that offered tertiary education while the entire nation was recovering from the war was not easy. The more critical problems after finding the ideal school site was to patiently source additional funds while sustaining office facilities, classroom fixtures and laboratory equipment as well as salary for the teachers and office personnel, while securing the permit to operate from the Bureau of Private Schools. Instead of being discouraged, all six men instinctively acted with indomitable will to overcome the obstacles and difficulties. Eventually, each stumbling block was addressed effectively, and the school continued to expand through the steady increase of enrolled students.

Mrs. Flordeliza Arguelles, beloved wife of Atty. Jesus Arguelles, emphasized the importance of sustained enrollment to the lifespan of any educational institution. Thus, actively campaigning for the courses offered was tirelessly pursued during the day, and often extended even after office hours. To the credit of Mr. Juan Javier and his ever-dependable jeep, together with the kin of other founders, they were able to establish a steady group of supporters who took kindly to this noble mission. Announcements about the opening of classes were posted prominently in strategic areas, and advertised in local newspapers and local movie houses. This part of the campaign was undertaken by Mrs. Arguelles with the help of the other founders. It also helped that the reputation of the founders and their mission of providing affordable education was well-received in the community. On April 28, 1947, the maiden class with 48 enrolled students officially commenced... after only a year of conceptualizing, seriously preparing and fortifying the school's foundation.

WPC's earliest school site was a small rented house opposite Batangas Trade School, (more commonly known as Batangas State University). The first collegiate courses offered were Education Program with Mr. Juan Javier as the first Dean, Liberal Arts Program with Atty. Francisco G. Perez as its Dean, and Commerce Program under Atty. Pablo C. Umali as Dean. The student population almost doubled after its first year of operation that the school administrators decided to transfer classes to a bigger place owned by the Javier family located at the corner of Diego Silang and Padre Burgos Streets.

Rev. Father Vicente Catapang was elected by the Board of Trustees as President and overall Administrator because of his wisdom and expertise in the field of education. His exposure from his post-graduate studies abroad further broadened the vision of the founding fathers for WPC.

Atty. Arguelles was elected Executive Secretary and was serving in that capacity when he suffered a heart attack and passed away in July 1947. Like her husband, Mrs. Flordeliza Arguelles was similarly committed to paving the way for affordable tertiary education for Batanguenos. With his sudden demise, his wife immersed herself in helping with problems related to unstable finances, decreasing resources, and addressing the need for additional requisite school facilities like a library and a school ground for PE classes, ROTC military drills and parade. There was still a shortage in the number of qualified teachers despite the growth in student population. These pressing problems needed to be resolved immediately and additional funds must be infused.

The steady increase in the number of enrollees of the Collegiate Department paved the way for the High School Department with Mrs. Flordeliza Arguelles as their first Principal. Seeing the success of establishing the secondary level, the foundation for a primary education program became the next important project of the Board of Trustees. The creation of the Elementary Department was eventually realized after a few years with Miss Gliceria Martinez as its first Principal.

To improve the finances of the college, an educational partnership was forged on December 5, 1947 to boost Western Philippine Colleges, Incorporated. This new development brought in fresh funds from selected new stockholders who subscribed shares to help augment the existing capital.

Despite the challenges that beset the college department, the graduation program of the first batch of high school senior students, 14 of them, was held on April 30, 1948, with Judge Vicente Arguelles as their guest speaker. Mr. Remigio Agpalo was the first Valedictorian and Mr. Rafael Dimaculangan, their Salutatorian.

The growth of the College population can be attributed to the number of graduates from the high school level, from a group of 14 seniors to 63 for the school year 1948-1949. On the same year, the Collegiate Department produced 18 candidates from the Liberal Arts program and 48 candidates from the Education program. Honorable Speaker Jose P. Laurel, a distinguished son of Batangas Province, was their commencement speaker.

In June 1949, the College of Law was opened with Honorable Justice of the Peace Court, Judge Eulalio Chavez, as acting dean. From his short stint as Dean of the Liberal Arts Program, Atty. Francisco G. Perez became the first full-time Dean of the College of Law, succeeding Judge Chavez.

