

Editors' Notes

In conjunction with the U.P. College of Public Administration's 45th anniversary, the *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* dedicates this year's volume to the papers presented in this year's Fifth National Conference on Public Administration with the theme "Public Administration and Socioeconomic Transformation." The conference was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Quezon City on 26-27 June 1997.

The papers presented were grouped into four distinct panels, namely: (a) Socioeconomic Transformation, (b) Governance, (c) Decentralization, and (d) Academic Stream.

Three papers in Panel A (Socioeconomic Transformation) are incorporated in this volume. Leonor M. Briones' "Globalization, Nationalism and Public Administration: Challenge and Response" underscores the impact of globalization in the national economy as well as in the theory and practice of public administration in the Philippines. In light of this development, she argues that nationalism should serve as the guiding principle in responding to the challenges brought about by globalization to make the consequent changes truly beneficial to the national interest. In "Reorganizing the Agricultural Bureaucracy for the 21st Century: Trends, Issues and Policy Questions," J. Prospero E. de Vera III puts in perspective the major features of previous reorganization efforts of various line departments in the agricultural sector (i.e., Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Department of Agrarian Reform). He observes that fragmentation and multiplicity of the delivery systems have resulted in duplication of programs and wastage of public funds. Filomeno S. Sta. Ana III describes, compares and analyzes the pension system in the Philippines and in Chile in "Reforming the Pension System: Is Privatization *a la Chile* the Best Route?" He briefly traces the privatization history in the Philippines and brings to fore the rationale for privatizing the pension funds. Citing the Chilean experience in privatizing the pension system, he points to the major weaknesses of the current Philippine social security system and hints at some possible alternatives in privatizing the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and Social Security System (SSS).

Panel B (Governance) focuses on leadership studies and the electoral system. Ma. Concepcion P. Alfiler and Eleanor E. Nicolas discern some major trends and patterns in the existing literature on leadership. They observe that leadership studies in formal settings tend to focus on the basic elements of the Filipino concept of leadership, socioeconomic background of political and administrative leaders, leadership styles of administrators, religious leadership in local sects, autobiography/political biography and memoirs. In her article "The Politics of Election Administration: The Modernization Program of the

Philippine Electoral System," Luzviminda G. Tancangco documents and analyzes the different aspects surrounding the passage of the Modernization and Excellence Program or Operation Modex into law. The paper also focuses on the costs and consequences of the computerization of the Philippine electoral system and the dynamics which transpired within the Comelec hierarchy in the effort to "sell" the idea of computerization to the public. She argues that the increasing political role played by Comelec officials demystifies the politics-administration dichotomy and the application of the latest electronic technology as the solution to electoral fraud.

Panel C (Decentralization) features discussions on the latest developments concerning decentralization. Victoria A. Bautista highlights the implementation status of the minimum basic needs (MBN) approach in her piece "Socioeconomic Transformation Through the Minimum Basic Needs Approach: Accomplishments, Problems and Research Implications." She stresses that the successful application of the MBN approach is a critical factor in fulfilling the mission of people empowerment. She also exhorts NGOs and POs to assume various roles in enhancing the application of MBN. Perla E. Legaspi's article on "The Role of LGUs in the Management of Fisheries/Aquatic Resources: Some Policy Issues and Proposals" documents the legal provisions and their implementation concerning the critical role being played by local government units (LGUs) in environmental management and protection. Foremost among the problems and issues confronting the implementation of the Codal provisions is the insufficiency or lack of manpower, financial and technical resources. In the article "Local Government Transformation: Glimpses from the Local Finance Literature under the 1991 Local Government Code," Simeon Agustin Ilago assesses the strides taken by LGUs in local financial administration five years after the passage of the Code. Some innovations in sourcing local funds characterize the emergence of the enabling, entrepreneurial type of LGUs. Jocelyn C. Cuaresma considers the gains achieved in the area of local fiscal administration in her article "Transforming Local Finance." By citing statistics, she notes that the improvement in the fiscal position of LGUs vis-à-vis the national government has been minimal and has shown signs of slowing down. The challenge for LGUs to perform better and be more innovative in dealing with persistent problems remains real.

Panel D (Academic Stream) features discourse on various concerns of the discipline. Danilo R. Reyes' "Controversies in Public Administration: Enduring Issues and Questions in Bureaucratic Reform" parleys on the spate of public administration concepts such as reinventing, reengineering, refounding and reframing. These terms have been coined to denote better public administration; they may have become by-words in government circles, but their realization remains far from reality. He poses the hard question of the discipline's relevance to the practice of governance. In her article "But is it Public Administration?: The Place of Voluntary Sector Management in the

Discipline," Ledivina V. Cariño justifies that Voluntary Sector Management indeed belongs to and enriches the Public Administration discipline. Management of the voluntary sector is beset by problems related to long-term commitment of volunteers, which may in turn affect the stability and institutionalization of the organization. Jose V. Abueva exhorts the leaders to review, evaluate and tailor their roles and qualifications to the needs of the next millennium in his "Political-Administrative Leadership for the 21st Century." He reiterates the dedication of the U.P. College of Public Administration in evolving ideals for political-administrative leadership and in working for the attainment of these ideals.

This volume also highlights Vice President Joseph E. Estrada's speech "Keeping the Faith." He conveys hope in a leadership that knows the real problems of the people and implements real solutions, rather than empty rhetorics.

In closing, the U.P. College of Public Administration acknowledges the support of the U.P. Central administration in printing this volume.