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ABSTRACT

Economic growth and social development significantly improved the living condition of people around the world as several job opportunities were generated brought about by the rapid growth of industries and businesses. To fill the labor demand needed for the production and delivery of goods and services, investments in education consequently increased to provide individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge required for the jobs. Graduate schools likewise proliferated to equip leaders and managers with the advance knowledge and specialized training required for positions of responsibility.

As societies undergo the transformation, education changes as well to foster the competencies needed by the growing economy and the society. Significant reforms and innovations are put in place towards the achievement of excellence, focusing not only to literacy and numeracy but also to learning environments and new strategies for the common good based on respect, dignity, and human development.

Just like in any other industry, the post-graduate education market has reached its saturation point. Many universities have already established their own graduate schools to grab a large percentage of the enrollees internationally. All have presented similar propositions using prevailing standards, business models, and best practices from the industry. While those measures may be considered as practical solutions, are they relevant and competitive?

To lead the path to sustain global competitiveness, this paper describes how the leadership of a graduate school builds up the school community and promote excellence, in and off campus. It details strategies undertaken by the leadership to encourage the community to be proactive in a shared learning process and engage in lifelong learning through various channels while providing students with an experience of community, deepened by curricular and co-curricular programs. This paper's purpose is to draw lessons on programs implemented by a graduate school, focusing on the development of the community -- faculty development, alignment of infrastructure needs, alumni involvement, the establishment of innovative practices and fortification of extension programs. This paper will cover a substantial review of related literature on common good, leadership and best practices from the industry. It will present measures, strategies and concepts to be undertaken towards the sustenance of academic excellence with the end in goal of providing for the common good.

SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE IN THE ACADEME FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Introduction

Economic growth and social development during the Industrial Revolution in the 18th-19th centuries significantly improved the living condition of people around the world. Several job opportunities were generated from rapid growth of industries and businesses. However, despite the creation of new jobs, many remained poor and unemployed as the newly-created jobs required higher skills that the people know little of and are not work-ready.

The growing mismatch between the quality of workforce and the new skills required of the newly-created jobs remained a reality even to this date as many graduates are either unemployed or underemployed. Notwithstanding that many also had no education or did not finish school especially in underdeveloped countries due to poverty or lack of educational facilities in far-flung areas. Many other social and economic factors may have influenced the labor-education mismatch, but the most prominent factor is the lack of qualifications for the even most basic jobs.

To fill the labor demand for the growing economy, investments in education consequently increased to provide individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge required for the jobs. Meanwhile, leaders and managers are equipped with advance knowledge and specialized training by graduate schools required for positions of responsibility.

Education - The Driving Force Towards Competence

Education in developed countries particularly Europe and the United States of America has proven to be successful in meeting the demands of their fast-changing economies. The global economic recession of the 1980's which slowly recovered towards the end of the century stimulated the call for reforms not only in economic, political, and social systems but also in education. Competitiveness and strong excellence were the rallying cries of various economic and educational reform movements in order to fully recover from the recession.

Thomas Toch, a policy education expert, emphasized that "educational reforms are tied to the nation's quest for greater competitiveness." As the world undergoes transformation, education changes as well to foster the competencies needed by the growing economy and the society. Significant reforms and innovations are put in place academic excellence, focusing not only to literacy and numeracy but also to learning environments and new strategies with the integration of a strong commitment to the common good based on respect, dignity, and human development.

The Path Towards Excellence

Measurement of excellence today goes beyond the traditional assessment of good reputation and resources, high admission rates and enrolment retention, increase productivity, high profitability, distinguished outcomes and high rankings.

In the book *Achieving Education Excellence*, author Alexander Astin measures excellence as the institution's ability to affect the students' and faculties' intellectual and scholarly development to make a positive difference in their lives. "Impact on student's knowledge and personal development and on the faculty members' scholarly and pedagogical ability and productivity are deemed important characters of educational excellence". (Astin, p. 61).

The World Bank affirms that education contributes to the economic and social development of a nation and has the responsibility to equip individuals with the advance knowledge and skills, advanced quality research and teaching, in order for education to be responsive to the labor market demands of government, business, and the profession. Ben-David, the pioneer of modern sociology of science, adds that these specialized knowledge and skills have to be "cultivated and transmitted at its highest level to be utilized in the professional activity." Essential in building academic excellence is the engagement of highly competent and motivated teaching staff and a supportive professional culture and the ability of institutions to continuously evaluate, monitor and innovate quality training and research outputs.

