Cura Personalis, Ignatius’ standard of caring for others

By DR. ANGELA C. YLAGAN and MARIA PATRICIA CERVANTES-POCO

It was a bright and sunny Saturday morning on August 6, 2016, when we, twenty-one Ateneo Law School (ALS) professors, began our trip to Prado Farms in Lubao, Pampanga for the second ALS Class Advisers’ Workshop.

After a hearty, organic breakfast, the workshop was officially opened by Associate Dean Giovanni F. Vallente. To get to know each other a little bit more, participants were made to introduce themselves and their “fictional character alter ego,” the latter drawing laughs from the crowd. (At least three participants identified with DC Comics hero “The Flash.”)

At the beginning of the workshop, we sought answers to the following questions: What exactly are our roles as an adviser? What do we do as advisers on the academic aspect? How can we be more than just academic advisers or technical advisers? What is our responsibility when it comes to students who are victims of violence? How do we handle students dealing with abuse, self-harm, etc.? How can we make advisers more useful and more known to the students? How do we deal with the generation of our students?

To help us find the answers to our questions, Dr. Roberto Guevara, Associate Dean for Student Formation of the Loyola Schools, gave an enlightening talk on “The Characteristics of Jesuit Education and the Ateneo Teacher”. He highlighted a few of the points discussed in “Our Way of Proceeding,” a 1986 document on the characteristics that animate Jesuit education, including:

• Jesuit education is world-affirming, helping the students discover the radical goodness of the world by encouraging a sense of wonder and mystery in them.
• Jesuit education assists in the total formation and fullest development of all talents of each individual.

Dean’s Corner

By SEDFREY M. CANDELARIA

Reunited on all fronts

As we flew into Oslo on the 21st of August 2016, I could not help but trace the number of times I have flown to Europe to participate as a young lawyer in the formal peace negotiations since it opened in Brussels, Belgium in 1995 during the Ramos Administration – that’s 21 years ago!

In 2001, upon succeeding to the Presidency, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo resumed the formal talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the then Third International Conference on Peace talks held in Belgium. As the talks continued, I had the opportunity to meet with the personalities of the then NDFP negotiators.

Ateneans cross paths to peace (from left: Atty. Marie Yuvienco, Dean Candelaria, Prof. Jose Ma. Sison, Mr. Allan Jasmines, and Atty. Edre U. Olalia)
Cura Personalis, Ignatius’ standard of caring for others

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• Jesuit education insists on individual care and concern for each person, or cura personalis. 
• Jesuit education encourages a realistic knowledge, love, and acceptance of self, where students are challenged in order for them to realize their value. 
• Jesuit education is centered on faith that does justice, manifested by particular love for the poor.

Fr. Ismael Jose Chan-Gonzaga, S.J., APS Chaplain and recent ALS graduate, then shared his thoughts about cura personalis from the perspective of a student.

He suggested three values for law professors to consider in relating with their students: consistency, acceptance, and openness.

Mr. Rene San Andres, Associate Dean for Student Affairs of the Loyola Schools, talked about “Cura personalis: The whole school approach.” He discussed long-term or transformational change in the context of the Law School, and identified the following as key areas of consideration: mission and strategy; leadership; culture within the organization; structure and functions; systems, policies and mechanisms; climate; and individual needs and values.

In the following session, Atty. Patty Sison-Arroyo asked the group to reflect and thresh out in concrete terms and indicators the four values that the ideal Ateneo Law School graduate is expected to espouse: spiritually developed; academically competent and excellent; socially involved and culturally rooted; and a global citizen.

The full day of events was capped by a community celebration of the Eucharist and an Italian-themed dinner. Those who were not quite ready to retire for the night enjoyed cold beer as they were regaled with tales of Atty. Snoop’s Montero’s Blue Babble glory days (and one lifeless beloved pet eagle) and Dean Vannie Vallente’s dorm-life antics.

The following day, a special session on students at risk (those experiencing extreme anxiety, depression, and other emotional and mental health issues) was facilitated by Mr. San Andres.

He shared factors that may help identify potential self-harm cases, and how to administer psychological first aid. The workshop ended with a planning session on setting up a referral system for these types of cases in the law school.

The following resolutions were made at the end of the workshop:

• The term “class advisers” will be used instead of the term “academic advisers,” so that students will know that they can approach their class adviser for both academic and non-academic concerns, especially when the latter affects their well-being.
• The class advisers will undergo special training on psychological first aid in order to be more effective in advising students regarding their non-academic concerns.
• A draft referral protocol for cases involving students at risk (“StARs”) will be prepared and circulated among the group for review and comments.
• The suggestion to involve the advisers in processing milestones and critical events and in implementing activities for social involvement and cultural rootedness will be revisited. After Atty. Lat designs the program, the appropriate persons to implement the program will be determined.

It was a fruitful two-day workshop. What follows is the challenge to live out and share with other ALS professors the characteristics of Jesuit education that “pursues excellence, seeks to form men and women for others, and insists on individual care and concern for each person.”
Supreme Court Justice tells Ateneo’s new lawyers that integrity matters

By UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

JUSTICE Estela Perlas-Bernabe called on the Ateneo Law School’s (ALS) Class of 2016 to keep their integrity intact even when the title of Attorney has been affixed to their names.

“I therefore hope that while all of you try to make your way through the crossroads of change and seek the pathway of success, you will nonetheless keep intact the Atenean virtue of being a ‘man for others;’ that you realize the greater meaning in a life of self devotion; and that you find happiness in changing things for the better.”

Bernabe delivered the commencement address at ALS’ 70th graduation exercises on July 17, 2016 at the Meralco Theatre, Pasig City.

“As lawyers, you will be, first and foremost, protectors of the law. And so, of all people, you should be faithful to the law. Keep to heart that the legal profession will not only be your means of livelihood; it will be a vocation whose honor you will sworn to uphold. You will be identified with truth and justice. And so do not betray this image,” Bernabe said.

