A ‘wiki’ for the UP Diliman community

What is of UP, by UP, and for UP? The answer is iskWiki (http://iskwiki.upd.edu.ph/index.php/Main_Page), an open-purpose community wiki for the UP Diliman community and a collaborative platform for instruction, research, and UP life.

Created and maintained by the Diliman Interactive Learning Center (DILC) and officially launched in February 2009, the iskWiki is a community-wiki that serves as a platform and archive on anything and everything about UP Diliman. Any UP student, faculty member, scientist, artist, researcher, musician, administrative officer and staff member—in short, anyone with a UP Webmail account—can add to this stockpile of knowledge.

According to—who else?—Wikipedia, a wiki is “a website whose users can add, modify or delete its content via a web browser using a simplified markup language or a rich-text editor.” Wikis are “typically powered by wiki software and are often created collaboratively by multiple users.”

iskWiki is not exactly Wikipedia though, says DILC Director Peter Sy. “Wikipedia is about building an open encyclopedia. iskWiki is a community. We’re taking account of our stock of knowledge about UP and of our activities.”

A wiki for iskos and iskas

Sy describes wikis as “the closest thing to the internet itself,” and the closest thing to a common area or central library for UP Diliman students, faculty and staff alike, where any bit of information or knowledge about UP—from the serious to the trivial—can find a permanent home. iskWiki—a contraction of “a community wiki by and for the iskos and iskas of the University of the Philippines”—began through the DILC’s efforts to come up with an efficient information distribution disseminative system for the community. “We looked at how information is distributed in other universities such as Stanford, Case Western, Columbia and Cornell, and how these universities use wikis,” says Sy. “Then we gave careful thought on the tack we were going to take. We saw the potential of iskWiki.”

Wikis today are used for a variety of purposes: as a library cum storage space for information about specific disciplines; as a means to expand knowledge about certain topics, including entire books, through inputs from as many authors as possible; and as a mechanism for the broadest possible dissemination of a wide array of fields, interests and fandoms.

“The wiki is now the platform of choice for a lot of things online,” says Sy. “The problem with things online was that they were so hard to maintain and to update, and you ended up with silos of knowledge and information. Now we can start with something simple and then we can just populate the platform, put in a lot of stuff and aggregate it for you. That’s why we’re presenting iskWiki as anything about research, instruction and the UP life. Basically anything up!”

iskWiki for UP students

Anyting up is, as iskWiki is designed to fulfill a function for any member of UP community. For UP students, iskWiki is a place where information on anything and everything that touches on the life of a UP student or UP student orgs can also up uploaded on iskWiki, which should complement whatever they may have already on their personal sites or on social networking sites. Groups of students doing projects and reports for class may also document their work process and upload these on iskWiki. From the same preliminary brainstorming work to the final product, and maybe even a “behind-the-scenes” narrative, album of photos or videos.

Finally, UP students can also upload their

UPD Department of Geography inaugurates GIS Lab

The newly-renovated Geographic Information Systems and Digital Cartography Laboratory (GIS Lab) of the Department of Geography of UP Diliman’s (UP) College of Social Sciences and Philosophy (CSSP) was inaugurated last January 25.

The event was led by Department Chair Darlène Oceñita-Guitierrez and attended by UPD Chancellor Caesar Saloma, CSSP Dean Michael Tan, CSSP department chairs, faculty members and students of the Geography Department.

The GIS Lab was constructed in 2003 and was upgraded to meet the increasing demand for GIS as a geospatial technology.

Saloma said in his message that like any other technology, GIS involves constant instruction and research, particularly in the Geography Department’s GIS, Cartographic and Map and Air Photo Interpretation courses. Classes of Quantitative Methods in Geographic Analysis are also held here as statistical software is required in teaching the said subject.

The department also uses the laboratory when offering short-term courses on GIS applications to members of the CSSP faculty and staff members, non-government and community organizations, private individuals and government officials who are involved in development-related programs.

UP community demands justice for HR victims

for Nationalism and Democracy—UP (CONTEND-UP) said that Filipino do not tolerate killings. According to Army Julian Oliva, private prosecutor from National Union of People’s Lawyers (NUPL), Palparan cannot ask for special treatment while in hiding.

