

## Editorial

## Living in the “New Normal”

Four months into the community quarantine, the “new normal” context must have been normalized already whether at home or in the workplace. Reminders about what must be done during this period have spread here and there, and some might have been a practice due for full implementation years ago.

This should never be made an excuse for the inefficiency of services, not just internally but elsewhere in the government.

In the workplace, efficiency and quality of service should not be compromised. In August 2019, TSU implemented Republic Act No. 11032 or the “Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018” through TSU Memorandum Circular No. 11, s. 2019. In addition, the digitization of services must have been complied with even before the Coronavirus pandemic as the university has been advocating to comply with Industry 4.0 when it emerged in 2018. Best of all, the university’s Management Information Systems Office has been on top of their game in streamlining and digitizing services.

Even the digital delivery of quality education, guided by Education 4.0 which was tackled during the 2019 university planning, must not be an alien concept to the academe. TSU has been proactive in preparing for such as evidenced by its procurement of Microsoft 365 way back in 2017, which includes the learning platform Microsoft Teams.

In hindsight, some facets of the “new normal” are actually reminding us to go “back to the basics” such as the frequent washing of hands and other hygienic practices. And other protocols temporarily strip off some Filipino practices. Pagmamano and the warm welcome often given to guests have been replaced with a nod (not even a smile due to the face mask) and indifference (because of the fear to catch the virus).

Indeed, this pandemic has led the entire world into a topsy-turvy. What was originally planned for 2020 has been set aside due to more pressing concerns. Time even flew by so fast that the year is already halfway towards the end.

This “new normal” might be not-so-new at all since the resiliency of Filipinos is still outstanding. Specifically, the TSU community has already been used to what was “new” four months ago and has smoothen out the rough edges little by little. In March, to be prepared for a pandemic was a myth; but now, to cope up with the needs of these trying times is paramount.

Even with a skeleton workforce, efficiency could be attained. This “new normal” could stretch from months to years without a vaccine, and the inability to keep up – whether in the workplace or at home – because of uncertainties and adjustments is no longer valid as an alibi. In one way or another, this is already the inevitable “now”.



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## 3 TSU SOL students hurdle 2019 Bar Exam



IN PHOTOS: (L-R) Atty. Ruth Hazel Galang, Atty. Dominic Oswald Halili, Atty. Theresa Reotutar

Three TSU School of Law (SOL) students passed the November 2019 Bar Examinations as announced by the Supreme Court through [sc.judiciary.gov.ph](http://sc.judiciary.gov.ph) on April 29, 2020.

Ruth Hazel Galang, Dominic Oswald Halili, and Theresa Reotutar are among the 2,103 Bar exam passers out of 7,685 takers nationwide.

This year’s 27.36 percent passing rate is higher than the 2018 passing, which is 22.07 percent.

According to Senior Associate Justice and Bar Chairman Estela Perlas Bernabe, the Court en Banc decided to lower the passing rate from 75 to 74 percent because of “the discerned need for younger and technologically adept lawyers to help different fronts of society as we meet the peculiar challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and transition to the new normal.”

### THE NEW TSU LAWYERS

The three passers managed to juggle their time between law school and other priorities such as their job and respective family obligations.

Galang, 25, a TSU AB Communication graduate in 2015 who also worked as a technical staff at the TSU Office of Public Affairs and Information, is a first time taker of the Bar exam.

She said staying home while Tarlac province is on Enhanced Community Quarantine has added to her anxiety in waiting for the results.

“Unlike before, Bar takers would actually do drinking sprees or go anywhere just to distract themselves. But now, I was just stuck in our home. I couldn’t sleep well,” Galang added.

Galang resigned from her job to focus on her last year in law school. She treated every exam and revalida as if she was already taking the Bar exam.



## Cisco bestows awards to TSU

Tarlac State University was recognized with an Academy Curriculum Excellence in Digitization by the Cisco Networking Academy, a US-based global information technology and cybersecurity program that partners with learning institutions around the globe.

The annual Academy Curriculum Excellence award is presented to one academy in each region for achieving excellence in teaching a curriculum, as quoted from the letter sent to Dr. Theda Flare Quilala from Cisco Academy last May 22, 2020.

This university milestone was achieved through the number of the students availing the Cisco courses online along with the successful accomplishment of tasks.

According to Engr. Marlon Gamido, College of Computer Studies (CCS) dean, there are only few Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and fewer State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) who have Cisco courses.

TSU was also awarded by the Cisco Academy for their ten-year partnership.