At a time when the school was steadily gaining popularity among the local folks, internal concerns had to be addressed. Another founder, Mayor Roman Perez, passed away. After only three years of serving as School President, Rev. Father Vicente Catapang resigned because of failing health. He was succeeded by Mr. Juan Javier. Later on, Atty. Pablo Umali retired from the college to devote more time to law practice in his hometown, Lipa.

Father Catapang, as school president, was a strict disciplinarian. He strongly

advocated quality education. His deeply rooted principles were manifested by how he led WPC to its growth. His administration was marked by an unprecedented rise in school population comprised mainly of Batanguenos and Mindoreniens. His flagship project and crowning glory during his term was the opening of the College of Law in 1949. The opening of the College of Law was not easy for the founders. For the school to be able to offer the Law course, both Father Catapang and Mr. Javier traveled to far-flung towns of Batangas and Mindoro to campaign for it.

Under Father Catapang's leadership, student councils were organized in the High School Department. Thereafter, existing departments namely: Law, Liberal Arts, Commerce, and Education also formed student councils in order to inspire the students in politics and governance and imbibe in them the principles of freedom and democracy by being responsible leaders and followers. While enrollment and the number of graduates increased, the new administration under Mr. Juan Y. Javier faced the challenges of leading a growing college. Under Mr. Javier's term, the school organ, "The Westernian Advocate" was founded with Pedro S. Tolentino as its first Editor-in-Chief in 1950; active participation of the student government became a venue for electoral practice; the formation of ROTC's all-student brass band; the WPC Orchestra and other accomplishments saw fruition which greatly enhanced the confidence of the community on the merits of having a local College.

Western Philippine Colleges lost another pillar when Atty. Francisco G. Perez succumbed to a heart attack in August 1959. However, the remaining forefathers did not let the loss of another important member affect the plans which were slowly realizing fruition despite minor setbacks. Those left behind were very much aware of the weight of commitment and responsibility on their shoulder, that of delivering affordable yet quality education to mould the Batangueno youth who will become future community leaders and builders of the nation. The remaining founders and kins continued on to make great strides to further improve the school. The fame and popularity of WPC spread even to far-flung towns of Batangas because of the exceptional rate of passers in the Bar and CPA licensure

examinations.

More enrollees flocked to Western Philippine Colleges prompting the administrators to prioritize construction of more classrooms because the rapid increase in enrollment posed a problem in terms of classroom allocation. In order to address this concern, WPC's Board of Directors assigned its official representatives to negotiate with Batangas Provincial Government, represented by then Governor Feliciano Leviste, to allow the school to lease a 3,290.76 sqm lot located along M. H. Del Pilar Street. After approval was obtained, expansion came underway with the immediate construction of 2 new buildings. Eventually all classes were transferred from the old Javier Residence to the new M. H. Del Pilar campus. New courses were offered which attracted more enrollees, thus making another three-storey structure necessary. However, it was during this period of expansion projects that the health of President Javier deteriorated until his untimely passing in 1964.

The Board of Trustees re-organized the Administration and Management of WPC with the creation of the Executive Committee under the chairmanship of Atty. Manuel Panganiban. Under the new leadership, the school sustained primary objective of providing quality education to the youth of Batangas and its nearby areas. After three years, Dr. Abelardo B. Perez, first-born of founder Atty Francisco G. Perez, was elected Chairman and voted by the members of the Executive Committee as President. It was during the time of Dr. Perez that the institution transitioned to become a stock corporation registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). After recognition by the SEC was obtained, Atty. Juan V. Ramos was elected as the new Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He was succeeded by Atty. Vicente A. Mayo, as Chairman, serving WPC, then University of Batangas, from June 1973 up until his retirement in 2014.