As regards the transfer to Fort Bonifacio under military custody of Lt. Col. Felipe Pariñas of AUPWU wait for their turn to speak. as follows: “All of the accused in the disappearance of Empiezo and Cadapan must be jailed in an ordinary civilian penal facility where they rightfully belong.”

Harassing students at fieldwork

Student Regent Conti explains the human rights violations experienced by UP students, as Kabataan Partylist Rep. Raymond Palatino, Prof. Mykel Andradia of AUPAEU, Anton Dulce of Porac 3 and Felix Parillas of AUPMEU wait for their turn to speak.

According to Dulce, his groupmate Marie Gold Villar was even asked by a soldier in civilian clothes who introduced himself as ‘Paul’ of ‘DPWH region 3 office’ what they were doing in the area. The seemingly casual questions turned into accusations that the students were NPA guerrillas. They were detained and released after one of their groupmates broke into tears. After issuing threats, the alleged military personnel covered the cellphone number of one of the students and, according to Dulce, the military has been contacting and harassing his groupmate via text messaging since then.

In a statement, Anakbayan condemned “the physical assault and terrorizing” of three UP students who were detained by the 7th Infantry Battalion-Philippine Army and called “on the DOJ and the rest of the Aquino administration to end the climate of immunity by immediately arresting Palparan and prosecuting other ‘butchers’ in uniform.”

“Terror threats the viability of our programs and derails the practice of our legitimate profession,” said CSWCD in a statement that denounces “in the strongest terms the harassment done to (our) fieldwork students” and calls “on the military chain of command” to “conduct a thorough and impartial investigation of the harassment incident, and deal accordingly with those at fault.”

The manhunt for Palparan lasted for many years. The two arrest warrants were issued against him and his co-accused. In December 2011, Karapatan Alliance for the Advancement of People’s Rights and members of Depsapekko and other supporters started disseminating “Wanted Palparan” posters online and offline.

During the same month, the University Council of UP Diliman issued the statement “Release our students and alumnae” stating that “these UP students and alumnae are the country’s assets rather than its liabilities. They are UP students and alumnae, not poseurs, while UP’s loss, are the nation’s too.”

During the January 26 press conference, different sections of UP reafirmed support for the people’s manhunt. Prof. Michael Francis Andradra, president of All-UP Academic Employees Union Diliman, said that every UP student brings with him the mark of the militant history of UP, making him or her seem like a “threat” to the government.

Parisan, national president of the All-UP Workers Union, said that they experienced the same treatment during their participation in the celebration of Mangyan Day last year.

President Alfredo Petilla urged the alleged perpetrators to face the charges and also expressed support for the call for justice.

Kabataan Partylist Rep. Raymond Palatino, former UPD University Student Council chairperson, appealed to the UP alumni, to the House of Representatives and to the Aquino administration to help all the victims of the People’s manhunt. Resolution 2055 to urge representatives, of which 68 are UP alumni, to help in the manhunt. He added that if the Aquino administration shows determination in the investigation and proceedings of Supreme Court Chief Justice Renato Corona’s impeachment, it should also harness the strength of the human rights violators like Palparan accountable.
Rizal and the Woman Question

Scholar tackles Rizal and the woman question

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Rizal and the Woman Question’ that San Juan asks: “What is Rizal’s ultimate assessment of women’s actual virtue and potential?” In this essay, San Juan explores through a historical-materialist lens the subaltern marginalization of women with the advent of colonialism and its consequences. There is little disagreement over what ultimate goal the GEP should be that of turning out liberally-educated and well-rounded graduates. But there is much less agreement on how that overarching goal should be operationalized. To borrow a concept from management, what are the relevant key result areas with which to assess the programs? What in measurable terms are the acceptable criteria of success? One thing is certain: there are limits to what can be achieved in the two years or so of exposure to the program. The most that can be accomplished is to sow a few seeds in terms of basic knowledge, skills and competencies that will eventually take roots to ensure lifelong learning for the graduates.

