

The College of Teacher Education as Center of Development: Its Experiences and Challenges

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Abstract

Improving the quality of education is of utmost importance and interest in every developing country like the Philippines. Thus, higher education institutions (HEIs) play an indispensable role in making the country to be globally competitive through the quality of human resources they develop. Consequently, teacher education curriculum must be designed to meet the needs and challenges of the Philippine educational system. This study aimed to look into the policies and strategies undertaken, the emergence of best practices and their effects to the College. It is a qualitative and historical study which employed data analysis and triangulation in gathering data from the purposively chosen respondents. Based on the findings, a well-planned curriculum responsive to societal changes yield tangible results which will benefit the stakeholders; well-designed and strictly implemented policies and programs coupled with collaborative efforts by the administrators, faculty members, students and other stakeholders would likely yield positive effects for the educational community. Thus, it is recommended that the College should continue designing relevant policies to address the emerging needs of the educational community; sustainable extension programs should be conducted; and issues and concerns along research should be acted upon to encourage the involvement of the faculty members.

Keywords: *quality assurance, academic policies, higher education, educational development*

INTRODUCTION

Quality learning is indispensable for meeting people's basic needs, and vital in nurturing the conditions for global peace and sustainable development across the globe. Regardless of the race and creed, everyone needs to learn in active, collaborative and self-directed ways in order to flourish and contribute to the communities.

The World Declaration on Education for All in 1990 was emphatic about the necessity of providing education for all children, youth and adults that is responsive to their needs and relevant to their lives. This paved the way for the concept of quality expressed in terms of needs based criteria. The skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that learning and teaching promote must reflect and respond to the needs and

expectations of individuals, countries, the global population and the world of work today (UNESCO, 2015).

Relatively, improving the quality of education is of utmost importance and interest in every developing country like the Philippines. Tertiary education institutions play a very significant function in the preparation of the country's citizens to be globally competitive through the quality of human resources they develop. This is a challenging endeavor for these learning institutions. They have to be sensitive and constantly vigilant in responding to the needs of the labor market. Colleges and universities are faced with evolving and more demanding environment that has forced them to become adaptive and flexible. Thus, colleges and universities need to ensure that they maintain a sound, balanced and organized academic program based on standards, policies and guidelines. Hence, the curriculum plays a very pivotal role towards the development of the quality of graduates. To relevantize the programs then, these are submitted for accreditation which will ensure that these are in accordance with the set standards (Conchada and Tiongco, 2015).

CHED Memorandum Order no. 30 (CMO 30), series of 2004, the bible of teacher education institutions, was implemented in order to streamline and relevantize the undergraduate teacher education as a response to the strains of global competitiveness. Relatively, the Commission on Higher Education continuously evaluates tertiary schools in order to meet the demands of quality education and the demands of the labor market. Thus, CHED issued CMO # 26, Series of 2007 as amended by CMO #16, series of 2015 otherwise known as the Implementing Guidelines for the Identification, Support and Development of Centers of Excellence and Centers of Development for Teacher Education Programs.

The College of Teacher Education, established in 1968, is now one of the biggest colleges in the University with more than 1,500 students and has four programs namely Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd), Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor of Science in Industrial Education (BSIE), and the youngest program, the Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS). The BSEd, BSIE and BEED programs have been awarded Level III accredited status while BLIS is Level I by the Accrediting Agency of Colleges and Universities of the Philippines, Inc. (AACUP). It is one of the 14 Centers of Training in the country and last April 2016, it became the first college in the university to be designated by the Commission of Higher Education as a Center of Development in teacher education.

This study scrutinized and analysed the efforts of the College toward the attainment of being one of the Centers of Development along teacher education in the country. Careful analysis of the policies implemented will definitely provide inputs as the College prepares its quest toward the attainment as Center of Excellence in Teacher Education.

This study has been guided by theories and principles which have been written by authorities along the field of education.