Bernabe, an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, earned her law degree from ALS in 1976, graduating as salutatorian. After passing the bar, she immediately joined the judiciary.

“Because my father wanted me to be a judge, he exerted his influence that led me to work in the Supreme Court under then court administrator Justice Lorenzo Relova. Aside from the low pay and meager working conditions, I wasn’t really enthusiastic about working for the government,” she said. Disheartened with her experience, Bernabe transferred to a prominent bank and worked her way up.

“I was stable and secure with my life. Until, one day I felt that I was not,” she said. It turned out that her father was right: she wanted to be a judge. In 1996, Bernabe was appointed Metropolitan Trial Court Judge of Makati. She admitted that taking on the job was a huge gamble.

“I took this risk because I believed that things needed to change first, for myself and later on, for the institution,” Bernabe said.

She recalled how, at the start of her appointment, she had a case load of 2,400. The heavy workload may be overwhelming to a fledgling judge but Bernabe did not waver. She persevered until she was able to reduce her case list.

“I was able to develop an expeditious work ethic not because of my supernatural skill or ability but because I fell in love with what I was doing. And when you love what you do, then everything does not only become easier on yourself; but also for the people around you,” she said.

ALS conferred Juris Doctor degrees on 181 graduates and Master of Law degrees on four graduates. The batch was led by Patricia P. Geraldez and Angelmhinia D. Lencio, who graduated as batch valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively. Professor Jacinto “Jack” D. Jimenez was honoured with the Dean’s Council Award Hall of Fame for Professors.

By OSCAR CARLO F. CAJUCOM

On June 13-15, 2016, the Ateneo Law School (ALS) hosted Filipino and Spanish delegates at the International Scientific Congress on Private Law of the Philippines and Spain. The Congress was organized by the ALS and Universidad de Malaga Facultad de Derecho (UM), the Legal Education Board, and the Philippine Association of Law Schools, with the cooperation of the Embassy of Spain in Manila.

Distinguished professors from UM, headed by Dean Juan Jose Hinojosa Torralvo and Prof. Jose Manuel de Torres Perea, arrived in Manila to participate in the Congress and were welcomed on the first day by participants from Manila, headed by Ateneo President Fr. Jose Ramon T. Villarin, S.J. No less than Supreme Court Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes P.A. Sereno gave the keynote address. To lighten the mood, Court of Appeals Justice Magdangal M. De Leon rendered a charming performance with guitarist Rafael Ronquillo, followed by a passionate number from the ALS Choir. The Framework Agreement for the Development of Doctoral Theses in Joint Supervision Between the ALS and UM was signed the same day. In the evening, participants at the Congress were hosted by H.E. Luis Antonio Calvo Castaño at the Spanish Ambassador’s Residence.

The Congress saw leading experts present papers on a wide variety of private law topics, from civil law, property law, and discrimination in the private sphere and in family laws, to money laundering, competition law and policy, and maritime law. In between the presentations, the floor was opened to questions from the participants, resulting in an informative and lively, sometimes entertaining, discussion.

The delegates from the UM gave authoritative and instructive discussions on Spanish law. Prof. Angel Rodriguez Vergara succinctly discussed the Effect of the Spanish Constitution on Spanish Private Law while Prof. Gonzalo Martinez Etxeberria introduced the participants to interesting concepts by lecturing on the Constitutional Integration of Forality in Spain. Prof. Perea gave a keen presentation on Discrimination in the Private Sphere, taking it from a comparative approach. He was followed by Prof. Yolanda de Lucchi Lopez-Tapia, who passionately discussed the Right to Effective Judicial Protection of Persons with Disabilities. Dr. Eugenio Olmedo Peralta then presented his paper on the Regulation of Competition and Innovation in the European Union and Spain, with particular focus on opportunities for the Philippines and Asean. Meanwhile, Prof. Leticia Fontestad Portales discussed the Procedural Aspects of Spanish Maritime Law. For her part, Prof. Teresa Rodriguez de las Herras Ballell focused on Concepts, Conflicts and Rules in the Right of Accession, Ownership of Property and Security Interests, with some discussion on and comparison with Philippine law. In the session, Prof. Antonio Quesada Sanchez ended the sessions on a lighter note with a Legal Analysis of the Literary Work of Vargas Llosa from a Civil Law Perspective. In all, participants and presenters alike learned a lot from each other about Spanish and Philippine law, culture, history, and even literature.

Among the presenters and participants were respected Supreme Court and Court of Appeals justices, law school deans, professors, and highly regarded experts and practitioners from both the Philippines and Spain. The exercise at times became an enlightening comparative discussion of the two countries’ private laws, which was quite enriching considering the close legal and historical association between the Philippines and Spain.

To end the Congress, LEB Chairperson Emerson B. Aquende gave the closing remarks, thanking all the participants especially the visitors from Spain. The night was capped with a hearty dinner and an excellent cultural performance from the University of Manila’s Sinaglahi Dance Troupe.

The papers presented at the Congress and the entire proceedings will be published in a special issue of the Philippine Journal of Legal Education, the law journal of the Philippine Association of Law Schools.

Delegates from the University of Malaga pose for a picture with participants from the Philippine Association of Law Schools, the Legal Education Board, the Philippine Judicial Academy, and the Supreme Court.
TRUE TO its constant effort to deliver quality legal assistance and other relevant services to as many indigent clients, the Ateneo Legal Services Center (ALSC) has recently entered into partnerships with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC), and Icomteq Solutions, Inc.