In the book *Managing Education Excellence*, a shared set of attitudes, values, and beliefs to develop common expectations are characters of a robust organizational culture. This is a shift of focus of institutions from policy to aspiration and from allocation to quality of education.

Education develops critical thinking, independent judgment, problem-solving, and information and media literacy that contributes to changing people's mindset and perspectives expanding their opportunities to choose meaningful lives with equal dignity. Improvements in the quality of education, and in the provision of economically and socially relevant learning as determined by individuals and communities, are intrinsic to making these shifts (Sustaining, p).

Over time, development of the potential of individuals became the central concern of education and management. In *Rethinking Education*, 'an empowering education is one that builds the human resources we need to be productive, to continue to learn, to solve problems, to be creative, and to live together with nature in peace and harmony. When nations ensure that such an education is accessible to all throughout their lives, a quiet revolution is set in motion: education becomes the engine of sustainable development and the key to a better world'.

EXCELLENCE FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Education is a process of creation, control, acquisition, validation, and use of knowledge. It must be made commonly available to the people, especially to the profession. Education, therefore, is not limited to acquiring and validation of knowledge, but also to the development and transmission of knowledge for common use. As such, knowledge and education are considered as common good.

Perceived to be a common good, education must be equitably shared and be made available to all the people, regardless of culture, economic status, nationality, age, and religious belief because education is a basic human right. As such, "it is the right and duty of the State to protect, according to the rules of right reason and faith, the moral and religious education of youth, by removing public impediments that stand in the way." (From *Rappresentanti in terra*, Quotation on Education, Authors of Society, Catholic Social Teaching, p. 397).

The fundamental purpose of education has evolved to sustain and enhance the dignity, capacity, and welfare of the human being, in relation to their community and the society. This new approach can best be realized if enhanced with the concept of common good that leaders are committed to implementing at all levels of decision making and inspire others to do the same. Therefore, it would be the best interest of organizations "to support the building of

healthy communities on the basis that what is good for the community is good for the company.” (Alexander and Buckingham, p.).

This theory of common good emphasizes that an organization is a community of persons who need each other to satisfy one’s own needs and subsist, but above all to develop as a person and be happy as life with others is part of the very idea of happiness.’ (Argandoña, p. 7). Meanwhile, the Catholic church social teaching focuses on the dignity of the human person as each individual is made in the image and likeness of God. Each individual has value and must be respected by the society.

The common good approach, therefore, is not exclusively identified with the provision of material goods and services and creating infrastructure for the benefit of the organization and the society but must also include the support of human and cultural value such as self-discipline, integrity, trust, and solidarity to sustain human capital that would involve the businesses, government, and the civil society.

Hindu statesman and philosopher Kautilya describes common good as a shared good between corporate and the society at large. He maintains that the strength of a successful business lies in its ability to incorporate the system of values and norms embedded in the respective societies and culture. A skilled and talented workforce, a robust market for goods and services, and above all, a healthy local and international community that is based on the principle of what is good for the community is good for the company to make a business successfully efficient.

In the case of Japan, Kautilya cites that its economic and business success is not much on profit but generally on Japanese ethos and business ethics embodied in non-profit motivations including honor, trust, entrepreneurship, devotion to the enterprise, selfless work and so on.

