

SPUP 1st Students' Internalization Integration Activity

By Dr. Jeremy Godofredo Morales

St. Paul University Philippines' International Relations Office conducted a grand International Students' Integration Activity (#ISIA) on September 13-14, 201, with varied activities to foster deeper ties between and among the University's foreign and Filipino students, as well as to deepen understanding about the various cultures now flourishing in the University.

The two-day activity commenced with a Conference on Internationalization which was highlighted by Inspirational Messages from SPUP President Sister Merceditas Ang, SPC, VP for Academics Dr. Agripina Maribbay, and CHED RO2 Education Supervisor Dr. Florida Capili; Oath Taking of the Officers of the International Students Organization, and Cultural Presentations and Testimonies from select Foreign Students. The said event was also graced by Bureau of Immigration Representative Ms. Analyn Garcia, SPUP Administrators, Faculty Members, Staff and Students.



In her message, Sister Merceditas emphasized the gargantuan efforts that SPUP, through its administrators and designated officials, had undertaken in the recent years. While it is true that SPUP has been granted Authority from the Bureau of Immigration in 2001 to accept alien (foreign) students, this year marks a record high in terms of influx of foreign students (enrolled in degree programs, short courses and immersions) and guests for various activities and visits for collaboration which is expected to increase in the next few months and years when more foreign nationals will start arriving at SPUP for enrolment in various degree programs of the university as well as for short programs in English Language, Culture and Immersion activities, aside from prospected visits from different countries for

collaboration activities with SPUP as well as participation in SPUP organized international activities.

Dr. Maribbay, moreover, discussed the importance of sharing varied cultures and practices in the University to foster deeper and stronger bonds between and among the members of the academic community without compromising academic excellence and Paulinian values. Cultural integration will, thus, become an essential part in the life of every Paulinian (of Tuguegarao) where unity amidst diversity is at its best.



Meanwhile, Dr. Capili of CHED RO2 presented salient government policies in terms of acceptance of foreign nationals into Philippine universities, as she affirmed that SPUP is compliant to these government promulgations. She also reminded the foreign students of their duties and responsibilities while studying in the Philippines such as immigration procedures, safety and security matters, and completion of all academic and discipline requirements as basis for promotion

and graduation among others.

On the other hand, Onam Festival Dance was performed by Indian students while the Indonesian students presented a traditional inspirational chorus.

The convocation was concluded by a testimony of Mr. Mathanjuki Mayna Muhoro, BS Pharmacy student from Kenya, about his experiences at SPUP where he emphasized the caring attitude that he felt from the people in the University and the assistance that each person can readily give. #



Indian Student is Head of SPUP's International Students



Sreyas Manoharan Punjavi, a senior BS Biology student from Kerala, India, took his oath as Secretary-General of the newly organized SPUP International Students Organization on September 13, 2016, during the International Students Integration Activity, with SPUP President Sister Merceditas Ang, SPC, as Inducting Officer.

In his Inaugural Speech, Mr. Punjavi humbly accepted the responsibility as he presented his plans for a better collaboration and integration between and among foreign and Filipino students, as well as partaking in the promotion and marketing activities of SPUP in other countries. He also urged his fellow officers and the foreign students to abide by the policies of the University and the laws of the Philippines at all times while protecting their rights as non-citizens of the Philippines.

The complete list of the International Students Integration Activity Officers is as follows:

Secretary-General	:	Sreyas Manoharan Punjavi (BSBio, India)
Deputy Minister	:	Sister Maria de Araujo, SPC (BSIT, East Timor)
Country Representatives / Ambassadors:		
USA	:	David Saquing Munsayac (BSPsy)
Nigeria	:	Mercy Iyanuoluwa Abu (BSN)
Korea	:	Yoo Jeonghyun (BSEd)
Kenya	:	Mathanjuki Mayna Muhoro (BSPhar)
Indonesia	:	Kurnia Harli Hasan (BSN)
India	:	Jwala Mary Mercy (BSBio)
East Timor	:	Daniel Da Silva Ferreira Mau Bere (BSCE)
Philippines	:	Mark Anthony Baliuag (BSA)

Interactive Museum: A Showcase of Cultural Diversity at SPUP

International Students of SPUP showcased their cultures (per country) through an interactive museum tour at the St. Paul's Home – Student Center (SPH-SC) during the International Students Integration Activity on September 13-14, 2016.