Cisco Academy partnered with the university in 2001 as initiated by the founding CCS dean Engr.

Wilson Fallorin, wherein Cisco courses were integrated in programs under the college.

Cisco 1 to 4 is integrated in each program curriculum where the university pays fees for the Cisco courses intended to equip students with industry-relevant skills.

“Pero ‘yung ituturo galing sa Cisco, international ang category nila kaya pwedeng-pwede makipagsabayan [ang] mga students natin internationally,” Dr. Quilala said in an online interview.

Dr. Quilala frequently interacts with the Cisco Academy and monitors the implementation of the courses in the programs.

TSU also uses the Internet of Things (IoT) from Cisco. Moreover, faculty members need to undergo trainings to be qualified as Cisco instructors.

TSU is one of the 12,100 academies who partnered with Cisco Networking Academy. Cisco has been empowering individuals and organizations with transformative technologies as they bring digitization to people. Cisco has taught students, educators and employers in over 180 countries.

[Maria Adelaida D. Calayag]

## Hytec Power Inc. hosts webinar for TSU

In response to the invitation from Hytec Power Incorporated, a distance learning webinar for Tarlac State University was held on May 14, 2020.

Modules, simulation laboratories, learning management systems, and other virtual platforms for civil engineering, electrical engineering, sciences, automotive, ICT, electronics engineering, automation studio, mechanical engineering, robotics, and general education are among the topics covered in the webinar.

The high demand for webinars on distance and flexible learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the

existing Amatrol learning system in the Advanced Manufacturing Training Hub (Smart Lab) of the College of Engineering and Technology (CET) prompted the initiative of Hytec Power.

The Amatrol learning system and Smart Lab are already being utilized by the college prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. This was purchased from Hytec Power Inc. in 2017 and installed in 2018.

According to Engr. Eric Jude Soliman, President and CEO of Hytec Power Inc. and TSU alumnus, TSU is the first state university in the country to utilize the Amatrol Advanced Manufacturing Training Hub.

He also encouraged the university to provide webinars to other SUCs on the use and importance of Amatrol relative to Industry 4.0 and Education 4.0.

University key officials and college deans attended the webinar at the TSU Main AVR while the chairpersons were invited to listen through the Zoom application.

Aside from the Amatrol and Smart Lab, the university has other online learning platforms such as Microsoft Teams of Office 365, and Cisco Net Academy and Cloudswyft of the College of Computer Studies. [Jazzel Llaneli M. Manabat]



## TARLAC STATE UNIVERSITY

### Vision

Tarlac State University is envisioned to be a premier University in the Asia Pacific Region.

### Mission

Tarlac State University commits to promote and sustain the offering of quality and relevant programs in higher and advanced education ensuring equitable access to education for people empowerment, professional development, and global competitiveness.

### Towards this end, TSU shall:

- 1.) Provide high quality instruction through qualified, competent and adequately trained faculty members and support staff.
- 2.) Be a premier research institution by enhancing research undertakings in the fields of technology and sciences and strengthening collaboration with local and international institutions.
- 3.) Be a champion in community development by strengthening partnership with public and private organizations and individuals

### Quality, Environment, and Health and Safety (QEHS)

Tarlac State University is committed to improve continually for:

- Global competitiveness and excellence in the delivery of education, research, extension, training and consultancy services, hotel operation and administrative support services;
- safe and healthy working conditions to prevent injury and ill health of its employees, students, guests, visitors, suppliers and contractors;
- management of environmental aspects towards the prevention of pollution;
- compliant to regulatory and statutory requirements for the utmost satisfaction of its valued customers.



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## TSU receives free access to Brightspace LMS

Tarlac State University academic group was granted with a free 60-day access to the Brightspace Learning Management System by D2L (Desire2Learn) after the product presentation held via Zoom on May 20, 2020.

As presented by CAL Philippines Inc., Brightspace is a learning management system software created by D2L intended for online teaching and learning for K-12, higher education, and corporate learning.

The 60-day free use of the LMS includes full utilization of Brightspace for the university's midyear/third trimester classes as well as access to online courses and trainings with certificates provided by Skillssoft, largest digital library and partner of CAL Philippines.

Brightspace, according to presenters, supports the migration and integration of content from Office 365, the existing TSU LMS platform.

It promotes blended learning, creates a virtual classroom, and features an offline mode for viewing of content.

