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Tinig ng Plaridel

Year 30 Issue 1

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March 10, 2009

No limits on campaign spending

By Hon Sophia Balod and Shaira Panela

The sky is the limit.

As long as a political party has the machinery to lubricate the campaign, the amount and the cost of publicity materials is not a problem—thanks to the lack of regulations on campaign expenditure.

The University Student Council (USC) Election Code did not specify the limit on expenses on the publicity materials for the elections.

Article VII Section 1 of the USC Election Code stated that posters may be put up only in the bulletin boards of recognized student organizations and name tags may be used for identification, "provided, that the necessary expenses for the aforementioned additional campaign materials shall be the responsibility of the political parties /candidates concerned..."

In contrast, the Synchronized
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Pubmats, pubmats everywhere, but not...

Campaign materials are common sights during the two-week-and-a-half period of the College of Mass Communication Student Council Elections. While there is a limit on what candidates and parties can do for publicity, there's no cap on how much they can spend on them. (Photos by Roehl Niño Bautista)

CMC-SC divide stays after 3 years

By Roehl Niño Bautista

The composition of next school year's College of Mass Communication Student Council (CMC-SC) is a near stalemate between the Student Alliance for the Advancement of hDemocratic Rights in UP and Interdependent Student-centered Activism (ISA), with the former bagging seven out of thirteen council positions.

"I personally think it is good, in a sense that no particular party would be dominating in terms of forwarding its ideologies and ideas," said Jo Javan Cerda, incoming CMC representative to the University Student Council (USC) and a member of ISA. "But regardless if it's divided in terms of seats, I trust my co-council members enough that they will cooperate in every project and plan decided by the entire council."

Despite the political rift in council, incoming CMC-SC chairperson Rupert Mangilit of STAND-UP said he's sure that candidates

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2009 Student Council Breakdown By Party



This graph includes the chairperson, vice-chairperson, the 12 councilors and the 20 college representatives to the USC. "Independent" comprises of those who did not run under any party or ran under a non-ALYANSA/non-KAISA/non-STAND-UP affiliated local party.

Source: USC Electoral Board

Graph by Rachel Miranda

In last 4 elections

Yellow gradually breaks red, blue USC party dominance

By Andrew Jonathan Bagaoisan

A yellow-led, evenly-colored University Student Council was the top story of the 2009 elections, next to the campus-wide computerized voting system.

Nagkakaisang Iskolar para sa Pamantasan at Sambayanan (KAISA) last Feb. 25 scored an upset by gaining the chairperson and ten other USC seats, neutralizing the power shared for two years by long-time parties Student Alliance for the Advancement of Democratic Rights in UP (STAND-UP) and Alyansa ng mga Mag-aaral para sa Panlipunang Katwiran at Kaunlaran (ALYANSA).

It was evidently a turning point for UP party politics, KAISA

taking councilor seats from the 13-year-old STAND-UP and winning back college representative posts mainly from the nine-year-old ALYANSA.

A scrutiny of the council's makeup from 2006, KAISA's first year in politics, shows that UP Diliman students voted fewer STAND-UP and ALYANSA bets into the council and more from KAISA.

KAISA attributed their win this year to an "intense" campaign, an "ideal" message, and "the best" messengers.

Officers from the other two, however, blamed the victory of personality politics over ideology or platform-based voting.

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FOR MORE NEWS, FEATURES & PHOTOS

Elected council mems call for unity in SC

By Maria Ernica de Guzman and Frederick Paulo Tomacder

Elected leaders at the College of Mass Communication (CMC) are pushing for intra-student council (SC) unity after a close fight between two political parties in the college.

With seven members from the Student Alliance for the Advancement of Democratic Rights in UP (STAND-UP) and six from the Interdependent Student-Centered Activism (ISA), next year's council faces deadlock caused by rifts within the SC.

ISA's Jo Javan Cerda, CMC representative-elect to the University Student Council, called for tolerance in considering multiple viewpoints on issues and problems.

"I believe we all need to strip off our colors as student council and put the interests of the students first," Cerda said.

Meanwhile, STAND-UP's Rupert Mangilit, incumbent CMC vice-chairperson and chairperson-elect, expressed confidence

that both parties share the same passion in upholding student interests and that "similarities in platforms and projects are good take off points for unity."

"At least both parties know what the students want and what the students need," Mangilit said. "Im sure those who ran for positions from both parties would promote students' interests."

Planning early

Both Mangilit and Cerda are already preparing for their leadership this coming academic year.

Mangilit said that he would prioritize plans on freshmen, shifttees and tranferees' orientation.

"Of course, we already need to establish powerful info dissemination measures at the start of the academic year. That is also one of our goals. and hopefully, for TNP (Tinig ng Plaridel) to have an office or to build TNP an office", he said.

Cerda, on the other hand, said that he is already asking tips on how to handle council matters from former CMC representatives Ruth Miguel and Karol Yee.

2009-2010
College of Mass
Communication
Student Council

Chairperson: Rupert Francis Mangilit

Vice Chairperson: Paula Bianca Lim

Secretary: Jihad Mariano

Treasurer: Michelle Miranda

Broadcast Communication Representatives:

Athena Keziah Chavez
Michaela Faeska Salonga

Journalism Representatives:

Judy Ann Espiritu
Kelvin Angelo Paulino

Communication Research Representatives:

Claire Pantoja
Michelin San Diego

Film and Audio-Visual Communication Representatives:

Grace Simbulan
Thesa Tang

CMC Representative:
Jo Javan Cerda

SR nomination period extended

By Franz Jonathan de la Fuente and Rachel Miranda

Nominations for the next Student Regent (SR) have been extended at the College of Mass Communication (CMC) because nobody has been nominated yet.

