



## IN THIS ISSUE

1,336 graduates don sablay in 114th UPM Recognition Ceremony (page 2)

3 UPM members win in research competitions (page 3)

UP education without borders: Exploring education opportunities for Filipinos in Japan (page 3)

Training program on occupational health and safety held for UP Manila employees (page 4)

Whole-of-society approach in achieving disaster-resilient communities urged (page 4)

UP Manila's Clinical Pharmacy Training Program graduates Batch 2 (page 5)

Class of 2023 nursing graduates celebrate success and commitment to serving the nation (page 5)

College of Public Health celebrates its graduates for 2023 (page 6)

UP Manila holds development program for junior faculty (page 7)



upm-ippao@up.edu.ph | (02) 8814-1218



## UPM Chancellor reflects on life lessons and inspires graduates, attendees in 114th UP Manila Recognition Ceremony

"My dear graduates, what gives meaning to all my efforts...is the FULFILLMENT OF MY GRAND DESIGN—THAT IS, TO BE OF SERVICE TO THE NATION, and I thank UP for giving me the environment to grow and become a better leader."

Thus conclusively declared **Dr. Carmencita D. Padilla**, professor and chancellor of the University of the Philippines Manila (UPM), during her commencement speech delivered at the 114th UPM Recognition Ceremony held on August 7, 2023 at the Philippine International Convention Center. With the lifting of most of the COVID-19 restrictions, this graduation was an on-site affair. The graduates were allowed to bring two family members to the commencement.

In the beginning of her speech, the Chancellor stated her hopes that the graduates' stay in UPM has strengthened their resolve to positively face new challenges outside the walls of their school, with the end goal of serving their country. She affirmed the leadership lessons UP has taught her, saying that the graduates may not realize it until much later in their life and careers. "I was a very shy student in my elementary and high school days; my parents were very strict. It

was UP that took me out of my 'shell of shyness' through participation in student organizations."

The Chancellor dwelled on three major detours of her life: her shift to genetics, her experiences in the legislation of laws, and her establishment of the Philippine Genome Center. During these detours, she learned ten lessons which she imparted as words of wisdom to the graduates:

- "Small ideas can lead to grand things; small ideas are like seeds—they must be nurtured to grow."
- "Share your vision; collaborate. It is very lonely to do things alone. Never do things alone."
- "Explore. Accept. Embrace. Do not let your inadequacies and inexperience paralyze you. Be open to explore new things. Accept challenges given to you, and when you accept these, you have to embrace them."
- "Mentors will help you discover your potential. Listen. You will eventually realize that you have mentors in your ladder of professional growth. Listen and be open."
- "Start with good ideas. Good ideas will attract funding."

Continued on page 2

# 1,336 graduates don sablay in 114th UPM Recognition Ceremony



A total of 1,366 graduates from the various colleges of UPM received their diplomas, a number of scholars and honor graduates were awarded with medals, and doctoral candidates were donned with their hoods during the 114th UPM Recognition Ceremony themed “*Talino, Galing, at Puso Tungo sa Kalusugang Pangkalahatan*” held on August 7, 2023 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

The ceremony began with an audio-video presentation featuring a slideshow of all the graduates, faculty of colleges, and directors of UPM offices. This was followed by the processional of the directors of the PGH and NIH, the assistants to the vice chancellors, the deans of UP Manila, chancellors of UP constituent universities, UP Manila vice chancellors, UP vice presidents; UP Board of Regents members, UPM Chancellor Carmencita D. Padilla, and UP President Atty. Angelo A. Jimenez.

## The challenges after college

In her opening remarks, **UPM Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Nymia P. Simbulan** described the event as an “occasion for celebration, triumph, and thanksgiving for the people who helped the graduates reach this moment of their lives.” She added that the ceremony serves as a “pause and reflect” moment for the graduates before they face new challenges in a world with uncertainties, wherein they will

also give back to their parents, loved ones, and the nation who labored and gave it all for their education.