This study is guided by the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) by Spady. According to him, Outcomes-Based Education means vividly looking closely and managing all that matters that will make eventually equip the learners in their chosen career (Killen, 2000). Relatively, every school aims to produce graduates who may become later productive and responsible members of the society. To attain this, teacher education institutions are imperative to align their curriculum, responsive with the needs and demands of the society.

The implementation of the Center of Excellence and Center of Development is pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 7722. Thus, it became the mandate of the Commission on Higher Education to stimulate quality and excellence in higher learning institutions (HEIs). The identification of COEs and CODs is expected to facilitate the attainment and fulfilment of the program's mission of providing professionally capable and decently upright Teacher Education graduates (CMO 26, s. 2007).

As stressed by Ladia, Facun, Garcia and Nool (2012) among the definite parts and duties of identified COEs include performing the act of leadership along teacher education programs (TEP); strengthening research capabilities and elevate professional or research graduate programs; helping other agencies / institutions within their location or community; conducting programs and activities instrumental in developing quality TEP; Conducting research along the emanating trends and developments in the field of teacher education; and Commencing collaborative extension and linkages with academe. Similarly, the identified CODs are expected to do the same.

Several studies have been conducted about the importance of attaining excellence in education. Hellstrom (2012) cited Balderston in relation to excellence that the institutions have to meet certain criteria and exhibit certain conditions that include sound school policies and strong adherence to a generally acceptable, incomparable commitment to educational positive values.

In the quest for excellence in education, CHED issued CMO #1, series of 2005 otherwise known as the Revised Policies and Guidelines on Voluntary Accreditation in Aid of Quality and Excellence in Higher Education. Consequently, accreditation is regarded as a manner by which programs or courses at the tertiary level appraises its educational activities, in whole or in part, and search for an autonomous decision to check that it noticeably realizes its objectives, and is generally comparable among institutions in terms of quality.

It is very important that while future teachers are still pursuing their degrees, they should be exposed with different activities, be provided with opportunities to develop and hone their teaching skills. One strategy which may allow the students to develop their utmost potential is through experiential learning. Advocates of experiential learning stressed that it aids to stimulate students because it comprises them more profoundly and comprehensively in the learning process: instead of just being unreceptive receivers of a “product” that the mentor is conveying. They vigorously participate with the content, the teacher, their peers, and themselves in a current manner of evocative detection. As David Moore has asserted, experiential learning "provides opportunities for the students to take what they learn in the classroom and apply it in a real world setting where they grapple with real-world problems, discover and test solutions, and interact with others" (Qualters, 2010).

This study aimed to explore the experiences of the College and how it responded to the challenges of the present educational system for the development of future teachers equipped with well-rounded personality.

Specifically, it determined the following: a) the profile of the College along faculty, their academic qualification and performance of the graduates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers; b) programs and activities the College had undertaken along curriculum and instruction, extension, and research in response to the needs of its stakeholders; c) best practices emerged along curriculum and instruction, research, and extension as the College responded to the needs and demands of the educational community; d) how the College responded to the challenges towards the attainment of Center of Development.

METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative and historical in nature. Documentary analysis was primarily utilized. It made use of the available documents which provided sufficient information like Accomplishment Reports/Annual Reports. These were further substantiated by conducting unstructured and participant observation, unstructured interviews as well as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) among the respondents chosen purposively such as the administrators, faculty members, students, parents, and members of the educational community.

To enable the researcher to present and analyze the data in accordance with the objectives set in this study, the documents were analyzed and evaluated. Answers during the interviews and FGDs were also transcribed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of the study.

1. Profile of the College and the faculty members along instruction, research, and extension involvement and performance of the graduates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers.

The faculty members in every higher education institution are expected to perform specific functions along instruction, research, extension, and production. Moreover, the professional growth and development of the faculty is also an utmost concern of the administration due to its domino effects. Thus, the College of Teacher Education is not an exemption. Faculty development is very evident among the CTE faculty as shown in the succeeding figures.

