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Planning Process

Highlights in Planning Process

1. **Our strategic goals are aligned with USM priorities.** The planning process at USM is grounded in its vision, mission, and strategic development plan, ensuring that all colleges and departments initiatives contribute meaningfully to institutional priorities and national development goals.
2. **Our planning culture is participatory and data-driven.** USM employs a bottom-up and inclusive approach that engages stakeholders across all units. Planning is informed by performance data, stakeholder feedback, and evidence-based assessments to ensure responsiveness and relevance.
3. **Our planning process is integrated with Quality Assurance Systems.** The university's planning framework is integrated with quality assurance mechanisms such as ISO 9001:2015 standards, AACUP accreditation requirements, and the Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS). This promotes coherence, accountability, and continuous improvement.
4. **Cascading of plans across organizational levels is systematic.** University-wide strategic goals are operationalized through rolling-out of plans, such as the Office Performance Commitment and Review (OPCR) and Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR), ensuring alignment and clarity of roles from top management to individual employee level.
5. **Achievement of our goals are evident.** Our planning process has led to measurable outcomes in research productivity, instruction, community engagement, and infrastructure development. Our department contributes significantly to institutional targets.

Background

Maintaining and enhancing quality is an integral component of the USM planning framework. Key players in this effort are the University Quality Assurance Center (UQAC), Planning and Development Office, and Human Resource and Development Office (HRMDO). They play the most important role in the development and monitoring of targets and reporting quality across all university operations. The UQAC ensures continuous improvement by upholding the highest standards of the systems and procedures throughout the institution. As part of this commitment to quality, the M.Sc. in Biology Program undergoes regular accreditation by the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP), Inc. This process supports the continuous enhancement of academic standards and program relevance. The PDO initiates, monitors, and evaluates the planning activities of the university. It leads the preparation of project plans and proposals and assists in packaging programs and recommendations from different offices in the University. On the other hand, HRMDO ensures that people, the university's most valuable resource, are aligned with institutional goals. This ensures that the USM development agenda is backed by a competent, motivated, and strategically deployed workforce.

Our planning process is designed to establish clear targets that guide progress at all levels and contribute to the overall advancement of the university. The priorities and operational goals outlined in our development plan, that is, the DBS Development Plan 2023-2028, are closely aligned with the University’s goals articulated in the USM Strategic Plan 2023-2028.

The Department of Biological Sciences maintains a culture of planning in all aspects of its operations, including faculty advancement, research and extension agenda, student services, quality of instruction, and curriculum development that aim to cultivate essential skills for lifelong learning for students, encouraging engagement with societal and global issues, and equipping students for meaningful careers in an ever-evolving world.

Organization and Management

The organizational structure of USM (Figure 5A) is the starting point for serving the region as a Center of Excellence (COE) in agriculture and Center of Development (COD) for Veterinary Medicine and BIOLOGY. It is geared to strengthen the operation of the institution’s four-fold functions: instruction, research, extension, and production, including general administration and support services across its covered campuses.

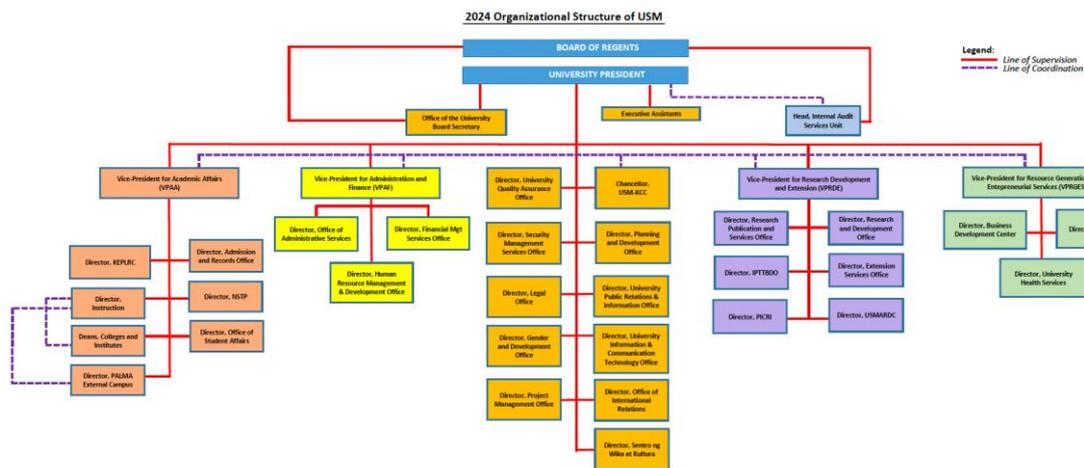


Figure 5A. USM’s Organizational Structure.

USM Institutional Development Planning

The University of Southern Mindanao (USM), as a Higher Education Institution (HEI), commits to participating in addressing emerging challenges in the national education system and actively contributing to achieving the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030**, particularly those aimed at ending poverty in all its forms and

ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education with lifelong learning opportunities for all. To help realize these goals, the **University of Southern Mindanao (USM)** has aligned its institutional priorities with various international, national, and regional development frameworks. These include the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, **AmBisyon Natin 2040**, the **Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023–2028**, **Mindanao 2020: Peace and Development Framework Plan 2011–2030**, and the **SOCCSKSARGEN Regional Development Plan (RDP) 2023–2028** (Figure 5B).



Figure 5B. Schematic diagram of the USM Strategic Development Process.

USM Leadership Management System

The senior leaders (SL) of USM, including the University President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Research, Development, and Extension, Vice President for Administration and Finance, and Vice President for Resource Generation and Entrepreneurial Services, set the vision of the institution through a five-year **Strategic Plan**, anchored on the statutory requirements set by the CHED, DBM, COA, CSC, BIR, and VMGO as stipulated in the USM Code (Link). The SLs deploy the vision and values with the workforce, customers, students, and other stakeholders using a top-down approach (Figure 5C).

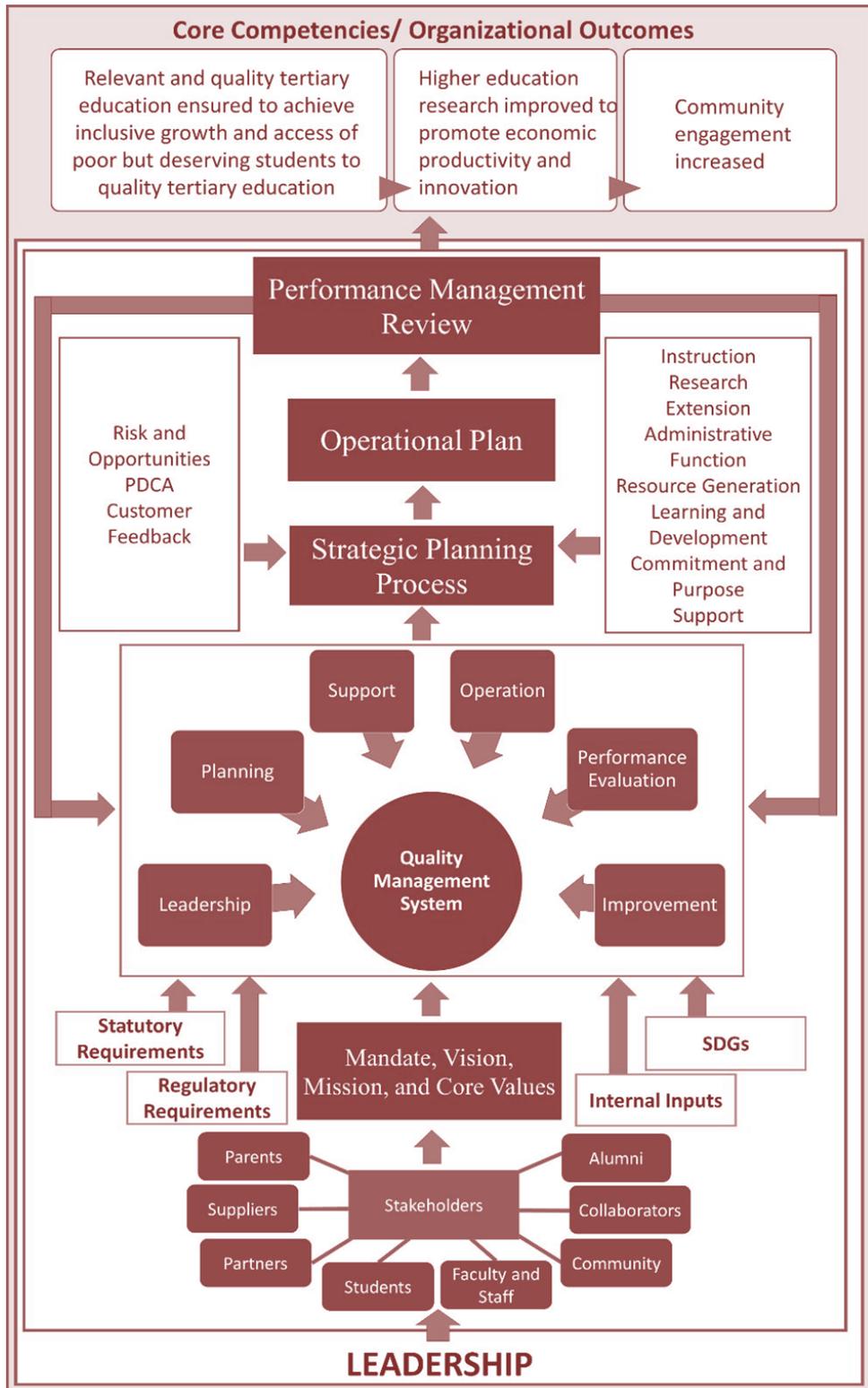


Figure 5C. USM Leadership Management System (Source: USM PQA Report, 2022).

5.1. Brief Overview of USM Strategic Planning Process

USM classifies its planning framework into three main components: the **Land Use Development and Infrastructure Plan (LUDIP)**, **Strategic Plan (SP)**, and **Operational Plan (OpPlan)**. The LUDIP serves as the university's master plan, outlining how campus land and infrastructure will be allocated and developed to support both academic and non-academic functions. The Strategic Plan (SP) is USM's five-year roadmap that defines the university's long-term goals and strategic directions. Both the LUDIP and SP align with key national and regional development frameworks, including the RDP, Mindanao 2020, PDP, AmBisyon Natin 2040, and the United Nations SDGs for 2030.

To operationalize the Strategic Plan, USM formulates an annual Operational Plan (OpPlan), aligned with Sustainable Development Goals and guided by its Quality Policy Statement, that outlines specific activities to achieve the University's Organizational Outcomes (OOs) under its Key Results Areas (KRAs). Based on the OpPlan, each unit sets its performance targets, which are reflected in the Office Performance Commitment and Review (OPCR) document. The PPDO implements the Operational Plan (OpPlan) based on the University's Strategic Plan (SP) and the evaluation of accomplishments from the previous year. This process sets annual performance targets for various KRAs under instruction, research and extension services, resource generation, and general administration and support services.