On May 24, 2016, a simple Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signing ceremony was held between ALSC and POEA at the Ateneo Law School Faculty Conference Room. The POEA was represented by its Administrator, Hans Leo J. Cacdac, distinguished alumnus of the Ateneo Law School (ALS), while the ALSC was represented by its Director, Axel Rupert M. Cruz. ALS Dean Sedfrey M. Candelaria, POEA’s Deputy Administrator Jesus Gabriel Domingo, Atty. Celso J. Hernandez, Jr., Ms. Moira Lintongan Idiesca, and ALSC Resident Attorneys Takahiro Kenjie Aman and Maria Patricia Cervantes-Poco witnessed the event.

The agreement covers a case referral process between the POEA and the ALSC; capacity enhancement seminars on illegal recruitment and trafficking; and potential internship opportunities with the POEA for ALS students. The first joint activity under this agreement will be a capability enhancement training on the Anti-Illegal Recruitment Campaign for ALSC lawyers, students, and volunteers on September 3 and 10, 2016.

On July 19, 2016, ALS alumnus and HKIAC counsel Jay Patrick Santiago delivered copies of the MOA signed by HKIAC Secretary-General Ms. Chiann Bao. The agreement covers coordination of conferences; exchange of expertise, publications and standard information; and cooperation in research and development programs and training.

The ALSC also entered into an agreement with Icomteq Solutions, Inc., for the free use by ALSC of JurisLib, a comprehensive online library of court decisions and other legal references. Discussions between Icomteq’s Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Jose M. Enriquez and ALSC Director Atty. Cruz included the possibility of jointly developing an online case management system for ALSC. The MOA signing was held on August 3, 2016 at the ALSC office.

Of all the partnerships ALSC has entered into, what remains to be most valuable are those with lawyers, mostly ALS alumni, who have volunteered to supervise, train, and mentor ALSC student associates. On August 2, 2016, ALSC gathered its volunteer supervising lawyers for a general assembly to level off on expectations and evaluate the current ALSC operating procedures. At the end of the meeting, the group agreed that supervising lawyers should play a more active role in forming and mentoring the students to best prepare them for the rigors of the legal profession.

ALSC strengthens mandate through partnerships

By MARIA PATRICIA R. CERVANTES-POCO
How the West (Philippine Sea) was won
By I N A T I U S M I C H A E L D. I N G L E S

Professor Florin Hilbay (third from the left) and Associate Justice Francis Jardeleza (second from right) pose with some ALS faculty members after the forum

LAW STUDENTS were given a great treat on August 25, 2016, as Supreme Court Associate Justice Francis H. Jardeleza and former Solicitor General Florin T. Hilbay braved the rain and the traffic to speak during the Forum on West Philippine Sea Dispute.

Law students came in droves, and were even joined by representatives from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the Philippines. All came to hear war stories from Justice Jardeleza and Professor Hilbay, both having served as lead counsel of the Philippine legal team that argued before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague. The Solicitor General is mandated by law to represent the Republic of the Philippines in international litigation. When then Solicitor General Jardeleza was appointed as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Professor Hilbay took over as lead counsel, while Justice Jardeleza was requested to stay on as adviser to the legal team.

In his lecture entitled “How The Sea Was Won: The West Philippine Sea Arbitration,” Justice Jardeleza gave the students a thorough background of the case. He began by explaining basic concepts under the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), such as maritime features and how these concepts were used during the case. He also shared a plethora of maps, which were warmly received by the students. Signs of — first, astonishment; then, understanding — filled the auditorium as the map with China’s notorious Nine-Dash Line was presented.

ALS faculty join Ignatian Spirituality in Education Workshop for Administrators

On July 28-30, 2016, professors Nina Patricia Sison-Arroyo (Assistant to the Dean for Administration), Maita Chan-Gonzaga and Jose Maria G. Hofileña (full-time ALS faculty), Ray Paolo J. Santiago (Director of the Ateneo Human Rights Center), Ryan Jeremiah D. Quan (Program Coordinator of the Graduate Legal Studies Institute), and Axel Rupert M. Cruz, Maria Patricia Cervantes-Poco and Takahiro Kenjje C. Aman (Director and Resident Supervising Attorneys of the Ateneo Legal Services Center) participated in the three-day Ignatian Spirituality in Education Workshop (ISEW), held at the Sacred Heart Novitiate, Novaliches, Quezon City. Fourteen participants from other units of the Ateneo de Manila University joined them.

On the first day of the workshop, Fr. Ismael Chan-Gonzaga, S.J. and Fr. Eric Anthony Escandor, S.J. introduced the participants to the life and spirituality of the founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius of Loyola. The following day, Fr. Ramon Ma. L. Bautista, S.J. presented the Ignatian Way of Proceeding, a prerequisite step for the participants to reflect on how they could be of better service to their respective units and to society, in true magis fashion. In order to concretize the session, Fr. Jose Ramon T. Villarin, S.J., President of the Ateneo de Manila University, and Fr. Antonio F. Moreno, S.J., Provincial Superior, elaborated on the mission, vision, and identity of Ateneo de Manila University and the Society of Jesus in their respective sessions.

Prof. Hilbay explained how he first got involved in the case — he was initially apprehensive because of his workload — and how he waited in Justice Jardeleza’s chambers on the day the decision was to be handed down. He also shared how “civil” it was to argue before the PCA, as compared to doing oral arguments before the Supreme Court, where justices seem to make it a point to go for lawyers’ heads. This elicited much laughter from the students.

The open forum that followed was lively and engaging. Students focused mostly on the enforceability of the award and what the Philippines can and should do moving forward. The two lecturers agreed that the game was now in the hands of the diplomats. At the end of the forum, students lined up for the inevitable selfies with the lecturers, who were kind enough to indulge.

After two nights of reflection and fellowship, the workshop culminated with the participants’ creative presentation of their answer to Ateneo’s call to be more, for the students, for the institution, and for the country.