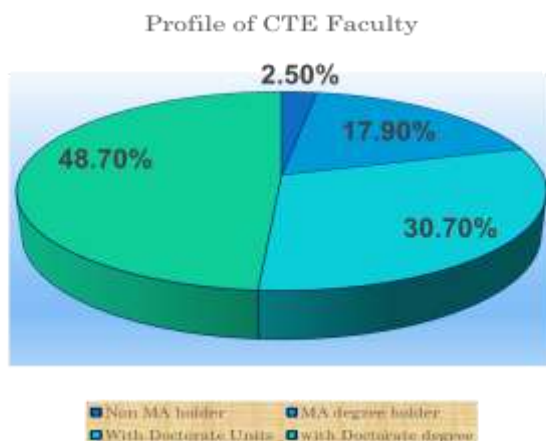


Figure 1. Profile of the CTE Faculty from 2012-2015

The chart shows that nearly half of the 39 faculty members are doctorate degree holders (48.70%), either in Doctor of Education or Doctor of Philosophy, while others are master's degree holders (17.90%). It can be noted that majority of them are presently pursuing their doctorate degrees (30.70%) and are expected to finish within the next three years. The College has newly-hired part-time faculty but are also enrolled in their graduate courses. It is therefore validated that the College has a strong faculty beneficial for both the College and the University.

Faculty Researchers

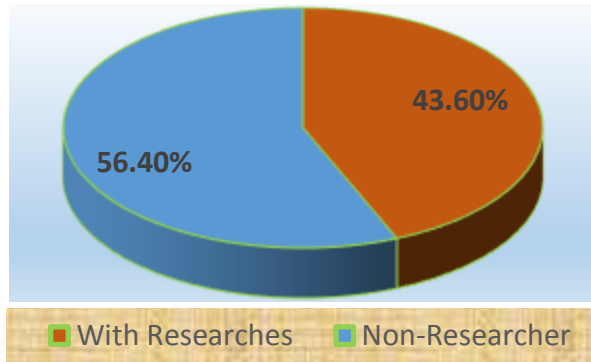


Figure 2. Percentage of CTE Faculty who are Involved in Research

In addition to the above mentioned faculty involvement, they were also active in research. Out of the 39 faculty members, 43.60 percent were involved in research.

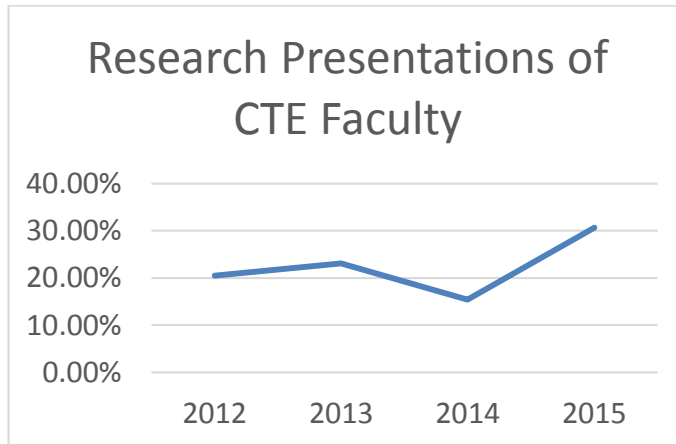


Figure 3. Percentage of CTE Faculty with Research Presentations, 2012-2015

Within the last four years, it can be seen that faculty members continuously presented their research outputs. The number of presentations gradually increased every year except in 2014 wherein a sudden drop from 23.07% (9) in 2013 to 15.38% (6) could be observed. This scenario could be attributed to the lack of finished researches and these were completed in 2015, thus presentations went up to 30.7% (12).