Lessons learned from San Beda University’s Graduate School of Business

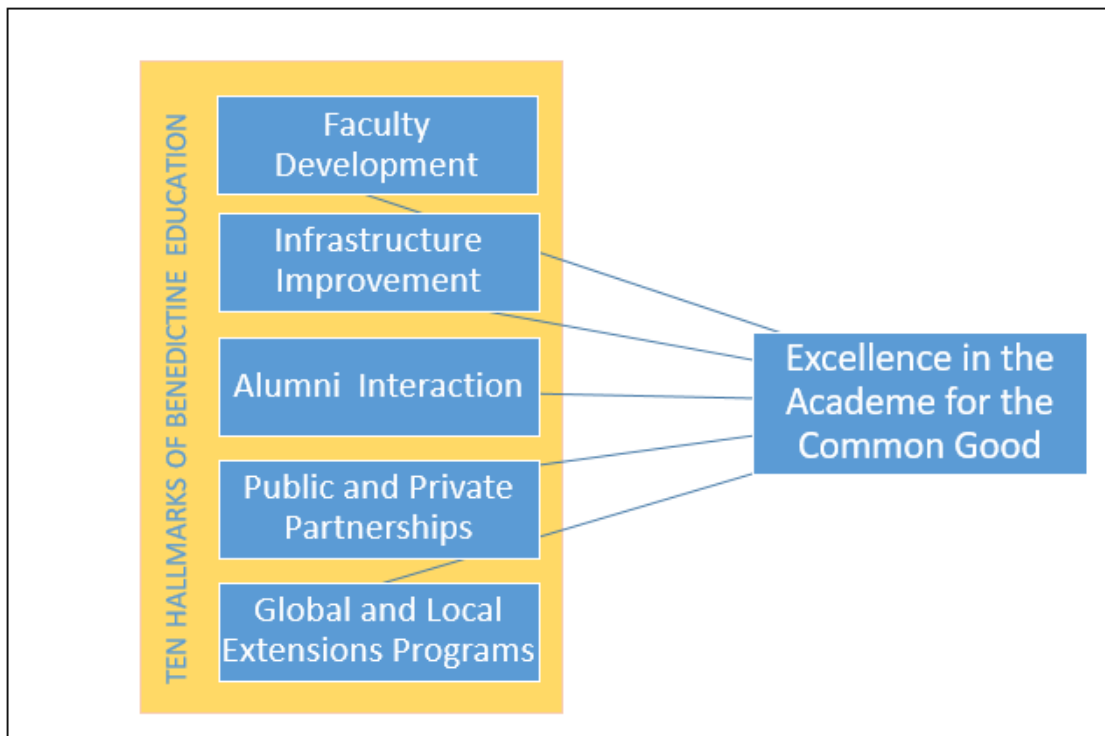
San Beda University is a Benedictine Catholic educational school in the Philippines committed to the Christian formation of the Beda community as its service to the Church, the Philippine society, and the world. It aims to form its members in faith (fides), knowledge (scientia), and virtue (virtus).

Being a Benedictine Catholic school, it follows the Ten Hallmarks of Benedictine Education, to wit: 1) love of Christ and neighbor; 2) Prayer: a life marked by lectio, liturgy and mindfulness; 3) Stability: commitment to the daily life of a Benedictine monastery; 4) Conversatio: the way of formation and transformation; 5) Obedience: a commitment of

listening and consequent action; 6) Discipline: a way toward learning and freedom; 7) Humility: acceptance of the demand for realism and accountability; 8) Stewardship: respect for the beauty and goodness of creation as a sacrament of God; 9) Hospitality: call to openness; and 10) Community: call for service to the common good and respect for the individual.

The Ten Hallmarks of Benedictine Education became an encompassing centerpiece of all factors leading to the sustenance of excellence in the academe for the common good. It has been the guiding post of San Beda University that enabled its Graduate School of Business to offer a world-class education inspired by the tenets of leadership and governance. Below is the Sustainability Framework used by the Graduate School of Business that illustrates the process of actualizing developments and achieving organizational goals.

Figure 1: Sustainability Framework of the San Beda University Graduate School of Business



Using this framework, the Graduate School of Business envisions to produce professionally competent as corporate and business individuals, fully aware of their significant role in society, and responsibly committed as agents of change for the good of society and for the greater glory of God. It seeks to train knowledgeable, principled and skilled leaders that have

a “global mindset” and skills in navigating organizational realities with emphasis on leadership development, critical, creative and integrative thinking and learning.

It also provides a serious agenda that seeks to develop universal principles of leadership and promote good governance in both the private and public sectors with accountability and responsibility at its very core.

Understanding the situation

It is a given that educational system should be leading the path towards global competitiveness. But the question remains on how an institution can lead the students if the foundation for progress is insufficient and lacking in necessary infrastructures and programs.

The list may go on and on in identifying the internal challenges that any graduate school may encounter. There may be many things achieved in the past that may have been proven to bear significant value to a graduate school. However, the fundamental question arises - given scarce organizational resources: on which of these things that matter most to students should be the main focus?

