



June 27, 2024

Dear FEUDNRSMAF,

Much has transpired between last year's homecoming and this year's upcoming one; and it is my distinct honor to share these developments we have undertaken for the greater good of your Alma Mater and for the benefit of those who were unable to attend the 2024 Foundation Week.

Last October 2023, we signed a lease agreement with AC Health, the healthcare subsidiary of Ayala Corporation, effectively turning over management and control of the FEU-NRMF Medical Center for thirty-five (35) years. This controversial decision was not one we took lightly, but believe it or not, maintaining the status quo was the least desirable among the available options.

Our hospital was intended to be the laboratory for our students and trainees. However, our forefathers understood that we would not be able to survive if we only catered to charity and service patients. Hence, a pay section was created to mitigate the expected service losses. Unfortunately, it was never enough. The school would support the hospital, until it couldn't; and while we don't believe our hospital is a lost cause, we don't have the luxury of time to turn things around.

The lease agreement definitively puts the school back to the fore; right where it should have been. The partnership not only allows the hospital to carry out its intended mission, chances are, it will do better. Being part of a system means our students will no longer be limited to our Medical Center for their training needs. Moreover, through economies of scale, AC Health can bring down procurement costs, provide our physicians expanded access to patients and vice-versa, and we can finally look forward to much needed facility and equipment upgrades through their capital infusion of over a billion pesos (₱1B) in ten years, six hundred eighty million pesos (₱680M) of which shall be spent during the first three (3) years.

Author Robert Hargrove believes today's leaders must be able to move quickly from being stewards – conserving what has been built, to being revolutionaries – engaged in a balancing act of maintaining equilibrium and creative destruction. One example of the latter is New York University or NYU. Oddly enough their rise to prominence began with a sale. Faced with crippling financial difficulties in the 1970's, the administration made the very unpopular decision to sell its Bronx campus. Naturally, many university alumni were vehemently opposed to it. Fifty years later, the administration has been vindicated. Not only was the sale necessary, it may go down as the most significant event in the school's proud history – one that dates back to 1831.

After raising the capital needed to save the school, NYU embarked on the greatest fundraising campaign in the history of American higher education. They spent billions to update their campus and increase their financial aid packages. Consequently, applications increased with each dollar raised. By the 1990's, their student applications tripled, which allowed the school to increase their admission requirements.

In 1991, NYU accepted a modest 65% of the 10,000 applicants. By 2007, only 24% of the 37,000 freshmen applicants were accepted. For the class of 2027, only 8% of the 120,000 applicants were accepted. NYU now receives more applications than any private college or university in the United States. If you need more proof of NYU's popularity, it has been rated as Princeton Review's #1 "dream school" for three years in a row, beating out the likes of Harvard, Yale, and Stanford.

The past does not always predict the future. It is possible to improve your lot in life. There was a time when NYU wasn't even considered among the best schools in New York City. Now they're arguably one of the best in the world. If they can do it, why can't we? From time immemorial, our measuring stick has always been our performance in the licensure examinations. I am pleased to announce that our tradition of academic excellence is alive and well with all our programs continuing to boast a passing percentage well above the national passing rates. Accompanied by stellar individual performances from the likes of Dr. Sean Michael P. Orbigo who placed 3rd in the October 2023 Physician Licensure Examination, our total count of topnotchers has increased to 153 for Medicine alone.

2023 was also a banner year with respect to our accreditations. We began with only four programs being accredited. By December, all eight programs were accredited. The School of Nutrition & Dietetics earned candidate status. Pharmacy, Radiologic Technology, and Respiratory Therapy each earned a Level 1 accreditation. The School of Physical Therapy went from Level II to Level III; while the Schools of Nursing and Medical Laboratory Science both went

to Level IV; making them eligible to apply for the coveted CHED Center of Excellence. Finally, the School of Medicine is hoping to achieve a Level III re-accredited status this year; and should we succeed, it won't be long before we apply for Level IV and join only two other prominent institutions with the highest level of accreditation. These outstanding achievements did not go unnoticed. The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities – Commission on Accreditation or PACUCOA, granted us Institutional Accreditation in Cebu last December. It is worth noting that FEU-NRMF is only the 4th higher education institution in the Philippines to earn this distinction.