The trail of the said museum tour started at the St. Francis Building, dubbed as “India Gate” where the Indian students welcomed the guests through their traditional ritual during Onam festival (coincidentally, September 14 is Onam Festival in Kerala, India). Here, *Mahabali* (great grandson of a Brahmin sage who became Emperor of Kerala) stands at the gate while three ladies dressed in traditional *Saree* (Kerala dress) do the ritual: two ladies hold a tray of petals and incense and the other one sprinkles the petals on the guests.



Upon entry, one is amazed by the Indian museum artworks depicting the Onam Festival with paintings done by student artist Arlin Wessily as main attractions including *Thiruvathira* (Onam Festival Dance) performed by selected students around the beautifully mounted Onam Flower Art which is called *Pookalam* in Malayalam.



Dr. Pilar Acorda, Arts and Sciences Dean, together with some faculty members, were also presented wearing the traditional Kerala dress. A tourism promotional video about Kerala and Onam Festival was shown for the audience to be more acquainted with the said state and the feast. Food tasting of Indian delicacies called *sadya* prepared by the students concluded the Indian leg of the interactive museum.

Moving to the St. Clare Building, Indonesian and East Timor paintings, traditional clothes and other items with historical value were on display, together with photos of Indonesian Presidents. Looking at these and the video presentations were guided by representatives from various countries with display.



Cultural numbers were performed by students from Indonesia, East Timor, Nigeria, Kenya and the USA to entertain the museum goers, ending the dancing and singing with community dance of Indonesia's Poco Poco where members of the audience were invited to dance with the performers. Food tasting of Indonesian and Timorese

delicacies prepared by the students concluded the Pacific-ASEAN-African leg of the interactive tour exiting through Air Terjun Sri Gethuk Gate.

The interactive museum tour was conducted as part of the integration activity to provide opportunities to the other foreign students, as well as to Filipinos, for them to get to know one another's culture and traditions. This activity was graced by the University officials, faculty members and students led by President Sister Mercedes Ang, SPC, as well as Hon. Claire Imogene Callangan, Tuguegarao City Councilor, and Atty. Mark Anthony Articulo of the RTC Public Attorney's Office, among other guests. #

1st SPUP International Students Integration Activity Conducted

The International Relations Office, in collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs & Paulinian Student Government, St. Paul Home-Student Center, Promotions and Marketing Office and Sports Office, engaged the foreign students in showcasing their talents and cultures through the 1st International Students Integration Activity held on September 13-14, 2016.

In the opening program, Dr. Florida Capili (CHED RO2 Education Supervisor and In-charge of Foreign Students), Sister Mercedes Ang, SPC (SPUP President) and Dr. Agripina Maribbay (SPUP VP for Academics) addressed the audience, composed of Filipinos and foreigners, on the essence of the said activity, to foster stronger bonds between and among foreign and Filipino students, understanding one another's cultures and practices in coming up with unified international community in the University, including the development of the internationalization of SPUP and where this is heading to.

Moreover, they discussed salient government policies specifically those of CHED and Immigration, as well as SPUP's institutional requirements regarding the acceptance, retention and graduation of foreign students which bear responsibilities on the part of both the institution and the students.

The said convocation was made more significant with the Oath Taking Ceremony of the maiden set of officers of the International Students Organization, led by Mr. Sreyas Manoharan Punjavi, BS Biology student from India, as Secretary-General, and Sister Maria de Araujo, BSIT student from East Timor, as Deputy Minister.