In Malcolm Gladwell’s book, *The Tipping Point*, the author recommended the application of the power of context. He explained in the book that the inner states are the results of the outer circumstances (Gladwell, 2002). Research, therefore, is a crucial first step towards an improved understanding of the current situation.

As practiced in the business industry, the benefit derived from “situation analysis”, from a two-tiered vista: externally and internally, cannot be overemphasized. External factors affect organizations without any recourse or influence. Internal factors, on the other hand, contribute to the enhancement or limitation of the strategic alternatives. Knowing what you have reveals the extent of what you can utilize to be able to attain what you want to achieve.

Best practices yield unique insights into proven and practicable paradigms. Prominent academic institutions and professional associations, both locally and internationally, have embarked on specific programs in their drive for excellence. However, there is no one-size-fits-all formula that may be uniformly applied across organizations - across corporate cultures. Various nuances abound and they need to be properly considered.

Leadership in action

Internalizing the challenges presented, the advancement of quality management in the graduate school must be anchored on the concept of leadership (Prager and Surch, 2010). Facing the abovementioned challenges requires an accurate appreciation of leadership in its truest essence. Essentially, one must believe that leadership is not a noun - leadership is a verb. Leadership connotes action, leadership requires action, and leadership in action.

The San Graduate School's transformation to excellence rests on the initiation and guidance of the leadership. It is directly clear to the leader the values and purpose of the Graduate School in particular and the University in general and most of all, the fundamental aim of developing talents of students and the faculty to their fullest. The leader communicates across to the rest of the academic community the school's goals, programs and innovations to the students and the faculty through various forms including speeches, conference, training and symposia.

With this framework, ideas and actions enumerated in this article were all tested and implemented by the author in a graduate school that has resulted in its continuous development.

Build from within

Leadership is not just about getting the best people in your organization. Leadership is about influencing people in your organization to become better persons and helping them achieve their full potential. Developing people you lead is a leader's first order of business. Without their self-esteem and cooperation, you can never inspire, energize and empower them to be better than what they already are; and if you cannot inspire, energize and empower them, you cannot lead them. John Maxwell, another international author on leadership and one who has mentored great people in leadership positions, aptly capsulizes this concept into a single sentence: "People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care" (Maxwell, 2012).

This aspect of leadership, focusing on people, should be the first priority in fully integrating the faculty towards the main goals of a graduate school. The key resolve is to glue together all the bright minds and provide them with the right mindset pursuing the institution's focus on research and development (BizEd 2008).

As a first step, conducting a Research Agenda seminar will allow the faculty members to revisit and improve the research direction of the institution. Through careful deliberation, the faculty will identify the technical aspect, administrative and structural support of the institution as important drivers in a successful research program.

On the aspect of curriculum enhancement, the Curriculum Mapping seminar will enhance the alignment of subjects offered both in the Doctor's and Master's programs. More than a compliance to the government's rulings, this effort must be conducted annually to consolidate innovative ideas from the faculty members that will further improve and provide value-adding changes in the curriculum.

The Research Writing Seminar should be a staple event in the graduate school with attendance from both the students and faculty members. This will ensure the quality of thesis and dissertation produced tantamount to the high standards of Ivy League schools in the US.

Capacity building

Indeed, leaders derive strength from the people in the organization. But how could these people perform and produce results if the capacity is limited? Simultaneous to the efforts given in investing in faculty development, capacity building through infrastructure development is yet another piston that powers the engine for change. The school's infrastructure must go hand in hand with the education service to support the growing needs of the graduate school. As discussed in the book *Tipping Point*, human beings are a lot more sensitive to their environment than they may seem to be (Gladwell, 2002). This only shows that structural improvement translates to increase in effectiveness and advancement of the organization.

In a graduate school, the immediate effect of structural change must be initially felt inside the classroom. With this, renovation of classrooms must be put on top of the list. Of course, the school may have been burdened financially. Thus, financial support from the alumni can be sought to fund the construction on a per room basis. In return for their generosity, the renovated rooms can be labeled based on the name of the sponsoring alumnus.

Complementing the newly renovated rooms are the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment that must be simultaneously installed and fixed as part of the classroom interiors. These important acquisitions will no longer require students to borrow equipment from the central equipment office just to have a classroom slide presentation.