Subsequently, all teaching and non-teaching personnel align their individual performance goals with their respective unit's OPCR through the Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR) process. The Planning and Development Office (PDO), Human Resource Management and Development Office (HRMDO), University Quality Assurance Center (UQAC), and Performance Management Team (PMT) established the Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS) of USM. Under this system, the results of the implementation and effectiveness of the strategies are evaluated through University Performance Management Review. The results of the monitoring and evaluation are cascaded and properly communicated to concerned units and will be used as basis for the accomplishment of the organizations targets. When targets are not accomplished, SLs develop catch-up plans to address this.

The UQAC leads the establishment, preparation, implementation, maintenance, and continual improvement of the USM's Quality Management System (QMS), including the processes needed and their interactions, in accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 International Standards. In addition, the UQAC conducts management reviews, facilitates internal audits, and oversees the review and revision of procedures to ensure the consistent delivery of quality services across all university units. The UQAC is also responsible for maintaining program accreditations, ensuring that academic offerings meet national and international standards. This process is illustrated in Figure 5D.

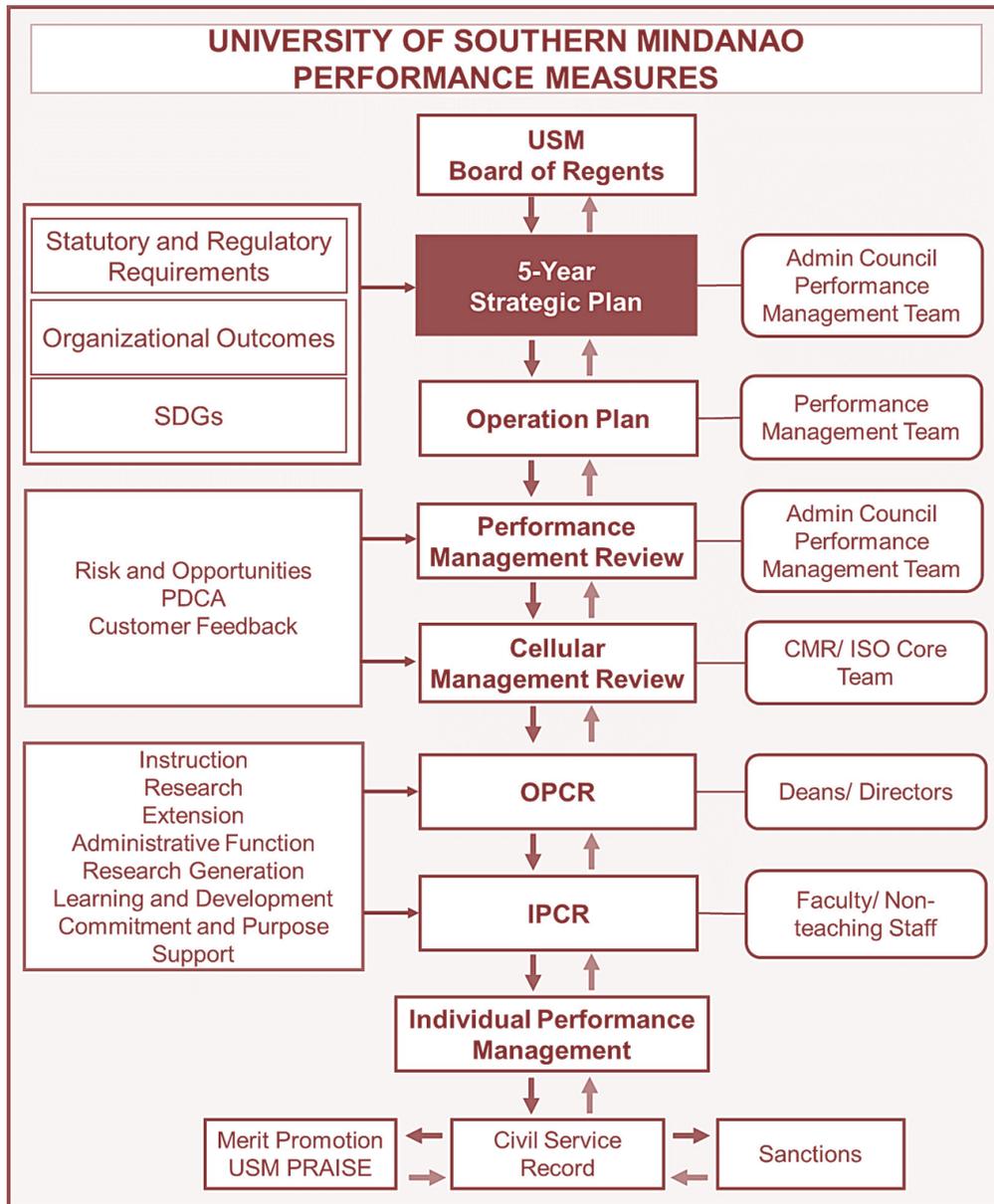


Figure 5D. USM Strategic Planning Process (Source: USM PQA Report, 2022).

5.2. USM Strategic Plan 2023-2028

The **University of Southern Mindanao (USM) Strategic Plan 2023–2028** outlines its commitment to advance inclusive, innovative, and sustainable development in higher education, research, and public service. Anchored on national priorities and aligned with the university’s vision of becoming a globally engaged institution, the plan focuses on strengthening academic excellence, expanding research productivity, enhancing institutional resilience, and fostering community collaboration. With clear goals, performance indicators, and a results-based management framework, the Strategic

Plan serves as a roadmap to guide USM in fulfilling its mandate as a transformative educational leader in Mindanao and beyond.

This strategic plan reflects USM's commitment to sustaining high academic and administrative standards and maintaining the COE/COD status of programs (one of which is BIOLOGY) through an increased number of students, strengthened scholarship, and competent and productive faculty members, researchers, and support staff. We discuss this USM strategic plan for 2023-2028 by presenting first the **strategic goals (SGs)** of the university, followed by the **key result areas (KRAs)** that align with these goals. Each KRA is supported by **specific strategic objectives (SOs)**, which are further detailed through corresponding **key performance indicators (KPIs)** to measure progress and impact. These are outlined below.

SG1. Locally and Globally Competitive Graduates

KRA1. Access to higher/advanced education

S01. To provide deserving students access to higher/advanced education

KPI1. Number of enrolled students in higher education

KPI2. Number of enrolled students in advanced education

KPI3. Number of scholarship-granting agencies

KPI4. Number of grantees of academic scholarship grants

S02. To provide quality learning experience and opportunities

KPI1. Passing percentage in licensure exam

KPI2. Percentage of relevant employment for higher education graduates

KPI3. Percentage of graduates employed (last 2 years after graduation)

KPI4. Number of host training establishments

KRA2. Competent faculty and staff

S01. To provide appropriate/relevant professional development programs

KPI1. Percentage of faculty pursuing advanced and post-doctoral degrees

KPI2. Percentage of faculty with relevant trainings & seminars

S02. To rationalize faculty teaching load

KPI1. Percentage of faculty with normal teaching load

KPI2. Percentage of faculty with overload

KPI3. Faculty-student ratio

KRA3. Curriculum aligned with statutory standards and regulatory agencies

S01. To ensure the adherence of programs to the standards of statutory requirements and regulatory agencies

KPI1. Percentage of programs due for COPC

KPI2. Percentage of accredited programs

KPI3. Number of programs with COE/COD

KPI4. Number of institutional accreditation/assessments maintained or applied for

KPI5. Total number of internationally accredited programs

KPI6. Percentage of graduate students enrolled in research degree programs

S02. To harmonize program curricula at the regional level

KPI1. Number of programs harmonized with other SUCs in the region

KPI2. Number of stakeholders involved in curriculum design

KRA4. Responsive student support services

S01. To ensure the provision of responsive academic student services

KPI1. Percentage of updated learning resources and facilities

KPI2. Percentage of students' utilization of resources and facilities

KPI3. Client satisfaction rating of service delivery

KPI4. Timeliness of services rendered

S02. To ensure student welfare and development

KPI1. Percentage of students involved in student development programs

KPI2. Number of students who availed the guidance and counseling services to undergraduate students

KPI3. Number of students who availed health and infirmary services

SG2. Develop Inclusive Innovations

KRA1. Strengthen RDEI facilities and crop genetic resources

S01. To revisit and rationalize existing facilities

KPI1. Percentage of research centers rationalized

S02. To upgrade RDEI facilities

KPI1. Percentage of equipment/laboratories upgraded

S03. To enrich crop genetic resources

KPI1. Number of germplasm collections

KRA2. Publication of research and development outputs and activities

S01. To increase the level of knowledge creation outputs in terms of scientific and technical publications

KPI1. Number of articles published by USM faculty, researchers and students in legitimate peer-reviewed publications

KPI2. Number of faculty and researchers with publications

S02. To ensure the adherence of university-managed peer-reviewed journals to international standards of publication

KPI1. Number of articles evaluated

KPI2. Number of new reputable indexes of peer-reviewed journals

KPI3. Number of citations in publications in national or international scope

S03. To increase visibility of USM-managed journals

KPI1. Number of articles submitted to USM-managed journals

KPI2. Number of new RDE journals

KPI3. Number of hits in RDE website

KPI4. Number of RDE news articles submitted to UPRIO

KRA3. Access to funds and facilities for RDEI

S01. To increase funds for RDEI

KPI1. Funds generated for RDEI

KPI2. Number of personnel with access to research funds

KPI3. Number of funded projects

S02. To provide services for clients

KPI1. Number of clients served

KRA4. RDEI engagement and capability of faculty, full-time researchers and students

S01. To enhance faculty and researcher engagement in Research, Development, Extension and Innovation (RDEI)

KPI. Percentage of full-pledged professor actively engaged in RDEI

KPI2. Percentage of associate professors and below actively engaged in RDEI

KPI3. Percentage of Plantilla full-time researchers actively engaged in research

S02. To enhance research capability among students

KPI1. Number of approved quality thesis outline and manuscript

KPI2. Number of students involved in funded research projects and RDI Centers

S03. To ensure quality of RDEI programs, projects and studies

KPI1. Number of proposals evaluated

KPI2. Percentage of projects monitored

S04. To strengthen RDE capability of faculty and researchers

KPI1. Number of seminars, workshops and trainings conducted

S05. To support presentation of quality papers in legitimate scientific fora

KPI1. Percentage of request for funding support evaluated

KPI2. Percentage of funded projects presented

S06. To formulate and review RDE guidelines and procedures for RDE matters through URDEC resolutions

KPI1. Number of guidelines/processes/procedures crafted, reviewed, assessed and endorsed

KRA5. Intensify IP assets of the University**S01. To protect Intellectual Property (IP) Assets of the University**