Globalization, according to VC Simbulan, has placed an additional burden for the new graduates, as they will be encountering problems and social situations as professionals and public servants. These problems include the worsening economic and political conditions, food insecurity, severe inflation, rising costs of living and healthcare, the prevalence of corruption in all levels of government, and climate change being brought about by the destruction of our environment and natural resources sanctioned by some public officials. On the other hand, she lauded the determination of some Filipinos to fight for human rights and dignity, most recently families of the victims of extrajudicial killings under the previous administration by filing cases in the International Criminal Court, demanding justice for their slain loved ones.

## When your detours become steps for triumph

In her speech, **UPM Chancellor Carmencita D. Padilla** stated her hopes that the graduates’ stay in UPM has strengthened their resolve to positively face new challenges outside the walls of their school, with the end goal of serving

their country. She affirmed the leadership lessons UP has taught her, saying that the graduates may not realize it until much later in their life and careers.

The Chancellor’s keynote message dwelled on three major detours of her life: her shift to genetics, her experiences in the legislation of laws, and her establishment of the Philippine Genome Center. During these detours, she learned ten lessons, which she imparted as words of wisdom to the graduates. As she closed, she encouraged the graduates to live up to their UP roots and serve their countrymen with *talino, galing, at puso*, and with *dangal at husay*.

The graduates and attendees stayed glued to the Chancellor’s talk and applauded several times in appreciation during her speech.

After the Chancellor’s keynote address, the candidates for graduation were presented to **UP President Angelo A. Jimenez** who awarded the titles and conferred the degrees to them. After the distribution of diplomas, medals, and hoods, the *Ugnayan ng Pahinungod* volunteers were awarded in recognition of their effort.

## Message from the graduates

**Mr. Ivanne Joepoert A. Idorot**, summa cum laude graduate of BS Biology, delivered a speech on behalf of batch 2023. In his message, he reiterated the importance of honor in everything. “*Araw-arawin man ang pagpapakita ng kahusayan, kung hindi tayo marangal, at wala tayong puso, hindi natin lubos na mauunawaan ang kabuluhan ng ating mga pinag-aralan.*” He ended his speech by promising, “*Gagamitin natin ang ating talino, galing, at puso sa pag-ampat kung paano ipararanas ang progreso na tinatamasa ng mga lungsod sa kanayunan; mararanasan ang pag-unlad sa sektor ng kalusugan kung makikita natin ang papel ng bawat isa.*”

The recognition ceremony capped off with the pledge of loyalty to the alma mater, the swearing-in of the graduates as new members of the UP Alumni Association, the singing of the *UP Naming Mahal*, and a lightning rally by student activists.

**I Martin R. Racza**

From Page 1 (UPM Chancellor...)

- “Challenges and frustrations are part of the ladder of success. Setbacks are reminders that we are not perfect; setbacks teach us to be humble.”
- “Be an optimist. Trust that even the failures, delays, and setbacks are opportunities for us, and our labors are not in vain.”
- “Enjoy life. Keep in mind that work-life balance will definitely contribute to your mental health.”

- “Keep your values intact. Keeping a moral compass is very important for sanity. That is the true essence of being an *Isko* and *Iska-may talino, galing, at puso*. May your moral compass be always directed towards positively affecting the lives of the Filipino people.”
- “Pray. I surrendered certain decisions to His will, knowing that He is always working things for our good. You will

eventually receive an answer to your prayer—maybe not how you hoped for them to be answered, but definitely an answer that is best for you.”

The 114th UPM Commencement Ceremony is one of the highlights of Chancellor Padilla’s 9th year at the helm of UP Manila as she will be completing her third term this October 2023 .

**I Martin R. Racza**

# 3 UPM members win in research competitions



From left to right: Dr. Christopher G. Manalo, Mr. Larrie Antoni B. Adaptar, and Dr. TJ Robinson Moncatar

**Dr. Christopher G. Manalo**, Medical Specialist II at the Philippine General Hospital was awarded with the "Best Paper by a Young Investigator" at the 22nd International Conference on Emergency Medicine 2023 presented at the 23rd International Federation for Emergency Medicine on June 13-16, 2023 in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

His paper is titled "Efficiency and efficacy of high-dose dexamethasone in severe and critical COVID-19: A systematic review and analysis."