Ateneo has been offering the ISEW to its teaching and non-teaching employees for years now. This year, for the first time, a special workshop was designed and facilitated solely for school administrators and faculty with administrative responsibilities, recognizing the unique role that they play.
ALS revamps Introduction to Law

By MA. LUISA ISABEL L. ROSALES

Every year, a new batch of students prepare for their first brush with the law. In Ateneo, this means starting a week before anyone else to participate in what can only be characterized as a trial by fire, but is fondly known as Introduction to Law (ITL). Over the past decades, ITL has gone through various forms from an elaborate discussion of Roman Law to glimpses of advances in various legal fields. ITL has employed both scare and care tactics, depending on the professor, to “weed out the weak.”

Ateneo Law first year students, color-coded by block, line up to receive their case packets

This year, however, ITL was enhanced to equip the students with basic skills of case analysis and to expose them to basic legal concepts.

On July 30, 2016, the students underwent a Legal Research, Writing, and Analysis Workshop focusing on case analysis and case briefing. Dean Sedfrey M. Candelaria put together a corps of lawyers consisting of Ateneo Law’s alumni and faculty from various batches to mentor the first year students.

The students were assigned various cases and wrote briefs in the morning. Thirty-nine mentors reviewed these briefs and provided specific feedback in the afternoon. Prominent government officials, partners and associates of law firms, and in-house counsel devoted half their day to speak to their small groups about their briefs, but also went so far as to provide advice about law school and legal practice in general.

It was an opportunity to set the bar high for the first year students and prime them to hit the ground running once regular classes commenced.

When Monday rolled around, the students were expected to tackle the cases and laws assigned to give them a broad understanding of the sources of Philippine law and the overall structure of the Philippine legal system. Justice Maria Filomena D. Singh, Dean Candelaria, and the author employed the Socratic Method to assess the students’ understanding of the hierarchy of courts, powers of the branches of government, and certain essential legal concepts.

Before the week ended, the students were given the opportunity to weigh what they had learned about the law and themselves to determine if the rigor of law school was a reasonable choice for them. Atty. Tanya Lat, Program Officer for Formation, and the Campus Ministry Office, through Fr. J.J. Chan-Gonzaga and Michelle Marquez, conducted a recollection, guiding the students through their decision to go down an undeniably difficult path.

The students who emerged on the other side had to face an exam after their recollection to determine whether they could go through the rest of law school without looking back, or if they’d have to go through it all again next year.

The students who receive news that they didn’t make the cut should look at the silver lining – next year they get an opportunity to show off to a new batch the skills rigor brings.

Ateneo community calls for respect for life, due process

By VERONICA MAE C. YAN

In light of the rapidly increasing number of summary killings since the beginning of the Duterte Administration’s war against crime and drugs, the Ateneo community calls for the respect and reverence for life, due process and human rights in the efforts toward real and sustainable social change.

On July 29, 2016, Fr. Jose Ramon Villarin, S.J. issued a statement expressing his objection to arbitrary killings in the aftermath of the sudden death of Emmanuel Jose Pavia, an alumnus and faculty member of the Ateneo de Manila University. Fr. Villarin acknowledged the frustrations of the people on the effects of drug-related violence on the lives of the users, their families, and communities. Despite these frustrations, Fr. Villarin urges the Ateneo community to “promote reverence for life, respect for human rights, and restorative justice; espouse best practices in crime prevention and control; enforcement of equality before the law; due process and mandated judicial processes in instances of criminal arrests; lobby against the potential reinstatement of capital punishment and the lowering of the age of criminal liability; develop and protect transparent modes of truth telling in mass and social media as well as in pronouncements of government and civil society; and, address the root causes of violence, including all forms of addiction and bigotry, and help develop effective campaigns and programs.”

The Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC) echoes this sentiment with a statement against summary killings. In its statement, AHRC recognizes the value of fighting crime and drug addiction and its effects on the community. Recent events have shown that the administration’s war against drugs disregards a person’s inherent right to life and right to security. The AHRC statement calls for the observance of due process in all cases. While the government has the duty to protect and serve the people, the manner by which the government is currently fighting its war has cultivated fear among the very people it seeks to protect, as the right to due process is disregarded under the guise of promoting public safety.
Ateneo reminds alums in government: go to peripheries, find friends

By MARIA PATRICIA R. CERVANTES-POCO
In his homily, Fr. Nebres offered the theme of “Going to the Peripheries and Finding Friends,” inspired by the key message of Pope Francis to members of the Society of Jesus when he visited Manila in January 2015. Fr. Nebres reminded the faithful that even Ignatius of Loyola found companions in his spiritual journey.

“In the legal profession, you have this saying that ‘those who have less in life should have more in law,’ but before we can help the poor, we have to know them first,” Fr. Nebres explained in his homily. “What can we do so that the poor are actually our friends?” He then used the example of Pope Francis, who as Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, used to ride out to the slums, greeting and getting to know the people living there, and eventually maintaining those friendships even as he became pope.

Fr. Nebres then shared his own “going to the peripheries, making and finding friends” story, when in April 2016, the Ateneo community was moved to help civilians living in evacuation centers following the Mamasapano clash between members of the Special Action Force and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and Moro Islamic Liberation Front. He showed through pictures how he and other faculty members of the Loyola Schools spent time in the evacuation centers, running the feeding and football outreach programs organized by Ateneo.

Fr. Nebres ended his homily with a blessing and an exhortation for all ALS alumni serving in the three branches of government to “respond to the call of Jesus, where he has anointed us to be in good tidings with the poor.”

A simple dinner and recognition ceremony organized by the Ateneo Law Alumni Association followed at the fourth floor lobby.
ALS units convene to respond to pressing human rights and rule of law issues

By Gilbert V. Sembrano

On July 26, 2016, the Ateneo Law School (ALS) convened its units and student organizations to develop a concerted and strategic response to the pressing rule of law and human rights issues plaguing our country today. The strategic planning workshop provided an opportunity to level-off on the different units’ understanding and assessment of the issues, conduct a stocktaking of current initiatives within the ALS, and collaborate on concrete responses to the issues.