KPI1. Number of IP Assets identified and evaluated

KPI2. Number of IP Assets filed for protection

S02. To strengthen IP and technology for utilization and commercialization

KPI1. Number of IP utilized by industries and stakeholders

KPI2. Number of USM constituents trained in IP protection and licensing

KPI3. Number of IP assets assessed for extension

SG3. Transform Lives of Partner-Beneficiaries in the Service Areas of USM**KRA1. Competence of faculty, staff, and students in community engagement****S01. To capacitate faculty, staff, and students on community engagement**

KPI1. Number of faculty, staff and students participating in community engagement or capability-building activities

KPI2. Number of faculty and staff who submitted extension outputs

S02. To support dissemination of extension projects

KPI1. Percentage of request for funding support evaluated

KRA2. Community engagements**S01. To implement need-based community engagements**

KPI1. Number of community engagement projects approved

KPI2. Number of faculty, staff & students involved in community engagements

KPI3. Percentage of community engagement completed and reported

KPI4. Number of completed community engagement assessed

KPI5. Number of communities served

KPI6. Number of interest groups served

S02. To promote transfer and utilization of R & D outputs

KPI1. Number of R and D outputs identified and assessed for dissemination

KPI2. Number of IEC materials developed and disseminated

KPI3. Number of clients served

KRA3. Linkages/partnerships with government and non-government organizations

S01. To strengthen partnerships with government and non-government organizations

KPI1. Number of existing partnerships sustained

KPI2. Number of new partnerships/collaborations forged

KRA4. Community outreach

S01. To engage in community outreach programs

KPI1. Number of community outreach conducted

KPI2. Number of community outreach participated in community outreach program

KPI3. Number of community outreach beneficiaries

KPI4. Number of donor-partners in community outreach programs

KPI5. Number of volunteers involved in community outreach

SG4. Develop Market Driven Business Portfolio

KRA1. Strengthening university resource generation and entrepreneurial services (URGES) operation

S01. To conduct comprehensive evaluation of existing USM-IGPs

KPI1. Percentage of USM-IGPs to be evaluated

KPI2. Number of marketable IGPs

KPI3. Percentage of profitable IGPs

KPI4. Percentage increase of production performance

KPI5. Percentage of utilization of land holdings

S02. To sustain financial performance of viable USM-IGPs

KPI1. Percentage increase of ROE

KPI2. Percentage minimization of operational costs & expenses

KPI3. Percentage increase of revenue

S03. To enhance financial, marketing and operations management capabilities of project manager

KPI1. Number of trainings conducted

KPI2. Number of trainings/fora/congresses attended

S04. To generate new viable IGPs

KPI1. Number of Production proposals submitted & reviewed

KPI2. Number of production proposals implemented and sustained

KPI3. Number of production proposals presented and endorsed to ADCO & BOR for funding

S05. To establish partnership with private and public entities for USMIGP activities

KPI1. Number of private and public entity partners

S06. To promote and intensify the marketing of HRDT services

KPI1. Number of training designs developed

KPI2. Number of trainings institutionalized

KPI3. Number trainings conducted and participants served

S07. To establish proper placement and scheduling of USM medical employees

KPI1. Number of Duty Hours in infirmary

KPI2. Number of Duty Hours in hospital

KPI3. Number of patients served in the hospital

KPI4. Number of patients served in the infirmary

KRA2. Commercialization of IP assets

S01. To identify IP assets for commercialization

KPI1. Number of IP assets identified for commercialization

S02. To provide services for technology business incubation.

KPI1. Number incubates provided with services

KPI2. Number of customers/industries generated

KRA3. Extending access of urges assets for instruction, research, and extension services

S01. To serve as a techno-demo hub for instruction, research, and extension

KPI1. Number of students, researchers, and extension workers served

KPI2. Percentage of URGES assets utilized

SG5. Build Innovative and Sustainable Governance Ecosystem

KRA1. Performance management

S01 To align the individual and unit objectives to its strategic goals on the attainment of university

KPI1. Number of strategic plans formulated and reviewed

KPI2. Number of operation plan formulated

KPI3. Percentage PPA's Reviewed

KPI4. Percentage of OPCR/IPCR Monitored and Evaluated

KPI5. Percentage of processes reviewed

S02. To continuously develop the employees' competencies to achieve superior standards of work performance

KPI1. Percentage of teaching employees achieved superior standards

KPI2. Percentage of non-teaching employees achieved superior standards

KPI3. Percent integration of innovative HR Management Systems in big data analytics

KPI4. Percentage of completion of HR Learning Management System

S03. To optimize employee performance through implementation of a data-driven reward and recognition system

KPI1. Percentage of IPCR rating improved for awards recipients

KPI2. Percentage of OPCR improved for office awardees

S04. To ensure transparent and fair recruitment, selection and placement practices through proactive strategies

KPI1. Percentage of vacant teaching position filled within a year

KPI2. Percentage of vacant non-teaching position filled with in 6 months

S05. To continuously innovate systems for the customers and stakeholders to submit feedback of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction to the services provided by the university.

KPI1. Number of developed VOC information systems

KPI2. Percentage of utilized VOC information systems

S06. To build a culture of continuous improvement to the processes to achieve effective and efficient delivery of services

KPI1. Percentage of updated processes / procedures due for revision

KPI2. Number of enrolled necessary new processes / procedures and policies

S07. To improve engagement with the customers and stakeholders using varied communication platforms

KPI1. Number of engagements with customers and stakeholders through radio

KPI2. Number of engagements with customers and stakeholders through social media

KPI3. Number of engagements with customers and stakeholders through website

KPI4. Number of face-to-face engagements with customers and stakeholders

S08. To continuously provide the right to access information as allowed by law for citizen empowerment

KPI1. Number of local, regional, national and international awards received

KPI2. Number of local, regional, national and international recognitions received

S09. To continuously strive for service excellence worthy of recognition

KPI1. Percentage of published administrative issuances for public consumption

KPI2. Percentage of published resolutions for the public

KPI3. Percentage of information mandated by law published on time

KRA2. Fiscal and administrative responsibility, accountability, and innovation

S01. To expedite administrative and financial transactions of the university through the use of digital platforms.

KPI1. Number of digital platforms utilized for administrative transactions

KPI2. Number of digital platforms utilized for financial transactions

KPI3. Percentage of administrative transactions processed through digital platforms

KPI4. Percentage of financial transactions processed through digital platforms

S02. To ensure efficient use of the university's resources

KPI1. Percentage of decrease of administrative cases

KPI2. Percentage of decrease of sexual harassment cases

S03. To strengthen compliance of employees on policies governing government workers

KPI1. Utilization rate

KPI2. Disbursement rate

KPI3. Percentage of goods and services procured on time

KPI4. Percentage of obligation versus allotment for infrastructure projects

KRA3. Infrastructure development

S01. To continuously design and build facilities necessary for the delivery of instruction, research, extension, resource-generation and general administration and support services

KPI1. Percentage of infrastructure project designs completed on time

KPI2. Percentage of infrastructure project completed on time

S02. To continuously expand the deployment of ICT infrastructure to address the growing demand in digital transformation in the university

KPI1. Number of information systems developed based on processes

KPI2. Percentage of deployed information systems

KPI3. Percentage of utilized information systems

KRA4. Peace, security, and administration of justice

S01. To promote the culture of peace among university constituents and stakeholders

KPI1. Number of activities conducted among students relevant to culture of peace

KPI2. Number of activities conducted among teaching and non-teaching employees and stakeholders relevant to culture of peace

KPI3. Percentage of students informed on issues relevant to culture of peace

KPI4. Percentage of teaching and non-teaching employees and stakeholders informed on issues relevant to culture of peace

S02. To expeditiously implement the administration of justice for employees, students and other stakeholders

KPI1. Percentage of resolved administrative cases within the prescribed period

KPI2. Percentage of resolved sexual harassment cases within the prescribed period

S03. To promote inclusivity in curricular and co-curricular activities

KPI1. Percentage of curricular programs infused with concepts of inclusivity

KPI2. Number of activities infused with concepts of inclusivity

Schedule of Plan Implementation

The plan is implemented in accordance with the criteria set or targets. The schedule of implementation depends on budget appropriations. Programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) which do not require large appropriations are accomplished simultaneously with other PPAs. The Unit Heads/Directors/Deans are responsible for the implementation of their units' PPAs and coordinated and acted upon by the appropriate responsibility centers. e.g. all purchases of materials for the implementation of PPAs, whether for monthly operations or capital outlay shall be coordinated with the Bids and Awards Committee and Office of the President for review and approval. Once approved, the program of work and implementation of unit's PPAs are coordinated closely with Planning Development Office (PPDO) and Financial Management Services (FMS). The initial activities are followed by those which require more, but not inordinately large, amounts. For Capital-Intensive Activities, the university appropriates the budget or forges partnerships with other funding agencies and follows a program of work for implementation. The

implementation of the four-fold functions of the University such as Instruction, Research, Extension and Resource Generation, is done simultaneously in accordance with the budget appropriated per office and in the timeline set during the plan design.

5.3. USM Annual Operational Plan

On a yearly basis, an Operational Plan (OpPlan) of USM is implemented in alignment with the University's Strategic Plan (SP), from senior leaders down to individual employees of USM, with annual evaluations of accomplishments to assess progress (Figure 5E).

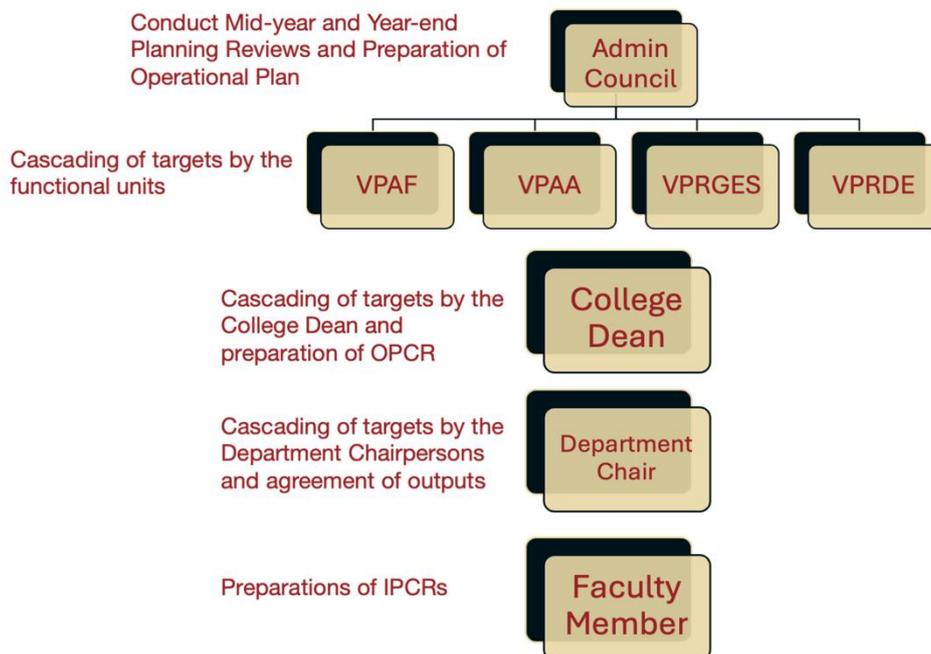


Figure 5E. Operation Planning Process and Action Plans in the College and Department.