According to TSU President Dr. Myrna Q. Mallari during the Zoom presentation, the academic group will review the features and benefits of the Brightspace LMS during the 60-day free access to be led by College of Computer Studies Dean, Engr. Marlon Gamido and Management Information Systems Office Director, Dr. Heidilyn Gamido.

She added that with or without COVID-19, using an LMS is already the future of higher education in the Philippines. [Jazzel Llanelli M. Manabat]



## TSU execs gear up for 3rd trimester



Tarlac State University key officials and some members of the Administrative Council participated in an in-house training-workshop on the use of Microsoft Teams for flexible learning held on May 7, 2020.

The said training-workshop is meant to prepare faculty members who will handle classes for the third trimester in the graduate level and midyear term for the undergraduate level this coming May to July 2020.

The session started with a short lecture about Office 365 and its applications followed by hands-on exercises to try out the Microsoft Teams features.

The Management Information Systems Office (MISO), headed by Dr. Heidilyn V. Gamido, organized the said activity. Handouts were also provided for distribution to colleges both for faculty and students.

According to Dr. Gamido, colleges may also

request for the same training, but with limited number of participants due to the pandemic.

Since September 2017, TSU has been utilizing Office 365 applications as ICT tools for teaching and learning. Microsoft Teams is part of the Office 365 package.

Prior to the pronouncement of the Enhanced Community Quarantine in Luzon, the MISO had conducted the same training-workshop to the College of Teacher Education on March 12, 2020.

Aside from Microsoft Teams, the university has specialized online learning platforms such as Cisco Net Academy and Cloudswyft of the College of Computer Studies and the Advanced Manufacturing Training Hub (Smart Lab) of the College of Engineering and Technology. [Jazzel Llanelli M. Manabat]



## TSU resumes work under the “new normal” context

With the implementation of the General Community Quarantine (GCQ) in Tarlac Province last May 16, Tarlac State University has resumed its operations and services through a skeleton workforce and other alternative work arrangements on May 18, 2020 through the TSU Memorandum Order No. 22, s. 2020.

The university offices and units have adopted some or a combination of the recommended arrangements from the Civil Service Commission (CSC) such as work-from-home, skeleton workforce, and the four-day (compressed) workweek, which the university has since been implementing.

Aside from this, TSU ensured its workers with adequate support mechanisms such as provision of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and reasonable transportation facilities.

Shuttle services are deployed at specific pick up points across the province from Tuesdays to Fridays,

and all offices are provided with alcohol-sanitizers, face masks, and face shields.

TSU-provided face shields are products of the Face Shield Taskforce who successfully made 3,276 units as of May 13, surpassing their April target of 1,000 pieces.

General guidelines are also being followed where regular disinfection of buildings, offices, and grounds is maintained. Offices have also been modified to guarantee physical distancing.

Floors are marked with reminder stickers in several areas within the university to control the flow of people, and plastic cover barriers called “office shields” have been installed in receiving units. File holders have also been placed outside of offices to serve as “pigeon boxes” for incoming and outgoing documents.

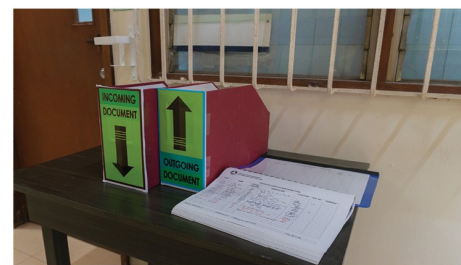
TSU is also strictly implementing the minimum health standards protocol such as wearing of face masks at all times (which includes

the No facemask, No entry policy), and taking of body temperature upon entry along with sanitation measures.

Fifty-two (52) foot-operated handwash areas with soap dispensers and 101 alcohol-sanitizer dispensers have been installed in strategic locations in the university, including the extensions campuses, that bear appropriate signages for safety.

All of these will be in effect until the duration of the State of National Emergency or until lifted by President Rodrigo Duterte.

These are in compliance with the CSC Memorandum Circular No. 10, s.2020 or the “Revised Interim Guidelines for Alternative Work Arrangements and Support Mechanisms for Workers in the Government during the Period of State of National Emergency due to COVID-19 Pandemic” where it covers government institutions including State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), [Jodie Andrea G. Pangilinan]



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## 3 TSU SOL students hurdle 2019 Bar Exam

While preparing for the Bar, she attended a number of mock bar examinations and would read cases for nine to 12 hours.

“For those who didn’t make it, my heart goes out to you. Your time will come. I know you did your best and I am always proud of you,” Galang said when asked about her message to fellow Bar examinees.