Moving on to the non-academic achievements, we were the proud recipients of the Employer's Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) Kapatid Award for Industrial Peace and Harmony, in recognition of outstanding labor relations. This is a truly remarkable achievement, especially when you take into account the volatile labor relations of the 1980s. Companies across all sectors now look to us as the benchmark for harmonious labor relations. The Bureau of Internal Revenue recognized the Foundation as one of the Top Taxpayers in our district. The local government of Nueva Vizcaya commended our Book-Al Sa Puso Community Project, where our Community Engagement Office, library, and other volunteers delivered books to Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas. We also received the Outstanding Stakeholder Award from the Department of Education-NCR School Division Office and a back-to-back Kaisa Star Seal Award from the Bureau of Fire Protection.

Evidently, the state of our foundation is strong, yet we cannot close our eyes to the challenges that lie in wake. There are serious threats that must be addressed. The old order and our old ways of doing things are being called into question. To make matters worse, all of this is happening at a time, when the very foundations of FEU-NRMF have been shaken to the core, due to financial difficulties. The question is, what are we going to do about it?

Well, I can tell you what we are not going to do. We're not going to stand pat and allow things to continue down this path. We're going to ask ourselves the hard questions, putting aside our pride and personal biases in search of the truth, knowing full well that we may be part of the problem. At the same time, we are also not going to point fingers, looking for a scapegoat to blame. The only way we can turn things around is together.

To further support our vision, our future plans will be geared toward autonomy, internationalization, and expansion. Inspired by our feat ranking 56th in the 2023 World University Rankings for Innovation, we aim to be included in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings in the coming Academic Year. Four Philippine schools were ranked between

1,000 and 1,500. We boldly aim to be the 5th. To add, students from our School of Medicine won the Khon Kaen University International Challenge of Emergency Medicine (KKU:ICEM) Surgical Trauma Competition last February 2024, besting over twenty-three teams and displaying our prowess in the surgical field. Notably, this was the first time in nine years that a non-Thai university was crowned champion in the prestigious competition.

We have also been aggressively expanding our international linkages. The partnerships have been centered around, but not limited to the following: improving student engagement, mobility, and outcomes, professional development programs for faculty, and collaborations regarding community engagement and research. Building on our strong ties with Thailand and South Korea, we have recently signed with partners from Germany, Canada, and Indonesia. Prospective opportunities have presented themselves from Australia, Japan, and Taiwan to name a few. We can expect that list to grow further over time.

Over a year ago, we shared our intention to open new programs. Today, we are pleased to announce that our applications with the Commission on Higher Education for Master in Nursing and Bachelor of Science in Psychology have been approved with the former having accepted its first cohort of students last February. Meanwhile, our psychology program shall commence in A.Y. 2024-2025. A timely, yet bittersweet moment given that students from the new programs will replace those from Senior High which will be closing its doors after this academic year. Although we will be sad to see it go, our Senior Highschool has admirably served its purpose, helping us to mitigate the effects of K-12, while providing a new stream of students for our BS programs.

We know where we want to go. Our previous definitions of rough waters or uncharted territory are behind us. With our momentum, we need the FEU-NRMF community to step up now, more than ever. We need your energy. We need your enthusiasm, and we need your imagination. We need a willingness to question conventional wisdom, and the openness to rethink old dogmas, without regard for tradition, simply because that's the way we always did things. More importantly, we need to shed our limiting beliefs for FEU-NRMF. We are our own greatest enemy. We will never truly be globally competitive or world-class until we can believe it in our hearts. Just like NYU, we can use our adversity to propel us to greater heights, giving new meaning to our motto, "To the stars, through hardships."

I wish you all a successful celebration and homecoming. Ad Astra Per Aspera!



JUAN ENRIQUE J. REYES
President and Chief Operating Officer