Eight steps are followed in the Operational Planning and Control Procedure of USM (USMPDO-001-Rev.2.2020.06.01) (Figure 5F). In **Step 1**, the unit heads draft the unit's quality plan design, program, projects, and activities (PPA) and targets. These data are collected and analyzed by the PPDO (**Step 2**). In **Step 3**, the preparation of plans shall be coordinated with the concerned unit heads. The Vice President (VP) for each function consolidates the plans from the three campuses and submits them to the PPDO. The consolidated plans of the different units under the four functions become the institution's OpPlan.

The Administrative Council, BOR Committee on Administration and Finance, and Board of Regents approve the OpPlan in **Step 4**. In **Step 5**, the quality plan is implemented

according to the targets set. Unit heads implement their unit's programs, plans, and activities (PPA), which are coordinated and acted upon by the appropriate responsibility centers. The implementation of the four-fold functions is done simultaneously in accordance with the budget appropriated per office and the timeline set during the plan design.

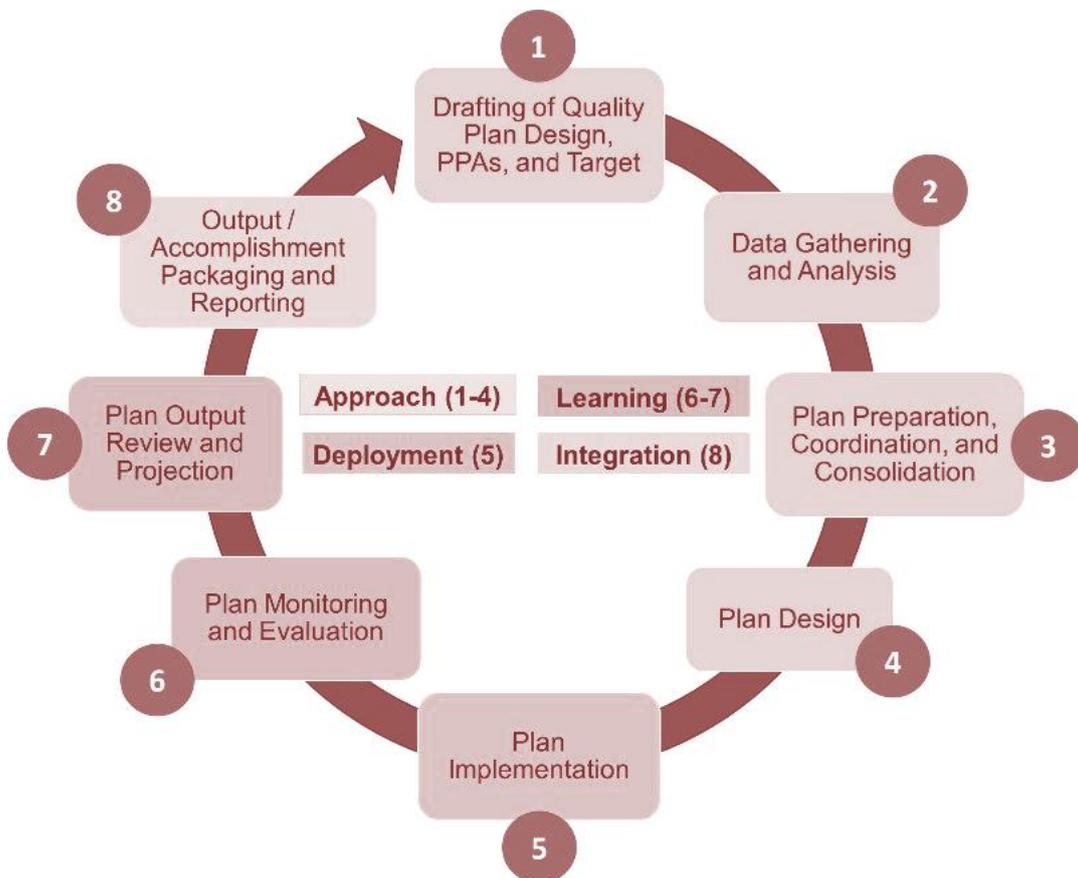


Figure 5F. USM Operational Planning and Control Procedure (Source: USM PQA Report, 2022).

In **Step 6**, the PDO is the primary unit in charge of monitoring the compliance of the plans on a quarterly basis, as applicable, to ensure that plans are achieved accurately and timely. The Office of the VPs, HRMD, FMS, and other units conduct the evaluation based on the targets and are tied to the promotion system and performance-based benefits that may be given to employees.

In **Step 7**, the PDO facilitates the conduct of the Semi-Annual and Annual Review/ Planning Seminar Workshop, in which the unit heads present their accomplishments for documentation, critiquing, and assessment by the PMT. It is composed of the President, VPAF, HRMDO Director, HRMDO Learning and Development Head, FMS Director, PDO Director, UQAC Director, USMFAI President, USMASSA President,

Clients and relevant stakeholders are crucial factors in the USM QMS. Their requirements, issues, and concerns are considered in the planning activities of the university. Their feedback and satisfaction are considered inputs for the continual improvement of processes, products, and services. The SLs of USM create a workforce culture that delivers positive experiences for students, the workforce, and clientele in general by encouraging them to engage in the four-fold functions of the university. All clients of the university's service units are regularly evaluated through customer feedback, and the results are used as the basis for improving the quality of service.

5.3.2. USM Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS)

The alignment of individual and overall USM performances with the USM strategic plan is the main aim of our USM Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS). These targets are reflected in performance forms at two levels: (1) **Office Performance Commitment and Review (OPCR)** for offices and units, and (2) **Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR)** for employees. Every year, staff and offices list their targets, consistent with and toward the attainment of USM strategic goals, and report what they have accomplished. Their performance is reviewed by the **Performance Management Team (PMT)** from the HRMDO, and ratings are given based on actual results.

The USM SPMS is a well-integrated four-stage cycle linking institutional strategy with individual performance across all delivery units (Figure 5H). This is aligned with the USM QMS in accordance with ISO 9001 international quality standards and national government mandates. This ensures that every department and faculty member contribute meaningfully to USM's mission and vision.

Key Components of USM SPMS

Our SPMS revolves around four stages:

1. Performance Planning and Commitment

At the start of each year, institutional goals (for example, Office Performance Commitment and Review [OPCR]) are set, and individual targets (IPCR, Individual Performance Commitment and Review) are cascaded down to the units and staff.

2. Performance Monitoring and Coaching

Quarterly reviews assess the progress. Department heads and supervisors provide coaching, address issues, and implement recovery plans when necessary.

3. Performance Review and Evaluation

Mid-year and year-end reviews and planning, led by senior leadership, including the President and Vice Presidents, evaluate accomplishments, infrastructure progress, and set future targets.

4. Performance Rewarding and Development Planning

Evaluation outcomes inform personal development plans, reward systems, capacity building and promotions. Underperformers receive tailored developmental support.

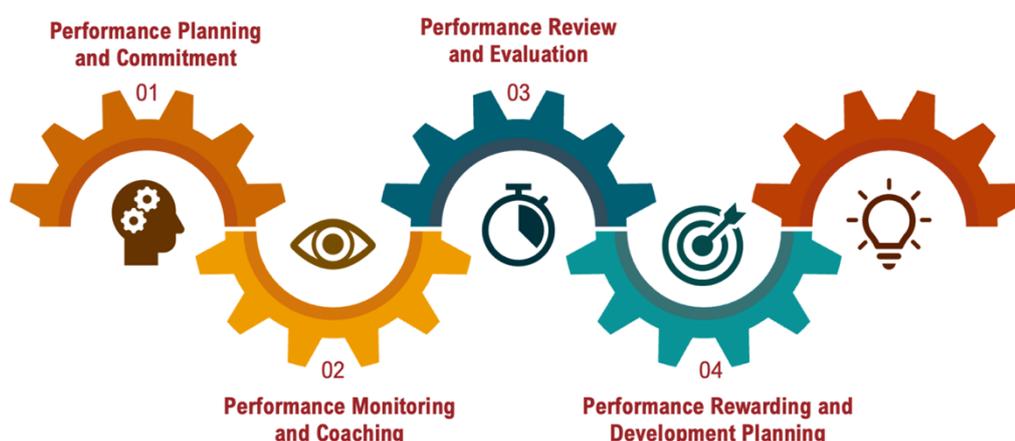


Figure 5H. USM Four-stage Strategic Performance Management System.

The results of these performance reviews (OPCR and IPCR) and audits are discussed during meetings where university leaders and unit heads talk about what went well, what needs improvement, and what actions should be taken to address the issues. These performance results help universities make better decisions, improve services, and use resources wisely. They are also included in annual reports and used to meet the requirements of CHED, DBM, and other agencies. Through these systems, USM continues to improve and provide quality education and services to its stakeholders.

Managed by a Performance Management Team (PMT) under the HRMDO, the system links SPMS outputs to learning and development programs, recruitment, promotions, and rewards. This aligns with the university’s quality policy, ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, and stakeholder requirements.

Sample Performance of CSM and DBS according to USM OpPlan

Various units, including the Graduate School, participate in the accomplishment of university targets under its OpPlan. The 2025 OpPlan roll-out for the College of Science and Mathematics (CSM) was conducted on **May 26, 2025**. Under the Strategic Goal of producing Locally and Globally Competitive Graduates, one Key Result Area

(KRA) is the development of Competent Faculty and Staff. To support this, the Strategic Objective (SO) emphasizes providing appropriate and relevant professional development programs, with the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) being the percentage of faculty members with post-Master's degrees. The university has set a minimum target of 15% for all academic units, including the Graduate School. In line with the university's strong tradition of faculty development and adherence to its Faculty Development Program, the Department of Biological Sciences recorded a major accomplishment in 2024: ten out of its 20 permanent faculty members now hold PhD degrees, far surpassing the university's minimum target, as reflected in the CSM accomplishment report for A.Y. 2024. This commitment to continuous professional growth will be sustained, with at least three more faculty members expected to earn their PhDs by 2025 (see DBS Faculty Roadmap 2025-2034).

In terms of research targets and outputs, in alignment with USM's 2024 research target of publishing 36 scholarly articles from faculty researchers and students, the College of Science and Mathematics has made significant contributions toward this goal. Notably, our department was a key contributor, accounting for 21 publications in 2024. This achievement reflects our strong research culture, active mentoring of student researchers, and continued commitment to producing high-quality scientific outputs. Through these efforts, the DBS has played an important role in advancing the university's research agenda and reinforcing its reputation for academic excellence.