In his opening remarks, Dean Sedfrey M. Candelaria reminded the participants to consider in the planning workshop the issue of creative engagement and critical collaboration with the present national administration.

The formal program began with a briefing on three pressing issues, namely, extrajudicial killings (EJK) and the war on drugs; the re-imposition of the death penalty; and the lowering of the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR).

Atty. Axel Cruz of the Ateneo Legal Services Center (ALSC) provided the context of the war against drugs and the implications of characterizing it as a national security issue. He also presented the international and domestic legal framework of EJK and vigilante killings.

Atty. Jaymie Reyes of the Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC) presented the history of the abolition of the death penalty in the Philippines, including the country’s obligations under Optional Protocol II of the International Covenant on Civil and Political. She also provided an overview of House Bill No. 1 that seeks to restore the death penalty.

Atty. Patty Sison-Arroyo gave an overview of House Bill No. 2, which seeks to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 15 to 9 years old. She then discussed how the proposal is violative of substantive due process, and how in the end, it will not reduce criminality.

In addition, the burial of former President Ferdinand Marcos at the Libingan ng mga Bayani and the State of the Nation Address of President Rodrigo Duterte and its implications for the pressing rule of law and human rights were two other issues identified during the open discussions that followed the presentations.

During the strategic planning proper, the overwhelming and immediate need identified were raising awareness in the law school community, and engaging with the bigger Ateneo de Manila community.

In the end, the participants agreed to pursue the following activities:

1. Awareness raising forum, to be coordinated by the Law Student Council and the AHRC;
2. Activation of quick response or reaction teams, to be facilitated by the ALSC;
3. Issuance of statements and infographics, to be coordinated by the Palladium;
4. Reaching out to the alumni, to be initiated by the Bernas Center Volunteers, in cooperation with the Ateneo Law Alumni Association;
5. Engagement with Loyola Schools, to be led by Atty. Patty Sison-Arroyo; and,
6. Engagement with law makers and security sector, to be facilitated by the AHRC.

The protocols on how to proceed with some of these activities were also threshed out at the end of the workshop. It is hoped that the foregoing plans will provide the ALS with a concerted, strategic, and swift response to the pressing issues affecting the rule of law and human rights.

#HustisyaNatin: Round Table Discussion on Judicial Monitoring held at APS

By Cornelio Alfonso III

On June 13, 2016, the Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC) facilitated a roundtable discussion for the project, “Hustisya Natin: Empowered Civil Society Participation in Monitoring Judicial and Quasi-Judicial Bodies Towards Enhanced Integrity of the Justice System” at the Blue Room, Ateneo Professional Schools Building.

The Hustisya Natin project aims to enhance the integrity of the Philippine justice system by creating a monitoring system that would allow stakeholders to check accountability, transparency, and performance of the courts and quasi-judicial bodies. The integrated system will involve the participation of the citizens through civil society organizations (CSOs) to ensure the proper conduct of justice administrators, observance of legal and ethical rules, and appropriate management and use of funds.

As an initial step in developing the monitoring mechanism, the roundtable discussion was organized with key justice institutions and other stakeholders involved in monitoring the justice system. Representatives from the Public Attorney’s Office, Philippine Judicial Academy, Regional Trial Court, Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Supreme Court, The Asia Foundation, ABA Rule of Law Initiative, Governance and Justice (GOJUST), Philippine Alliance of Human Rights (PAHRA), and Alternative Law Groups (ALG) shared best practices and challenges from previous and existing monitoring efforts. From the data gathered from this activity, AHRC will draft a monitoring toolkit and present it to local communities.

The project is supported by the European Union and implemented in partnership with ALG, PAHRA, Journalism for Nation Building Foundation (JNBF), Lawyers’ League for Liberty (LIBERTAS), and Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN).
AHRC Summer Internship 2016 – Reaching out to the peripheries

BY ANNE MAUREEN B. MANIGBAS

The Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC) welcomed 15 new student interns to its annual Summer Internship Program (SIP), which ran from June 14 to August 4, 2016. As AHRC’s flagship program, the internship program seeks to form the law students by instilling tenets of Jesuit education and acquainting them with alternative law practice. It aims to develop human rights advocates who can facilitate the marginalized and vulnerable groups’ access to justice.

The SIP 2016 kicked off with a four-day Basic Orientation Seminar in Tagaytay City, where the interns were given a crash course on human rights laws and issues. Speakers from various legal non-government organizations discussed issues concerning women, children, refugees, environment, peasant farmers, detention prisoners, victims of human trafficking, migrant workers, and indigenous peoples.

The interns and facilitators then took a ferry and travelled to San Mariano, Oriental Mindoro to live among the different Mangyan communities. This week-long immersion exposed the students to living in poverty, giving them an opportunity to reflect on the unique issues that affect indigenous peoples.

After their immersion, the students were assigned to different alternative law groups for their five-week internship. Interns were assigned to Manila-based NGOs, including Humanitarian Legal Assistance Foundation, Kaisahan, Tanggol Kalikasan, Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center, Kanlungan Foundation, International Justice Mission, Alternative Law Groups, and AHRC. Other students were sent to Environmental Legal Assistance Center in Palawan and Balaod Mindanaw in Cagayan de Oro.

Some of the students’ notable internship experiences were attending hearings on the Marcopper Mining Disaster case in Marinduque, handling labor cases of overseas Filipino workers at the NLRC, visiting e-courts in Angeles, assisting in drafting local ordinances, and conducting paralegal trainings for communities.