There are fundamental differences between knowledge on the one hand, and skills and competencies on the other. These should be developed separately and differently, and the GEP should concentrate only on knowledge creation. Knowledge has to do with understanding the world around us. It reflects the ability to make inferences, to make interpretations, and to take actions that can potentially change things. Explicit knowledge is transferable and can be taught. Skills and competencies cannot be taught; these, along with tacit knowledge, are either learned from experience, through continued practice, and by effective coaching, or they are genetically wired in us. In implementing the GEP, tacit knowledge, skills and competencies, including communication and thinking skills, can be honed in the students through their own active participation in the learning process - through open, interactive discussions of current issues to adapt them to hand-written reports on topics that are of interest to them. I see no reason, therefore, in offering separate courses for this purpose.

Perhaps a more relevant criterion is that suggested at the conference by Professors Cynthia Bautista and Ma. Serena Dikson, that of “developing the ability to adapt to change.” I shall dwell on this subsequently.

Integrating framework

A major characteristic of current approaches to the teaching of GCE courses is that content is organized by discipline or specialty. This is true among the specific sciences and disciplines within each of the three broad knowledge domains, for example, chemistry and physics in the domain of mathematics, science and technology, and economics and sociology which fall under the domain of social sciences and philosophy. As currently implemented, the GEP also offers little opportunity to capture the inter-relatedness among the three domains of knowledge (for example, the strong links between the evolution of the human species on the one hand, and the development of human society and culture on the other). This manner of designing courses gives a fragmented view of reality, and students fail to perceive and appreciate the complex inter-relationships among the diverse and limitless elements that comprise the world around us. A unified perspective of reality cannot be developed in this way not only because the different sciences and disciplines employ different terminologies and methodologies, but also because they are founded on different assumptions about the nature of things.

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As an alternative, we propose that courses in the GEP be designed around certain issues or problem areas. For example, system social sciences and philosophy, we can identify topics of current interest such as poverty and social inequality, sustainable development, crime and delinquency, we have spoken about the need for better understanding of the various sciences and disciplines in addressing the entire range of relevant issues and problems.

Further, we believe that this approach makes better pedagogical sense. By introducing concepts and theories in the context of problems and issues, especially with those whom the students are familiar, new ideas are better internalized and learned. Therefore becomes more lasting and meaningful, much more so compared with forcing our students to suffer our boring lectures and humdrum PowerPoint presentations.

But how can we perceive a semblance of unity in a world characterized by confusing diversity? We strongly believe that the GEP can achieve the required coherence by adopting Complexity Theory as an organizing framework. By designing social, biological and physical phenomena as Complex Adaptive Systems, and noting the essential commonalities among them (for example, their extreme sensitivity to initial conditions, their self-organizing capacity), we are able to discern order in what appears to be a convoluted and aimless world, and to understand better the dynamics of systems change.

We have earlier noted Professor Bautista and Dikson’s suggestion to focus on change and adaptation. By long-standing tradition, in the U.P. we have been taught that we can manage or respond to change in a manner that brings predictable results. The realization that we live in a world of complexity, instability and change, and that the problems requires us to think differently in interpreting and dealing with today’s realities, and to learn how to live and work more productively in a world characterized by incessant and unpredictable change.

Niceto S. Poblador, Ph.D.

Photo by Bong Arboleda
UP as a fertile place for love

Engineering. The video has been uploaded to iskiWiki [http://ikiwiki.up.edu.ph/index.php/iskiWiki:Community_Portal], and is available for viewing in a wide array of UP people can relate to.

But UP love stories spring from deeper reasons as well. “I have met, many UP alumni found their husbands and wives in organizations like UP Student Catholic Action (USCA), Kabataang Makabayan (KM) and Student Environmentalist Action (SEA) University of the Philippines (SCAU). They met because of the community—the orgs, the groups, or the disciplines they came from,” says Capili. In many cases, students meet from far-away places. Since they live far away from their families, they look for surrogate families, friends, even lifelong partners who are more tolerant and romantic interests at the same time.

There’s also something to be said about our romantic preferences being influenced by other rose-colored idealization of the past, the high school romance. For one thing, college romances could be considered more stable and more serious compared to high school, “there’s a greater deal of maturity in college. You get exposed to socio-political realities and you tend to find common-interest friends, the grassy when you’re your partners, close friends and surrogate families,” says Capili. During the chaos of Martial Law, for example, many people found themselves growing closer because of shared political ideas and common ordinances.