Impact and Commitment

USM consistently applies SPMS through ISO audits, merit awards (such as PRIME-HRM), and performance reviews to uphold its commitment to continuous improvement, accountability, high-quality instruction, research, and service. Our system fosters data-driven decision-making and teamwork across units to reinforce institutional continuity.

Institutional Budget Plan

The five-year budget for the implementation of the USM Institutional Development Plan is based on the following:

1. The current financial resources of the institution's need to be increased significantly to pursue the school's directions, and
2. Aggressive resource mobilization to schemes will substantially contribute to the generation of funds necessary to achieve the university's medium and long-term goals

The institution's total budget was based on three major sources of funds:

1. Allotments from the General, Appropriations Act (GAA) of the General Fund,
2. Allotments from income generated by various income generating projects and/or of the academe Income Trust Fund, and
3. Donations and Grants. As a government institution, the University shall receive the bulk of its funds from the GAA which sustains the general fund.

The University's financial resources are drawn from multiple funding streams to support its academic, operational, and developmental priorities. General Fund allotments serve as the core budget and consist of regular annual appropriations, supplementary releases, and congressional initiatives. These are allocated for both recurrent (e.g. salaries and utilities) and non-recurrent expenditures. Complementing this is the Income Trust Fund, which is sourced from projected current income and savings. This income includes revenues from tuition and miscellaneous student fees, legal research fees, auxiliary services such as dormitories and housing, interest earnings, and other miscellaneous sources such as rent. The Income Trust Fund supports both operational needs and capital outlay.

The University also manages Trust Funds, which are categorized into external and internal accounts. External trust funds come from industry-sponsored research grants, private endowments for scholarships, faculty development, professorial chairs, and cash and in-kind donations. Meanwhile, internal or "income-fed" trust funds are derived from student fees designated for libraries, laboratories, student services and co-curricular activities. The disbursement of these trust funds is guided by specific contracts, deeds of donation and earmarking agreements. To further strengthen its financial base, the University, through its Resource Generation and Entrepreneurial Services, actively pursues diverse income-generating projects as part of its aggressive resource mobilization strategy.

Land Use Development and Infrastructure Plan (LUDIP)

USM developed its Land Use Development and Infrastructure Plan (LUDIP) for 2022 to 2031 in compliance with Republic Act 11396, which requires all state universities and colleges (SUCs) to prepare a long-term campus development plan. The LUDIP serves as a roadmap that guides the university in using its land properly and building the infrastructure needed to support academic growth, research, extension, and public service. The LUDIP is closely **aligned** with the university's **strategic** and **operational plans** to ensure that all infrastructure and land use developments support the university's long-term goals and day-to-day priorities.

LUDIP provides a physical and spatial framework that supports the university's vision, mission, and institutional goals. For example, if USM aims to expand its academic programs, enhance research capacity, or improve student services, the LUDIP identifies where and how to build the needed facilities, such as new classrooms, laboratories, libraries, dormitories, and innovation centers. Thus, LUDIP serves as the physical backbone of the university's strategic direction. LUDIP also guides budgeting and resource allocation. When USM creates its annual operational plans, it refers to the priorities and timelines set in the LUDIP. This helps the university decide which buildings to construct or upgrade in a given year and what support facilities (roads, water, power, internet) must be developed to match academic and administrative needs. Additionally, LUDIP supports compliance and quality assurance. The projects outlined in the plan are aligned with CHED standards, environmental laws, disaster risk reduction measures, and accessibility guidelines, ensuring that both strategic and operational actions meet national and institutional requirements.

To prepare the plan, USM organized a technical working group composed of planners, engineers, architects, and university officials. The team also consulted various

stakeholders, including faculty, students, staff, administrators, and representatives from local government units. Their ideas and concerns were important in shaping a plan that truly reflected the needs and aspirations of the USM community. As part of the planning process, USM conducted a comprehensive inventory and mapping of its lands, buildings, facilities, and utilities. The university also used modern tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to assess available spaces and plan for future development more efficiently. The plan was designed to align with the land use and development plans of the local government to ensure harmony and avoid conflicts in land use.

The LUDIP outlines the infrastructure projects that USM intends to implement over a 10-year period. These include the construction of new academic buildings, dormitories, staff housing, roads, walkways, research centers, and recreational facilities. The university also identified the need to improve water, power, waste management, and drainage systems. Some of these infrastructure projects are already underway, such as the multi-purpose building near the IMEAS complex and the academic building at Libungan Campus. To manage these developments effectively, the plan is divided into three phases: short-term (1–3 years), mid-term (4–7 years), and long-term (8–10 years). This phased approach allows USM to prioritize projects based on urgency, available funding, and institutional goals. The university is also committed to periodically reviewing and updating the plan to respond to changes and emerging needs.

The LUDIP follows national laws and policies, including those related to environmental protection, disaster risk reduction, safety standards and accessibility. The completed plan was submitted to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and is now being used to guide annual infrastructure planning and budgeting in the Philippines. To ensure proper implementation, USM created a monitoring and evaluation team responsible for tracking progress and preparing reports. The university includes updates on LUDIP in its annual institutional reports, helping to promote transparency and accountability.

Commitment to Quality Assurance

The accreditation timeline of the Master of Science in Biology program at USM reflects its steady progression toward academic excellence. The Graduate School was established in 1975 through Board of Regents (BOR) Resolution No. 65, Series of 1975. After more than two decades, the MS Biology program was officially launched in 1997. In 2000, the program underwent its Preliminary Visit by the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP). This marked the start of its quality assurance journey. Just three years later, in 2003, the program earned Level II accreditation, affirming its adherence to national academic standards. This was followed by the awarding of Level III accreditation in 2009, which recognized the program's continuing improvements in instruction, research, and faculty development. The program successfully maintained its Level III status through reaccreditations in 2016 and 2017, with the validity extending from June 1, 2017, to December 31, 2020. In 2019, the program underwent evaluation for the Certificate of Program Compliance (COPC) by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), with the certificate becoming effective from 2019 to 2020. In August 2022, the program

underwent its most recent AACCCUP evaluation from today. This timeline features the commitment of USM's MS Biology program to continuous quality improvement and national standards of graduate education.

Quality Assurance Plan 2023-2028

The sustainability of delivery of quality education is one of USM's priorities. This strong commitment to excellence is demonstrated through the work of its University Quality Assurance Center (UQAC). UQAC ensures that all university operations exceed established standards and align with institutional goals. Headed by Director Lawrence Anthony U. Dollente and supported by a dedicated team, the office collaborates with quality assurance focal persons across all academic units to manage accreditation, ISO compliance, CHED requirements, and more. Quality assurance at USM is more than a function, it is a deeply rooted culture that guarantees trust, precision, and continuous improvement.

The University Quality Assurance Center (UQAC) continues to lead in enhancing services and upholding USM's reputation for excellence. One of its key accomplishments is the development of the Quality Assurance Plan for Academic Years 2023 to 2028. This is a comprehensive document that serves as a roadmap for the University's quality assurance initiatives. This plan clearly defines the overarching role of UQAC, outlines its organizational structure, and specifies the functions and responsibilities of its various departments. It also details standard processes, quality assurance plans tailored for each academic program, and the current status of USM's quality assurance system. Most importantly, the plan provides a clear direction for ISO 9001:2015, identifying priorities and strategies to continuously improve academic and administrative performance in alignment with the University's strategic goals toward the attainment of Philippine Quality Award for Performance Excellence (Level 4) in 2028.



V. Quality Assurance Plan

ACCREDITATION LEVEL STATUS and PLAN OF ACCREDITATION VISIT

No.	CAMPUS(ES) /PROGRAM(S)	LEVEL (ACCREDITATION STATUS)	DATE OF VALIDITY OF ACCREDITATION STATUS	PLAN OF ACCREDITATION VISIT
1.	Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology (major in Automotive Technology, Architectural Drafting Technology, Electrical Technology, Electronics Technology)	Level III, Re-accredited Assessment on-going in Phase of the 4 th Survey Visit (Revisit Areas V, VI, IX)	September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025	September 2-4, 2025
2.	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	Level II, Re-accredited Must comply w/mandatory recommendations	July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	Submitted mandatory recommendations
3.	Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics	Level III, Re-accredited (must comply with mandatory recommendations)	April 01, 2025 – March 31, 2030	
4.	Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness	Level IV, Re-accredited (must comply with mandatory recommendations)	AUGUST 2022 – JULY 2023	June 18-20, 2025
5.	Bachelor of Science in Accountancy	Level II, Re-accredited (must comply w/mandatory recommendations (Revisit Extension))	July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	June 18-20, 2025
6.	Bachelor of Science in Electronics Engineering	Level II Re-accredited	December 16, 2021 – December 15, 2025	September 2-4, 2025
7.	BS in Computer Engineering	Level II Re-accredited	December 16, 2021 – December 15, 2025	September 2-4, 2025

No.	Kabacan Campus: (GRADUATE PROGRAMS)	LEVEL (ACCREDITATION STATUS)	DATE OF VALIDITY OF ACCREDITATION STATUS	PLAN OF ACCREDITATION VISIT
1.	Doctor of Philosophy in Extension Education	Level III- Re-accredited	MAY 2022 – APRIL 2023	comply with mandatory recommendations
2.	Ph.D. - Agricultural Science (Doctor of Philosophy in Agricultural Science) majors: Animal Science, Crop Protection, and Crop Production and Management	Level III Re-accredited (must comply with mandatory recommendations) Revisit ALL Areas	December 1, 2023 – November 30, 2025	September 2-4, 2025
3.	Master of Science in Biology	Level IV Re-accredited (must comply with mandatory recommendations)	AUGUST 2022 – JULY 2023	June 18 – 20, 2025
4.	Doctoral of Education in Educational Management	Level III Re-accredited (must comply with mandatory recommendations) Revisit Area of Community Service and International Linkages and Consortia	December 1, 2023 – November 30, 2024	June 18 – 20, 2025
5.	Master of Science in Agronomy	Level III Re-accredited (Revisit ALL AREAS)	September 01, 2024 – August 31, 2026	2026

Figure 5I. Excerpt from USM Quality Assurance Plan 2023-2028 detailing the accreditation status and plan of accreditation assessment of each program in USM.