Reotutar, 40, who is one of the dean’s listers and also a first time taker of the Bar exam, learned that she passed the exam through her husband, Mr. Paul Victor Reotutar.

She recalled how she would memorize the provisions of the law back when she was a freshman student even when she does not fully understand it.

“As I progress in law school, I understand the law better and memorized some provisions of law by heart because there is repetition. I see to it that I will come to school prepared for the recitation,” she said in an online interview.

Reotutar managed her time with her studies and two children.

Meanwhile, 32-year-old Halili is a second time taker who received a 73.0930% grade in the 2018 Bar Exam.

Halili shared that his previous grade was posted in his study table to serve as an inspiration to get a higher grade in the 2019 Bar.

On his second attempt, he stayed at home, created a strict schedule, and self-reviewed for the Bar.

“I read cases, mostly, used my old notes, and a 2018 Reviewer, and no other. I didn’t have any interests on those pre-week and last minute notes. I chose to master what I already have. Perseverance, hard work, and properly distributed rest periods ought to do it,” he said.

He further said prayers were the main reason for

him to pass the Bar exam.

Halili plans to further train and practice at a law office where he is currently employed. He plans to have his own law office in the future.

### TSU SOL BAR OPS

Every Saturday, the SOL billets the Bar candidates at a hotel for free. SOL shoulders the expenses amounting to 300,000 to 350,000 pesos a month including transportation.

According to Atty. Dela Rama, SOL initiates projects like Deans’ Cup Golf Tournament and fun run to raise funds.

TSU also invites top caliber professors and reviewers from Manila to give special lectures a week before the Bar exams. However, Bar candidates are also given the freedom to choose their preferred Bar review after graduation.

The usual number of TSU Bar exam takers is around 12 to 20.

In 2014, six TSU SOL graduates passed the bar – the highest number of passers recorded since the first batch in 2012.

“We prepare our students from first year. We have revalida oral exams at the end of every semester and mock bar exams to prepare them for the Bar,” said Dean Atty. Dela Rama.

The TSU SOL currently has two bar topnotchers among its roster of faculty members.

“With [the] full support of TSU like acquiring new books, modernization of facilities, upgrad[ing] of library and improv[ing] Wi-Fi connection for online teaching and research, we can also beat Manila law schools in the future,” Dela Rama further said. [Maria Adelaida Calayag]

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of the university, but also to their immediate family members. However, if an individual's concern falls beyond the competencies of the volunteers, a referral to a more competent professional authority will be made.

Aside from this, they also adhere to the nation’s policy on data privacy.

Lifted from their Facebook page, “As licensed and professional counselors and psychometricians, we keep our counseling and consultation highly confidential. We

may ask for your personal information to understand you more and to be able to help you better with your concern. However, we have the legal and moral obligations to inform your family members and proper authorities when [if] we assess [a] possible harm or injury to yourself or to others during our session (RA 11036)”.

The office soft launched the online counseling and consultation last April 5, 2020. [Jodie Andrea G. Pangilinan]



## TSU complies with CHED recommendation, GCQ guidelines

Even with the pronouncement of General Community Quarantine (GCQ) in several Luzon provinces, holding of face-to-face classes or residential learning is still discouraged by the Commission on Higher Education as stated in the Inter-Agency Task Force Resolution No. 36, dated May 13, 2020.

Tarlac Province was placed under GCQ on May 16, 2020 and the guidelines indicate that those who are 21 years old and below are still not allowed to go out.

Since some first and second year TSU students belong to the 21-and-below age group, and also with the aim of limiting movement, flexible

learning is regarded as an equitable means to deliver quality education during this health crisis.

CHED defined “flexible learning” in an online article from the Philippine News Agency as “a broader term that focuses on the design and delivery of programs, courses, and learning interventions that address learners’ unique needs in terms of pace, place, process, and products of learning; it does not necessarily require connectivity.”

It uses both digital and non-digital technology.

TSU has since heeded to the CHED recommendation and has started preparing its teaching

workforce with trainings, workshops, and webinars for the implementation of flexible learning.

A survey was also launched on April 30 to determine the needs and concerns of currently enrolled students in connection with flexible learning.

The University is also planning to coordinate with local government units for the offline or non-digital mode of learning since they are the closest service providers to the students.

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## TSU surveys students on flexible learning ahead of CHED’s advice

Tarlac State University launched an online survey via social media page for its currently enrolled students last April 30, 2020 to serve as inputs on the conduct of flexible learning for the next academic year.