Their dates would consist of playing and talking and having outings to the Student Union Building. They would also hang out with their friends in their “tahomay” or go swimming at the best resort. One day, I could not forget was when they went for a hike in Mt. Makiling. The sunsets were on their names on a tree. Papa wrote, “RICO,” then the shape of a heart, then “DELA,” meaning Roxas Dan O. Every time we went to Los Banos, he would tell us that story, and we would attempt to find that tree.


Of course, all these love stories have one more thing in common: the environment. “Actually, UP campuses in general tend to be very romantic, because they are some of the few places in the respective localities where there are trees and open spaces,” says Capili. This is especially true of the larger and older campuses with long-standing traditions, such as Diliman, Los Baños, Mindanao, and Misag-no, Iloilo. UP Baguio, too, is known for its close-knit constituents, the pine trees and mountainous area. UP Manila, although now rather hemmed in by buildings and a train-track, can also be considered romantic, particularly back in the day when it was “The Riviera.”

An article on “Romantic Places to Elope” on the website LoveToKnow Weddings (http://weddings.livetoknow.com/kwikipedia) lists the characteristics a place must have to be considered romantic: it must offer the couple some privacy; it must give the couple opportunities to get to know each other and focus on each other; it must be unique; and it must have romantic touches. With its trees and greenery, its campus hangs, lakeside restaurants and housing units, UP Diliman’s architecture and its romantic scenery (see: sunsets and evenings on campus), UP’s campuses certainly fit the description. No surprise, then, that UP campuses tend to attract non-UP lovers as well to its sheltering grounds, especially couples seeking a more affordable date alternative to beaches and resort islands. As a matter of fact, PennyMoneyVantage.net has listed stargazing in UP Diliman as a good idea for a Valentine’s Day date for the cash-strapped couple (http://www.pennymoneytantage. net/2011/02/pro-valentines-treats-dating. html), UP Diliman Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Community Affairs received around four requests to conduct romantic or pre-nuptial shoots on campus, with the Lagoon, Sunken Garden, the Carrillon Plaza, the Academic Oval, and Quezon Hall-Oblation Plaza as favorite spots.

The romantic atmosphere of the UP campuses may prove detrimental to academic success at times. “There was a joke in the 1980s that the soil in UP had high protein content,” Capili says. Seriously, though, “I’ve heard of a lot of stories of people who found lifetime partners in PMB Mr. Makiling, lends itself to be used for...” to extracurricular activities, apparently. I thought that as diverse opinions on things, being products of an open-minded institution like UP, was also what made us click. I don’t know if it was a UP kind of love, but whatever it was, I became a willing victim in surrendering to its beauty.


It’s not only UP’s physical environment that makes it conducive to romance, it’s the culture as well. “In UP, one is not confined to the traditional concepts of love and sexuality, for one thing. For instance, ‘Diliman, regardless of political, social or sexual orientation, tends to be less model-dependent and you have a greater chance of getting respected vis-à-vis the outside world,” says Capili. Things like love and courtship may run a bit more on the conventional side in many other places, but “I will always have people who will always deviate from the norm, and they will stick to it and fight for their convictions, despite people not sharing their values.”

The beauty of UP lies in its willingness to tolerate, if not embrace, diversity. “You will find god on campus, and you will find atheists on campus. No need to camouflage or trim down your identity, because people will respect you for who you are,” says Capili. He adds that the perceived culture of permissiveness among UP campuses “can be attributed to the fact that we tend to challenge existing norms, to think outside the box. People in UP tend to be more creative, and to problematize a lot. It’s part of the upbringing of UP students and faculty—the UP community in general. People don’t go for emotions. [In fact], people think too much in this campus,” he adds with a laugh.

Part of this process of questioning, analyzing, exploring and experimenting extends to sexuality, religion and the very concept of romance. Because of this, there is room in UP for the traditional and the alternative, the conservative and the liberal, the common practice and the experimental, and everything in between. UP is home to people from all walks of life, single people, who are devoted to their partners and to their research on abstract theory, and people who are committed to their interpersonal relationships as well as to their creative and783x601 their crafts.

“I think in general, UP is a fertile place for romantic interludes,” says Capili. “There is academic freedom [here] that enables people to respect each other’s feelings while at the same time, be less inhibited. In short, UP is a wonderful playground of love.”