Another innovative addition to the existing infrastructure is the establishment of a conference room and research center solely devoted to the graduate school. This unique section in the institution's premises will provide students and faculty members with a research haven where they could focus on their thesis and dissertation writing and consultation. The conference room can accommodate at least 25 people where pocket meetings may be held comfortably at

the disposal of a coordinator. On top of the main college library, an exclusive library incorporated in the said room would be value adding by offering the latest books in the business industry.

Constructing research hubs in the Graduate School addresses the needs of the students and faculty for a conducive venue in holding strategy paper, thesis and dissertation defenses. It is the facility that will help elevate the quality and quantity of student and faculty researchers and possibly catapult the school's standing as one of the most productive academic research institutions.

Connectivity and access to information around the world is important in the developing the research capability of the graduate school. On the initiative of the Graduate School, the University is keen on upgrading the information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure to enhance the academic and research collaboration, community outreach program, and education and support services of the institution. With an enhanced ICT, the Graduate School will be able to provide learners easy access to knowledge anytime and anywhere. ICT will support the university's search for knowledge and navigate through the vast amounts of data and information worldwide. Through ICT, the university will have new ways of teaching and learning. ICT does not only improve learning quality, innovation and creativity, but also simplifies administrative and management processes and services. The establishment of the Center for Information and Communication Technology will provide a reliable, accessible, secure, resilient, and sustainable integrated digital ecosystem in the University.

Alumni involvement

As previously narrated, running a graduate school entails managing of people on one hand while ensuring quality educational services, on the other hand, leaving the Dean's hands full. Despite the heavy loads, the Dean keeps his doors open for communication with students. The Deans are expected to be a model for the people in their organization. They cannot give what they do not have. They cannot influence and inspire the people they lead to be successful if they do not know and have not experienced success themselves. For, as they say, leaders can never take their people farther than they have traveled (Maxwell, 2011).

To fill this communication gap, someone has to play the role of a master of success. Postgraduate education should make use of master-apprenticeship relationship in the learning process so as to guide them to an effective ongoing development process. More importantly, the real challenge to our desired dynamic postgraduate education is the creation of a mentor-protégé relationship to facilitate continuous learning beyond the formal education process (Hahn, 2014).

Who else could fill this role but the alumni of the school who are now trailblazers, pioneers, chief executive officers, presidents and chairmen in various multinational, conglomerate and local companies. Through various recognitions, the Graduate School can capture the interest of alumni to become role models and masters of success to the students. It has pioneered the Icon of Entrepreneurship Award to outstanding Bedan alumni. These awards can be specifically introduced that will highlight the success, contributions, and achievements of the alumni in the business industry. More than the awards, these management gurus may all share their wisdom and valuable messages as baccalaureate guest speakers during the school's commencement exercises or in specially-organized seminars.

Innovative Partnership

Only through continuous development that a graduate school may have better chances of surviving the ever-changing business, economic and organizational world (University Business, smallcaps2016). One cannot be contented with what is, nor should one relax and sit on his laurels elated by his accomplishments of improving on what was. A leader concerns oneself not only with what is new but more importantly on what should be new. In the current pace of competition in the graduate school market, keeping the lead is already a tall order. But in being several steps forward, one can only hope for survival, not just leadership and success. Success belongs to those who dare to innovate, those who always thirst for something new and something better.

In order to scale up the competitiveness of the Graduate School, implementation of an innovative and strategic partnership with private companies is a big step forward. With a tailored-fit MBA program, the graduate school opens its doors to private companies and caters to the needs of its senior and junior executive employees. With this unique off-campus program, the quality of postgraduate education reaches out to more professionals and in the process, permeate the business industry.

Closed linkages with several successful private companies and other education institutions through advanced training course, competitive research progress, consultancies, and continuing education programs enable the students and faculty to learn best practices and challenges in the industry.

Given that classes are held from Monday to Friday or just every Saturday in some graduate schools, the classes under the off-campus program can be held on Sundays at the company's venue in coordination with the industry-practitioner professors of the graduate school.

On top of the tailored-fit MBA program for private companies, a graduate school may also develop an executive learning program targeting the professionals and companies who share the same passion for continuous professional development. The concept is about investing in people-based strategy as a tool in gaining a strong leverage from today's highly competitive market. Similar to the off-campus MBA program, the modules are tailored-fit to the needs of the company and its employees.