The deadline for submission of nomination was moved from March 6 to tomorrow, March 11, as the selection process for the new SR started last February 20. All colleges were allowed to extend the deadlines of their respective nomination periods.

CMC Student Council (CMC-SC) chairperson-elect Rupert Mangilit said, "We'd just like to give more time for CMC students to forward their nominations to the college search committee (but) no one has formally forwarded his/her nomination."

According to Article IV Section 1 of the Codified Rules for Stu-

dent Regent Selection (CRSRS), "any student, group or organization may nominate a student from any college of any of the autonomous or regional units of the UP system" as the next SR.

Mangilit said the extension will mean that the CMC-SC could only deliberate on the nominees for two days. The deliberation for college-level nominees was set on March 13.

Deliberation for university-level nominees will be on March 20 and protests may be filed with the search committees until 5 p.m. on March 24.

The next SR will serve for one year starting May 2009, after the system-wide SR selection on April 14 to 15 at the UP Visayas Miag-Ao campus. Incumbent SR Shahana Abdulwahid's term had already been extended from December 2008 to April 2009 to accommodate the selection process.

No rivalry among council members, says outgoing SC

By Maria Ernica de Guzman

Outgoing student council (SC) members denied the rumors of rivalry between members of council from different parties and claims that political differences did not hinder them to serve the students during their term.

Allegations of this divide sparked as a result of a heated online discussion among council members about the college's stand on Codified Rules for Student Regent Selection (CRSRS).

Incumbent Film representative Caloy Soliongco, a member of Interdependent Student-centered Acitivism (ISA), who questioned the creation of the stand, said that compromises have always been made when the council makes such decisions.

"My only observation is that once the statement finally comes out, it doesn't seem to be as exact as what has been discussed during the GA (General Assembly)," said Soliongco.

He clarified, however, that the council always reaches a stand

through a consensus.

Outgoing chairperson of CMC-SC Marian Santos confirmed this and clarified that even if majority of the council members are from Student Alliance for the Advancement of Democratic Rights in UP (STAND-UP), they "always challenge the minority to engage us in arguments."

Soliongco added that "having different arguments and working together to reconcile or compromise is an indicator of a council that aims to be effective in service."

Fulfillment of promises

Santos explained that during "sem planning," members of the council from ISA and STAND-UP would lay out their general and specific programs of action for evaluation and assessment. These plans would later be scheduled for implementation.

Santos said that the resolution of the council during this planning was the fight for tambayans, scrapping of laboratory fees and charter ratification.

Soliongco said that everyone

in the council did their fair share in organizing the projects.

"I know we weren't the best council and that there were lapses on our part, but it was still a council wherein everyone helped each other to the best of their capabilities," said Soliongco.

Soliongco also cleared that the council planned the activities and projects as a council and not as ISA or STAND-UP. This meant that the GPOAs the parties presented during election campaign were subject to the decision of elected members to actualize them.

"However, if it's a department project, then the department representatives will be in charge to handle it. Everyone should help out but they don't have a say about it," Soliongco added.

Final stretch

The council has also been working for the procurement of printer and a tarpaulin grid in the parking lot. These will hopefully be available come summer, Santos said.

Soliongco said he and his co-

Yee scoops Gawad Chanselor award

By Jenin Velasquez

Karol Mark Yee, former chairperson of College of Mass Communication Student Council (CMC-SC), received this year's Gawad Chanselor Para sa Natatanging Mag-aaral for his outstanding academic performance and leadership skills.

Yee, 22, earned his Bachelor of Arts in Broadcast Communication with honors. He graduated as magna cum laude and was awarded the best undergraduate thesis in his department in 2008.

In an interview with Yee a day before the awarding, he expressed his gratitude to the university for all the lessons and opportunities it gave him. He also thanked all those who helped and supported him.

When asked for reasons for Yee's nomination, Jane Vincu-

lado, former college secretary, described Yee as "well-rounded," adding that he had good performance in his exchange program at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

Yee's experience as a student leader also earned him points for the said nomination. In 2007, Yee founded the Interdependent Student-centered Activism (ISA), a local political party that recently won six posts in the incoming SC.

Other student-recipients of Gawad Chanselor were Mark Joseph Tan from the College of Engineering and Mikhail Solon from the College of Science.

The annual Gawad Chanselor is the highest recognition conferred by the University of the Philippines to outstanding individuals from different sectors in the university.

