

rotunda

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Embracing the Lasallian mission



What's inside:

BALAG: Empowering
Communities

Transforming Lives
through Compassion:
The Story of Bahay
Pag-asa

DLSU-D's Night
College: A
Commitment to Hope

Discovering, Living,
Sharing the Gift of
Teaching

Transforming Lives
through Education:
The DLSU-D Balik Aral
Program

HANGO (UPLIFT):
CBAA Community
Extension Program

Table of contents

- 2 Embracing the Lasallian mission
- 4 BALAG: Empowering Communities
- 6 Transforming Lives through Compassion: The Story of Bahay Pag-asa
- 8 DLSU-D's Night College: A Commitment to Hope
- 9 Discovering, Living, Sharing the Gift of Teaching
- 10 Transforming Lives through Education: The DLSU-D Balik Aral Program
- 11 HANGO (UPLIFT): CBAA Community Extension Program

Embracing the Lasallian mission

"Shaken but not stirred."

I think this is how I describe my journey in embracing the Lasallian mission," says DLSU-D's Chief Lasallian Mission Officer Jose Ritche Bongcaron. "Every day, I am challenged to think, assess and take charge of what confronts me. That's why to respond to the mission is not a one-time act. It's also not enough that we just talk about it. It's a conscious decision to respond."

Bongcaron acknowledges the difficulty of this path, especially in the beginning where it would always be difficult but eventually one learns to embrace both failure and success.

"I am Riche and I am a Lasallian by choice."

One of his insights is that he does not believe that the Lasallian mission has a finish line because it continues to exist. Its core is in the conscious response to the realities of everyday life that need to be addressed.

Bongcaron believes that this is what it means to be shaken, the need for renewal, the need for reassessing our commitment to the mission as Lasallians which is ultimately to bring and lead the young people towards Christ.

He emphasizes that if one looks at our founder St John Baptist de La Salle as a universal patron saint of teachers then one gets to understand the whole idea of understanding the context of communion in mission: together, we serve the needs of the last, the lost, and the least in our

society by teaching minds, touching hearts, and transforming lives.

The Lasallian mission is basically providing a Christian and human education. Seeing a lot of children on the street without having this chance is depriving them of that opportunity: a chance that will give them a better future. Through the years, more than 300 years from the time the mission started in France, the Lasallian mission has always been present in more than 80 countries. In fact, currently more than a little over a million young people all over the world are in fact experiencing Lasallian care and education.

"At DLSU-D we create possibilities."

"I think we can only achieve a better and safer future by taking care of the young people now," Bongcaron says. He asserts that education would have implications for the future. This does not stop at just having faith. It should be faith realized through action service, and that action must be grounded where you recognize that

it's God who make things happen, the providential God who allows us to take part in His plan of taking care of the young people.

"Bless the work of your hands."

"The work that we're doing is truly God's work. This is from the prophet Habakkuk and I'm claiming it as well," says Sir Bongcaron. *"Unlike any ordinary daytime job, I am blessed to have been called to be a Lasallian partner of the De La Salle Brothers' community."*

According to him, there's always that mission orientation that if one loses sight of that orientation, then one will lose sight of the true essence of why one is part of the mission.

"And I think that defines our Lasallian identity. The way we do things, I think, reflects our desire to choose what is good," Bongcaron says.

For Bongcaron, he chose to embrace the Lasallian ministry even if he came from a different formation because for him, the mission is both grace and responsibility. He believes that the measure for us to know if we are responding well is when we see ourselves growing in the mission.

"Growing in terms of becoming more available for the mission because you have the opportunity. Since I am part of the academe then that's who I am. I teach. I cannot take away the whole idea of education because that's who I am," says Bongcaron. *"Essentially,*

education is at the heart of what I am doing. This is God's way of telling me to be part of the teaching ministry. Only if I follow the founder's steps that you and I can practically understand the whole story of the journey."

