



ATENEUM DE MANILA UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Memo # U2223-028
6 Oct 2022

Memo to : The University Community
Subject : Higher Education Cluster

Upon the recommendation of the Higher Education Structure Committee (HESC) and after due consultation with university administrators and deans, I am pleased to announce the establishment of the Higher Education Cluster which integrates the Loyola Schools (LS) and the Ateneo Professional Schools (APS) effective SY 2023-2024.

This important decision was reached thanks to the rigorous study conducted by the HESC, whose members, led by Dr Edna P Franco, were appointed earlier this year (cf. Memo # U2122-064 dated 21 Mar 2022) *“to conduct an organizational review involving a study of an alignment of the structures and processes between the Loyola Schools and the Ateneo Professional Schools in view of a possible higher education cluster.”*

Prior to the work of the HESC, the President’s Council had several discussions of the merits and possibilities of integrating LS and APS into a Higher Education Cluster. The Board Executive Committee also discussed this proposal several times.

The HESC led a consultation process which involved the following:

- 11 Interviews¹
- 15 Focus Group Discussions (mixed groups from APS and LS)²

I also conducted a meeting with APS and LS deans and administrators to cascade the results of the organizational review and to receive feedback.

¹ Ateneo Presidents (1 ex-President and 4 current Ateneo Presidents in Luzon and Mindanao), Former VPs (2), Incoming JGSOM Dean, Former Registrar, Library Heads (2)

² Deans (2 sessions, with 5 and 8 participants), Associate Deans (2 sessions with 3 participants each) Associate Deans, Directors (3 participants), Assistants to the Deans (8 participants), Department Chair, OIC Faculty (3 sessions with 6 participants each, 1 session with 11 participants), Culture Bearers (4 participants) Research Directors and Coordinators (2 sessions, 4 and 8 participants), Registrar’s Office Admin Staff (6 participants), Internationalization Coordinators and Office Representatives (10 participants)

In its study, the HESC concluded that there were sufficient reasons for creating the Higher Education Cluster:

- Better focus on the academic “core:” teaching/learning, research, and internationalization;
- Greater opportunities for synergy in systems and facilities, research, academic programs, faculty resources;
- Consistency across academic units in the following areas: academic standards & policies, support mechanisms for research and outreach, faculty ranking, development and promotions, student life;
- Greater efficiency through streamlined managerial functions

Moreover, the HESC noted that:

- There are existing collaboration initiatives among sub-units, groups, and individuals across the two Schools that have proven to be beneficial and can be further developed.
- There are current issues or gaps that may be resolved by aligning the processes and structures of the two units.
- Although a number of challenges were surfaced, most can be addressed with more in-depth discussions and concrete efforts at bringing together processes, programs, and people among specific sub-units.

Even as we pursue the creation of the Higher Education Cluster, it is important to note that the HESC’s recommendations are broad strokes with many details that can be fleshed out/ironed out in collaborative processes and through an ongoing study of the gradual implementation of elements in this new structure. The work of integrating LS and APS will be a work-in-process and we must be prepared to refine and revise it as needed.

The following are some of the recommended key administrators for this Higher Education Cluster:

1. VP for Higher Education

The VP for Higher Education (VPHE) is the chief academic officer of the Higher Education Cluster. S/he is responsible for all academic operations, specifically the activities related to curricula, teaching/learning, research, and internationalization. As head of the cluster, the VPHE ensures that all academic goals are met, and that the strategic priorities of the University are pursued. The VPHE reports to the President. The nine School Deans of LS and APS will report to the VPHE.

2. Dean for Undergraduate Studies

The Dean for Undergraduate Studies (DUS) ensures the identity and integrity of Ateneo undergraduate education as a whole. S/he collaborates with the School

Deans and department chairs, particularly through undergraduate majors program coordinators and those in charge of the core curriculum as well as faculty formation in teaching and learning. The DUS reports to the VPHE.

3. Dean for Graduate Studies

The Dean for Graduate Studies (DGS) provides oversight for the postgraduate programs of the University. The DGS office focuses on common services and external regulatory compliance, while recognizing the different Schools' and departments' autonomy over program formulation and delivery. S/he assists the VPHE in developing, coordinating and maintaining graduate programs in the University. The DGS reports to the VPHE.

4. Assistant VP for Research, Creative Work, & Innovation

The Assistant VP for Research, Creative Work & Innovation (AVP-RCWI) provides research direction and support to the different schools. S/he oversees both the strategic and tactical activities involving research, creative work, and innovation. The AVP-RCWI office implements the research agenda crafted by the HE Research Council in consonance with the strategic plans of the university. The AVP-RCWI reports to the VPHE.

5. Assistant VP for Internationalization

The Assistant VP for Internationalization (AVP-I) strengthens the capacity of the University to operate in a global environment through effective engagements with universities and other organizations or networks abroad. S/he formulates and implements strategic initiatives to promote internationalization for the Higher Education Cluster through expanded international research, international collaborative projects, transnational education initiatives, and strategic relationships with global partners. The AVP-I reports to the VPHE.

The next steps to setup the Higher Education Cluster are the following:

1. The Board of Trustees to conduct a Search for the VP for Higher Education
2. The President to conduct Searches for:
 - Dean for Undergraduate Studies
 - Dean for Graduate Studies
 - Assistant VP for Research, Creative Work, & Innovation
 - Assistant VP for Internationalization

The Office of the President will implement communication strategies to inform, consult, and update various stakeholders on the setting up of the Higher Education Cluster.

On behalf of the University, I would like to thank all the members of the HESC for generously giving their time in doing an organizational review that led to the creation of the Higher Education structure. I thank them too for their valuable recommendations.

I request your cooperation and prayers as we go through these vital organizational changes so as to better fulfill our mission that is Ateneo de Manila.

(Sgd) Roberto C Yap SJ
President