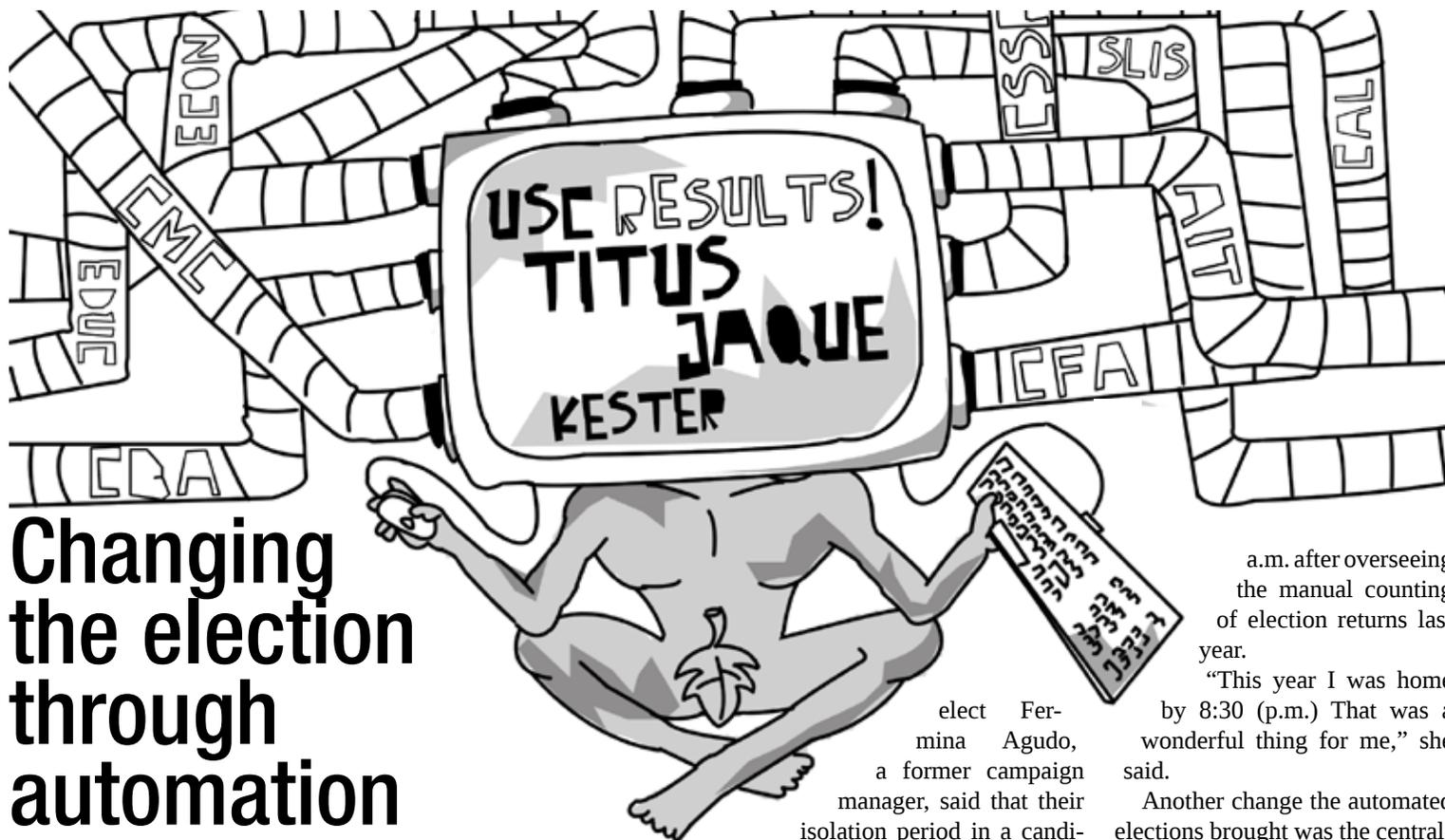
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representative Sam Lee is still working on some final projects, including a film wall and a multiply account for film majors.

"This will most likely serve as our goodbye project. There are many potential projects for the film department. It's just disappointing that we still lack equipment (in the department) but I also think that systematic marketing for such is a long term goal," said Soliongco.



Changing the election through automation

By Cherrie Anne Ongteco and Maria Katrina Elaine Alba

It could have been another defeat for Titus Tan.

In 2008, he lost to STAND-UP candidate Airah Cadiogan for the University Student Council (USC) Vice-Chairperson position by a slim margin of 82 votes.

This year, Tan and Cadiogan faced off one more time for the chairperson seat of the university

student council.

Thirty minutes after the polling precincts closed, the election results were released. And Titus Tan of KAISA was elected the new USC chairperson.

The first university-wide automation of elections this year drastically reduced the time of counting each college's ballots from at least seven hours to a mere 30 minutes.

STAND-UP's USC councilor-

elect Fermina Agudo, a former campaign manager, said that their isolation period in a candidate's house, when their mobile phones were taken away to prevent them from knowing the election results beforehand, was much shorter this year.

Previously, they had to wait until two or three in the morning before receiving the election results, Agudo said.

College of Social Sciences and Philosophy (CSSP) Secretary Aurora Mendoza also had the same experience of going home at three

a.m. after overseeing the manual counting of election returns last year.

"This year I was home by 8:30 (p.m.) That was a wonderful thing for me," she said.

Another change the automated elections brought was the centralization of the voting precincts and less need for manpower. In the past, CSSP's seven precincts were spread out across the CSSP lobbies to cater to their 2,256 voting population. Now, with two computer labs serving as precincts, it was easier for the College Student Electoral Board (CSEB) to administrate the voting.

The software that facilitated this year's elections was Halalan, an open-source voting system de-

veloped by University of the Philippines Linux Group (UnPLUG).

However, it was not perfect. According to UnPLUG's elections website, College of Law, College of Business Administration, National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) and School of Economics still resorted to manual voting for some of their students because of "inadequate preparations and miscalculated procedures."

The Halalan Voting System had been developed by members of UnPLUG in January 2005, but wasn't used then because UP lacked equipment like a suitable server.

In an interview with the Manila Times, Adrian Alcayde, UnPLUG member and engineering professor, said UnPLUG won an IBM server as a prize in an international contest on open-source software in 2006.

Because of this, they were able to use Halalan for the March 2007 elections at the College of Engineering and the College of Statistics.

In 2008, five of the 25 UP colleges and institutes followed suit on the automation: National College of Public Administration and Governance, College of Mass Communication, College of Music, College of Science and College of Business Administration.

Illustration by Barry Cyrus Viloria

Why people chose Yu

By Ma. Clarisse Osteria and Mark Allan Cervantes

What are voters really looking for?