To culminate the program, the students underwent a processing and evaluation in Batangas. The internship program enabled the students to see and feel how the law affects the lives of vulnerable sectors through an advocate’s lens. One of the interns reflected that the program helped him understand himself better and know what kind of lawyer he wants to be in the future – a lawyer with passion for justice for all.
Proud of our own: Getting to know our 2015 topnotchers

By OSCAR CARLO F. CAJUCOM

Atty. Reginald M. Arceo
4th Place

In law school, Atty. Arceo was a scholar of the Bobby Gana Scholarship Foundation from 2013-2015 and the ALS Scholarship Foundation in 2012-2013. He ranked 6th in the ALS Class of 2015. It was his dream to top the Bar exams since he was in his first year in law school. He said that with prayers, hard work, and the help of many good people along the way, he realized that achieving a dream of such magnitude was possible.

Atty. Arceo said that the ALS taught him the habit of striving for the best in all his endeavors. He counted on the discipline and self-control that he honed when he was in law school. He believes that preparation for the Bar exams starts on the first day of law school, so he read assigned cases in the original and made personal outlines of some laws. He also said that the law school instilled in him values beyond the mastery of law.

His advice to those taking this year’s exams: relax, enjoy the process, and trust in your Ateneo law education. He added that examinees should not forget to prepare physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Atty. Arceo is presently in the process of establishing a law firm with his partners, some of whom were his law school blockmates. He also looks forward to handling pro bono cases aligned with his personal advocacies, which he said is one of the reasons why he chose to put up his own law office this early in his career.

Atty. Mandy Therese M. Anderson
5th Place

Atty. Anderson graduated 5th in the ALS Class of 2015. She was watching the television series Game of Thrones when she found out that she placed in the Bar exams. Feeling surreal, her initial reaction was to stare at the list while sitting down and taking deep breaths.

She said her stay in the law school immensely helped her prepare for the exams. She learned time management and organization skills in law school and felt she was able to build a strong foundation on the basics. When asked how she prepared for the exams, she gave two words: consistency and endurance.

Atty. Anderson is now professor of Legal Accounting in ALS and serves as Chief of Staff of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Customs, where she gives legal advice on a wide array of matters touching on constitutional law, administrative law, taxation, and criminal law, among others. In terms of career, she said she is just trying to learn as much as she can but has not really thought of where she would be working in the future. When she was a student, however, her options were to engage in private practice and start her own business, or be a justice of the Court of Tax Appeals.

Atty. Jericho R. Tiu
8th Place

Atty. Tiu graduated with Second Honors in 2015. When he learned the news that he placed in the Bar exams, he was trying to sleep nursing a nasty hangover from the night before.

He said the daily grind in law school undoubtedly helped him prepare for the Bar exams. He added that during the review, he reviewed concepts and doctrines he was already familiar with, save for recent cases and certain subjects he did not devote as much time to in law school.

He tried as much as possible to give effort each time he reviewed, which took eight to ten hours of his day. He ran every morning before starting review and always took weekend breaks. His simple piece of advice to those taking this year’s exams: “Don’t let fear or panic get ahead of you.”

Atty. Tiu is an associate at SyCip Salazar Hernandez & Gatmaitan, where he is currently on rotation in the firm’s practice areas. He sees himself as a litigator in the near future who will eventually go into corporate practice.
Leadership by Example: A look at the awardees of ALS Class 2016

By MA. JILLIAN C. GANDINGCO

Down from the hill and to the world, Ateneo students’ holistic formation molds them to become men and women for and with others. On July 17, 2016, we witnessed more of them soar high as they gained recognition for their academic achievements and stellar performances as student-leaders.

On graduation day, the following awards are given to members of the graduating batch who emulate the quintessential Atenean lawyer: the St. Tomas More Award, the Evelio Javier Leadership Award, and the Bobby Gana Service Award. Let us get to know this year’s exemplars.

The St. Thomas More Award is presented to the student who best exemplifies the Ateneo lawyer. He or she is not only skilled and well-versed in the law but can also take a lead role in the administration of justice and promotion of good order in society. This year’s awardee was none other than Harvey Bilang. Consistently balancing his academic life with extra-curricular activities, Harvey is definitely a well-rounded law student. His love for God and passion for law ignited in him a spirit of volunteerism. This spirit flourished during his time as an intern at the Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC), where he engaged and assisted members of poor communities. He joined other organizations such as the Ateneo Law School Choir, the St. Thomas More Debate and Advocacy Society, and the KAPWA Charity Organization. He represented the law school in two short-term exchange programs in Malaysia and Japan, respectively. He was also the founding member of the Philippine Medical and Law Students Association aside from being a proud member of the Association of Law Students of the Philippines. Undoubtedly, Harvey’s leadership inspires a new generation of law students to proceed with passion and blaze a trail.

The Evelio Javier Leadership Award is given to the student who has consistently pursued, in an exemplary way, the ideals of genuine leadership, concern for fellow students, and selfless service to the law school and the community. Two students received the honor this year: Phil Recentes and Cyndy Dela Cruz.

Cyndy served as an emphatic student leader as President of the ALS Student Council.

Cyndy complements Phil perfectly as co-awardee. She led the student body as President, Internals Vice President, and 2nd Year Batch Representative during her stint with the Student Council. Under her leadership, the Ateneo National Elections Task Force (2015-2016) became the law school’s first election-related endeavor. This project exposed the law students to the grassroots in preparation for the 2016 National Elections. An emphatic leader, she also implemented the Ateneo Law Batch Charity Programs. Aside from her work with the Student Council, she was an active member of the Ateneo Central Bar Operations Hotel Committee and a delegate for a short-term exchange program in Japan.