Celeste Ann Castillo Llaneta

Faculty Tree

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administered offices in UP, there is such a thing called “institutional memory.” Officers and staff may come and go, but the administrative processes, internal operations, administrative roles and functions, and university policies remain. iskiWiki can serve as a platform for storing and documenting these processes and policies, as well as intra- unit updates, memos and newsletters, thus providing an archive of that office or unit for easy retrieval.

The DILC (DILC) keeps its documentation in iskiWiki. “For instance, we in the DILC have developed a template for how to respond to requests from the faculty,” says Sy. “Even if we have a change in our staff, the template is still there. And that’s another special feature of iskiWiki. You can restrict access to information so that the public

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A world-class UP president

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UP as a fertile place for love

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cannot access it. It's really very flexible.”
iskWiki for everyone

And that's just the serious, academic/
career UP website. There
is also a UP Alumni
webpage where you can
find UP alumni profiles,
directories, and other
information.

For visitors to UP, iskWiki can serve as a repository of useful and relevant information, such as seminar and conference venues with locations, rates, and contact information; hotels, hostels and dormitories; schedules of art shows, theater and musical productions and other events; alumni reunions and events; short courses, workshops and community recreation programs, and the like.

There are other aspects of UP life that people find useful and meaningful, such as the many restaurants and assisted cuisine for food-trippers; date-spots on campus for lovers or would-be lovers; historical landmarks for day-trippers; jogging, and sports facilities for athletes and the health-conscious; even the collections of clever graffiti, humorous witticisms and “only-in-UP” wisdom. In short, UP is helpful to and useful for many people, and, for UP alumni, bring back fond UP memories of their own UP experience. All of these are waiting to be written up and archived on iskWiki.

While these are not considered “official” information, “these are still part of the knowledge-base of UP,” says Sy. “Where do you aggregate them? Certainly not in the front page of the official UP website. There has to be a place where [information such as these] can be shown, and there’s no other place like iskWiki.”

iskWiki for the UP community and beyond

In addition to being a powerful storage facility for documents, photos, media and video files, and a repository of every bit of information about UP, iskWiki has many other advantages. The most prominent is that information uploaded to iskWiki is easily collected, sorted and aggregated into a directory and may be further sub-categorized. UP faculty profiles and directories can be aggregated according to fields of specialization. Theses, papers and conference materials uploaded on iskWiki can be sorted according to subject, author, date or any other category, which makes it easier to do content analyses of theses and research work. It also makes it easier for UP administrators to create lists of publications or published papers, and for UP administrators to access such a list when considering promotions.

iskWiki's capacity to aggregate data can be invaluable. “It makes things very easy,” says Sy. “You can maintain this little piece of information, you can make it accurate, and then it could be aggregated to some other category.” Data categories depend on how the information is tagged, and it could be aggregated to some other category. “Data categories depend on how the information is tagged, and there’s no limit to the number of tags you can put. For as long as we have categories, and that our tags are accurate, then we can have many choices” with regard to categories of data.

In addition to this, iskWiki is extremely flexible and easy to use. (To contribute content, simple visit the Contributor's Page [http://iskwiki.up.edu.ph/index.php/iskWiki:Contributors_Page] for instructions.) It is easily indexable and search engine-optimized. It is also immune to vandalism, since its restriction to people with UP Webmail accounts makes it easy to track down changes. It can also be updated quickly, which gives UP a means to respond promptly and efficiently to the public’s need for information during crises such as natural disasters.

With regard to traditional websites, libraries and social networking sites, “our aim is complementation, not competition,” Sy stresses, adding that iskWiki is being created to address the gap between the need for information and the comparative lack of updated information about the University. In fact, given that iskWiki is more easily indexable, it can be a tool to document all this knowledge.”

iskWiki ng bayan

Beyond its promise of being the go-
to resource for UP students and faculty, UP, iskWiki will be an invaluable tool for enhancing the sense of community among UP constituents, as everyone is encouraged to participate.”

The DLIC is currently working to expand iskWiki to other UP constituent units, thereby creating a UP System-wide wiki. The idea is to expand the capacity to access iskWiki. “The larger vision [for iskWiki] is to open this to all knowledge producers,” says Sy. “We have a lot of knowledge producers in this country. We have to build a way to document all this knowledge.”