Mrs. Flordeliza Arguelles became the 4th President of WPC. She was succeeded by Dr. Abelardo B. Perez as School President in 1974. Under the leadership of Dr. Perez, the former WPC, a local city college, metamorphosed in mid-1996 into what is now University of

Batangas (UB), the first private university in Batangas Province. Eventually, the institution was granted Autonomous Status by the Commission on Higher Education in recognition of the cooperative effort of the entire UB Community to sustain continual development in terms of course offerings and infrastructure expansion while responding to the needs of its office personnel and faculty members for their personal and professional growth. Dr. Perez served as University President until he passed away in April 2007. His brother, the former Department of Justice Secretary, Dr. Hernando “Nani” B. Perez, succeeded him. Dr. Nani, fully inspired by what his “Kuya Beling” has embarked on, rallied everyone to aim for greater accomplishments for the school.

From the wooden, semi-permanent buildings and sole WPC campus at M.H. Del Pilar Street in the early 1960’s, the institution has expanded into several campuses. The Elementary Department is housed at the M.H. Del Pilar campus, the Junior High School and Collegiate Departments are located at the Hilltop Main Campus, the 10-hectare Pallocan East campus and the Pallocan West Campus (beside Holy Trinity parish and SM City Batangas). The rapidly-growing Lipa Campus located in a 3.5 hectare property along Gov. Feliciano Leviste Road in Lipa City, with its infrastructure and state-of-the-art laboratories, classrooms, and facilities, is at par with Manila universities. It offers collegiate programs and Grades 7-12 (Junior and Senior HS).

The latest acquisition is the Millennium Campus. It is where the Senior High School Department, the UB Corporate Center (Corporate and Executive Offices) and the UB Life Building (College of Law, Graduate School, and ETEEAP) are located. Expected to be completed by January 2023, the institution has embarked on another milestone project for this campus what will be the city’s biggest gymnasium (6,460 sqm) with a 4,000 seating capacity, containing two full-sized basketball courts, a volleyball court and a hundred parking slots at the lower ground level.

True to its mission, UB provides opportunities for students to strengthen their faith in

God, uplift their love of wisdom, and heighten their concern to serve their fellowmen, such principles that guide the UBinians in the conduct as they go about their daily lives. Continuously innovating its offerings in the field of Engineering, Business, Entrepreneurship and Accountancy, Liberal Arts, Education, Allied Medical Sciences, Technical Education help the academic community to manage global trends in education, thereby producing competitive and employable graduates. Student involvement is encouraged in collaborative programs to mould future leaders who are empowered by the core values learned in school. Active participation in academic, sports and cultural competitions foster sportsmanship, fairness and grace under pressure. The students learn resourcefulness, critical-thinking, creativity, skills competitiveness and responsibility.

The University of Batangas is a top performing school for government licensure examinations in Engineering, Education, Allied Medical Sciences, Business and Accountancy, Nursing and Midwifery, and Law. Examinees have obtained scores way above the national average, and have even posted 100% passing scores in previous Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Midwifery, and Physical Therapy board examinations.

Attaining University Status helped boost the institution's rapid growth, supported by more curricular programs in the Graduate and post-Graduate levels, the formation of a Review Center, and offering modular short-term courses. Campus expansion and its facilities were also upgraded to complement the rapid academic growth that the institution was going through.

Accreditation and surveillance audit has become a way of life for all members of the university, and this strict practice contributed to the series of achievements and grants attained because of the untiring cooperation and effort of everyone who belonged to the UB Family. The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA), a private accrediting agency, has given formal recognition to UB's level of competence and performance in its academic programs. Further, PACUCOA affirms that

excellent standards in its educational operations are sustained, as proven by the highly admirable number of Level III and Level IV accredited programs attained by the school, an attestation to the distinct honor of consistently being counted among the Top Ten (10) Schools nationwide with the most number of accredited programs.

On a related milieu, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) granted the following honor and distinction to the institution: Autonomous University Status, Center of Excellence in Teacher Education and Center of Development for Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) Program. Another program undertaken by UB in order to uphold organizational standard and practice is strict conformance to the Quality Management System enforced among academic institutions that have been granted ISO 9001:2015 Certification.

