CSWCD as Center of Excellence in Social Development

The CSWCD continues to work towards the fulfillment of its dream of becoming a Center of Excellence in the Asia-Pacific Region in the field of social development: a center of professional and continuing education; research and scholarly publications; and, social development initiatives, as well as, social policy advocacy and reform. Its continuing discussion on community engaged scholarship calls for a vibrant curriculum relevant to the needs in the region, with competent and grounded faculty and staff, as well as resources and facilities to support the implementation of its programs. Moreover, stakeholders need to be united towards a common mission and vision. They should be ready to share talents, expertise, and resources in the fulfillment of this dream.

In my view, this is a living expression of the mandate of the University of the Philippines as a public service university, a graduate university and a research university.

My dear Chancellor, Dr. Caesar A. Saloma; our beloved Dean, Dr. Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo; Dean Edgardo Gonzales and members of the 2013 nomination committee on the Search for CSWCD Dean; my co-nominee, Dr. Emmanuel M. Luna; honourable colleagues at CSWCD; students; fellow alumni; partners; guests; and, friends of the College -

I am honored to be nominated to the deanship of my Alma Mater. The College of Social Work and Community Development, CSWCD, is my second home, my second family. I practically grew up here, earned my undergraduate degree in Social Work in 1975, and returned after working for three and a half years in another UP unit. My two daughters also spent their early years in the premises of this institution. To me then, this nomination is payback time – inspired by the support and encouragement of colleagues, various sectors of the College, the alumni, and partners.

In 33 years of working with the College, I have served in most administrative positions within the the term of six deans - Dr. Sylvia H. Guerrero, Dr. Josefina D. Pineda, Prof. Evelina A. Pangalangan, the late Dr. Romeo C. Quieta, Dr. Amaryllis T. Torres, and the incumbent, Dr. Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo. This gives me great confidence to be at the helm of CSWCD leadership and governance at this point in my professional and personal life. For taking up the challenge of leadership and service, it is also a great source of inspiration to have witnessed CSWCD’s growth and struggles through these years.

Nurtured by the growth of this Institution, I saw the College rise from two departments: the Department of Social Work (DSW); and, the Department of Community Development (DCD) -to four academic programs. This came with the establishment of the now Department of Women and Development Studies (DWDS) in 1995, and the Doctor of Social Development Program in 2009.
Alongside the curricular development of academic programs were the continuing education programs (both institutional and field-based) of professionals and paraprofessionals in SW, CD, women and gender studies; College-initiated field placement programs in Sariayaya, Quezon and Lian, Batangas; and, field-based extension programs like the TITRD. A network of social development agencies, the Lambatlaya, was also initiated.

Moreover, the past three years saw the active engagement of the research and extension clusters involving all sectors of the college including the administrative staff in various undertakings along DRRM and climate change, social protection, migration as well as peace and governance. Partnerships with local and international institutions and networks in curricular, research and extension endeavors flourished with the conduct of local and international fora, exchange programs and collaborative projects.

Despite diversities, there is always one thing in common among us in CSWCD: the desire to serve and to make a difference in the lives of the poor, vulnerable, marginalized, and underserved - the struggle for social development.

We are definitely at the doorstep of making this College a center of excellence in social development in the Asia Pacific Region. The strategic planning that took place under the leadership of Dean Torres, followed by the initiatives and programs under the leadership of Dean Ofreneo kept us abreast with the challenges of the changing times. This is also evident in our academic, curricular and field programs as well as in our research and extension programs.

At present, the CSWCD is a recognized leader in social development. Consistent with its professional service tradition, the College takes pride in graduates who have committed themselves in working for people’s development in various capacities as direct workers, field managers, planners, policy makers, educators, researchers at different levels: in communities, and in institutions, local and international. Our continuing education programs have produced known leaders and advocates of local and national organizations addressing social development issues.

Likewise, a number of our graduates have taken key positions in government, non-government and international organizations. The same goes for our faculty and staff who are actively involved in advocacy and social movements, and are in fact in leadership positions in their own fields within and outside the University. More-so, a number of our students and participants in both academic and continuing education programs have come from different parts of the country and the Asia-Pacific Region.