Dr. Manalo's unwavering dedication and expertise in contributing to the fight against COVID-19 is admirable. His outstanding research has not only garnered international

recognition but also highlights the significant impact of his work on advancing medical knowledge and patient care.

**Mr. Larrie Antoni B. Adaptar**, a BS Biochemistry student, won 2nd place during the Department of Science and Technology – Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI) Nationwide Undergraduate Research Competition held last July 5-6, 2023 at the Dusit Thani Hotel.

For his study entitled "Composition and Thermogravimetric Characterization of Philippine Tablea," he used differential scanning calorimetry, thermogravimetric analysis, gas chromatography-mass spectrometry, and Fourier Transform infra-

red spectroscopy to analyze cacao and tablea samples from various geographical locations in the Philippines.

He won PhP 12,000 and was given a plaque of recognition. His research adviser is Dr. Julius Andrew P. Nunez from the Department of Physical Sciences and Mathematics and his co-adviser is Dr. Aldrin Bonto from De La Salle University.

**Dr. TJ Robinson Moncatar**, College of Public Health's associate professor and assistant to the dean for planning and development, received the "First Place Award" for his oral research presentation titled "Recognition of qualifications and skills of Filipino healthcare migrants: A qualitative case study approach."

This study was presented during the health service and healthcare management session held on July 1-2 at the 13th International Conference on Public Health among Greater Mekong Sub-regional Countries in Hue City, Thua Thin Hue Province, Vietnam.

Dr. Moncatar's participation in this conference fostered the research and academic connection of the CPH with other public health institutions within the Greater Mekong sub-regional countries.

**I Cynthia M. Villamor**

# UP education without borders: Exploring education opportunities for Filipinos in Japan



Envisioning to provide quality and affordable education to our expat workers and their children in Japan, **UP President Atty. Angelo A. Jimenez**, **UP Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Leo D. Cubillan**, **UP Open Universi-**

**ty (UPOU) Chancellor Dr. Melinda dela Peña Bandalaria**, and **Atty. Edlyn B. Jimenez** met with **Her Excellency Mylene Garcia-Albano**, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Phil-

ippines to the Government of Japan last August 7, 2023, at the Office of the UP President in UP Manila.

The meeting centered on discussions to create a framework agreement under the UP Education Without Borders program and with UPOU as the point office, specifically to provide access to our citizens living and working in Japan to UP education including the holding of the UPCAT in the said country.

After the meeting, President Jimenez presented Ambassador Garcia-Albano with a complete volume set of the "Pagkalinga: The PGH Human Spirit Project" as a token of appreciation.

Later on, President Jimenez and Atty. Edlyn received from UPM Chancellor Dr. Carmencita D. Padilla a copy of her book, "Celebrating 20 Years of Newborn Screening: Challenges and Successes."

**I Martin R. Racza**

# Training program on occupational health and safety held for UP Manila employees



1. Module 1: Managing Risks for Health and Safety on August 01, 2023;
2. Module 2: Analyzing the Priority of OHS Problem on October 03, 2023;
3. Module 3: Implementing an OHS Program on January 16, 2024; and
4. Module 4: Celebrating Quick Wins on March 12, 2024.

At the end of each module, the participants must be able to share and implement their learnings in their corresponding committees or technical working groups within two months after each training program. The participants were taught to address first the potential risk through risk assessment in the workplace environment to reduce the probability of an employee's exposure to a hazard, hence, the prevention of accidents.

Employees are the assets of any institution for its future and continuous success. Thus, an institution or organization should make an effort to meet the needs of its employees and ensure their safety and well-being through a two-way transaction and in an inclusive way.

The occupational health and safety standards' main goal is to protect the employee from anticipated accidents, injuries, or illness which may be present at the workplace, making the working environment and condition conducive for working, safe, and healthy (DOLE, 2016).