Bongcaron's story is a testament to the enduring power and purpose of the Lasallian mission, a mission that continues to shape lives, inspire hearts, and build a better future through faith and education.



BALAG: Empowering Communities

With DLSU-D's advocacy for a brighter, more sustainable future, its Lasallian education stand tall as a beacon of good and ethical governance. This is how the School of Governance, Public Service, and Corporate Leadership (SGPSCL) Director Dr. Rommel Mazo wants his office to

respond to various social issues in the country.

He asserts that what the Lasallian education aims is to inspire individuals to be agents of proactive change in communities. With this vision, SGPSCL introduces an inspiring initiative aimed at fostering

excellent and sustainable education: the free executive program in Sustainable Barangay Leadership and Governance (BALAG).

A commitment to community building

Mazo furthers that this initiative is an evidence of DLSU-D's unwavering commitment to serving local communities. Through the collaborative efforts of SGPSCL, the College of Liberal Arts and Communication, and the Center for Innovative Learning Programs, this program is set to make a profound impact to barangay officials' leadership and governance skills.

According to Mazo, *balag* in Tagalog means "trellis" or "arbor," and the term beautifully encapsulates the essence of this initiative. Just as a trellis supports the growth of vines, providing them with the structure they need to flourish, BALAG offers vital support to barangay officials. It empowers them to lead their communities with wisdom, integrity, and sustainability at the forefront.

...the Lasallian Education aims is to inspire individuals to be agents of proactive change in communities.
-Mazo

A journey of progress and development

The program was launched in May 2024, but the program's vision extends far beyond. As the program rolls out, it aims to expand to Region IV-A CALABARZON and ultimately reach barangay communities nationwide. According to the University Provost Dr. Cristina Salibay, this ambitious journey is aligned with DLSU-D's broader vision of advancing a just, peaceful, and sustainable society, echoing the goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number 16. She believes that to create a strong government, one should start building a strong foundations one barangay at a time. She furthers that the BALAG program is meticulously designed to provide incumbent barangay officials with the essential knowledge needed for sustainable leadership and governance. With Mazo's leadership, together with volunteer professors and industry leaders who excel in their own fields, shall engage its participants to delve into the historical and legal foundations of barangay governance, explore key aspects of barangay management, and understand the importance of a fair and just barangay justice system.

Cultivating ethical leadership

Mazo is certain that the educational philosophy behind the program lies in its deep commitment to ethical

and strategic leadership steered by the Lasallian values. By fostering these qualities, the BALAG program aims to create leaders who are not only effective but also principled and accountable. These leaders will be equipped to inspire their communities, guiding them towards a future that is both thriving and sustainable.



Executive Program in Sustainable Barangay Leadership and Governance (BALAG)

QUALIFICATIONS:

- :: Incumbent elected barangay official
- :: Recommended by the DILG City/Municipal Local Government Operation Officer (C/MLGOO)
- :: Commitment to completing the program
- :: Availability for onsite and/or online classes

REQUIREMENTS:

- :: Application letter detailing the reasons for participating in the program and demonstrating his/her availability and commitment to completing it
- :: Proof of incumbency as elected barangay official
- :: Recommendation letter from the DILG City/Municipality Local Government Operation Officer (C/MLGOO)



Transforming Lives through Compassion: The Story of Bahay Pag-asa

Bahay Pag-asa is a heartfelt initiative born from the vision and commitment of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rome and the Philippine District Chapter. It intends to provide the youth-at-risk the support and guidance they need to become responsible and contributing members of society. This mission aligns deeply with the Lasallian values of faith, service, and communion in mission.

In 2001, the De La Salle Brothers of the Philippine District answered God's call to serve the most vulnerable—children in conflict with the law (CICL)—by establishing a transformation

center in Bacolod City. The center's goal is to nurture these young individuals, helping them grow into well-adjusted, responsible, and confident adults. Over the years, the center has become a cornerstone of hope in Western Visayas, achieving remarkable results and transforming countless lives.