In the ten-year strategic plan formulated in 2008, the vision of CSWCD has taken a larger context: "justice, peace and sustainable well-being shared by the Filipino people and the global community.” Furthermore, our mission expresses what we are in the college and what we continuously strive for: "Academic excellence in the service of the nation and the global community through participatory, gender responsive, empowering and transformational development praxis.” The strategic directions of CSWCD highlight three major concerns: 1) academic programs; 2) research, extension and library services; and, 3) institutional strengthening.
During the last three years, thanks to Dean Ofeneo, the College has taken great strides in the fulfillment of its mission and the realization of its vision. The period saw the active engagement all college sectors in its research and extension clusters. It continued its consolidation efforts in the light of assessment and planning initiatives in various CSWCD undertakings including ethical concerns in research and extension endeavors, local and international partnerships and exchange programs, a highlight of which is the manaulization of CSWCD policies and procedures which is near completion. The period also saw the formalization of student and REPS representation to the College Executive Board, at the same time, a gender friendly lounge for administrative staff was established during the period. Significantly, too, the initiative to apply as a center of excellence in Social Work, took shape during this period.

It is imperative that these initiatives are sustained and pursued in the next term. More-so, curriculum review and development as well as theorizing from the field for knowledge generation by the various disciplines of the College should be strengthened. To complement this, the completion of advanced degrees among faculty and REPs should be pushed forward. Around 11 faculty members, 1 REPS and 1 administrative are pursuing their doctoral degrees; while 1 faculty, 2 REPS, and one administrative staff are pursuing their masters degree. All the support and encouragement for the completion of their respective degree programs should be provided. Moreover, post graduate degree programs should also be pursued.

Becoming a center of excellence means meeting the best of academic standards. But, for us in social development, excellence should also mean commitment and performance in practice, covering research and extension service provided to stakeholders. It involves community engaged scholarship. That is why our strategic direction is towards producing socially committed and competent social development professionals. Amidst the global challenges and from the perspective of a rights-based approach, the scholarly outputs we produce should enrich and generate new knowledge and approaches gained from theorizing and synthesizing our field practice and experiences.

In keeping with our vision, it is not only important to get faculty and staff promotions from our research and publication efforts, but we should always aim at relevant and timely research outputs that can address the challenge of the times. For all these should easily translate into our curricular programs, both formal and non-formal, as well as into our extension programs. Moreover, our strength and energy is kept vibrant by our active partnerships and involvement among the vulnerable and marginalized sectors through our field programs, extension, and advocacy in social movements. As a leading institution in social development, we have to sustain our endeavours for social policy advocacy and reform.

On top of all these, we need a sustainable resource base. It greatly inspires us that we have an approved appropriation of Php20M for our building. If we have to be abreast with the global challenges of social development, we have to be at par with the leading universities of the world. If we have to be a center of excellence in the region, we should have the facilities: a good building; well-maintained classrooms; sound equipment; efficient internet system and web-based facilities, including provisions for teleconferencing that will virtually bring us to our students in
the field and vice versa, as well as to our partners and networks anywhere in the world at almost any given time.

As an academic institution, we should uphold the highest standards for institutions of higher learning that prides itself with offering a quality of education to the nation’s youth and future leaders. At the same breath, we serve as refuge and relief center for our partners, risk communities as well as marginalized communities, whenever they come for assistance in voicing their demands to the government offices and other offices for their welfare. This is corollary to the academic mandate of community engaged scholarship, having the grounding in reality and praxis.

But of primacy in all this is a vibrant curriculum responsive to contemporary needs in the region, with competent and grounded faculty and staff, as well as adequate resources to support its implementation. Foremost, we should aim for the best minds grounded in practice especially for the Doctoral of Social Development program that needs the assignment of permanent plantilla items for its faculty complement. This makes us more confident in moving towards being a center of excellence in the region: we have the public, we have among the best in the field, and we have resources although we have to work for more to fully support our programs. We also need to be together to harmonize our talents, capabilities and resources.

With the selection and assumption of a new dean, there is now a great need to sustain, strengthen and integrate the initiatives of the past three years, within a climate of participative, consultative, transparent, accountable and responsive governance.

**Major Directions in the Next Three Years**

1) **Curriculum Development: *Theory and Practice Complementation***

Our quest for community engaged scholarship calls for a curriculum (academic and continuing education programs) that is responsive to the needs of people in order to produce socially committed and competent professionals. Complementation of the formal and non-formal education programs should be strengthened. Faculty and staff development should also address curricular needs.