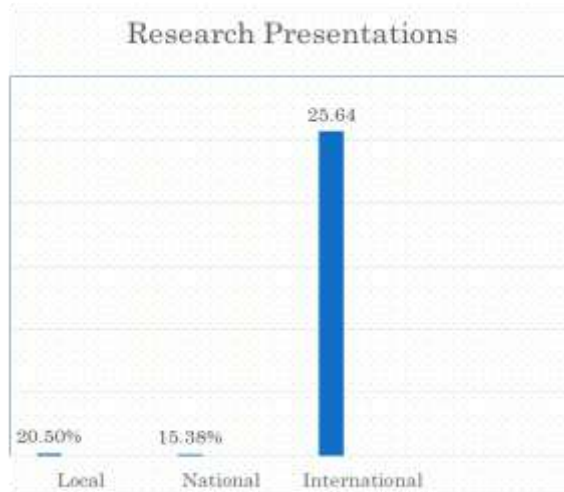


Figure 4. Research Presentations of the CTE Faculty along Local, National, and International Conferences, 2012-2015

The research outputs have been presented in research conferences within or outside the Philippines. It is disclosed that 25.64 percent among those outputs were presented internationally. These countries included Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea, Japan and Indonesia to name a few. Some of the presenters were also recognized as Best Oral presenters, Best Paper among others. Research outputs were also published in different journals, with ISSN and/or refereed ones, circulated locally, nationally, and internationally.

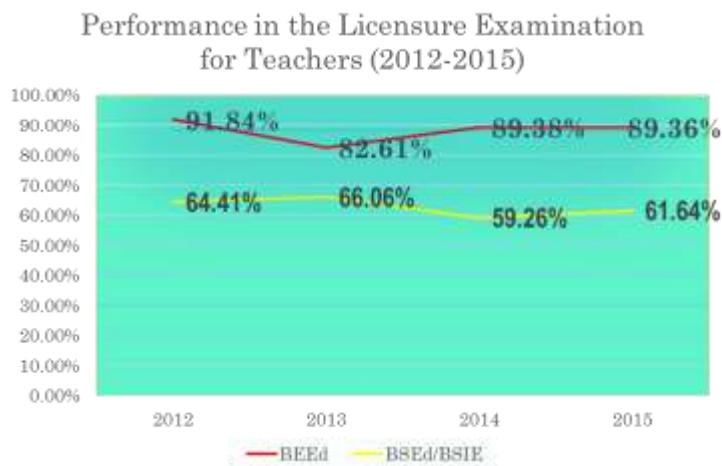


Figure 5. LET Performance of CTE Graduates from 2012-2015

Among the three programs, the Bachelor of Elementary Education LET takers have performed better as compared to the BSEd and BSIE programs. The BSEd/BSIE programs appeared to have difficulties as shown in the figure. It can be noted that they have three areas in their examination while the BEEd takers have only two areas. Moreover, the low performance could also be attributed to the fact that BSIE students did not undergo the Teaching Aptitude Test, a way of screening incoming second year students to ensure that the College would produce future teachers whose hearts and minds are into the teaching profession. It is further noted though the LET performance in the last four years was still higher than the national passing percentage which only ranged from 31.36% to 49.29%.

The College was able to establish the CTE Research Journal with ISSN, CTE Research Manual of Operations, and Compendium of Abstracts for BEEd, BSEd, BSIE, and BLIS programs. Moreover, the faculty members were able to develop Instructional Material for the Literacy and Numeracy Program (Reading) and the establishment of The Vox and The Official Publication of CTE Faculty.

The above profile is a tangible proof that the College was able to produce competent, effective and efficient educators who are not only users of knowledge but producers of knowledge, too. The best outcome and/or undeniable effect of all the efforts was the commendable performance of the graduates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers wherein the results have always been higher than the national passing rate. The College took pride also in producing two top notchers in the LET 2014.