Bahay Pag-asa: a reminder of God's goodness and man's faithful response

Fueled by the grace of giving and a relentless desire to continue their mission, the Brothers established a second Bahay Pag-asa, this time, in Luzon. This new center, located in DLSU-D, began with a groundbreaking ceremony on

May 22, 2008, through a collaboration with De La Salle Medical and Health Sciences Institute and with the support of PLDT SMART Foundation, Inc.

The Bahay Pag-asa Dasmariñas, like its predecessor, is dedicated to the transformation of CICLs. Under the guidance of its current Director Chery Pareja, the center provides a nurturing, monastery-like environment within the DLSU-D campus. Its mission is clear: to offer a holistic formation program, provide

legal assistance, and implement a comprehensive post-release program. These programs include parent education, family counseling, job placement, scholarships, guardianship, and more, ensuring the children receive continuous support even after their release.

This noble mission is supported by various partners, including the Department of Justice, Cavite Police Department, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Provincial Government of Cavite, local governments, civic organizations, the Juvenile Justice Welfare Council, and the Humanitarian Legal Assistance Foundation Inc.

Currently, the center accommodates 15 CICLs from different municipalities in Cavite, ranging in age from 16 to 23. Among them are nine ALS passers of the Balik Aral Program, three senior high school students at Dasmariñas Integrated High School, and three students at the DLSU-D Night College. Pareja emphasizes that their mission extends beyond

the children's time at the center. She hopes the lessons learned and values instilled will guide them long after they leave.

Fostering Growth and Healing

The Bahay Pag-asa is more than just a house; it is a sanctuary of spiritual healing and renewal. It provides a second chance for these young individuals to live better lives, embodying the Lasallian commitment to holistic education through its programs in basic education, spiritual formation and values education, and livelihood and skills training.

Through compassion and dedication, the Bahay Pag-asa continues to transform lives, reflecting the true spirit of Lasallian education and advocacy for the least, the last, and the lost.



DLSU-D's Night College: A Commitment to Hope

Ibelieve in the power of education to transform lives, especially for the young people who need it the most," says DLSU-D Night College Director Dr. Ma. Rosario Salibay about Lasallian education.

DLSU-D's Night College is a testament of University's volunteer faculty members' enduring commitment to reaching out to the indigent working youth of Cavite.

The heart of the program: volunteer faculty members

Salibay explained that the heart of the program is to provide underprivileged working youth with a college degree and a foundation in Christian education. This initiative began in 1998 under the leadership of Dr. Jorge Camposano, which eventually grew and evolved through the invaluable support of various colleges and departments within the University.

According to Salibay, the Night College continuously expands its offerings, which now includes courses in multimedia arts, applied math, information technology, international hotel and restaurant management, marketing, operations management, and human resource development.

She highlights that the success and growth of the Night College would not be possible without the faculty members who generously share their knowledge, time, and effort, driven by a deep belief in the potential of young people and the transformative power of education.

Volunteers: the true mirror of the Lasallian mission

Salibay beautifully captures the spirit of this endeavor of community service, saying, *"participating and volunteering as teachers is like planting the seed of Christian education, sown through our deep beliefs in young people and the hope we find in them. It is about finding meaning in our work as Lasallian educators and experiencing the joy of discovering and sharing the Lasallian mission."*

When We Teach, We Empower the Youth

As Chief Lasallian Mission Officer Jose Ritche Bongcaron says, *"DLSU-D Night College is more than just an educational initiative; it is a compassionate commitment to empowering the youth. By providing opportunities for learning and growth, it nurtures the dreams and aspirations of young people, helping them build a better future for themselves. At DLSU-D, we are more than an educational institution; we are a community committed to nurturing and empowering the next generation."*

"The DLSU-D Night College is more than just an educational initiative; it is a compassionate commitment to empowering the youth."

Discovering, Living, Sharing the Gift of Teaching

Engaging in the Lasallian mission goes beyond the role of a facilitator; it is a profound commitment that enriches the facilitator's life. This dedication helps build a cohesive Lasallian community, fosters a strong sense of gratitude, and maintains a consistent focus on the importance of mindful work and service to the church.