The Introductory Training Program on Occupational Health and Safety for UP Manila Health and Safety Committees

and Health and Safety Technical Working Groups was conducted on August 1, 2023 at the UP Manila Social Hall. The training program was hosted by **Dr. Paul Michael Hernandez**, Chair of UP Manila Health and Safety Committee with the special presence and participation of **Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Dr. Arlene A. Samaniego** and Zoom participants from the School of Health Sciences.

The OHS training program is composed of four (4) modules of four (4) hours each implemented for four days and distributed across eight months as follows.

More importantly, the training program aims to educate the employees on how they can assess and characterize the unrealized risks, recognize possible hazards, and alleviate or eliminate potential accidents by identifying and planning adequate institutions of controls and measures in their respective offices. | **Angelou C. Mendoza**

Reference:

[https://www.dole.gov.ph/php\\_assets/uploads/2019/04/OSH-Standards-2017-2.pdf](https://www.dole.gov.ph/php_assets/uploads/2019/04/OSH-Standards-2017-2.pdf)

## Whole-of-society approach in achieving disaster-resilient communities urged

The University of the Philippines Manila was a major partner in the conduct of the 2023 Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Health (DRRM-H) Learning and Development Summit held on Aug. 9 in Olongapo City, Zambales by the Dept of Health.

In cooperation with other health sector partners such as World Health Organization, Zuellig Family Foundation, American Health Association, Philippine College of Emergency Medicine, and Civil Service Institute and Local Government Academy, the event was conducted in response to global and national appeals to intensify efforts towards Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Health (DRRM-H) institutionalization, operationalization, and localization.

The event also aimed to urge the adoption of a whole-of-society approach in achieving

disaster-resilient communities by building competency in the province-wide and city-wide health systems towards promoting disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery and rehabilitation.

In attendance were **Department of Health (DOH) OIC-Undersecretary and Chief of Staff Dr. Gloria J. Balboa** and the DOH Health Emergency Management Bureau (HEMB), DRRM-H Managers of the DOH Centers for Health De-



velopment (CHDs), Hospitals and Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers, and other health sector partners.

The summit affirmed the importance of expanding knowledge and skills on DRRM-H to prepare local communities in responding to any crisis. *(With reports from the DOH Facebook)*

# UP Manila's Clinical Pharmacy Training Program graduates Batch 2



The 29th of July 29, 2023 marked the culmination of the 6-month Clinical Pharmacy Training Program (CPTP) with the graduation ceremony held at the Emilio T. Yap Auditorium of the UP College of Pharmacy.

The CPTP has been designed to orient and expose hospital pharmacy practitioners to the different issues, opportunities, and challenges in the Philippine pharmacy profession that concern clinical pharmacy services. The training program was made possible through an educational grant from Pfizer Philippines, Inc.

The program participants were trained to critically evaluate evidence for managing drug therapy problems, develop practical individualized pharmacist's care plans, and develop sound clinical pharmacy project proposals. After a series of virtual sessions for the lectures, workshops, and case presentations, the 20 scholar-participants from 18 hospitals and medical centers across the Philippines attended the face-to-face graduation ceremony where they received their Certificates of Completion.

After last year's successful first implementation of the program, the program offering for this year has been improved and enhanced by including more clinical pharmacy services and pharmacotherapeutic topics as part of the modules. As a final requirement, the scholars were tasked to formulate their project proposals, which will eventually be implemented in their respective institutions. Also present during the ceremony were CPTP Program Leader and **UPCP Dean Francis R. Capule**, the faculty members of the UPCP Department of Pharmacy, representatives from Pfizer Philippines, Inc., and guests. The keynote speech was given by **Ms. Chrisel G. Carreon**, clinical educator of St. Luke's Medical Center. A message on behalf of the scholar-participants was given by **Mr. Basil C. Baylon** of the Western Visayas Medical Center. Congratulations to the second batch of Clinical Pharmacy Training Program on your graduation! Padayon!