2. Programs and activities conducted to respond to the needs of its stakeholders.

Making a name in the field of education does not come overnight. It involves years of struggles and policy implementation before tangible results could be felt. Based on the documents gathered that were carefully analysed, the College has undertaken several measures in responding to the needs of the educational community. It can also be noted under this about the policies and program that were undertaken successfully.

A. Curriculum and Instruction

1. Revising, Updating/Enhancing the Curriculum.

The curriculum is ensured to meet the demands of both the educational community and the labor market. Thus, it is designed, developed, monitored, reviewed and approved by authorities concerned, including the participation of its stakeholders. Moreover, the presence of a unit Coordinator for Instruction ensured that syllabi are constantly updated, revised, and

reviewed. Meetings are conducted between and among the faculty members handling similar subjects. To ensure that the curricula were in line with the thrusts of the government, curricular revision and/or enhancement were based from the Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No.30 and other related CHED/government directives.

2. Conferences, Seminars/Workshops, Lectures.

Faculty members and students are given opportunities to attend local, national and international seminars and workshops, relevant to their area of specialization. These seminars which students usually attended are organized by national organizations like PAFTE, college-based mandated and accredited organizations like CTE-FTA, KAMAGUFIL, Science Club, Social Science Club, Young Minds Educators Club, Future Industrial Technology Educators, CTE-Parent-Teachers Association to name a few.

The College as a Center of Training in the country for almost ten years, also sponsor national, regional, and local seminars/trainings. These do not only cater to the needs of faculty members and students in the College, but from the Department of Education. Some of the seminars and trainings worth mentioning are the following: Seminar Workshop on Storytelling, Creative Crafts and Play for Filipino Children and Instructional Making: Technologically-Based, Seminar on Kto12 and the Iloko Language, A Seminar on Gender Sensitivity and Development, Teacher Induction Program, K to 12 Mass Trainings for the teachers in the Department of Education among others from 2012-2015.

In the case of the student-seminars, students were exposed in seminars and conferences which were held within or outside the country, supported financially by the College, student organizations as well as the CTE-Parent-Teachers Association.

3. Preparation of Instructional Materials

Faculty members are not only honed to become pedagogically equipped in discharging their teaching responsibilities. They are also capable of becoming producers of knowledge by preparing quality instructional materials.

The university also venture into book writing activities in general education and professional subjects which are now widely used by the different State Colleges and Universities (SUCs) in various regions of the country. Majority of these writer-faculty members come from the College of

Teacher Education who were selected through rigid screening by the Technical Working Group. Other faculty members have also constructed or prepared instructional materials like modules, electronic materials and hand outs which are now being utilized in various subjects and teachers.

The University has also an Instructional Materials Development Committee which assured that quality materials are utilized to facilitate classroom instruction.

4. Conduct of the LET Enhancement Seminar

The College annually holds enhancement classes in preparation for the Licensure examination for Teacher for more than ten years already and has contributed to the increase of the passing rate of its graduates. Majority of the LET reviewers are the competent faculty members of the College. This enhancement class was given free of charge to the graduating students.

In 2014, the College collaborated with one of the leading review centers in the country to better prepare its graduates in hurdling the licensure examination for teachers (LET). Fortunately, the College was able to produce 2 LET topnotchers, top 7 and top 8 in 2014. Both topnotchers came from the Bachelor of Elementary Education program.

5. Establishing Linkages

The College has established linkages with other colleges/institutions or agencies for the provision of technical support and other forms of assistance contributory in improving the delivery of instruction. To name a few are the alumni association, cooperating schools/divisions of the Department of Education especially for the off-campus practice teaching of the pre-service teachers, conduct of Extension services for both students and faculty. These services included, but not limited to, the provision of instructional materials to elementary schools, conduct of tutorial classes in Mathematics and English classes, skills development trainings for mothers, out of school youth, among others in identified poor performing schools and/or depressed communities. More recently, it has established a strong collaboration with universities in Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand for instruction, research, and extension purposes. In 2016, two English majors of the Bachelor of Secondary Education, were able to undertake their Practice teaching for four months in Tan Trao University, Tuyen Quang, Vietnam. Currently, the program coordinator is working for the internship of two Bachelor of Elementary Education student-teachers in Plookpanya School, Nakhon Rachamat, Thailand.