Grounded Purpose

University Lasallian Family Office Director Diana Jean Roque began her journey as a formator 19 years ago. Despite serving a large number of students for recollection, she believes that work-life balance is possible, and that consistency and frequency are key to forming habits. As a facilitator, helping the community nurture their spirituality and embracing the Lasallian mission had become automatic.

Grateful

Roque believes that there is greater opportunity when we align our plans with what God wants for us to accomplish. Being grateful means submitting to His divine plan. Our jobs and work becomes our spiritual direction towards inspiring students. "I am grateful for being entrusted with this mission to journey with the young Lasallians," says Roque.

Community

Being with young people allows Roque to discover the meaning of her role in the Lasallian mission. It is through her constant engagement with them through these formation activities that became a vehicle for her growth and maturity in the mission. It means her work becomes a conscious effort to nurture her calling in the mission.

Working Dynamic

For Roque, the Lasallian calling becomes part of our lifestyle. Everything we do as Lasallian partners has to be intentional. Being mindful of our work means creating divine opportunities to be of service to the church. As mission facilitators, we choose empathy, compassion, healing, happiness, and confidence.

Transforming lives through education: DLSU-D Balik Aral Program

According to College of Education (COEd) Dean Dr. Jose Arvin Gacelo, the college is "committed to being a catalyst for positive change in society." One of these initiatives to achieve this is the Balik Aral Program (BAP), a special outreach endeavor under COEd.

This program plays a vital role in integrating out-of-school youth into the Department of Education's Alternative Learning System, providing them with a second

chance to finish basic education and improve their futures.

A mission of transformation

The BAP embodies DLSU-D's mission to be an instrument of transformation through education. Gacelo shares that by reaching out to the out-of-school youth, the University is addressing one of the most pressing issues in our society: the need for inclusive and accessible education. This program opens doors for those who have been left behind, offering them the opportunity to continue their education.

Community effort and volunteerism

What makes the BAP truly special is the collective effort and dedication of the DLSU-D community. Gacelo is truly thankful because the program is facilitated by volunteer faculty members and staff who, despite their busy schedules, selflessly devote their time and expertise to this noble cause. COEd students also play an integral role, since they also volunteer their time after their regular classes to assist in the program. This spirit of volunteerism and community service is at the heart of DLSU-D's Lasallian values.

Comprehensive educational support

Gacelo furthers that the program goes beyond traditional classroom instruction, offering a comprehensive support system that addresses the unique needs of out-of-school youth.

"...by reaching out to the out-of-school youth, the University is addressing one of the most pressing issues in our society: the need for inclusive and accessible education."

- Gacelo.

It includes academic tutoring, life skills training, personal development workshops, and values formation and religious instruction ensuring that participants are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in their educational journey and beyond.

Creating lasting impact

He believes that the impact of the BAP extends beyond individual participants. By addressing educational disparities and promoting inclusivity, the program contributes to building a more equitable and just society. Educated individuals are better equipped to contribute positively to their communities, fostering social cohesion and economic development.

A shared vision for the future

Chief Lasallian Mission Officer Jose Ritche Bongcaron states that DLSU-D remains committed to expanding and enhancing the BAP.

to page 12

HANGO (UPLIFT): CBAA Community Extension Program

HANGO is the College of Business Administration and Accountancy's (CBAA) attempt to respond to the United Nation's sustainable development goals (SDG). Particularly, it aims to address SDG8, which refers to Decent Work and Economic Growth and aims to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."

The program focuses on four of the objectives of SDG8, namely:

8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services,

8.5 Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

8.6 Substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training

8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms.

HANGO is a community extension program designed to encourage micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) while espousing support local principles. It recognizes the

lack of employment and livelihood opportunities for Filipino families that results in many of the social problems and ills today. The most relevant are out-of-school youth and child labor, leading to increasing income inequality, drug abuse, and prostitution.

