Paying Tribute to the Past

Today, as I formally take over the presidency of the Catanduanes State Colleges, I can’t help but walk through the memory lane of the institution to pay tribute to the past presidents and Officer-in-Charge: Mr. Pedro G. Tabuzo (1971-1972); Dr. Jacinto A. Medal-lada (1973-1986); Dr. Rodolfo V. Azanza (1986-1990); Dr. Ernestina P. Averilla (1990-1992); Dr. Adolfo S. Bagadioing (1993-2002); Dr. Asun-cion V. Asetre (2003-2011). Images and shadows of their dedication are institutionalized in the campus. Fruits of their vision continue to echo and reverberate in the walls of classrooms and other structures. Legacies of excellence are alive, clutched and passed on to each graduate as they march the portals of this institution.

It is therefore deeply humbling and challenging to take over the stewardship as its 6th President, but immensely thankful for the strong solid foundation laid, from which we will lift-off and soar; and, from which history will judge, after connecting the footprints that trail behind.

The Demands and Challenges for Higher Education Institutions

From the vision of the Commission of Higher Education who oversees higher education institutions (HEI) in the country, one of which is the Catanduanes State Colleges, the demands and challenges are immense and daunting.

The vision states “...building the country’s human capital and innovative capacity towards the development of a Filipino nation as a responsible member of the international community.”

To achieve such vision, the parameters and scorecards are clear, among others, operationalization of: 1) relevant and quality higher education, 2) accessible higher education, particularly to those who may not be able to afford it; 3) continuing intellectual growth, research; the pursuit of programs for the enrichment of historical and cultural heritages; 4) commitment to moral ascendancy that eradicates corrupt practices, institutionalizes transparency and accountability (CHED Strategic Plan for 2011-2016).”
In the same light, when Michael Adams, President of the International Association of University Presidents delivered his Inaugural Address in Time Square, New York City on June 20, 2011, he said: higher education must serve as bridges of human developments, peace and sustainable economic growth. In the same address, he underscored the need for “new models of global inspiration and education because the next generation must become world citizens,” in the context that technologies have altered, mutated and diversified the pace, place and facets of education.

Given such reality, the Catanduanes State Colleges under my stewardship will embrace such developments but will likewise protect and respect proven and tested tradition of excellence in instruction, which may now be considered as one of the best practices, in the country. I am referring to the consistent magnificent performance of the Catanduanes State Colleges, College of Technology - Department of Engineering and the College of Health Sciences, Department of Nursing and Midwifery in the PRC Licensure Examinations.

The recent historical breakthrough where CSC graduates snatched the top 1, 2 and 3 in the Licensure Exam for Civil Engineers triggered various reactions and realizations. Whatever it maybe, it made a Catandunganon proud to be one.
Response to the Challenge and Blazing the Trail

Programs on Instruction. With the recent feat mentioned, the Catanduanes State Colleges is now synonymous to the provider of quality instruction at par if not better than the much expensive institutions. No less than CHED Commissioner and CSC BOT Chair William Medrano declared this confirmation during the December 5th 2011 CSC Board Meeting in Manila. He further instructed me to prepare proposal for funding assistance for the acquisition of equipment and facilities of COT Department of Engineering, and possibly to be recognized as Center of Development/Excellence showcasing the best practices in Civil Engineering; and serve as model of excellence and resource center for other HEI.

Quality of instruction in other disciplines will be further elevated through:

- Support to faculty members and personnel to pursue relevant Graduate Studies;
- Progressive review and updating of curriculum and offering of new industry-driven and cutting-edge programs both in the baccalaureate and advanced degrees;
- Compliance to recommendations of Accrediting Agency of State Colleges and Universities (AACCUP) and Institutional Quality Assurance Monitoring and Evaluation (IQuAME)
- Establishment of Continuing Professional Education Center
- Intensification of industry-academe partnership;
- Partnership with Student Body Organizations to assist financially challenged students through “Student-Meal for Education Program” and similar programs.

PROGRAMS ON RESEARCH, EXTENSION SERVICE AND PRODUCTION

Cognizant of the resources of our island province and in partnership with local and international agencies, we will pursue and advance information and technologies with sustainable socioeconomic impact, underscoring the following:

- Renewable energy (harnessing solar and wind power);
- Agriculture and fisheries;
- Pharmaceuticals and health concerns;
Environment, climate change and disaster risk mitigation;
Gender and development;
Policy research and sustainable development;
Public Land Grant as Colleges’ laboratory, research and training center to showcase sustainable technologies with global interest such as reforestation, Integrated Farming System, Sloping Agricultural Land Technology, Soil Amelioration, Biodiversity Conservation, Carbon Sequestration, among others.