After independent candidate Christopher Mariano "Kester" Yu secured the top spot in the University Student Council (USC) elections last Feb. 25, voters seem to be casting their ballots every which way, instead of for a single party line. This led to practically a three-way tie between Student Alliance for the Advancement of Democratic Rights in UP (STAND-UP), Alyansa ng mga Mag-aaral Para sa Panlipunang Katwiran at Kaunlaran (ALYANSA) and Nagkakaisang Iskolar para sa Pamantasan at Sambayanan (KAISA) in the USC.

Both STAND-UP and ALYANSA gained four seats each, while KAISA, the party of USC chairperson-elect Titus Tan, got three seats in the council.

According to the official results of the USC Elections Technical Team, Yu garnered 3,918

votes, about 30 votes ahead of ALYANSA's Mario C. Cerilles Jr.'s 3,888 votes.

"I did not at all expect to emerge as the number one councilor; I was expecting to get somewhere between the sixth to seventeenth councilor," Yu said.

According to the former College of Science chairperson, he had only aimed to be in the top 50 percent of the rankings given that he was hardly able to campaign because of the lack of political machinery.

He explained that because a part of the campaign period coincided with his college's week, he had to prioritize his duties as the chairperson over going to classrooms.

"I don't think I was even able to visit 3000 students in my room to room campaigns. Most of my votes came from my home college, since I am already known there," he said.

In the revised statistics released last Feb. 28 by UnPLUG,

or University of the Philippines Linux Users' Group, significant portions of his votes came from the College of Engineering (780 votes) and the College of Science (614 votes).

Yu believes that running as independent helped him win when election day came. "I was not limited or bound by the principles of a party," he said.

He also said that his environmental platform made him stand out among the sea of candidates. "It (my platform) was something different, specific and tangible. All other councilors had to go with the platform of their party which was more or less all encompassing."

Yu's campaign, called the "Green Revolution," focused on environmental programs within the campus. His programs include introducing a biodegradable alternative to styrofoam, using the Volunteer Corps for stricter implementation of the Clean Air Act and supporting existing projects such as the promotion of Padyak bikes.

A chemical engineering junior



said the Green Revolution campaign was important in winning his vote. "I'm all for the environment. I don't know if he's sincere, but I'd like to give Kester a chance," he said.

Meanwhile, an accountancy sophomore said that he voted for Yu because of the candidate's "concrete plans." "I don't see how he can be detrimental to the USC," he added.

At the College of Mass Communication, Yu got about 254 votes out of 655 voters.

A journalism senior said that he voted for Yu because of the "different focus of his campaign."

"He (Yu) breaks from the usual partisan politics," he said.

A communication research junior had a different opinion. According to her, she did not vote for Yu because she believed that there are more important matters.

"I think we should address social and political issues first," she said.

So what do students look for in a candidate?

"I look for ability and sincerity, and I don't know if Kester has them," said the chemical engineering student, adding, "I also look for something unique, something that differentiates the candidate from the others, and that's what Kester has."

According to Yu, this election season taught him some important lessons on winning. "You don't need to cut classes, spend a large sum of money or even have a personal campaign team to participate and win in the USC elections" he said.

"I know this is a very shallow answer, but at least it was something I was able to prove."

Photo by Roehl Niño Bautista

Who's waiting for a reply?

By Maria Ernica de Guzman
and Shairaanela

What is scarier than waiting for the reply of the one you're courting?

For media organizations and professionals in the field, it is another kind of reply. It is the Right of Reply bill.

The Right of Reply bill (RORB) has been branded by the practitioners as an "act of terrorism against media" in a conference attended by representatives from GMA, BusinessWorld, ABS-CBN, the Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI), BusinessWorld, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR), the National Union of Journalists (NUJP), and the Philippine Press Institute (PPI) on Feb. 24.

The practitioners and the organizations they represent agreed that the bill is an attack on press freedom and violates the constitution.

Getting to know the bill

Both senate (SB 2150) and house versions (HB 3306) of the bill defined the people qualified to make use of this bill as "all persons natural or juridical who are accused directly or indirectly of committing or having committed or of intending to commit any crime or offense defined by law or are criticized by innuendo, suggestion or rumor for any lapse in behavior in public or private life."

These versions also stated that the right of these persons to reply to an accusation or criticism against them in any form of media content shall be published or broadcasted in the same manner, with the same amount of space or air time, and should be

free of charge.

The senate version stated that the media organizations should broadcast or publish the response no later than three days while the house version gave media organizations one day to complete this task.

Moreover, the house version requires media entities to correct previous reports of a person accused if ever that person was proven innocent or was cleared of charges.

Steady hesitations

The bill does not only pose a threat to professional media practitioners but to student journalists as well.

Kristine Sabillo, chair of Union of Journalists in the Philippines-UP, said that it has many implications for the alternative and community media, which include campus publications "since they are the ones who are able to relentlessly expose and criticize the powers-that-be, having no commercial or other vested interests."

Larissa Mae Suarez, editor-in-chief of campus publication The Philippine Collegian, also said that "the language of the bill is so vague that its scope extends to the campus press, and if it is passed, student journalists would no doubt find themselves hesitating to tackle sensitive issues or criticize public figures."

Suarez added that it would be a "grave repression of the responsibility of campus publications to freely report on matters, whether at the national or the university level, which concern the youth."

Sabillo also said that "campus publications aren't published daily. Therefore, most of them would suffer violation penalties they can not afford and defend them-

selves from."

Meanwhile, Laurice Penamante, president of the UP Journalism Club, said that citizen journalists and journalist's blogs (or to criticisms aired or broadcast over websites, or through any electronic device) who may not have the protection a media organization can offer its journalists may also be targeted for the bill.

Penamante believes that while the bill can result in a "chilling effect" for journalists and private citizens, it can also serve as a wake up call to media to become more responsible, more careful in the way they gather and report news.

