

WEST VISAYAS STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
GRADUATE SCHOOL
Iloilo City

"CENTRAL SPIRIT": A CASE IN POINT FOR ALUMNI RELATIONS

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the Graduate School
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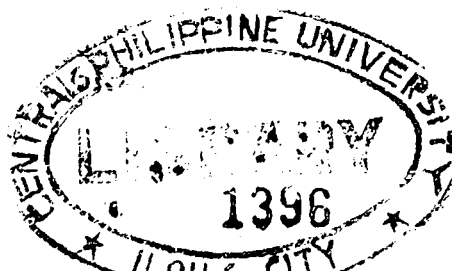
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Abstract

This study was conducted to delve into the "Central spirit" that consciously and unconsciously unites Centralians at the Central Philippine University community. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following: (a) What is the "Central spirit" to students, faculty, staff, officials, and alumni of Central Philippine University? (b) What are the symbols that evoke the "Central spirit" among Centralians? (c) What rituals help develop such spirit in the school's constituents? (d) What is CPU's organization--her organizational structure and culture, alumni association, and resource generation capacity that facilitate the development of such spirit--and how can the "Central spirit" provide a tool for educational managers? (e) How does the Work Study Program, the centerpiece of the school's administration, help develop such a spirit among her constituents? (f) How does CPU develop intergenerational loyalty among her wards? To accomplish the aforementioned objectives, the researcher employed the qualitative research design, specifically ethnography, a disciplined study which tries to ascertain and describe the culture of a people or an organization, in this case, the constituents of Central Philippine University united by their so-called "Central spirit". This study took place at Central Philippine University, Lopez Jaena St., Jaro, Iloilo City and its

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community, in school year 2005-2006, covering the school's Centennial year in 2005. The informants were mainly the CPU students, faculty, staff, school officials, and alumni. The data collection strategies were participant observation, interviews, and document analyses. Triangulation of data, informants, literature such as CPU's written history, the "Centralian LINK" or the alumni newsletter, journals, magazines, bulletins, institutional records, enrollment records, constitutions, speeches, letters, testimonials, relics (such as buildings and maps), and a related study were employed to further validate the observations made. The findings of the present investigation were as follows—CPU student, faculty, staff, school official, and alumni informants considered "Central spirit" as a bond, a feeling of belongingness with fellow Centralians; loyalty to and love of school; the indwelling Spirit of God that unites the hearts of people; a kindness to fellow Centralians; the accumulated experiences of students in the campus; and indescribable for some but surely exists. The symbols that evoke the "Central spirit" among Centralians were apparently the school hymns and the school logo called "The Gold and Blue". A Centralian's so-called "Rites of Passage" which mark a change in status from one life stage to another were apparently through the mentoring on Christian life brought about by the institutionalized CEW convocations, bible study groups, prayer rallies, Religion & Ethics classes, and the Christian living and values education classes in the elementary and secondary years, respectively. Other "school

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rites” or “Transition Rites” associated with important changes in personal status were the other co-curricular activities that fostered the holistic development of students consistent with the school’s vision of EXCEL. Lastly, CPU’s so-called “Rites of Intensification” which reaffirm a Centralian’s status in society consist of the Welcome and Send-off Parties, Dedication Sunday, Baccalaureate, and Commencement Exercises for the graduates, and alumni reunions, the biggest of which was the Centennial celebration. CPU’s school organization and management follows the bureaucratic model. Its mission objectives are carried out, following the technical values of efficiency, effectiveness and economy, but tempered by Christian values. The school’s organizational culture is definitely Christian and predominantly *Ilonggo* or *Visayan* with the very American concern for efficiency and democratic legacy. Reinforcing the socio-cultural traits of the University personnel is the spirit of *EXCEL* which is deeply steeped in Christian caring and concern for others. The Mother Alumni Association is the policy-making body on alumni affairs and provides a venue for the coming together of members/representatives from its more than 133 alumni chapters all over the world. The *Centralian LINK*, CPU website, CPU Alumni Channel, and the External Affairs Office serve as important tools in reaching alumni and other school constituents. Through the years, the resource generation capacity of the school through its alumni here and abroad have proven strong, hence, the various buildings and other infrastructure,

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foundations, scholarships, and grants-in-aid, and development funds amounting to millions. Centralians have offered their ideas on how the "Central spirit" can help provide a tool for educational managers *vis-a-vis* how a possible organizational culture or school spirit could evolve among alumni which can help facilitate the accomplishment of organization's goals. Specifically, the school official informants think the "Central spirit" if taken to heart, can help in managing the school, in allocating resources, in serving the clientele, in promoting the institution, and in promoting the school's vision and mission. The Work-Study Service Program (WSSP) has been a centerpiece of the school's administrations through the years, designed to help students who have the aptitude and motivation for college work but who are financially constrained. Many of the school's alumni attribute their individual successes to the Work-Study Service Program, fostering the "Central spirit" in them and engendering their active and heartfelt involvement and generous giving for the school's worthy projects. Moreover, the CPU Administration, cognizant of the great role of its constituents in the continuing existence of the institution, has established various award systems and incentives to foster intergenerational loyalty among its wards. Among these are the special privileges such as tuition fee discounts, employee dependent privileges, hiring preferences, Service and Posthumous Awards, Distinguished Centralian Award, Wall of Remembrance, and the Centralian Family Loyalty Award.