Top industry practitioners who are leaders in their respective fields will serve as professors and discuss comprehensively the modules under the executive learning program which will be delivered in two sessions for four hours each at the preferred training venue of the company. The said program can be complemented by a range of other development programs which focus on specific aspects of leadership and management.

Helping hands

In an educational institution, it is not only about the quality curriculum and outstanding facilities. The true worth of a school is also measured by its contributions to society. Remember that leaders do not live for themselves alone; leaders live for the organization and the society (Milana, Rasmussen, and Holford, 2016). One must think big in the context of assuming a scope beyond what is good not only to one but also as a leader. The idea of applying that learned knowledge in business must manifest in the outputs that are beneficial for the common good.

The offspring of this mission is the establishment of global extension and linkages program in the Graduate School. It aims to extend the helping hands of the members of the Graduate School in the local and global community.

In the local setup, the Graduate School actively promotes entrepreneurship among the non-teaching employees of the institution. Every year, the participants learn new skills directly from the experts in the field with programs such as flower arrangement, perfume making, deli making and Santa Claus figure making. These pieces of training are conceptualized to inculcate the "herd behavior" in the whole community, seeking to harmonize actions toward a common goal.

Fine tuning the details

Summarizing the key areas in managing a graduate school, a Dean invests in faculty development, aligns the infrastructure needs, involves the alumni, establishes innovative practices, and fortifies the extension program. Focusing on the big areas will sufficiently create a

big impact on the students and in attracting applicants to the Graduate School. However, there are times that even the smallest details matter and require careful attention and consideration.

Awards and Recognitions

One of the measures that gives instant impact is the awarding of special recognition to students who qualify in the Dean's List. Through this simple recognition on a trimestral basis, students immediately feel the fruits of their labor in studies. They appreciate the efforts of the Graduate School management in recognizing them which will continuously inspire them to excel in their academics. Aside from the certificates, the students' names are also be posted both in the campus and in the official publication.

Even the faculty members' performance is hyped-up with such recognition activity from the graduate school management. Faculty members are acknowledged for their outstanding performance based on the faculty evaluation report. Moreover, the professor who garnered the highest evaluation result is awarded a Plaque of Recognition for being the Most Outstanding Faculty for a specific trimester. With this effort, the faculty members are being challenged that outstanding performances merit such recognition from the Graduate School management. Also, professors with perfect attendance are given with tokens of appreciation for completing the required full attendance in their respective classes.

Faculty Evaluation

The Graduate School implemented the mid-trimester evaluation of professor. This faculty evaluation maintains the high quality of education provided. In order to receive accurate and timely feedback from the evaluation, this evaluation is rendered in the middle of the trimester instead of its usual accomplishment every end of the trimester. In this way, professors may immediately adjust their teaching process, address the concern, and refocus the subject matter if needed.

Student Magazine

Establishment of the student publication encourages free speech inside the institution. Students are given free hand to publish their own magazine funded by the graduate school. The magazine can be fully institutionalized as the official publication of the Graduate School complete with editorial and article contributions from the students and the faculty. Through this service, it captures the dynamics of the Graduate School community in varying stages of change in the

students' lives and professions. It also serves as the avenue of communication where students and faculty could freely publish their thoughts and ideas regarding the industry and their perspective on various issues.

Research Journal

As result of the Research Agenda seminar, the Graduate School actively commits itself in producing a research journal at least twice a year. Being a research-focused institution, the research journal is the School's response to more opportunities and venues for scholars and practitioners to further advance new knowledge in the field of business, and enable the development of new policies, processes, services, and products. The research journal is a double-blind refereed journal that highlights thesis and dissertation with relevant scope addressing the prevailing or emerging issues that affect the ever-changing global business landscape.

Research Digest

To address the limited capacity of the Research Journal, the Graduate School publishes a management digest to provide a definitive standard for a comprehensive reference learning tools for students. It serves as another platform for professors to share their insights on effective practices in business and management through this bi-annual publication. It is a supplementary reading material for students with direct inputs from their professors on top of the regular classes.