5.3.3. Accreditation Management

USM also implements a comprehensive accreditation management procedure that ensures all academic programs consistently meet national and international quality standards. This process involves systematic planning, coordination, and documentation to support accreditation requirements set by recognized accrediting bodies such as AACUP, CHED, and ISO. It includes pre-accreditation preparation and on-site evaluation coordination and post-evaluation follow-ups, and continuous monitoring for compliance and improvement (Figure 5J).

b. Accreditation Management Procedure

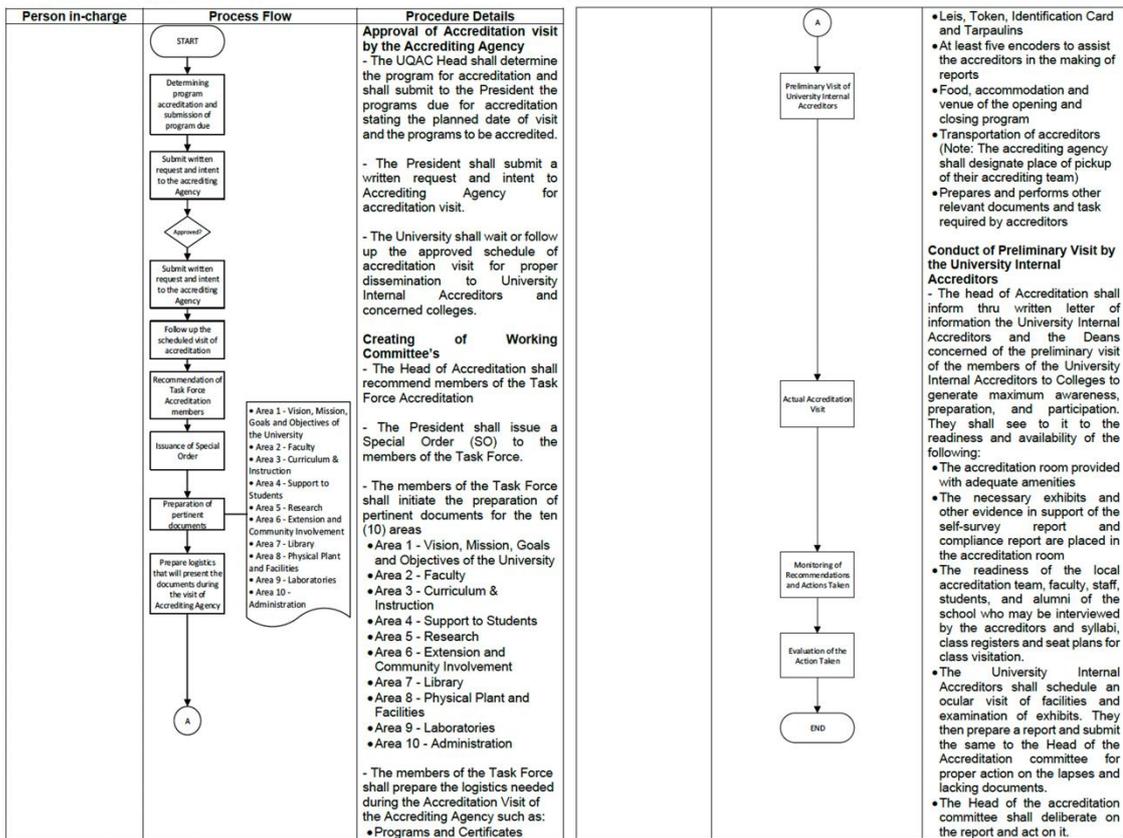


Figure 5J. Excerpt from USM Quality Assurance Plan 2023-2028 specifying the accreditation management procedure followed by USM.

5.3.4. University Quality Assurance Center

With initiatives like the development of an online document system for quality assurance known as the University Quality Assurance Center (<https://uqac.usm.edu.ph>), the UQAC continues to lead in enhancing services and sustaining USM's reputation for excellence. The website, serves as the landing page for AACCU accreditation and ISO Audit (Figure 5K).



Figure 5K. The interface of University Quality Assurance Center. Courtesy: UICTO & UCAC.

Department of Biological Sciences Strategic Plan 2023-2028

5.3.5. Vision, Mission and Program Objectives

The Department of Biological Sciences Roadmap is firmly anchored in the vision of USM: **“Quality and relevant education for its clientele to be globally competitive, culture sensitive and morally-responsive human resource for sustainable development.”**

To help realize this vision, our department is committed to fulfil the University’s mission:

“Accelerate the socio-economic development, promote harmony among diverse communities, and improve the quality of life through instruction, research, extension and production in Southern Philippines”

The Department of Biological Sciences (DBS) offers quality undergraduate and graduate education in both the basic and applied areas of biology. Our programs are designed to guide students toward a holistic and integrated understanding of biological knowledge enriched by meaningful academic and research opportunities. We envision achieving excellence in teaching, research, and service in our region and beyond.

As we move forward, DBS remains committed to strengthening its reputation for excellence in teaching, research, and service. We aim to maintain a high-quality curriculum, enhance student learning through improved facilities, and deepen integration across biological disciplines. We will continue to seek partnerships with

government agencies, non-profit organizations, and industry stakeholders to advance our mission and contribute to regional and national development.

5.3.6. Department Strategic Goals

1. To become the premier program of the university and of the higher education institutions (HEI) in the region (Region XII);
2. To be a Center of Excellence (COE) in Biology, and accredited not only by the local accrediting agency but also by the international accrediting agencies;
3. To be the best HEI program in Mindanao and among the best in the country in terms of quality research and extension covering more diverse areas and geared not only towards pursuing the development objectives of the government but also towards improving the operational efficiency of the university;
4. To be financially viable in terms of being able to adequately finance its maintenance and other operating expenses through improved production operations and judicious use of available resources; and
5. To have an organizational structure with an appropriate managerial and administrative system geared towards the attainment of the above scenarios.

Our department's objectives are as follows:

- [1] Develop students with specialized competence in biology, preparing them for graduate studies, medicine, teaching, research, and professional careers;
- [2] Equip graduates to lead in their fields with strong communication skills and scientific reasoning;
- [3] Promote the discovery and application of biological knowledge in response to local and global challenges; and
- [4] Foster a dynamic academic and institutional environment that cultivates a vibrant community of learning and research.

5.3.7. Program Objectives

Our MS Biology Program Objectives are as follows:

1. Develop critical thinking and independent research towards the advancement of knowledge in biology; and
2. Develop professional leadership in specialized areas of biology.

5.3.8. Department Key Result Areas

1. Quality learning and instruction
2. Quality research activities and outputs
3. Quality extension services
4. Financial viability
5. Functional organizational structure

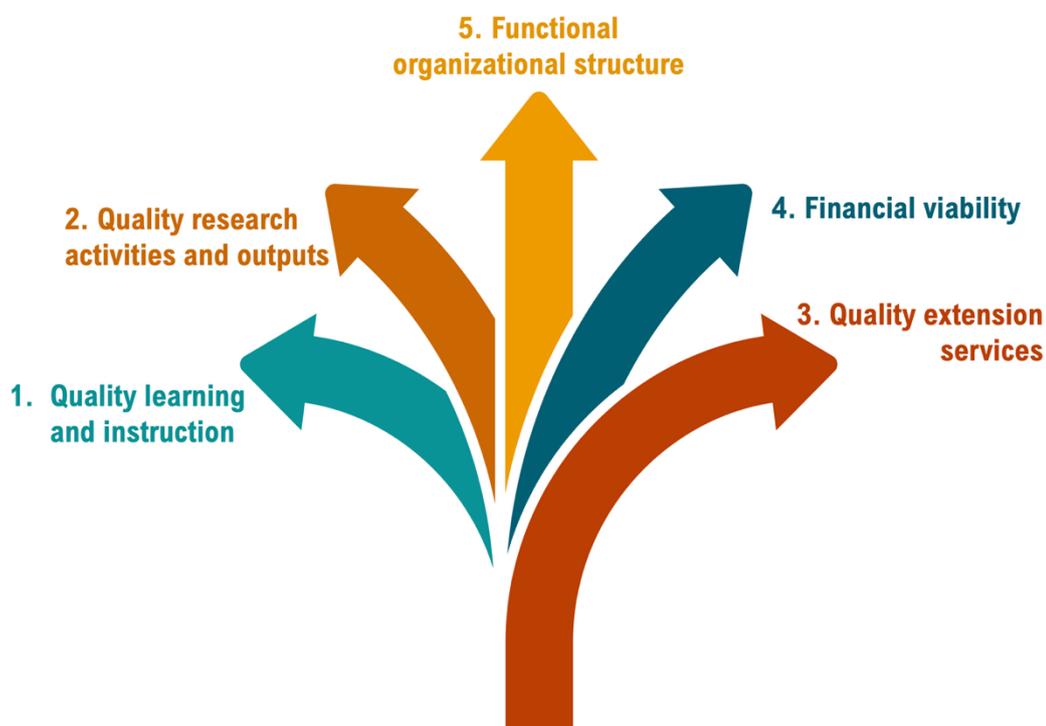


Figure 5L. DBS Key Result Areas aligned with the Department Objectives.

5.3.9. Implementation Plan of our Strategic Plan

5.3.9.1. Quality Learning and Instruction

- a. Offer a sound and innovative curriculum fully integrated with other disciplines that will prepare students for advanced graduate or professional studies and will enable them to excel in the labor force.
- b. Attract outstanding students through promotional activities and maintain academic standards of admission (Graduate Level Test).
- c. Support outstanding students through scholarships and other initiatives.
- d. Subject the programs offered by the Department and all its processes through evaluation or accreditation by AACUP and CHED (Center Development/Excellence).
- e. Recruit competent and affiliate personnel to contribute across all levels of teaching, provide fresh perspectives, meet demands as they arise, and offer a broad spectrum of options for students.
- f. Strengthen teaching and learning programs, including upgrading faculty and staff skills by providing professional development opportunities.
- g. Recognize and incentivize faculty members who demonstrate excellence in teaching.
- h. Regularly review the educational objectives, pedagogy, and modes of delivery of undergraduate and graduate courses.

- i. Provide the students with the opportunity to gain knowledge and competencies in the search and use of information available through online learning.
- j. Promote sensitivity and cultural diversity through extracurricular activities.
- k. Provide appropriate physical infrastructure for field, laboratory, and classroom learning experiences.
- l. Encourage and facilitate faculty initiatives to apply pedagogy that promotes student engagement in their own learning, conceptual understanding, and development of research skills through challenging laboratory experiences and fieldwork.
- m. Promote international mobility of faculty and students through exchange programs and scholarships.

5.3.9.2. Quality Research Activities and Outputs

- a. Submit research proposals for internal and external funding.
- b. Attract and retain qualified researchers with competitive remuneration.
- c. Seek funding from institutions and non-government sources to improve infrastructure and learning opportunities.
- d. Recognize and rewarding outstanding research performance.
- e. Deload faculty from teaching and allot time on research.
- f. Increase the University' s research budget.
- g. Provide incentive for publication
- h. Apply international best practice through ISO as a criterion for quality in academic program, research, student support services and research.
- i. Encourage and initiate international collaboration and cooperation with universities abroad.

5.3.9.3. Quality Extension Services

- [1] Leverage the resources and expertise of the Department to enrich the intellectual, cultural and educational economic of the adopted community.
- [2] Take leadership role in the development of the society by promoting public discussion and policy formation.
- [3] Promote greater public awareness of the significance of conservation and environment.