However, Penamante clarified that there are provisions within the same law that at first glance merely serves as a warning to media practitioners' but actually restricts their freedom and disregards media's right to editorial judgment of news.

"Say a government official feels they have been insulted (directly or indirectly, purposely or not) and demand that the media publish his reply the next day. What if the story was a banner story? Will the media disregard other news that they view to be more important in order to appease this government official? That's bad news sense. That would be a disservice to the readers of the paper who expect that only the most important news make it to page 1," said Penamante.

Sabillo also said that as a result, there will be constraints on the negative coverage of the school administrator and constraints like space in finances "just to be able to accommodate biased replies with probably false claims."



Sidebar: Courtship in the halls of the two Houses

Sources: senate.gov.ph, congress.gov.ph

Date	Event
May 1972	NPC, then led by Eddie Monteclaro, presented a position paper during a Senate hearing against the bill A similar bill to the Right of Reply, Senate Bill No. 903, was sponsored in the pre-martial law upper chamber by Senators Ambrosio Padilla, Mamintal Tamano, and Rene Espina
Feb. 8, 2007	Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr. emphasized the need to protect people who were unduly criticized or maliciously maligned in print, radio and television by granting them the right of reply. This proposal is embodied in SB 1120 which Pimentel hopes will be approved by the two chambers of Congress when it resume session in June
July 7, 2007	Pimentel re-filed a proposal which underscored the need to protect people who are unduly criticized or maliciously maligned over print, radio and television by granting them the right of reply
Oct. 19, 2007	Pimentel appealed for congressional support to the long-pending proposal for a mechanism to protect people who are unduly criticized or maliciously maligned in print, radio and television reports or commentaries by granting them the right of reply (SB 1178)
Apr. 3, 2008	SB 2150 was filed by Senate by Pimentel and co-authored by Senators Ramon Revilla, Jr. and Francis Escudero, in substitution of SB 1178
June 11, 2008	The bill was passed on second reading by the Senate Wednesday evening shortly before the first regular session of the 14th Congress adjourned
July 29, 2008	Senate had unanimously passed on third reading the SB 2150
July 31, 2008	The bill was sent to the House of Representatives for concurrence
Feb. 25, 2009	Senator Juan Ponce Enrile said the Right of Reply Bill approved on third reading Malacañang cautioned Congress that the bill could infringe on press freedom as guaranteed under the Constitution Bacolod Representative Monico Puentevella, principal author of the right to reply bill, was forced to file amendments to water down his proposal
Feb. 24-27, 2009	The House also approved on second reading a companion bill (House Bill 5760) and a counter-balance – the decriminalization of libel
Feb. 26, 2009	Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will veto the bill, said Presidential Spokesperson Anthony Golez
Feb. 27, 2009	In a joint statement, Senators Pimentel, Joker Arroyo, Juan Miguel Zubiri, Edgardo Angara, Richard Gordon, Gregorio Honasan, and Panfilo Lacson said Congress should pass the bill despite apprehensions that this would curtail press freedom in the country
Mar. 2, 2009	Pimentel reaffirmed his stance on the Right of Reply Bill Escudero said he will review the right of reply bill before it goes to the bicameral committee for final deliberation
Mar. 3, 2009	Media practitioners, led by National Press Club president Benny Antiporda, staged a rally at the House of Representatives to protest the proposed Right of Reply bill Speaker Prospero Nograles and leaders of the House of Representatives agreed with media executives to take a second, closer look at the Right of Reply bill
Mar. 4, 2009	Pimentel proposed that any person who had already been accorded the right of reply by the mass media over an objectionable story or commentary could not sue for libel anymore over the same item
Mar. 7, 2009	The Lower House put the Right of Reply Bill "in the freezer" and deliberated on other priority bills instead

No limits...

from page 1

Election Law or Republic Act 7166 mandates that candidates vying for any position to limit campaign materials cost depending on the number of registered voters per area.

The law states, "A candidate of any position, other than the president and vice president, spends only P3 per registered voter when affiliated with any political party and P5 pesos per registered voter for independent candidates."

In the College of Mass Communication, however, the USC Election Code practically allows political parties and independent candidates to spend as much as they can on campaign materials. Overspending is not an issue, since there are no existing standards in the first place.

Lourdes Portus, college sec-

retary and head of the electoral board, said she saw no potential problems in the current election manual.

"We don't really need a monitoring body for the campaign since it's a student activity," she said.

According to Portus, scrutinizing and going into the details of the election manual would complicate the procedures and may just become an unnecessary "hassle."

"Our election is not like in the national level wherein there are significant inequalities (in terms of economic resources of candidates)," she added.

In the recent campaign period, the CMC Skywalk was awash with color. Red and yellow tarpaulins, posters and streamers were strategically hung on the walls of the college. Leaflets, sticker-pins and General Program of Action (GPOA) brochures were a hit during room-to-room campaigns.

"The limit of collaterals (campaign materials) limits the spending," said Interdependent Student-Centered Activism (ISA) president Mark Dantes.

ISA party's campaign materials included a large slate tarpaulin donated by its alumna, Patty Lapus while slate posters were courtesy of Dantes. Other posters for individual candidates were paid for by their supporters and organizations.

When asked if these campaign materials were the fruits of solicitation, Dantes said, "We don't ask them (sponsors), they were the ones who offered it."

The only campaign items the candidates paid for were the yellow t-shirts printed with the party's logo, costing P250 each.

"We don't want them (candidates) to spend so much during campaigns. As much as possible, we don't collect money from the candidates," said Karol Yee, founder of ISA.

On the other hand, the Student Alliance for the Advancement of Democratic Rights in UP (STAND-UP) candidates paid P700 as "candidate's fee" for their campaign materials and other expenses.