GSB Night

Organizing a cultural night can be a much-awaited event in the Graduate School. Spearheaded by the student council, the cultural night will showcase an event full of serenade and performances from talented students. It is also a gathering of all the clusters of the Graduate School from MBA to DBA and even those from its off-campus programs. It can be normally held in a posh venue outside the school where students and professors alike come in their best tuxedos for men and elegant gowns for the ladies. To cap the night of celebration, the Graduate School management uses this event to award various recognitions to all deserving students who have merited outstanding performance and career in school and in the workplace.

Stricter policies

School policies are drafted and implemented based on the existing condition affecting the community. To better serve the interest of all members of the community, stricter implementation is a must with immediate effect to the primary beneficiaries - the students. In

the Philippines, one of the prevailing condition in the graduate school is the influx of foreign students whose general purpose of studying is just for their visa extension in the country. Placing a total ban or increasing the standards of qualification for these foreign students will benefit the genuine students in the graduate school. Because of the language barrier problems, these foreign students normally experience difficulties in comprehension, thus affecting the total class environment.

Another policy is the high standard set in hiring professors. The professor must be an industry practitioner with years of experiences in the managerial and executive position, and holds a Doctorate degree in the related field . With this policy, the students will benefit the most as they will learn from the actual gurus in the field of business management.

In terms of the school facility, special parking rate is offered to the Graduate School students who wish to park their cars securely inside the school. Since classes are only held on Saturdays, the Dean negotiated this special rate of half the price lower than that paid by students from other colleges.

The Impact of Change

With all these programs, the San Beda Graduate School of Business is one that is marked with an overwhelming passion and dedication of the members of the community. All these mentioned programs and developments are geared towards the making of a world-class graduate institution. With clear objectives of equipping the relatively young student professionals to acquire new knowledge and competencies in their fields; having a greater sense of educational values, and unwavering commitment to serving both the local and global communities, the Graduate School will achieve newer heights of success that will enable it to withstand all the present external factors and competitions initially experienced.

Predictably, the Graduate School will see a double-digit rise in enrolment at 20% average growth annually. With this, increase in student population will require more classes to be opened and classrooms to be made available. Correspondingly, increased enrolment means additional income for the school which will also result to increase in budget allocation for the improvement of the Graduate School. Also, more student applicants will enroll primarily because of word of mouth and the active recruitment campaign implemented by the graduate school management team.

The growing population of the Graduate School proves the captured the interest of the best and the brightest leaders in the field of business. Several high-ranking executives join the faculty bolstering the already competitive roster of the graduate school.

Because of the consistency in granting recognition to top performers per trimester, the students and faculty members alike develop a stronger aspiration to maintain their high-level performances in the graduate school. Proving the effectiveness of the Perfect Attendance recognition, faculty attendance will reach as high as 95% attendance as compared to previous records. Faculty evaluation is given serious considerations since students perceive it as their contribution to further improving the quality of educational standards through the resulting immediate response of the assigned faculty.

In the research aspect, the Graduate School doubles its thesis outputs primarily due to the increased student population, faculty contributions and mini-thesis production in every subject. Corresponding with the quantity, the quality of thesis outputs significantly improves after investing in several research enhancement seminars conducted by credible research experts.

The expected inflow of positive results encourages the Graduate School community to remain and continuously embark on improving further their program offerings. These potential accomplishments give leverage for the Graduate School to face new challenges in the areas of identity, mission and culture; administration and governance; curriculum and program offerings; classroom instructions; assurance of learning; instructional resources; quality and relevant research and intellectual contributions; community involvement; value-adding linkages; and, recognition and accreditation.

Synergy

The potential of individuals and organizations are best realized when the best efforts are exerted, and when the best of everything is hoped, dreamt, and worked for - nothing less. A true leader inspires and encourages the people he leads to give their best as he himself gives his best. Anything short negates the real essence of leadership.

A successful graduate school is not built as a one-day nor a one-man wonder. A center where passionate people come together to collaborate and elevate the successes and achievements higher than yesterday's is the proof of the bolts and joints that will come together over the years.

My hope is that the ideas, insights, and recommendations presented will help other academic institutions and not just the Graduate School in crafting a developmental roadmap following the well-proven strategies and tactics. All of the measures that were laid down in this may influence all other educational institutions to rigorously apply the concepts. In the academe, we are all united with an aim to produce quality graduates who are well-equipped with research tools, advanced knowledge, and analytical skills to better prepare them for the challenges of the highly competitive and dynamic twenty-first-century business environment.

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