HANGO makes us act together as a community to uplift each other and improve the quality of life. The program has the following mission: promote support local and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), provide scholarship opportunities, and create social engagement for business students. To accomplish its mission, the program has the following phases: partnering with local businesses and micro- financing selected beneficiaries, make available scholarship programs through the DLSU-D Night College, and deliver a meaningful business curriculum.



Transforming Lives Through... *from page 10*

"Our vision is to reach even more out-of-school youth, continually improving our methods and resources to better serve their needs. By doing so, we aim to strengthen our role as a leading institution dedicated to fostering educational opportunities and social transformation," Gacelo states.

Join the mission

Gacelo strongly believes that the BAP is one of the Lasallian stories of hope, empowerment, and transformation. He invites everyone—students, faculty, staff, and community members—to join this mission in making lasting difference in the lives of young.

BAP Requirements

- Age: 12 years old above for elementary level; 16 years old above for junior high school level
- 2 pcs. 2x2 ID pictures (colored / white background)
- Photocopy of PSA Birth Certificate
- Photocopy of latest school record
- Barangay Clearance (indicating the present home address of the applicant)
- P100 for DLSU-D ID
- P200 for Balik-Aral shirt
- Take the DepEd Functional Literacy Test (FLT) administered by the BAP Coordinator.
- Attend the General Orientation for BAP students as scheduled.
- Apply online for the DLSU-D ID through the DLSU-D Admissions Portal.
- Once online application is confirmed, the applicant will be issued an ID and BAP shirt payment slip.
- Present the payment slip to the Accounting Office (Counters 15 and 16) for payment.
- Present the official receipt of payment to the Office of the University Registrar (Counter 7) for the ID picture taking.
- Keep the official receipt which will also be used to claim the BAP shirt at the BAP Office.

Enrollment Procedures

Enrollment to the program is guided by the following procedures:

- Visit the BAP Office (LDH 106) for an initial interview with the BAP Coordinator who will also inform the applicant of the other requirements to the program.

ROTUNDA The Official Magazine of De La Salle University-Dasmariñas



Rotunda is an offshoot of *Newsette*, the official publication of the University with more than three decades of existence, and is managed by the Strategic Communications Office.

The creation of **Rotunda** is rooted from the desire of the office to meet the changing needs and preferences of our readers in the digital publication era. The SCO team conducted a series of brainstorming sessions and started curating a publication that brings together the best of digital content, featuring the relevant happenings in the campus, catering to the interests and lifestyle of the modern readers inside and outside the University, particularly those from the academic institutions.

The name was derived from the University's Rotunda, a structure that serves as the central hub of the University situated at the main entrance, Gate 1 of the Magdalo Gate, where it provides the four main points—the access roads leading to major areas of the University.

With the publication's initial sections such as "**I-quote**" which features interviews from the University's key administrators; "**Byaheng Lasalyano**" presents stories of the members of the DLSU-D or the University itself as they take their journey as Lasallians or as a Lasallian institution, this particularly features milestones or achievements; "**Para Po**" serves as the listening ear of the administration in which members

of the community talk about issues or concerns that need clarifications—and all these sections are artistically executed and disseminated through the DLSU-D's official Social Media accounts.

Moreover, as **Rotunda** was born initially as a digital publication, offering a seamless experience across various digital platforms, the SCO plans to venture into print publication in the future to meet the constantly evolving dynamic landscape of media. With **Rotunda**, we aim to revolutionize the way publications are consumed, delivering relevant and captivating content that resonates with our readers and keeps them engaged in the University. Generally, **Rotunda** magazine is a reputable and insightful publication that offers comprehensive coverage of the latest news and happenings on DLSU-D campus, providing the academic community, partners and stakeholders with a panoramic view of all happenings within and around the Campus. It specifically offers a comprehensive and insightful look into the academic world, exploring everything from student life to cutting-edge research and innovations.



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