

Gawad sa Natatanging Publikasyon sa Filipino was one response to faculty feedback. Authors of excellent publications in local journals have received awards from their constituent universities, which the System need not replicate. But until the Nemenzo administration highlighted the value of reputable, international refereed journals, little attention had been given them except in the basic sciences.

Today that is thankfully no longer the case. The practice of blind peer review is now accepted in all disciplines, and professional colleges are seeing the importance of publications in addition to the practice of their professions. Above all, Filipino—more particularly, UP—scholarship is becoming more and more visible in the global academic community. Long held as “natural” venues for mathematics and science research (because these are universal fields of knowledge), international journals are (or can be) just as much a home to social science and humanities research on the Philippines. Only one rule prevails in any case, and that is the standard of scholarship, whatever the discipline or subject and whoever the author. Indeed, contributions of UP academics in the social sciences and humanities to international refereed publications are especially important because they demonstrate our knowledge of ourselves and the mastery of our craft in keeping with international standards of scholarship. Embracing these standards is no easy task—and we, no doubt, have a long way to go—but the first necessary steps have been taken, aided by attractive financial, merit-based incentives.

The time will hopefully come when UP faculty will continue to publish even without these awards, when the philosophy behind these various programs will be so internalized that academic publications and creative work are undertaken as part of our regular work alongside teaching and extension service, without the anxious debate over the worth of one vis-à-vis the other.

The second hope is that the University will, in the future, hire only faculty with the necessary advanced degrees so that the mark of excellence can go beyond the faculty's degree profile and into the more substantive elements of academic life. For now, such support is recognizably necessary; hence the System Faculty Development Program for master's and PhD study. But both these programs are costly and have limited time span. Notwithstanding the risk of losing faculty whose studies we support, the Faculty Development Program is unquestionable proof of the administration's commitment to keep its most promising faculty.

In another sense, then, the awards and incentives have a common perspective—the perspective of the future. Programs are not built to resurrect the past, even the most glorious parts of the past, but to create a future in part by capitalizing on the best of the past. The programs described here provide support for a future in which UP will not lag behind but will lead in the fields it so chooses. The lament that there is not enough money for research or for writing textbooks is a thing of the past. Faculty who avail of these programs and receive awards of distinction are making a firm commitment to our future.

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