B. Extension Programs/Activities

Both faculty members and students are involved in extension activities within and outside the university. The exposure of the students in various communities further prepared them to meet school and classroom challenges effectively.

The Reading Literacy-Numeracy Program of the College has been participated in by the faculty and students of the three programs and has been recognized in the university as Best in Extension Program for decades now.

C. Research

The College of Teacher Education evidently encourages and trains its faculty and students to get involved in research. The students are required to conduct action research which are defended orally in front of a research committee. The findings are disseminated by the researchers to the laboratory schools. The students are also encouraged to submit their expanded research abstracts to the office of the Coordinator for Research for publication purposes or to present in local, national and international conferences. Some of them are even recognized as best research papers and best Research Presenters.

The CTE faculty also conduct researchs beneficial to the students and the community. Evidently, many faculty members have presented their researchers nationally and internationally like in Boracay, Davao, Cebu, Metro Manila, Baguio, South Korea, Indonesia, Hongkong, Malaysia, and Singapore, Thailand, Japan, and Cambodia to name a few. Some were consistently adjudged as Best Oral Presenters.

3. The best practices that emerged along curriculum and instruction, research, and extension as the College responded to the needs and demands of the educational community

The data presented are lifted from the documents provided as well as results of interview and focus group discussions. These are then, the best practices which the College has developed and continue to serve as guides on its quest toward excellence in teacher education.

1. Developing strong faculty members

The College has a very strong faculty members shown by their educational qualification. It can be noted that the College has the most number of doctorate degree holders in the university, vertically aligned, as mandated by the Civil Service Commission. Some are also pursuing their master's degree or doctorate degree as scholars in other universities and are expected to graduate within the next two years.

2. Developing responsibility and initiative among students

In order to train future teachers with well-rounded personality, activities contributory to such, are offered and encouraged. The students are assisted to join organizations where their abilities and interests could be challenged and enhanced. Institutional organizations such as College of Teacher Education-Future Teachers Association, Kapisanan ng mga Magiging Guro sa Filipino (KAMAGUFIL), Future English Teachers Association (FETA) and Social Science Club are examples of such. These student organizations, under the tutelage of responsible faculty advisers, have been consistently adjudged as outstanding organizations in the University.

3. Establishing local and international linkages

The established linkages of the programs are the Parent-Teachers Association, Alumni association, cooperating schools/divisions of the Department of Education for the practice teachers and business establishments for the On-the-Job Training (OJT) of the BSIE graduating students.

The College has worked for the practice teaching of the BEEd and BSEd students in selected schools in Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Several Memoranda of Agreements have been signed by the University officials and are now ready for implementation.

4. Sponsoring LET Recognition Program

This activity has been ongoing for more than ten years already and it has contributed to the increase of the passing rate of the graduates. As a result of a very good performance in the licensure examination, LET passers are cordially invited by the college and be part of a remarkable program tendered by the University and spearheaded by the College.

5. Enhancing Teaching Skills

The faculty members of the College are duty-bound to produce quality teachers with holistic personality. The four year stay of every student in the college is fully maximized true the provision of a conducive learning environment allowing maximum participation. These various activities have developed them to become effective and efficient teachers. Such was very evident in utilizing student reporting, peer teaching, cooperative learning, the use of multimedia in teaching and other group activities that would stimulate and develop critical, analytical and creative thinking.