The onset of the 21st century opened new avenues for more ASEAN linkages like the Faculty and Students Exchange Programs with Korea and Japan; Research Paper Presentations and participation at the ASAIHL International Convention in Malaysia and other foreign member-countries where UB faculty-presenters excelled. A significant number of faculty members were elected to key positions in prestigious regional and national organizations to name a few: Philippine Association of Law Schools (PALS), Philippine Association for Teacher Education (PAFTE), Philippine National Philosophical Research Society (PNPRS), the Kapisanan ng Bahay Saliksikan sa Bansa (KABANSA, Inc.), the Network of CALABARZON Educational Institutions (NOCEI, Inc), the CALABARZON Research Council (CRC); and even research fellows of Philippine Society for Educational Research and Evaluation (PSERE) and Council of Hotel and Restaurant Educators of the Philippines (COHREP).

For continual development in the delivery of quality education, innovative curricular programs were introduced. Such programs resulted from various studies made in response to the ever-changing demands of various industries. At the same time that new certificate programs were being introduced, the campuses also expanded. New buildings were

constructed and older edifices underwent retrofitting to accommodate additional floors. The Graduate School formed a partnership with Luna Goco Colleges in Calapan City, Mindoro for the Masteral Program so that potential enrollees are not discouraged to travel all the way to Batangas City weekly, to be able to attend classes. A similar accord between UB and Calayan Educational Foundation, Inc (CEFI) in Lucena City was also initiated, to reach out to other towns and municipalities beyond the confines of Batangas and Lipa cities.

The university continued to provide quality education. The UB College of Law maintains a standard that raises it above the other law schools in the region. This is manifested by the above-average performances in recent bar examinations. It has sustained being counted among the 20 Top-performing Law Schools in the country. Even the Moot Court and Debating Society of UB regularly participate in National Moot Court Competitions, a rare privilege to have competed with bigger and much older law schools.

The Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accredited Program (ETEEAP) and the more recent Distance Education Program aims to channel better employment possibilities for working students to earn a Bachelor's Degree or attend higher studies in the Graduate School. The university has cultivated linkages with Sukhothai Thammatirat Open University (STOU) of Bangkok (Thailand) in the field of academic research. The respective partnerships with Yeungnam University (Korea) and Yannarate Patana Pittayakom School (Thailand) has also produced unforgettable student exchange experiences.

Graduates of UB, particularly those from the College of Information and Communication Technology (CICT), have produced capstone projects which are now commissioned in different industries as part of their Extension and Outreach projects. The Brahman Library System or **"UB-Libro"** is a library management informative system now also being applied in some libraries in the province. They were able to develop a **"3D Website of the Municipality of Tingloy"** later on donated to the Municipality of Tingloy. The **"Taal Heritage Hunt (2015)"** is an Augmented Reality Game (ARG) that showcased the cultural

heritage of Taal thru a virtual tour that can assist tourists and help boost tourism for the area. Other related works include: “**Prinsesa ng Kumintang**”, a digital illustrated comics; “**The History of the Three Cities of Batangas (2015)**”, an interactive storytelling program; “**Indaman: 2D Mobile Game**”, a mobile game aimed to spread appreciation for Filipino folklore; and “**A Story of Kalumpang and Kumintang**”, another augmented reality about Kalumpang and Kumintang through visual representation and narration, to name a few. Faculty researchers have also realized that AR is an effective alternative learning tool in teaching History (Social Science 101). Another program, the **Barangay Information System**, was donated by the graduates to adopted barangays of the University as part of their Community Extension project. These barangays use the automated program for routine tasks like issuing barangay clearances among other paper works.

The world of modern technology has opened countless portals to digital revolution with the faculty and students constantly moving forward and skillfully adapting to ever-developing technologies. Despite being exposed to such challenges, it is still the university’s distinct pride to have produced outstanding men and women in their own fields of expertise. Many of its graduates are now physicians, lawyers, military men, teachers, medical therapists, priests and pastors, engineers, businessmen, writers, movie personalities, government officials and community leaders here and abroad. Such achievements reflect the admirable foundation of UB’s brand of education attained through relentless effort, strong faith in the Lord Almighty, firmness in maintaining a culture of excellence, and cooperation among the members of the institution. UB serves as catalyst for its graduates by making them highly competitive and productive in a society where digital technology has shrunk the world and everything is within reach in the global village.