Finally, the Bobby Gana Service Award is bestowed on the student whose devotion to service, as counselor and friend, and to the underprivileged members of society, is unparalleled. This year’s recipient was Pau Vasquez, whose commitment to service is exceptional, with human rights at the helm of her advocacy. Pau is a consistent member of the AHRC’s Council of Interns, serving as the President in her final year. She was also Desk Head for the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. Her firm commitment to justice and the upliftment of the underprivileged members of society were also manifested in her work for the LENTE as well as the Elections Task Force. She was also a very active member of the Ateneo Central Bar Operations Logistics Committee. During her stay in the law school, Pau definitely put the “passion” in “compassion.”

Law school is challenging enough, but these four awardees made it seem effortless. They are a true testament to leadership by example, which is everything an Atenean should aspire to be and more. We wish them more success in the future and thank them for serving the law school community and beyond very well.
Dreams of Harbour City: ALS faculty and staff visit Sydney

By DAN KEVIN C. MANDOCDOC

A CHILLY early Thursday morning greeted members of the Ateneo Law School (ALS) faculty and staff as we started our four-day journey in Australia’s Harbour City. Though forewarned that this year’s Faculty Development Seminar will fall on Sydney’s winter season, some of us still shivered as we exited Kingsford Smith Airport. But the cold weather did not stop us from enjoying Ateneo Law School’s first Faculty Development Seminar in the Land Down Under.

A pleasant walk along Bondi Beach. (Photo credit: PATRICIA CERVANTES-POCO)

Bonding at Bondi Beach

As if our tropical skins did not feel the sudden drop in temperature, everyone excitedly anticipated our visit to Bondi Beach. And it did not disappoint. A well-maintained beach, around a kilometer in length, with the cool Pacific Ocean breeze and fine creamy sand, Bondi Beach was the perfect welcome to anyone coming from an eight-hour overnight flight.

With a name that is the Aboriginal word for the sound of water breaking over rocks, Bondi Beach is regarded as one of Australia’s most popular beaches. But after enjoying Dean Lily K. Gruba’s hearty breakfast treat, the group became so energetic that the noise of the crashing Australian seawater was muffled by Pinoy laughter and giggles.

Exploring the University of Sydney

Upon entering the University of Sydney main quadrangle, some of us were reminded of the castle grounds of Hogwarts. The Main Quadrangle’s well-kept grass and the 89-year old jacaranda tree were interesting sights. To our pleasant surprise, two faculty members of Australia’s first university gave us a tour of the campus grounds, giving us access to the majestic Great Hall and leading us to the interesting Macleay Museum where we took a good look at different insect specimens. After the university tour, several faculty members and school administrators of the University of Sydney joined our group for afternoon tea.

Not so Blue at the Blue Mountains

The following day, our group went up to Katoomba to explore the Blue Mountains. According to our tourist bus drivers, the Blue Mountains were so named because of the seemingly blue color that its Eucalyptus trees collectively make when viewed from a distance. We immediately noticed this upon arrival at Echo Point, a lookout on the edge of a plateau with a clear view of Katoomba’s iconic rock formation, the Three Sisters. True to national identity, our group enjoyed the panoramic vista by doing one thing that Filipinos are known for — taking selfies and group pictures!

Our Blue Mountains adventure did not end there. Immediately after lunch, our group went to Katoomba Scenic World. Shrieks and laughter filled the air as the group, in rows of four, plummeted down a 52-degree incline onboard Scenic Railway, a red tram on rail tracks previously used to transport miners. Upon alighting the steepest passenger railway in the world, we were greeted by the luscious rainforest. The shade under enormous trees and the delightful bird chirps made the twenty-minute walk conducive for sharing of light stories and anecdotes.

At the end of the canopy walk, the group came upon the majestic Scenic Cableway gliding down from the mountaintop. This was our ride back. As the cable car regally ascended to the mountains, everyone was mesmerized by the vastness of the rainforest in front of us. We continued enjoying this view on board Scenic Skyway, another cable car that crosses two cliff tops. The two cable cars were distinct from each other in the experience they offered.

While Scenic Cableway was a soothing ascend onboard a glass-enclosed cable car, Scenic Skyway danced with the mountain breeze playfully blowing on an open-air gondola. That said, Scenic Skyway has a portion of the gondola made of glass — the center floor! As the acrophobic panicked, some took advantage of the unique bird’s eye view of the waterfalls, the ravines, and the rock formations through the glass floor. Everyone agreed, however, that Scenic Skyway, together with Scenic Railway and Scenic Cableway, gave us a memorable fun-filled group experience.

Exploring an Australian Animal Park

The following morning, we went to Koala Park Sanctuary, an 89-year old animal park in the suburbs of Pennant Hills. All of us had fun taking selfies and group pictures! (continued on page 16)
Reunited on all fronts

By SEDFREY M. CANDELARIA

from page 1

the Philippines (NDFP) under facilitation of the Royal Norwegian Government. The talks had continued under the patient watch of the Third Party Facilitator.

The resumption of formal talks this time under the Duterte administration is distinctly remarkable on account of the unprecedented number of releases on bail of detained NDFP consultants in the peace negotiations and the respective indefinite unilateral ceasefire orders of both parties with the aim of agreeing to a single unified bilateral document within 60 days from 25 August 2016. To my recollection, both have been sticking issues in the peace process.

Having been marginally involved in the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and National Democratic Front of the Philippines (GRP-NDFP) talks for the last six years, it took a little while for me to get back into the rhythm of the process. But as soon as I began to shake hands and exchange pleasantries with friends from the NDFP and after being introduced to some of the released consultants who flew with us from Manila, a sigh of renewed energy began to creep into my system. When we met the Utrecht-based group of Prof. Jose Ma. Sison (Joma) at Schiphol Airport, the cordiality became more pronounced. I remember having sat beside him during lunchtime in Brussels together with Fr. Joaquin Bernas, S.J. and one of NDFP’s legal consultants, Atty. Arnedo Valera, who was my childhood neighbor and classmate at Ateneo Law School. Joma casually commented, “O, kayo nang mga Atenista ang mag usap-usap,” (referring to the peace talks).