As it is to foster stronger bonds between and among the foreign students, a team building activity was facilitated by Mrs. Melissa Tuddao, with the PE major students, with festive and creative games to bring out decision-making and teamwork among the participants.

Furthermore, an Interactive Museum was set-up at the St. Paul Home-Student Center which brought the Paulinian community into knowing and understanding the cultures of the foreign students and their countries better. In this museum were paintings done by the students themselves, video presentations, cultural-historical displays, cultural performances and international cuisine where the museum goers were made to feel that they were in other countries experiencing various cultures and cuisines.

Flags of the countries where the SPUP international students come from were grandiosely displayed to enhance the ambiance of internationalization during the event.

Shown in the photo below are the SPUP international students, in their national costumes, together with the administrators.



Inaugural Address of International Students' Secretary-General Sreyas Manoharan Punjavi



Respected Sister President, Sister Mercedes Ang, SPC, beloved guests from the Commission on Higher Education, Dr. Florida Capili, and from the Bureau of Immigration Tuguegarao City Office, Ms. Analyn Garcia, Reverend Sisters, dear administrators, faculty members, visitors, fellow students, good morning to one and all.

It is a great honor to stand before you as the Secretary General of the International Students' Organization of St. Paul Almighty for showering his blessings upon me, and I would like to thank my parents and my friends for believing in me, and also for being with me through thick and thin.

Our journey as foreign students in this University, which we proudly like to say as OUR University, has been a wonderful experience and was clearly a turning point in our life. Sir Jeremy has always been considerate about our safety and well being from day one, and also, have made sure that we feel at home. All the Sisters from the Convent, especially Sr. Mercedes, have been very kind to us and have paid heed to all our needs and requests.

I give my word to all present here that I will try my level best to fulfill all the responsibilities given to me, and I will make sure that I am available for your concerns and open to all your suggestions. On this occasion, I would like to introduce the Deputy Minister of International Students Organization, Sister Maria de Araujo, SPC, and the country representatives: East Timor – Daniel Da Silva Ferreira Mau Bere; Indonesia – Kurnia Harli Hasan; India – Jwala Mary Mercy; Kenya – Mathanjuki Mayna Muhor; Korea – Yoo Jeonghyun; USA – David Saquing Munsayac, and Philippines – Mark Anthony Baliuag. Congratulations to all the country representatives.

I am glad that, as a first step of international integration, we are being given the chance to conduct Onam Celebrations in the University. Most of you present here must be wondering what Onam is. Onam is the harvest festival of our State, Kerala, and it is also celebrated in remembrance of a great King Mahabali, who once ruled our land. Our land saw prosperity and peace throughout his reign. We hope that our first step in integrating cultures of the world will set a new tradition in the history of SPUP. Given your support and prayers, we believe the upcoming events will be grand successes.

As we, thus, hold office for this academic year, we, your officers, will see to it that our welfare and rights are guarded as we ensure the entire Philippine community that we abide by the policies of this country, as well as the rules and regulations of our dear University. Let us participate, in our nice gestures, in promoting our University to our brothers and sisters back home, as well as to other countries, so that, like us, they will also experience academic studies, as we are experiencing now. As our main purpose in coming to the Philippines is to study and earn a degree, we will make our journey and activities light, yet fun-filled and educational. Let us remember that we belong to a bigger Paulinian community, that is why, we have to integrate ourselves as well with our fellow Paulinians in our schools or departments. We integrate with them, as you allow me, your Secretary-General, to represent you to the Paulinian Student Government – University Council for activities directly pertaining to us. Feel free, dear fellow foreign students, to approach me or anyone of us for your concerns that need to be given immediate attention.

May we all share happy memories together echoing in our hearts and minds the saying, *“Man power without unity is not a strength unless it is harmonized and united properly, then it becomes a spiritual power.”*

Thank you!