**I Francis R. Capule, Mac Ardy J. Gloria, Erica Nicole J. Tayko**

## Class of 2023 nursing graduates celebrate success and commitment to serving the nation

The recognition ceremony for the UP College of Nursing Graduating Class of 2023 was held on July 31, 2023. This was a celebration of their academic achievements and a symbolic step into the professional world as nurses and healthcare professionals.

The theme of the event, "*Yugto: Tungo sa Bagong Simula: Lingkod sa Bayan ay Pagkalinga*," captured the essence of the occasion. In her opening remarks, **Dean Shiela Bonito** asserted that the journey of Class 2023 had been a transformational one, and they were now embarking on a new phase as compassionate and dedicated healthcare providers, ready to serve the nation.

"As you take the next steps in your journey whether it be pursuing higher education, entering the workforce hopefully at the Philippine General Hospital, and exploring a new opportunity, remember that the lessons you have learned, the relationships you have built, the friendships you have

nurtured, and the experiences you have had will stay with you forever beyond these walls, beyond the halls of Sotejo Hall," said Dean Bonito.

The class has 3 MA Nursing graduates, 1 PhD in Nursing, and 50 BS Nursing graduates of which 26 are cum laude graduates.

Recipients of special awards included **Gwyn Del Rosario Sarigumba**, Bienvenido Gonzales Award; **Mikaela Angelika Denise Ortega**, community involvement; **Clea Erika Lou Abelido Dejillas**, leadership; and **Patricia Angelus Monton Calle**, best clinical performance.

In her message to the graduating class, **Chancellor Carmencita Padilla** underscored the significance of embra-



cing love for the country, the university, and their beloved college regardless of where their paths may lead them. The UP Manila chancellor urged the graduates to seize the opportunities to acquire new knowledge, confront novel obstacles, and celebrate the multitude of successes that life has in store for them.

In his keynote address, **UP Faculty Regent Carl Marc Ramota** remarked that in the

# College of Public Health celebrates its graduates for 2023

The UP Manila College of Public Health (CPH) held its Recognition Ceremony for its graduates on August 3, 2023 at the Fleur-de-lis Theater, St. Paul University Manila.

With the theme, "Empowering Minds and Strengthening Communities Toward a Culture of Public Health," **CPH Dean Fernando B. Garcia Jr.** stated in his welcome address the importance of continuous learning, innovation, and pursuit of knowledge.

"In a time when health has become a global priority, it is essential to acknowledge and honor the efforts of our young graduates and the future of public health. This event goes beyond simply recognizing accomplishments. It is a celebration of the spirit of collaboration, compassion, and perseverance that embodies the values of our college," he said.

The college awarded degrees to 279 public health practitioners composed of 81 BS Public Health (BSPH) graduates with 5 summa cum laude, 39 magna cum laude, and 33 cum laude among them. Also celebrated during the ceremony were the achievements of the following graduates: 2 in Master of Arts in Health Policy Studies (MAHPS), 9 in Master of Hospital Administration, 11 in Master of Occupational Health, 168 in Master of Public Health, and 8 in Master of Science in Public Health.

In her keynote speech, **UP Manila Chancellor Carmencita D. Padilla**, MAHPS alumna of CPH, reflected on her journey, recalling that she pursued the health policy studies program to address challenges in scaling the Newborn Screening program nationwide.

"More than ever, the country is in desperate need of public health workers, and it is my



wish that most of you will pursue this track. Preventive medicine rather than curative medicine will benefit more our population. Health promotion and ensuring access to responsive healthcare services are what our country needs badly. If you choose to pursue medicine, I encourage you to hold public health close to your heart," the chancellor stated.

Speaking on behalf of the BSPH graduates, *summa cum laude* graduate **Lyder Kyle A. Dimaapi** delivered a heartfelt speech using the "sablay" to reflect on the batch's transformative journey.

*"Dahil sa UP, naging mas matapang, mas mabuti, at mas makatao ako. Because of UP, I was able to touch other people's lives. Sa UP ko natutunan kung paano ko mahalín ang Pilipinas at kapwa kong Pilipino... Let*

*us wear our sablay with pride and dignity,"* said Dimaapi.