5.3.9.4. Financial Viability

- a. To increase revenues from income generation project such as the USM-BioDep Water Testing Laboratory
- b. To submit proposals for research funding
- c. To avail of the COE/COD grant for projects
- d. Cost reduction through efficient utilization of resources

5.3.9.5. Functional Organizational Structure

- a. Clearly delineate functions in the organizational structure
- b. Review administrative procedures
- c. Defined system for: control, hiring of faculty and staff, enrollment and student information, and employee career development.

Accomplishment Reviews and Planning

At the end of each academic year, Our Department holds year-end meetings where faculty members come together to discuss individual and collective accomplishments. These meetings provide an opportunity to assess the progress of our academic, research, and extension activities, the status of students per year level, how many students have finished, are still conducting, and have not yet conducted their thesis, the status of the Central Laboratory, the status of the Water Laboratory, the accomplishments of Research Laboratories, the number of research projects proposed and conducted, on-the-job training plans, the financial status of the department, and to identify areas for improvement moving forward.

Each faculty member is also required to submit a summary of their individual accomplishments to the department's chair. These include teaching performance, research output, community engagement, and other academic contributions throughout the year. The department chair then consolidates all individual reports to prepare the Departmental Accomplishment Report, which is submitted to the dean. This report serves as a basis for planning future activities and aligning departmental goals with the broader directions of the college and the university. Through this process, the department ensures that planning is evidence-based, transparent, and aligned with the USM's priorities.

Faculty Advancement

5.3.10. Merit Selection Plan

The DBS policy for faculty advancement is anchored in the USM Merit Selection Plan. On 18 October 2022 the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) jointly issued Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 3, series of 2022, which outlines the Guidelines for the Reclassification of Faculty Positions in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). Sections 3.2 and 3.3 of the circular mandate the adoption of a separate institutional faculty merit and promotion system, subject to the approval of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Under these guidelines, faculty members who were previously promoted through the institutional system may still qualify for reclassification; however, the credentials used in their prior institutional promotion are no longer eligible for point-based evaluation in the reclassification process. This underscores the need for a comprehensive and forward-looking merit selection system. The selection of faculty members shall be based on their relative qualifications, competence to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position, and alignment with the strategic priorities and goals of the University.

A faculty member may be considered for promotion to a higher rank or sub-rank if they meet the minimum requirements in education, training, experience, and **Dynamic Candidates Assessment System (DYCAS)** scores. In addition, the faculty member must have received at least a Very Satisfactory performance rating (IPCR) in the last two rating periods. When two or more candidates have comparable potential and

performance, priority is given to candidates from the department where the vacancy exists, particularly if their promotion would significantly strengthen the department's faculty profile. Each academic department is encouraged to have at least one faculty member in the professorial ranks as an indicator of its academic strength.

Promotion may be granted to faculty members with significant DYCAS scores. However, mechanisms must be in place to ensure that qualified next-in-rank candidates are considered. For professorial appointments, candidates must pass the **Productivity and Results-Oriented Framework for Sustained and Impactful Scholarship (PROFESS)** system. The **Linang Tao Academy** supports this process through portfolio development courses and coaching. Several DBS faculty members have benefited from this promotion system since 2024 (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Faculty members of DBS promoted to their current rank through DYCAS and PROFESS merit promotion system.

Name	Previous Rank	Current Rank
Krizler C. Tanalgo	Associate Professor V	Professor II
Angelo R. Agduma	Associate Professor V	Professor I
Lothy F. Casim	Associate Professor V	Professor I
Bryan Lloyd P. Bretaña	Associate Professor II	Associate Professor V
Cyrelle M. Besana	Assistant Professor I	Assistant Professor IV
Cromwell M. Jumao-as	Assistant Professor I	Assistant Professor III
Bona Abigail Hilario-Husain	Instructor 1	Assistant Professor II
Jamaica Delos Reyes	Instructor 1	Instructor III

5.3.11. Recruitment and Appointment Process

The hiring new faculty members in our department follows a clear and organized process to ensure that the most qualified applicants are chosen. Our department starts by identifying how many faculty we need over the next five years. These projections are sent to the Human Resource Management and Development Office (HRMDO), which works with the Planning Office to match these needs with the university's goals and the region's needs. Based on this, the USM President allocates vacant teaching positions. When permanent positions are unavailable, contractual (COS) faculty may be hired temporarily.

Before recruitment, the HRMDO builds a talent pool and encourages a diverse range of applicants. Applicants first undergo an initial screening based on their education, training, and eligibility. Those who qualify join the SINTIDO 1.0 Boot Camp, a competency-based assessment that simulates actual teaching conditions. The results of this assessment are uploaded to the Dynamic Candidates Assessment System (DYCAS), which creates a digital database of qualified candidates.

The Faculty Selection Board (FSB) uses DYCAS scores and other qualifications to compare candidates, supported by the HRMDO Analytics Team and Linang Tao Academy. The FSB submits a detailed report to the USM President or the Board of Regents, which includes each candidate's qualifications, performance, and potential, especially in teaching, research, extension work, and resource generation. The FSB

highlights “star candidates” (those with high performance and potential) and includes background checks and indicators such as PWD, solo parents, or IP status.

Based on this report, the USM President or Board of Regents selects and appoints the most suitable candidate for the position. They may also consider exceptional applicants, such as board topnotchers or experts in their field, for higher positions if items are available and the requirements are met.

Once the appointment is issued, a notice is posted in three visible places on campus for at least ten days, as required by civil service rules.

5.3.12. Faculty Learning and Development Planning Process

USM adheres to the following Learning and Development philosophy: **“Developing and Managing Smart Human Resources towards Smart University”**.

The **Linang Tao Learning and Development Management System (LDMS)** is central to this goal. It is a comprehensive framework implemented by USM to enhance the competencies of its faculty and staff. It is designed to align individual development with the university's strategic goals, ensuring that personnel are equipped to meet evolving institutional demands as it strives to become internationally recognized and a Smart University (Figure 5M).

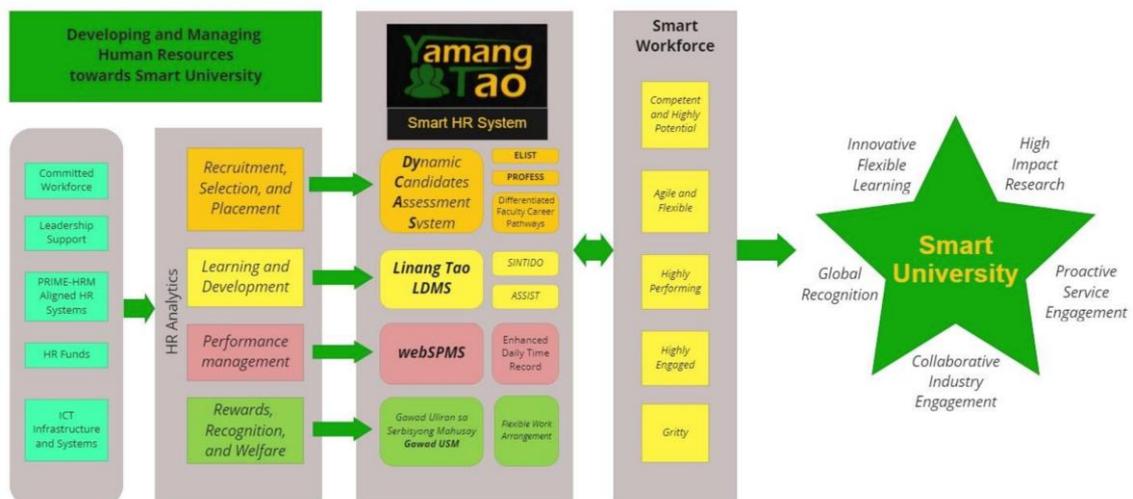


Figure 5M. Smart University HRMD Framework

The Key Features of the Linang Tao LDMS are:

1. **Inclusive Coverage.** The system applies to all faculty members and first- and second-level employees across various university services, regardless of personal background, thereby ensuring equal opportunities for professional growth (Equal Opportunity Principle; Figure). The Faculty Training and Development Committee (FTDC) and Human Resource Development Committee (HRDC) are tasked with

upholding fairness and inclusivity in the selection of participants for training opportunities.

2. **Competency-Based Development.** USM regularly develops and updates competency standards anchored on its strategic goals. These standards serve as the basis for crafting learning and development plans, addressing both current and anticipated competency needs.
3. **Structured Learning Approach.** The LDMS follows the 70-20-10 model, emphasizing workplace learning (70%), peer learning (20%), and formal learning (10%). This approach ensures a balanced and practical development experience.
4. **Digital Platforms and Boot Camps:** Through the Linang Tao Academy, USM offers online learning platforms for proactive recruitment, digital onboarding, and progressive competency enhancement. Programs like SINTIDO (for faculty) and ASSIST (for non-teaching staff) provide structured training modules.
5. **Workplace Innovation Hubs:** The system encourages collaborative innovation through design thinking approaches, allowing personnel to develop and implement workplace improvements.
6. **Lifelong Learning Opportunities:** USM supports continuous learning by offering scholarships, thesis grants, and study support grants, facilitating advanced education and research opportunities for its personnel.
7. **Performance and Training Evaluation:** The Human Resource Management and Development Office (HRMDO) monitors training effectiveness and aligns learning interventions with individual performance metrics to ensure that development activities address actual performance gaps.

The USM learning and development framework is presented in Figure 5N. This supports the USM strategic objective of developing a Smart Workforce: High Performing, Competent, High Potential, Gritty, Agile and Flexible, and Highly Engaged employees.

