

Academy Programs - A Running Commentary*

Fr. Ranhilio C. Aquino, PhD, JurDr
Head, Academic Affairs Office
PHILJA

I. INTRODUCTION

Your Honors, Reverend Father Anscar J. Chupungco, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. The law is human society's attempt to achieve cohesion and to guarantee the social conditions that allow individuals to flourish. For the law to constitute the rational solution to the demands of social integration, its institutions must be both efficient and credible. The Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA) is by design of the Supreme Court and of its legislative charter, the Judiciary's institution charged with enhancing through the systematic and planned delivery of judicial education, the competencies and skills of those who preside over courts – the law's principal institutions. Judicial education is principally the formation of the judicial person. Obviously, this formation cannot be an achievement of PHILJA alone but must come from the determined effort of society, media included, to invest with the dignity of judge, as those beholden alone the demands of justice as ordained by the law.

II. PHILJA COURSES AND OFFERINGS

PHILJA addresses three (3) principal concerns: the Judicial Person, particularly the values of a judge and his fidelity to the code of ethics; Judicial Knowledge, without which the delivery of justice cannot be competent; and Judicial Skills, as a judge must not only resolve questions of fact and law but also manage her court and direct her personnel.

A. The Pre-Judicature Program

The Pre-Judicature Program (PJP) is open to lawyers who seriously consider a career in the Judiciary. Republic Act No. 8557 mandates the courts to prepare a qualified pool

* Delivered at the *Ninth Lecture of The Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide, Jr. Distinguished Lecture Series*, on September 29, 2005, at the San Beda College, Mendiola, Manila.

of aspirants to judicial positions. The Academic Council has designed it to be more than merely a continuation of law school, it introduces the participants to a judicial prospective of the law, a more reflective, inquiring and philosophical perspective. An important principle of our educational philosophy is to deal with the shifting philosophies that undergird changes of the law. The newly appointed judge no longer needs to be alarmed by the daunting task of developing the necessary skills and acquiring the necessary knowledge.

B. The Orientation Program

The two-week Orientation Program for newly appointed judges prepares the appointee to discharge with efficiency, competence and credibility the duties of judicial office. The Academic Affairs Office has recently crafted a similar orientation program for newly appointed Clerks of Court considering the fact that under the Rules of Court the new Rules on pre-trial and the special rules governing special actions, Clerks of Court have increasingly challenging roles. Courts are established in the remotest points of our archipelago and the Academy recognizes the right of the judge who labors in some far corner of our country to the same opportunity at judicial education as is available to his counterpart in the cities.

C. The Regional Judicial Career Enhancement Program (RJCEP)

The Academy then annually takes its Career Enhancement Program to each judicial region covering 100% of all judges all over the country in a program that includes ethics, substantive and procedural law updates and skills enhancement.

The consortium of PHILJA and the San Beda College Graduate School of Law allow formal accreditation of programs attended by judges towards the Master of Laws degree.

D. Special Courses and Programs

Particular issues require particular attention; special courts require special courses; emergent issues call for emergent programs. The different curricular departments of PHILJA plan and conduct different special programs to meet special needs. Family courts, commercial courts, intellectual property cases, social context issues and human rights, mediation and indigenous law. One of PHILJA's key contributions to the Philippine Judiciary is mediation.

E. Professorial Competency Program

We are very proud of our Corps of Professors presided over by our Chancellor but they, too, must continue to learn being particularly alert to more effective ways of teaching. Thus, each year, the Corps of Professors meets in general assembly at which our professors engage in dialogues with visiting judicial educators. Throughout the year, professors gather in small group sessions to discuss strategy, curriculum, and course content.

III. CONCLUSION

At the end of each program, the judges themselves have been asked what they thought of our programs and the tables we now show tell us exactly what they think of the usefulness of these programs.

The tables below show the profitability rating of the Regional Career Enhancement Program (RJCEP), one of the Academy's regular programs, for Levels 3 and 4.

RJCEP Level 3: 2004-2005

Region	Profitability
I	100%
II	100%
III	94.79%
V	100%
VI	96.65%
VII	96.88%
VIII	100%
IX	100%
X	100%
XI	100%
XII	100%

RJCEP Level 4: 2005-2006

Region	Profitability
I	98.67%
II	88.64%
III (Batch I)	92.40%
IV	92.13%
VII	96.30%
IX	94.29%
XII	97.67%
Programs still on-going	

Res ipsa loquitur; in tort law, this is invoked for imputation of fault. In this case however, we present this statistics not in self laudation but as the assurance that we need that we are on track and our work in the Academy contributes to a judiciary that we recreated and reform.

Thank you.