Two other young Ateneo law graduates came on board the peace negotiations early on in their career. Attys. Edre U. Olalia and Marie Yuvienco were ably mentored by human rights lawyer Atty. Romeo Capulong, who served as NDFP Chief Legal Consultant. Later on I met Mr. Danilo Borjal, who was a former Jesuit scholastic but went underground during Martial Law years. We had time and again recalled common friends in the Society, like former APS Chaplain Fr. Lito Mangulabnan, S.J.

As early as the negotiations in Brussels, Ateneans, namely, Secretary Silvestre H. Bello, III, and Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) Secretary Jesus G. Dureza, had been engaged by Amb. Howard Q. Dee as Government panel member and panel spokesperson, respectively. Both have consistently played major roles in the peace process to this date.

More recently, one of the released NDFP consultants, Allan Jasmines, happened to share with me that he belonged to the batch of former Ateneo Alumni Relations Director Junjun Capistrano. We gladly stayed together during the city tour of Oslo and exchanged stories about the history of Ateneo. I was deeply touched by the support given him by his Ateneo batchmates. Upon learning that he was going to be released and participate in the resumption of the formal talks in Oslo last August, his batchmates began to send him some warm clothes, rubber shoes, and an Ateneo jacket. Recently, they had a reunion in his honor.

Aside from Sec. Dureza, Ateneo de Davao lawyers are part of the existing Government panel, namely, Attys. Angela L. Trinidad and Antonio B. Arellano. Atty. Vincent Paul L. Montejo, on the other hand, handles matters...
Meet the New Faculty

By BLYTHE M. LUMAGUE

Atty. Felicisimo F. Agas III

Atty. Junsi Agas is a Junior Associate at Quisumbing Torres, with practice focusing on banking and finance, commercial law, dispute resolution, employment, intellectual property, and taxation.

He graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University in 2010 with a degree in B.S. Management Engineering, with Honors. In 2015, he graduated Salutatorian from the Ateneo Law School with a Juris Doctor degree.

Atty. Agas was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 2016. He currently teaches Legal Research, joining the faculty in the first semester of S.Y. 2016-17.

Atty. Mandy Therese M. Anderson

Atty. Mandy Anderson is Chief of Staff of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Customs. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Accountancy in 2009 from the University of San Carlos, graduating magna cum laude. She graduated with Second Honors from the Ateneo Law School in 2015 with a Juris Doctor degree.

She was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 2016, placing 5th in the Bar examinations the previous year. She joined the faculty in the first semester of S.Y. 2016-17, teaching Legal Accounting.

Atty. Noelle Jenina Francesca E. Buan

Atty. Noelle Buan is an Associate at the Angara Abello Concepcion Regala & Cruz Law Offices. She obtained her Bachelor of Science Degree in Management, Major in Legal Management (Honorable Mention), from the Ateneo de Manila University in 2011. In 2015, she graduated with Second Honors with a Juris Doctor degree from the Ateneo Law School, where she also served as Member of the Executive Committee of the Ateneo Law Journal.

She was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 2016. She joined the faculty in the first semester of S.Y. 2016-17, handling Legal Research.

Judge John Boomsri Sy Rodolfo

Judge Boom Rodolfo is an incumbent Metropolitan Trial Court (MeTC) Judge, appointed to the sala of Branch 38, Quezon City on May 21, 2015. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he was an associate and senior associate at the SyCip Salazar Hernandez Gatmaitan Law Office and Romulo Mabanta Buenaventura Sayoc & de los Angeles Law Office, respectively.

Judge Rodolfo graduated with honors from the Ateneo de Manila University in 2005 and was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 2006. He joined the ALS Faculty in the first semester of SY 2016-17, teaching Criminal Law 1.

Atty. Patricia Anne D. Sta. Maria

Atty. Patty Sta. Maria is an Associate Solicitor at the Office of the Solicitor General. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science in 2011, graduating cum laude. In 2015, she graduated Class Valedictorian with a Juris Doctor degree from the Ateneo Law School, where she also served as a Member of the Executive Committee of the Ateneo Law Journal.

She was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 2016. She joined the faculty in the first semester of S.Y. 2016-17, handling Legal Research.

Volume 5, No. 1 • August 2016
ALS faculty and staff visit Sydney

feeding the kangaroos, having our pictures taken with the koalas, and watching a sheep shearing show. Our animal park visit ended with a barbeque lunch in Koala Park Sanctuary’s cafeteria. Meats served were of course limited to beef, pork, chicken, and fish. The filling lunch was complemented by the white and red wine given by our bus drivers as tokens of appreciation and the homemade vanilla ice cream from the owner of Koala Park Sanctuary.

Onboard the Scenic Railway

( Photo credit: PATRICIA CERVANTES-POCO )

Happy birthday to our faculty and staff!

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Visiting Sydney’s Landmarks

Our visit to the Harbour City aptly ended with our visit to its famous landmarks. The afternoon sun, the croon of sea gulls, the smell of seawater, and the cool winter breeze all made our visit to the Sydney Opera House a memory too vivid not to be remembered. This location also allowed us to view Harbour Bridge in its grandeur. Seeing how massive Harbour Bridge is, we realized why it took a thousand and four hundred men eight years to finish its construction. We were told that Harbour Bridge, for a fee, can be climbed up to its pinnacle. None of us had enough courage (and knee strength) to rise to the challenge.

While not one of us was able to climb the bridge at its 134-meter above sea-level height, every single one of us enjoyed the aerial view of the Harbour City from the Sydney Tower. Standing at 308 meters above the ground level, the Sydney Tower allowed us to take a good 360-degree look of Sydney while enjoying the sumptuous buffet dinner at its revolving restaurant. Seeing the Sydney skyline from one of its iconic structures while sharing stories with each other was the perfect culmination of our four-day trip.