STAND-UP standard bearer Rupert Mangilit admitted they lacked funds for the campaign, causing the delay in releasing their GPOA and other publicity materials.

They also had slate posters, sticker-pins and brochures distributed during room-to-room campaigns. Some of the candidates had their share of individual posters sponsored by supporters and orgmates.

Mangilit, also the party's convener, said, "It's about time to have clear-cut guidelines as to how much a party should spend on campaigns. This way, we can ensure that there would be equal footing among candidates."

The lack of guidelines could be

a disadvantage to political parties and candidates who do not have sufficient resources to fund their election campaign, Mangilit said.

On the other hand, Dantes believed that while publicity materials may had significant impact in the university level, it did not have the same effect in the college level.

"USC-wise, the packaging of a candidate determines his winning. However, I don't think pubmats have big effect in our college since the students know the candidates personally," Dantes said.

For Mangilit, the lesser the publicity, the lesser the chances are of letting other people know what the candidates could offer as student leaders.

"At the end of the day, it's not an issue of how many pubmats a party can release. It's an issue of a candidate's principle and his/her capacity (to serve the students)," he added.

CMC-SC ...

from page 1

from both parties ran to serve the students' interest.

Election firsts

When STAND-UP was first challenged by ISA in 2007, the SC had a 7-6 division in seats.

The difference in political orientation of both parties was constantly noted then: STAND-UP said that they have "always been at the forefront of social issues" while ISA was against "activism that comes from just one group of

students."

Elections that year recorded a 55.96 percent turnout, or 629 of 1124 students casting their votes, the first time that more than half of the student population voted in recent years. Lourdes Portus, College Secretary and college electoral board chairperson said then that the feat was a record-breaking statistic.

The turnout spurt made a significant increase of 8.38 percent from the 2006 turnout. Since then, the number of voters has always exceeded the 50 percent mark.

STAND-UP shared the executive board positions with ISA

which got the chairperson, secretary, and CMC representative seats. The former narrowly dominated composition of the department representatives.

The election for the incumbent council gave an 8-5 domination for STAND-UP who got all the executive board posts, a clear advantage for the party compared to their previous standing.

The year before the two-party system

STAND-UP was the sole political party in the college prior to ISA's inception. But even then, the party didn't entirely dominate the student council with six posi-

tions taken by independent candidates in the 2006 elections.

In the same year, most candidates ran unopposed, except for the CMC representative seat and for the three candidates who ran for the Broadcast Communication representatives position.

Micah Sulit, CMC-SC 2006-2007 Journalism representative who ran independent, said that the relationship of officers with each other "were okay", and that then chairperson Melanie Pinlac from STAND-UP made a setup where "everyone's voice counted."

"Melai was fully aware of the almost-equal divide and she al-

ways respected it," she said.

Voter turnout increase

Number of students casting their votes at CMC during the last elections slightly increased this year, with 655 out of 1144 or around 57.25 percent of the student population participating in this year's election, slightly higher than last year's turnout of 56.88 percent.

(With reports from Mark Anthony Gubagaras, Maria Ernicia De Guzman, and John Paul Afafe. Archived election story for TNP by Johanna Sisante and Kimberly Tan.)

Yellow breaks ...

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Yellow power

The yellow party gained more seats in the council through its college representatives.

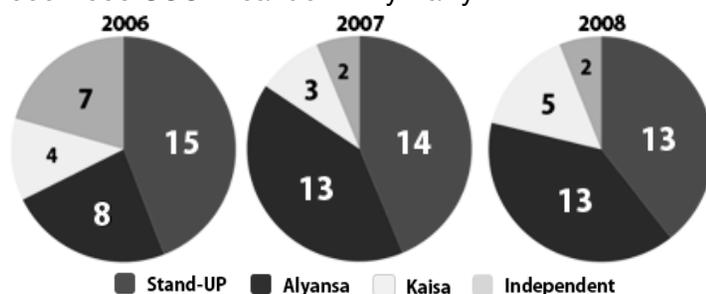
Holding on to its bailiwicks, the party also struck a win in Architecture, previously STAND-UP country.

Meanwhile, KAISA's no-show among the councilors since 2007 ended this year as three candidates took the last seats. Their landmark win was Titus Tan as chair.

Former KAISA party head Abdel Jamal Disangcopan said this "much higher vote of confidence" resulted from their candidates' efforts to campaign even in other parties' turfs.

Disangcopan said that on the side, their party had the "most ideal message" but explained it "without leaving the audience

2006-2008 USC Breakdown By Party



disconnected."

"We (also) had the best candidates this year. They articulated the message well all throughout the campaign," he adds.

Red recedes

STAND-UP secretary-general Marian Kris Santos, who didn't win USC councilor, ascribed their party's losses to decentralized party machinery.

"We didn't see at once that our narrowest competitor would be Titus and not Niña (Acasio of ALYANSA)," she said. "Or KAISA

and not ALYANSA."

STAND-UP's surprise this election was the 1,500-plus-vote defeat of standard bearer Airah Cadiogan to Tan, whom she beat last year for vice chair by a two-digit margin.

STAND-UP, which held the majority until last year, had one less council official every year since 2006. The party had nonetheless held at least a top leadership post that time.

KAISA regularly visited the College of Mass Communication,

which largely votes red to the USC. Cadiogan, a Communication Research major, won here, but only by 30-plus votes.

While other known STAND-UP colleges still voted red, they didn't deliver as many votes as bigger colleges with bigger turnouts that rooted for Tan.

Most students had voted this year based on personality rather than by party, Santos added.

It would be a challenge for the incoming council, she said, to unite for the students and the people.