4. How the College responded to the challenges towards the attainment as Center of Development.

A. Curriculum and Instruction

The College is confronted with some problems toward the attainment of excellence in education. The College is housed in one of the oldest buildings in the University which is being shared with the laboratory schools. The growing number of future teachers therefore demands a better building, well equipped and more conducive classrooms. However, due to cost-cutting measures or budget constraints, this remains a dilemma for the College. It can be noted that the College has sought assistance from the CTE-Parent-Teachers Association to help improve classrooms and facilities. But there are a lot of things needed immediate repairs, lacking laboratory rooms for the BSIE as well as laboratory equipment. Absence of enough budget also limits the number of faculty members and students as well in attending seminars and conferences for professional growth and/or development of holistic personality.

The PTA President mentioned that:

“The organization is very willing to support the activities of the College especially if these concern our sons and daughters. We will always be here to support.”

All the other officers present affirmed the statement of the PTA president. Thus, the College is then lucky to have elected officers who are willing to serve as partners for the benefit of the learners and the College in general.

During the Focused Group Discussions conducted among the student-leaders, they unanimously uttered that:

“The present curriculum responds to the demands of the Department of Education, however, the only thing that we see as problematic, is that our classrooms are not that conducive. Some rooms are very hot due to non-functioning ceiling fans and faulty electrical wirings. Some are even exposed, thus dangerous on the part of us, students due to the possibility of electrocution.

Another student-leader added that:

“The College must provide classroom-equipped with LCDs, and/or television and audio equipment, ready to be used anytime in the classroom. We hope to see in the future, a new building for the College with fully equipped and air-conditioned classrooms.”

To answer some problems relative to conducive classrooms, the College has started working for the improvement of the classrooms with the help of the student organizations as well as the CTE Parent-Teachers Association. The Arce administration has also promised a new building for the College. Two classrooms would later be converted as air-conditioned conference rooms for the conduct of trainings or seminars/conferences.

B. Extension

In spite of the financial constraints, the College built on the dedication, commitment, generosity and involvement of students, faculty and other stakeholders like the parents and the community. Thus, the College was able to initiate various extension programs. However, further analysis turned out that most of these activities or programs were considered dole out and/or one time activities, thus were not sustainable. Relatively, the College Extension Coordinator restudied the extension activities that have been conducted previously so as to come up with more sustainable and community-based extension activities. Thus, the College's the most awarded Extension program, The Literacy and Numeracy program has been enhanced. However, other than this Literacy-Numeracy Program, the College has yet to identify sustainable extension activities as well as has not yet initiated programs based on the results of research undertakings.

C. Research

Though there have been researches presented in conferences, not even a half of the 40 faculty members are active in research. One major problem that hindered the faculty in research, young and old alike, is lack of time. Most of their time is spent for instruction purposes. The limited budget in research is also a factor. Thus, majority of the researches conducted in the College are personally funded. Analyzing the types of research conducted, it can be noted also that tracer studies on the employability of graduates for all the programs, especially for the Bachelor of Industrial Education, have not been completed. These tracer studies are very important so as to determine the relevance and responsiveness of the programs. Likewise, studies on the teaching performance of the faculty and students' achievements were limited. Moreover, it

appeared that publication in refereed journals, is a challenge among the faculty researchers.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that:

The profile of the faculty members is commendable and likewise, the performance of the College in the licensure examination is above the national passing rate; Numerous programs and activities are employed which eventually generate tangible results for the college; The best practices are manifested along development of strong faculty and students, establishment of local and international linkages coupled with the implementation of well-designed, carefully planned, and relevant policies; and Collaborative efforts by the administrators, faculty members, students and other stakeholders along instruction, research and extension result to remarkable benefits, however, limited resources and overloaded faculty, hamper their active involvement in extension and research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Though the college has a strong faculty development program, the part-time faculty should be highly encouraged and be ceaselessly supported by the administration, morally and financially to ensure the speedy pursuance of relevant master's degree; the College may continue designing/implementing policies to address the emerging needs of the educational community with strong reference to the national educational policies; sustainable extension programs, with lasting impact to the clientele, are highly recommended; Reduction in load and sufficient budget on research and extension may be instituted and allocated.

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