**Samuel Christian C. Ong** delivered his message on behalf of the MPH graduates, expressing his unwavering faith in the potential of the Class of 2023 to create positive change in the healthcare landscape.

"Today is not just the end of our efforts to get that diploma with marks; more importantly, it is a milestone in our journey to becoming positive change agents in communities... Let us go forth and take our part to improve the health of every Filipino. *Tuloy ang laban para sa bayan!*"

**I Charmaine Lingdas**

From Page 5 (Class 2023...)

in the pandemic years, there emerged a stark realization of the vulnerabilities within our healthcare system and educational institutions.

"Let your generation be a beacon of hope for the discouraged and inspiration for many to continue the struggle for truth, democracy, and justice – remembering that dark days do not last forever. May the call, 'Serve the People', forever echo through the halls of your college, in your hospitals and communities,

and wherever you may be. *Paglingkuran ang Sambayanan, mga Iskolar at Nars ng Bayan! Padayon sa panibagong simula!"* Ramota declared.

Speaking on behalf of the graduates, valedictorian **Gwyn Del Rosario Sarigumba** recounted their collective experiences and shared the values of service, excellence, and compassion.

**I Charmaine A. Lingdas**

## Editorial Box

Dr. Olympia Ursula Q. Malanyaon  
Director and Editor-in-chief

Cynthia M. Villamor  
Assistant Editor



Cynthia M. Villamor  
Martin R. Racza  
January R. Kanindot  
Charmaine A. Lingdas  
Francis Nicole G. Maga  
Angelou C. Mendoza  
Erlын May U. Pareja  
Staff Writers

Francis Nicole G. Maga  
Design and Layout Artist  
Joseph A. Bautista  
Photographer

# UP Manila holds development program for junior faculty



The University of the Philippines Manila conducted a three-day development program aimed at empowering junior faculty members, enhancing their teaching effectiveness, and fostering their leadership skills to enable them to manage the demands of their academic responsibilities.

The event was held at the Taal Vista Hotel in Tagaytay from June 24 to 26, 2023.

In her video-recorded message, **Chancellor Carmencita D. Padilla** expressed the importance of helping faculty members become effective leaders in the university. She emphasized the need to strike a balance between professional and personal life and highlighted the significance of effective communication with the young generation of students who have a unique perspective on life and society.

## Day 1 - Nurturing the Gen Z Learners

The first day of the program focused on engaging and motivating "Gen Z" learners. **Dr. Evangeline dela Fuente**, chair of the UP College of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science, delved into the principles behind teaching-learning strategies for this generation.

**Dr. Bernadette Heizel M. Reyes** and **Dr. Coralie Therese Dimacali**, both from the UPCM, expounded on rethinking tools and techniques to effectively teach Gen Z students. They presented various teaching-learning strategies that align with the learning preferences of this tech-savvy generation.

## Day 2 - Crafting a Professional Portfolio

The second day centered on the development of a professional teaching portfolio, research portfolio, and academic

portfolio. **Dr. Maria Julieta Corazon M. Victoriano-Germar**, also from UPCM, shared her experiences in teaching medical students online during the pandemic and highlighted the importance of catering to different learning styles.

**Dr. Derick Erl P. Sumalapao**, from the UP College of Public Health, emphasized the significance of research in advancing knowledge and shaping policies. Meanwhile, **Prof. Chadwick C. Sy Su** shared his expertise in crafting an academic portfolio and encouraged the faculty to find their identity beyond their job.

**Prof. Erlyn A. Sana** from the UP National Teacher Training Center for the Health Professions stressed the importance of engaging in extension services as part of developing a comprehensive professional portfolio.

## Day 3 - Stories on Leadership

The final day featured inspiring "Stories on Leadership" from distinguished guests. **Dr. Maria Cynthia Rose Banzon-Bautista**, former UP Vice President for Academic Affairs, shared her journey and the valuable lessons she learned at UP.