Blue's clues

Marian Panganiban of ALYANSA, who also lost to Cadiogan as vice chair last year, agreed that candidates boosted KAISA's upset.

Being a young party, KAISA had little track record to base votes on, Panganiban says. Instead they had bets with "attractive personalities and background."

ALYANSA's numbers in the USC decreased with the college reps—two went to KAISA, one to Stand-UP.

Tan also won in ALYANSA colleges. Even the College of Engineering, where Acasio won USC representative in 2006, gave Tan more than a thousand votes.

It's not that Acasio had fewer credentials, Panganiban said. While the two had comparable records, Tan had the benefit of recent recall, having run last year, and running alone.

An evenly-divided council, Panganiban said, would challenge itself to still act on behalf of the students. The difference would only be judged later.

"Since we have no precedent of KAISA holding the (top) position(s), that is something we have yet to see."

(With reports from Mark Anthony Gubagaras, Rachel Miranda and Mark Pere Madrona)



Check and balance

At the height of an election's campaign period, the university becomes an open market where political ideas are bought and sold. Political parties and independent candidates used almost every kind of gimmickry available to promote their general and specific programs of action, hoping to solicit votes from the students.

During elections, information promoting political interests is constantly fed to potential voters. Bulletin boards and waiting sheds are plastered with slate posters and GPOAs trying to sound credible and convincing. Since no monitoring body exists to regulate campaign expenditure, candidates can practically spend as much as they want for their publicity materials. Information practically flows freely in the university.

It is in these critical times that

students learn to scrutinize future leaders and differentiate a solid platform from an empty promise. It is in these times that an informed decision is most vital in determining effective leadership and student representation. And it is in these times that the function of media as electoral watchdog emerges.

Day and night, media keep their eyes and ears open for news and updates, reporting as objectively as they can on election issues.

Amid the bombardment of projects that aim to promote students' interest, media should remain adamant in being critical and observant of the possible consequences of such projects. Are they feasible and timely? Do they adhere to students'

And it is in these times that the function of media as electoral watchdog emerges.

interest? Do they really promote students' rights?

Instead of publishing fragmented and incoherent news stories, media should provide more context and answer the question "so what?" in the story. It should put more emphasis on trends and developments during elections. Through careful and unbiased analysis of facts and figures, media could monitor progress or regression in terms of accomplishments of previous councils, public confidence on political parties or even level of student participation.

In the 2009 student council elections, Tinig ng Plaridel, in partnership with SOLIDARIDAD, an alliance of publications within the

university, took advantage of the speed and pervasiveness of the online medium as a venue for information dissemination. Through the central hub UPJourn.net, different publications collaborate to cover elections in every college in the university.

Now that TNP has made its mark online, it is time for our local newspaper to continue being the watchdog of College of Mass Communication. As communication students, our awareness and involvement in pressing national and local issues are crucial to our reportage. TNP represents the broadcaster, filmmaker, researcher and journalist in us. It represents our stand as a college, and our identity as mass communicators.

Let your voice be heard. Inform and be informed.

Tinig ng Plaridel

The official student publication of the College of Mass Communication, University of the Philippines Diliman

Hon Sophia Balod
Editor-In-Chief

Roehl Niño Bautista
Associate Editor

Riziel Ann Cabreros
Managing Editor

Frederick Paulo Tomacder
Officer-In-Charge For News

Cherrie Anne Ongteco
Features Editor

Rachel Miranda
Layout Artist

Maria Katrina Elaine Alba
Andrew Jonathan Bagaoisan
Jo Javan Cerda

Maria Ernica de Guzman
Franz Jonathan de la Fuente
Ma. Clarisse Osteria
Shaira Panela
Edmark San Antonio
Reporters

Jennifer Aquino
Cora Ana Karenina Evangelista
Mark Allan Cervantes
Mark Anthony Gubagaras
Mark Pere Madrona
Claire Pantoja
Jenin Velasquez
Barry Cyrus Vilorio
Contributors

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When the paper becomes the news



By Hon Sophia Balod

When Jovan Cerda first told me he'd be running as college representative for the 2009 University Student Council (USC) elections under Interdependent Student-Centered Activism (ISA), I went frantic. I didn't expect it and I panicked. At that time, he was the Editor-in-chief of TNP. I was the Associate Editor.

The issue spread like fire, dividing the colleges into three major houses: the pro-Jovan, an-

ti-Jovan and the apathetic. Some praised him for having the guts to run for the post, despite his responsibilities in the college paper. Some raised eyebrows, dubbing him as a "power-seeker," and accusing him of conflict of interest. Some never even bothered to comment.

A newspaper must be free from all slants and biases in its reportage, especially during elections. Cerda's affiliation in a political party might pose a threat on the ethical reportage and editorial decisions in TNP. Journalism ethics dictates that he chooses one: USC or TNP?

On Feb. 13, Cerda filed a leave of absence from performing editorial duties in TNP. However, he remained a news gatherer during the elections at the College of Music. He also informed the staff that he would resign as EIC if he wins in the elections, but is still

willing to work as a reporter.

But that didn't silence his detractors. More questions on his credibility and commitment in handling his priorities were raised.

At this point, TNP has earned much attention from local political parties, faculty members and students. The publication has become the topic in room-to-room campaigns and even in casual chit-chats among students. It has also become the major beneficiary in both parties' general programs of actions, each party pledging full support to our college publication in 2009.

I was glad to hear that the future council will be backing us up. However, as I have observed, the Cerda-TNP issue has become the subject of relentless politicking. "Why did Jovan choose to run as CMC rep when he already had a prior commitment? What

will happen to TNP if Jovan wins in the elections?"