With the results of the TSU-ECQ Survey, the university will be able to strengthen its capabilities to implement flexible learning by 1st Semester of A.Y. 2020-2021 under the “new normal” context.

The survey contains questions that relate to the students’ level of internet accessibility, gadget for learning, limitations on activity engagement, future problems that may arise, and acceptability on the new mode of instruction.

This initiative started three

days before CHED (Commission on Higher Education) Chairperson Prospero De Vera went on air on DZMM Radyo Patrol advising higher education institutions (HEIs) to consult with its students to find out their concerns and limitations on May 3, 2020.

De Vera pointed out that through these consultations, HEIs will be able to design a better system of flexible learning suited to their needs as different institutions have different issues.

Flexible learning is a style of education that combines digital teaching with other offline methods such as take-home readings and activities.

Through the instruction of

TSU President Dr. Myrna Q. Mallari, Dr. Erwin P. Lacanlale, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the college deans were assigned to create the assessment.

The survey is accessible through the TSU student portal account.

The personal data collected will only be viewed by the TSU Administrative Team, who will not specifically identify any student in its reports or outputs as well as share personal information without consent according to a member.

This disclaimer has also been posted together with the link on TSU’s official Facebook Page.

[Jodie Andrea G. Pangilinan]

Source: ABS-CBN News

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## URO conducts College Research Proposal Colloquia amid pandemic

The Tarlac State University Research Office (URO) successfully conducted the research proposal colloquia of various colleges, with a total of 117 proposals, from March to May 2020, even during the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) period.

The colloquia held serve as an avenue for esteemed faculty researchers to showcase their ideas in improving the weaknesses of current practices or providing solutions to research questions that will give new insights which can help decision makers and the community in general.

The paper evaluation was done through available communication medium where the different colleges invited external evaluators to be part of the evaluation team together with the in-house TSU evaluators.

The College of Public Administration and Governance (CPAG) invited Ms. Luzviminda Rivera as their external evaluator. Ms. Rivera is an international journal reviewer, multi-awarded researcher, session chair, and an external panel member of Tarlac State University thesis/dissertation committee. Likewise, Ms. Rivera has presented researches in various national and international conferences and published researches in journal and online proceedings.

Meanwhile, the College of Computer Studies (CCS) invited an equally talented evaluator, Ms. Ma.

Lolita Masangcap, a seasoned professor, an IT Trainer and program coordinator at Bataan Peninsula State University.

Engr. Ryan De Lara, current dean of the College of Engineering at the Wesleyan University-Philippines, evaluated the research proposals from the College of Engineering and Technology (CET), while the College of Science (COS) invited Mr. Wilfredo Sibal, the Assistant Regional Director of the DOST- 3, who is always supportive of TSU endeavors.

The College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) invited Ms. Ma. Rosario Florendo as their external evaluator. Ms. Florendo is an assistant professor of English at the University of the Philippines Baguio.

Moreover, Dr. Teody San Andres, the Vice President for Executive Operations at the Bulacan State University, evaluated the research proposals at the College of Teacher Education (CTEd), while the College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE) invited Dr. Wilfredo Domingo, dean of the Criminal Justice Education at the Dominican College of Tarlac, as their external evaluator.

As the country embraces the “new normal,” the URO, together with the faculty researchers, have proven that we can easily adopt to any situation when we work as one. [Prof. Edjie M. Delos Reyes, URO Director]

## HRDMO launches free online counseling and consultation

Amidst the public’s restlessness during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Tarlac State University launched a free online counseling and consultation service for its employees on May 18, 2020 led by Mr. Marlon C. Dela Cruz, Director of the Human Resource Development Management Office (HRDMO).

This initiative aims to provide free professional psychosocial support where volunteer counselors will listen to and help employees with social, emotional, and other mental health concerns.

By accessing the TSU Employee and Counseling Facebook page, an employee may send a message and be scheduled for an appointment. After which, the volunteer counselor for the day will attend to their concerns starting

with a few questions that are part of the counseling protocols.

Other means through which they can provide assistance are: 1) through any encrypted messaging apps available online, 2) through mobile text or call, and 3) through email messaging.

There are currently eight volunteer counselors, including Dir. Dela Cruz, who will be available every Monday to Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

“They are all registered psychometricians in the [HRDMO] under my supervision. They are trained in doing psychological first aid and basic psychosocial support,” said Dela Cruz.

The service is available not only to the employees

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