**Former Dean of the College of Pharmacy Yolanda R. Robles** emphasized the importance of embracing different seasons of life and the significance of passing on the knowledge to the next generation.

For her part, **Chancellor Padilla** shared her personal stories on leadership and highlighted the importance of embracing challenges and being open to unexpected opportunities, just like the time when she accepted the opportunity to become chancellor and embraced its functions and demands.

**I Charmaine A. Lingdas**

# Paglaom: UPCM Commencement Exercises and UP-PGH Internship Program Closing Ceremonies



*Paglaom*, a Cebuano term which means hope, a belief or desire for a possibility of positive change and success was the theme of the UP College of Medicine 114th Commencement Exercises and UP-PGH Internship Program Closing Ceremonies held at the University Theater in UP Diliman, Quezon City on Aug. 6, 2023.

In the Philippines, one of the most neglected basic human rights is access to equitable and quality medical healthcare services. Hence, the new UPCM graduates reflect hope and aspirations for many underserved communities in the Philippines deprived of healthcare assistance – the hope found amidst the uncertainties.

At the ceremony, **UPCM Dean Charlotte M. Chiong** emphasized the relevance of the instilled core values to the medical graduates during their stay in the College – to always prioritize the patients' well-being and dignity in their medical practice. She shared with the graduating class the relevance of embracing the diversity of patients, providing each with equal treatment and service with respect and empathy irrespective of social standing or background. Lastly, Dean Chiong urged the graduates to remain grounded in the reality of Philippine society and use one's education to be a catalyst for change.

As highlighted by **UP President, Atty. Angelo A. Jimenez**, every peso that goes to a UP education is one peso less from

Filipinos struggling financially, homeless families, sick Filipinos who cannot afford hospital dues and medicine, farmers who are paradoxically suffering from hunger, and a drop-out student who cannot afford one's education. Pres. Jimenez urged the graduates to dedicate their loyalty to the Filipinos and to the poorest of the poor.

The UPCM conferred medical degrees to 179 graduates this year with 97 awarded with Latin honors. Meanwhile, the College declared one diploma graduate, 19 Master of Science graduates, one Doctor of Philosophy, and 11 graduates from the MD-PhD program.

In her commencement speech, former **Vice President Atty. Maria Leonor "Leni" Gerona Robredo**, expressed admiration and a very high regard for the excellence and grit of the graduating class for finishing their respective degree programs and becoming the new *Doktor ng Bayan*. She characterized the graduates as a representation and symbol of *paglaom* (hope), the hope of countless indigent Filipino families and communities who cannot afford medical healthcare services.

*"Beyond your intellect, we count on you to be unfazed, to have a heart that is filled with compassion and is always ready to embrace others, to be sturdy and steady, to always give*

*the best of yourselves. [...] But, we also keep faith that in reaching your aspirations, you will never forget what it means to receive a UP education. To live with honor and excellence, with your heart for the Filipino every single day, ang tanawin ang utang na loob sa sambayanan."* Furthermore, she encouraged the graduates to stay and stand firm amidst the many temptations, one of which is being detached to the social realities and inequalities.

**Jose Emmanuel C. Mariano**, *cum laude* graduate of Doctor of Medicine and batch representative of Class 2023, lauded his fellow graduates in the culmination of their medical school journey for being persistently hopeful despite the uncertainties, describing them as "bruised but beaming" – the embodiment of *paglaom*.

In his speech, he recalled their individual conditions and struggles during the pandemic as medical students and also saw the good in the bad as they were able to come home to their families. These experiences reminded them to continue hoping and striving for the future, for themselves, and for the community they aspire to serve.

The UP College of Medicine 114th Commencement Exercises and UP-PGH Internship Program was capped off with the closing message from **Dr. Gerardo D. Legaspi**, Philippine General Hospital Director.

"Doctors are known as agents of change and purveyors of hope, an advantage of being a doctor – the proficiency to make healthcare equitable and accessible to every Filipino in dire need of universal health care," he stated.

**I Angelou C. Mendoza**