OTHER PROGRAMS. Programs that will be given priority and included in the 2012-2014 Annual Investment Plan will include among others,

Construction of Infirmary and Wellness Building;
Construction of Research and Development Building
Construction of Covered Pathwalk connecting the different departments of the Colleges

With these infrastructure projects, Fr. Paul, expect more paging for your intervention and prayers to prevent rigging of bidding and other procurement procedures.

But I will inspire and do the personal paging to CSC alumni to support their Alma Mater in the construction of Alumni Building, initiated by Honorable Trustee Raffy Zuniega, with initial funding coming from the provincial government through Governor Joseph C. Cua.

I am confident and expect more support to further the cause of quality instruction, research and extension services of the Colleges.
Declaration of Commitment and Prayer of Support

Today, I formally pronounce that I am accepting the challenges and responsibilities before the Lord and everyone here present as the witnesses.

More than other institutions, the Catanduanes State Colleges, being an institution of higher education, is faced with the responsibility of forming and nourishing the building blocks of the ethical foundations of our society, where good governance is not just trumpeted and lip served but rather ‘walked the talk.’

Everyone is expected to be proactively involved in this noble task because “in service no one is greater by size or purpose. What the little lamp can do which the big sun cannot, is to give light at night.”

The miracle is not that we work in this institution as mentors or in whatever capacity, but the real miracle is that we serve with passion, commitment, honesty and dedication, producing miraculous results.

HOMILY—Fr. Paul Isorena’s homily touched on parallelisms and significance of December 9, feast day of San Juan Diego, a peasant of Tepeyac, Mexico, and the investiture of Dr. Morales as the new CSC President. San Juan Diego, like the new CSC President, was a widow and a ‘nobody.’ It is in being a ‘nobody’ that the grace of Our Lady of Guadalupe’s apparition befell on him, and was instructed to “build a church in the desert of Tepeyac.”
I am aware of the need to restore the watershed of good governance, transparency and accountability. There is a need to fill the spring in order to burst, flow and give life to different bodies of water, channels and banks. Consequently, it will be well differentiated into rivers, streams, rivulets and canals, criss-crossing and complementing one another, as an empowered CSC team who will flood the ocean with achievements: quality graduates. These graduates will triumph and make a difference in the sea of humanity and in the shores far beyond our beloved island. Indeed, they are the citizens of the world.

Guiding Credo

In my administration, I shall always be guided by the following credo:

**The Credo of Public Office RA 6770** (The Ombudsman Act of 1989) - Public office is a public trust. Public officers and employees at all times must be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty and efficiency; act with patriotism, justice and lead modest lives."

My decisions and actions shall always be subjected to the **the Four-Way Test of the Rotary**: Of the things, we think say or do; is it the truth; is it fair to all concerned; will it build goodwill and better friendships; will it be beneficial to all concerned?

And **Psalm 23** will give me copious fortitude and confidence: The Lord guides me along the right path; He is true to His name...if I should walk in the valley of darkness, no evil would I fear. My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. Surely, goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.
Acknowledgement

With the mandate to serve, I am assured of the love, prayers and support of my children: Jozem Niño, Franco Erus and Marian Minette; my father Teofilo A. Isorena; my brothers and sisters and their families, and, my Morales-Vergara-Tejada Family. Thank you so much.

My CSC family, service in this institution is not a destination but a journey. Please leave some of your luggage so we can travel light. Thank you for traveling with me.

Thank you so much my Rotary Family; my EcoDev Family; my Basic Faith Community Family, Pandananon sa Virac, Inc., my Julia friends, my BCARRD friends and my classmates who took time to be with me today.

All of you touched my life and like the “seafaring man lost in the desert of waters,” your love, prayers, personal and professional friendship guided me to understand what DESTINY is.

Good noon and may God bless us all.

LET’S TRAVEL LIGHT, Dr. Morales urged the CSC Community. These symbolic lanterns, released by the CSC employees, highlighted the Investiture Dinner and Ball. The lighted lanterns magnificently soared to the horizon and dazzled the CSC’s jubilant nightscape.