**Priority Programs/Activities**

- Curriculum review of degree programs offered in the last 10 years
- Exploration in the offering of Diploma programs in Community-Based Disaster Management and in Community Resource Management; and, the BS Gender Studies or Women and Development (Strategic Plan 2008)
- Integration of relevant course offerings across Departments; possible Field Instruction (FI) placements/programs; and, curricular sharing and enrichment programs
- Creation of RGEP courses on women and gender studies, social work and community development

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2) Faculty, REPS and Staff Development: Competence Building, Recruitment of Young and Promising Faculty and Addressing Immediate Concerns

The faculty and staff should be provided with support and all opportunities possible to realize their potentials, hone their talents and build their competencies and commitment in complementing the vibrant programs of the College. Programs should likewise be created to address official and personal concerns that impinge on the fulfillment of the CSWCD dream, mission and vision. In living the spirit of being participatory, gender-sensitive, empowering and transformational-development praxis, programs to foster and engender unity and harmony within and among the CSWCD family should be sustained.

With more than 50% of PHD faculty nearing retirement age, there should be active recruitment of young and promising faculty with advanced degrees. Furthermore, the REPS plantilla items should be filled up with a speedy processing of the authority to fill up the vacant items. To ensure continuity of the CSWCD tradition and programs, we have to strengthen our mentoring programs and set up a superstructure for preparing the next generation of leaders and stakeholders of the College. Moreover, research dissemination opportunities and grants should be pursued to broaden our horizons in the College.

Priority Programs/Activities

- Strict implementation of the career pattern
- Increasing PHD degree holders
- Pursuing post graduate degrees
- Pursuing research dissemination opportunities and grants
- Recruitment of young and promising faculty with advanced degrees
- Mentoring of younger faculty and staff
- Faculty Support in the implementation of University Policy on Faculty Development (i.e., pursuit of advanced degrees and publications within required period for tenure, professional updating, etc.)
- Capability Building for Special Assignments (corresponding staff development to take on other challenges and tasks, i.e., competencies on web-based assignment, multi-media, record keeping, etc.)
- Sustained Initiatives in the Creation of a CSWCD Service Program Committee
  - Team Building Program
  - Grievance Mechanism
  - Opening Opportunities for Critical Needs (e.g., opportunities for income augmentation and special needs, etc.)
- Completion of the Manualization of college policies, procedures and decisions (to ensure implementation and avoid repetition of previously discussed concerns and decisions)
3) Student Program and Services: Recruitment, Academic Support and Consolidation

The declining enrollment and the inability to fill up the admissions quota for the undergraduate program in Social Work and Community Development may be better addressed by internal recruitment from among those who have passed the UPCAT but are undecided on their degree programs or those already enrolled in the University. The service courses and CWTS classes provide windows for this as well the student themselves who are already enrolled in the College.

For students who are already enrolled in the College, active program advising is a good source of support for the students. On the other hand, follow-ups should be made on students especially those in their completion year, i.e., thesis students so they can be motivated to complete their respective degree programs. Scholarship coverage should be expanded to support the needs of deserving students until graduation.

Fostering the bond among students across academic programs, both graduate and undergraduate is a venue for consolidation.

Priority Programs/Activities

- Internal recruitment of students for the CSWCD academic programs
- Career Talks (to make the CSWCD courses known and properly interpreted)
- Provide interaction area for students in addition to their Tambayans
- Active program advising of students
- Expanded scholarship program
- Continued representation and participation in College governance
- Fora or Sharing Conference Among Students Across Departments (at least once every semester)
- Consolidation activities among students across Department

4) Research and Publications: Theorizing from the Field

We should write and publish vibrant practice research outputs, with particular focus on theorizing from experience to enrich existing wisdom and knowledge in social development practice. We should come up with indigenous theoretical and practice models in community development, social work, women and development. Our research and publication outputs should be relevant and timely in addressing the needs of the times.

