



ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Memo # U2324-083

11 Jan 2024

TO The University Community
SUBJECT North Carpark Upgrade

I wish to acknowledge the different concerns and sentiments raised by members of the community related to the memo “Upgrades and Improvements to the North Carpark, Loyola Heights Campus,” dated 20 December 2023, issued by the Office of the VP for Administration (VPA). Let me address some of these in this memo through initial responses that we can expound on in a forum.

1. While there were consultations regarding the North Carpark Upgrade Project, the University administration apologizes for the inadequacy of these consultations.
2. The North Carpark upgrade is meant to address the need for a better-designed, maintained, and safer parking area. The increase in the number of parking slots available is merely a consequence of better planning and design of the area; there is no increase in the lot size or area covered by an upgraded North Carpark.
3. Other car parks on campus also need improvement. They will have their turn. But while we are improving our car parks, we also have some measures to promote sustainable campus mobility by, among other things, increasing the number of e-jeeps – a project that VPA will present for comments and suggestions by the community at a later time.
4. Regarding trees, since 2016, we have been working on replacing invasive tree species – particularly mahogany and gmelina – with native species to further enhance biodiversity conservation on campus. Special attention is given to these two non-native species because they have been shown to have adverse effects on the growth of native trees. For example, their presence on campus and their ability to outcompete native species means that other areas, like the Wildlife Sanctuary, will have a higher chance of being stocked with mahogany instead of native trees. We would like to promote native trees because these species have roles in both attracting and supporting (and restoring or conserving) native biodiversity, as well as serving to showcase native flora for educational purposes.
5. We acknowledge the importance of trees and we formulate renovation plans with a view of achieving a balance between biodiversity conservation and other stakeholder needs. We also acknowledge the importance of campus green spaces. We will soon embark on creating the Campus Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) which will be co-developed with relevant stakeholders. It will be guided by Lux-in-Domino 2030, the Laudato Si’ Plan



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2022-2029, and will be aligned with the Campus Master Plan, the Campus Landscape Master Plan, the Climate Action Plan, and other relevant strategic documents.

In recognition of the varying viewpoints of members of the Ateneo community, the University invites everyone to a forum on the North Carpark Upgrade Project on 31 January 2024. This meeting is envisioned for the Ateneo community to have an opportunity to express their opinions – clarify concerns, offer solutions, and arrive at reasonable compromises – so that together we can move forward with forbearance, trust, and care for the common good and our common home. The exact venue and time of the forum will be announced in the coming days. We hope that this will be a space for everyone to have a respectful, open, and fact-based discussion of the issues related to this project.

With this forthcoming forum, the North Carpark Upgrade project has been suspended effective 10 January 2024, pending the results of the forum.

Rest assured that Ateneo de Manila University is fully committed to its Laudato Si' plans. We will strive to let our projects be guided by our roadmap towards becoming a Laudato Si' university.

(Sgd) Roberto C Yap SJ
President