The editorial board's makeup may have changed, but that did not stop TNP from performing its function during the elections. People needed not worry about TNP—the editorial staff was more than up for the job.

Working hand in hand with other publications, TNP covered not only CMC, but also other assigned colleges such as National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG), College of Social Work and Child Development (CSWCD), and Collge of Human Kinetics (CHK). Through UPJourn.net and tinigngplaridel.net, we were able to post election updates regularly. In fact, these sites were so active that students even took the initiative to post their own updates, comments, and corrections online.

Instead of joining in the complicated and saturated ruckus of the Cerda-TNP issue, the publication chose to divert its focus on covering and reporting elections. That was, I think, the most pressing issue for the editorial staff that time.

Cerda won as CMC representative. He filed resignation from being EIC on Feb. 27, but he is currently working as a reporter for TNP. His articles, as with all submitted stories, are subject to editing and approval. His editors may even choose to scrap the entire article if they deem it biased.

There goes the Cerda-TNP issue. The fate of the infamous conflict-of-interest issue now rests in the hands of the current editorial board. Whether people trust the board or not—that is another story.

Oh, and by the way, I am no longer frantic.

Right of reply: campus edition



By Andrew Jonathan Bagoisan

Picture this: It's election season in UP, and the few active college papers go full force to report on the campaign, now online to keep up with the usually short campaign period.

Midway through the campaign, the exchange of propaganda gets dirty. Candidates expose others' dirty linen, parties denounce each other and unflattering rumors about contenders circulate. Even administration officials get dragged in.

As a reporter, you write them, knowing these are legit election stories. Your editors agree. You naturally get the other side. But to meet deadlines, you end up posting only the assertions as main headlines in your news site.

You are now compelled to write the reaction in the same length as the earlier story, and post it in the

same online status. If you don't do so by the next day, you could face a fine much larger than your publication's entire budget that semester. Put it out, or else.

The same alarmist storyline not only holds for professional journalists, but it also foretells how campus publications might alter their jobs should the Right of Reply become law.

That could possibly be true even before the next academic year. With its Senate version already approved last July, the bill is awaiting action from the House of Representatives as of this writing. The issue has generated media discussion and opposition precisely due to its bearing on the media's job and responsibilities.

Lawmakers who back it say the bill—already law in countries like Norway, Singapore, and Indonesia—is the best way to prevent media excesses. The bill institutionalizes immediate publishing of replies and reactions, and hands down punishment if it isn't followed. The two versions in Congress only differ on how much to pay and when replies should be put out.

The bill itself is not new. "Right of reply" has been filed and re-filed in Congress since 2004. Former bill supporter Sen. Francis Escudero even says bills like this exist as far back as the

early 1970s. But the moves were unsuccessful owing much to reactions from the media.

Considering the bill's oft-cited implications, especially for 2010, it takes little to extend the reasoning to the UP level, where press relations nearly similar to the national sphere also exist. Already the College Editors Guild of the Philippines has contested the bill on that basis.

Given the problems that the student press is facing now, the bill's added burden could further cripple the presently weak campus papers if officials use it to silence dissent or gain publicity gratis. Not that we don't fully

trust the administration, more so our student leaders. But to open up the possibility of controlling the media heightens the temptation to actually do so.

Most of our papers here make do with a minimum ten-peso-per-student budget that at its most efficient could only print four issues in one semester. Devoting space—and funds—on publishing replies free of charge denies other pressing stories and relevant information from seeing print. That's not to mention what could happen to the paper's funds when the bill's sanctions clause comes knocking.

Some may argue that posting

the stories online is less hassle. Still, the premise of the bill toys with journalists' news values and their capacity to determine a story's newsworthiness over another. Press people know that a headline's online placement shows its apparent significance for editors and readers. Requiring replies on similar planes twists that system.

The right of reply, while respecting a right that the press actually respects and exercises, impinges on other rights guaranteed us citizens. A case, as they say in media law, of balancing interests and prior restraint—a situation we don't want to waste funds and efforts on.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you have any reactions, comments, suggestions or inquiries for **Tinig ng Plaridel**, contact us at:



0927-3152715 (Globe)

0929-2560752 (Smart)

or e-mail us at:

tinigngplaridel@gmail.com



In Focus: Following the CMC campaign trail

By Roehl Niño Bautista



This is one of the most colorful seasons in the university. All of a sudden, hues of red, yellow and blue—and this time, green—are worn by groups of people in semi-formal wearing big laminated name tags that scream to be remembered. Campaign season is definitely a highlight of each academic year, with students getting a taste of hot politics right at the comfort of their own colleges.

The colors, events and personalities during campaign season are scenes that students love to remember. These shots were taken at one of the main political events at the College of Mass Communication: a mudslinging activity organized by Mass Communicators Organization on Feb. 20. More photos are available at <http://tinigngplaridel.net>.



(1) STAND-UP standard bearers Airah Cadiogan and Jacqueline Eroles make their way to the CMC veranda to show their support to their local candidates. However, they weren't able to face off with candidates from ALYANSA and **(2)** KAISA's candidates, including chairperson bet Titus Tan, at an earlier debate set for USC candidates.

(3) In the meantime, local candidates prepare for their turn on the seats. This is Rupert Mangilit, Stand-UP's chairperson candidate, after a last-minute meeting with his partymates. **(4)** ISA candidates and supporters huddle together and shout their slogan, "Isa para sa isang CMC."

(5)(6) During mudslingings, candidates must be able to answer any issue presented to them. In these photos, ISA's Jo Javan Cerda, Lorenzo Araullo, and Cora Ana Karenina Evangelista, and STAND-UP's Paula Lim, Rupert Mangilit and April Angela Nolasco deliberate during the debate.