Research outputs should accrue to the needs of transformational development practice, as well as in strengthening the curriculum. They should be materials and inputs for program policy advocacy and reforms.
Priority Programs/Activities

- Theorizing from experience, i.e. indigenous practice models
- Focused Research Concerns (pursuit of College research agenda, practice models, etc.) among all College sectors
- Active research mentoring and partnership (i.e., Senior-Junior Faculty/Staff, Faculty/Staff-Student)
- Web-based and on-line publications
- Professionalization of student papers and research outputs
- Research collaboration with institutional partners and linkage networks
- Conduct of regular research fora and dissemination activities

5) Extension Program: Transformational Development Praxis

This puts into action our transformational development praxis, lessons from which accrue to the strengthening of our academic program. This is our expression of service to our stakeholders in social development, including the capability building of frontline workers, policy makers and planners, and program implementers, as well as, the people and communities we work with. Moreover, we should also build the capabilities and competencies of our own staff to effectively implement the programs. Foremost, also a dream, is exploring the possibility of establishing a Training Center for Social Development.

Priority Programs/Activities

- Regular Continuing Education Programs to defined publics, including FI Partners and CSWCD alumni
- Curriculum development of regular programs and development of basic course materials
- Engagement in University and inter-unit programs and endeavors, (i.e., DRRM orientation, San Juan field placement)

6) Local and International Linkages

Local and international exchanges should be sustained and further developed in the areas of academic exchange, research, and social development initiatives. This is a dynamic basis for training; curricular and cultural enrichment: sharing of experience and expertise; research outputs/publications; and, resources. They keep our extension programs vibrant, and provide a base for resource generation.

In particular, local linkages serve as a relevant integrative learning methodology as often mentioned: "ang malawak na paaralan ay ang pamayan'an." It strengthens our thrust on grounded theory and practice.
Priority Programs/Activities

- Student and Faculty Exchange Program (including the firming up of policies and procedures)
- Collaborative research and training programs
- Leadership in national and regional associations and in SW, CD, and WD local/national/regional conferences
- Capability building of schools

7) Improvement of Facilities: *Well-Maintained Classrooms and Sound Equipments*

The CSWCD needs to improve and acquire facilities to keep its curricular, research, publications and extension programs vibrant and provide the best climate for realizing its dream, mission and vision.

Priority Programs/Activities

- Implementation of the Building Code (i.e., provisions for the elderly and handicapped)
- Repair of damaged building areas: walls, walkways, etc.
- Physical makeover of the BTS and the Seminar Room
- Maintenance and cleanliness of the CSWCD building and premises, including better lighting of the parking and a snack counter for evening classes
- As a direct support to academic programs:
  - Internet room for students
  - Digitization and Archiving of Library Materials
  - Computer Facility for Comprehensive Examinations
  - Audio-visual facility for computer-based instruction
  - Provisions for teleconferencing

8) Sustainable Resource Base

Adequate resources are needed to fully address these programs. This means both University and externally generated resources that include endowment funds, trust funds from alumni and benefactors as well as donations. We need to strengthen the coordination with Administration to exhaust all possible resources that can be made available for our programs, explore support from our partner institutions, donor institutions, as well as key people in government to generate additional funding for our programs. We have to maximize the potentials of our Sikhay Kilos, and our Foundation to generate programs and resources for the College.

Within the overall mandate of the University, the **DEAN as an academic leader**, should be a **unifier of all** College stakeholders. The Dean should not impose, instead, she/he should harness potentials and coordinate all efforts for the maximum fulfilment of its mission and vision: academic excellence towards "*a just, peace, and sustainable well-being shared by the Filipino*"
people and the global community.” The Dean should be visible and accessible. Within a nurturing and consultative climate of governance, the Dean should be firm in implementing administrative processes and steadfast in leading the College to translate action plans to fulfill its mission and realize its vision.

To be at the helm of CSWCD leadership needs the concerted and collective efforts of the College Executive Board, the different clusters of the College, the College/Department Unit committees, REPS, Library and administrative staff. My guiding spirit is commitment, service and excellence. We should be resolute about our goals and work hard to accomplish them; we should always be conscious of our reason for being, the people we serve; and, perform in the best standards possible. This is both my strength and my weakness as I expect my counterparts to do the same. My asset is always aiming for the best, and, believing in the best potentials of people.

In the true spirit of the CSWCD - of being participatory, gender-sensitive, empowering, praxis-oriented - everything can only be possible if we are all convinced, united, willing, and committed to put in our talents, expertise, resources toward our common vision in the service of the nation as an academic community - with the mandate of being an institution of higher learning that offers quality education in tandem with our advocacy agenda of serving the poor, the marginalized, and the underserved.