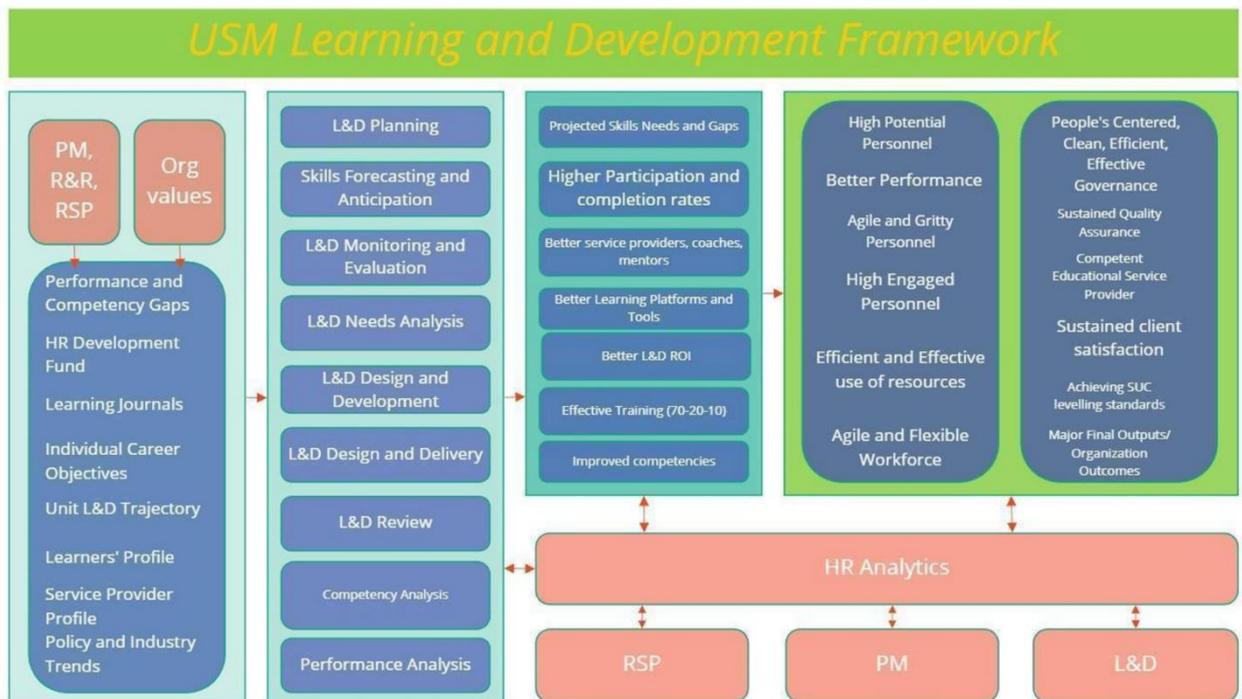


Figure 5N. USM's Learning and Development Framework.

5.3.12.1. Individual Learning and Development Planning

The Individual Learning and Development Plan (ILDP) is a structured process designed to identify and address competency gaps among employees through targeted learning interventions (Figure 5O). The process begins with a Learning Needs Assessment, which evaluates gaps in competencies, performance, qualification standards, and promotion points using tools such as competency self-assessment, IPCR, and reclassification/promotion point systems.

Personnel first identify their career goals and target positions, then assess their current and desired competencies using behavioral indicators. Performance gaps are analyzed through low IPCR scores and unmet targets, while future performance goals and associated learning needs are also documented. Additionally, gaps in promotion points or qualification standards, such as the need for graduate studies or licensure exams, are noted. Based on this assessment, learning objectives and relevant development strategies, ranging from experiential and social to formal learning (aligned with the 70-20-10 model), are formulated and documented. Training plans include specific timelines, cost estimates, and funding sources, particularly for formal intervention. The completed ILDP is reviewed by the supervisor and respective dean/director, then submitted to the HRMDO, where it guides committee

recommendations (UFTDC and USSDC) for approval of learning and development interventions including, PhD studies, MSc studies, secondment, industry or community immersion, post-doctoral fellowship, sabbatical leave, faculty exchange, microlearning courses, trainings and seminars.

 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MINDANAO Kabacan, Cotabato Philippines				
2025 INDIVIDUAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN				
Employee Name	Salary Grade	Position Title/ Designation	Unit	Supervisor's Name
ANGELO R. AGDUMA	23	Associate Professor V	CSM-BIO	PHILIP LESTER P. BENJAMIN, PhD
Section I – CAREER GOALS				
<i>Short-Term Goals (1-2 Years)</i>			<i>Long-Term Goals (3-5 years)</i>	
1. Publish at least 5 full-length research papers in ACI/Scopus/WoS journals with impact factor of at least 1.0, 2. Lead a research project worth 5 million PhP, 3. Win a national/international related to teaching, research, extension and public service, and 4. Get promoted to Professor 6.			1. Pursue a post-doctoral fellowship abroad, 2. Publish at least 10 papers in high impact factor (at least 3.0 IF or higher) in ACI/Scopus/WoS journals, 3. Lead a research program worth higher than 5 million PhP, and 4. Publish a book on mangrove anatomy, physiology, diversity and distribution.	
Section II - COMPETENCY NEEDS AND PERFORMANCE GAPS				
Expected Competencies of your current position (plantilla item)	Appropriate Competency Level (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, or Superior)	Self-Assessment (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, or Superior)	Remarks on Gaps (Discuss why you lack the competencies)	
Core Competencies				
C1. Demonstrate integrity and professionalism	A	S	Achieved competencies	
C2. Service Excellence	A	S	Achieved competencies	

USM-HRD-F65-Rev.0.2020.03.13

Figure 50. Sample of an Individual Learning and Development Plan.

5.3.12.2. Post-graduate Studies Support for Faculty Members

USM strongly values diversity in terms of academic expertise and perspectives. As part of our commitment to academic excellence and innovation, we encourage our faculty members to pursue postgraduate studies at a broad range of reputable institutions, both internationally and within the Philippines. By obtaining advanced degrees from diverse universities and leading academic centers, our faculty enrich the university with varied approaches, global insights, and interdisciplinary knowledge, which in turn enhances the quality of instruction, research, and service we provide.

To achieve the objective of bringing about highly educated manpower resources, the University, through the Linang Tao LDMS, developed and implemented a continuing program of training and development for its faculty and non-teaching personnel. Several faculty members have enjoyed the privilege of scholarships, fellowships, and grants.

5.3.12.3. Study Leave Opportunities

In line with our vision to maintain the AACUP Level IV and achieve Center of Excellence (COE) status in BIOLOGY, our department is committed to maintain a high proportion of faculty members holding master's and doctoral degrees. A key tradition of this commitment is our strong support for faculty members pursuing advanced academic training. Faculty members are actively encouraged to undertake graduate and postgraduate studies in priority fields aligned with the department's academic and research agenda, with the option to avail of Study Leave with Pay, subject to the terms and conditions set in the Linang Tao LDMS.

Many of our faculty members have successfully earned their master's and doctoral degrees from premier institutions in the Philippines, including the University of the Philippines, De La Salle University, University of Santo Tomas, Ateneo de Manila University, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, and Central Mindanao University. Others have pursued graduate studies abroad in Belgium, Australia, and China. Our support extends to faculty members pursuing (a) master's degrees, (b) doctoral degrees, and (c) postdoctoral fellowships.

We also actively encourage faculty members to seek scholarship opportunities from national and international institutions. Most of our faculty members who pursued studies locally were supported by DOST and CHED scholarships, while those who studied abroad received grants from the Chinese Government Scholarship Council and the VLIR-UOS program, among others. These initiatives reflect our strong commitment to faculty development and academic excellence.

5.3.12.4. Thesis or Dissertation Grants

To support faculty members and increase the number of graduate degrees, the University supports those who are working on their theses and dissertations in terms of teaching deloading and financial assistance for research preparation. The faculty members must have completed the academic requirements and enrolled in the master's or PhD program. The implementation of thesis/dissertation deloading is based on the progress of the faculty in their work program. The research topic must be within the priority research areas/thrusts of the Unit. This USM program not only supports faculty members in completing their academic degrees but also empowers them to conduct advanced research and enhance productivity through scholarly publications. Meriam Rubio and Angelo R. Agduma were recipients of deloading support for faculty scholars. While Genalyn P. Galas availed of the thesis support grant of USM amounting to 30,000 pesos.

5.3.12.5. Support for Trainings, Courses, Conferences, Seminars and Workshops for Faculty Members

Beyond graduate education, our department values short-term professional development. Faculty regularly participate in specialized trainings, workshops, and certification courses offered by institutions like the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), The Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), the Commission on Higher

Education (CHED), and international programs facilitated through partnerships and funding agencies. The participation of the faculty in these trainings is subject to the terms and conditions stipulated in the Linang Tao LDMS.

This tradition of continuous faculty development has enabled the department to build a dynamic team of scholars and educators who deliver high-quality instruction and actively contribute to scientific research and community engagement. Several faculties have published in international journals, led externally funded projects, and represented the university at national and global academic forums. In keeping with the university's mission and the evolving demands of biological sciences education and research, the Department of Biological Sciences remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthening its faculty development initiatives and sustaining a legacy of academic excellence for generations to come. This program will provide opportunities for faculty members to network with experts and peers in their discipline. The University supports faculty members in attending training, seminars, and workshops. A faculty member can avail a maximum of PhP 10,000.00 financial support per semester, subject to availability of funds. Regulations on disbursements and liquidation relevant to USM accounting procedures shall be followed after the seminar/training. Some examples of this support for short-term faculty learning and development include the following:

USM supports faculty members in actively participating in various international training and capacity-building initiatives. For example, Professor Agduma is part of the esteemed MicroMorph Fellowship at the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, where he trained under leading experts in Plant Anatomy, with a focus on wood anatomy and structural analysis, alongside early career scholars from around the world. Professor Casim completed a sandwich fellowship at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where she enhanced her expertise in molecular analysis for parasitology and One Health. Meanwhile, Professor Tanalgo pursued advanced training in animal conservation and behavioural ecology as a Zukunftskolleg fellow through research fellowships at the University of Konstanz and the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior in Germany.



Figure 5P. Professor Agduma (far right) with his classmates and professors in the MicroMorph Program at Harvard University.

Professor Agduma, Professor Tanalgo and Associate Professor Bretaña participated in the Future Science Leaders Forum conducted by the National Academy of Science and Technology of the Philippines on November 09-10, 2023. The Future Science Leaders Forum (FSLF) is a flagship program of the National Academy of Science and Technology, Philippines (NAST PHL), which aims to cultivate the next generation of Filipino science leaders. Held annually, the forum gathers promising young scientists from across the country to engage in meaningful discussions, leadership-building activities, and collaboration with established researchers and national scientists.

The goal of the FSLF is to recognize and empower early career researchers who demonstrate strong leadership potential and a commitment to using science for the societal good. By gathering a new breed of science leaders, the forum seeks to enhance the research capabilities of participants, encourage the responsible application of science in solving real-world challenges, and promote scientific excellence across all disciplines. It serves as a platform not only for personal development but also for strengthening the country's scientific community through peer engagement and mentorship.

The training was offered free of charge to participants, with funding support from NAST Philippines. The University of Southern Mindanao provided additional support by covering the travel expenses and per diem allowances of Professors Agduma, Tanalgo, and Bretana.



Figure 5Q. The participants of FSLF 2023 from USM with National Scientist Carmencita M. David-Padilla, the scientist behind the Newborn Screening in the Philippines, former UP-Manila Chancellor, former Executive Director of the Philippine Genome Center, and Chair of the FSLF steering committee.

The former USM President, Dr. Francisco Gil N. Garcia, directed and endorsed the new faculty of DBS, Bona Abigail Hilario-Husain, to participate in a course on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) from 24 to 28 October 2022. The University of the Philippines Los Baños School of Environmental Science and Management (UPLB-SESAM), through its Continuing Education and Training Division (CETD), in partnership with the Philippines Network of Educators on the Environment (PNEE), conducted the course.

This course was designed to build and strengthen the capacity of professionals, educators, and researchers to understand and apply the principles and processes of EIA, an important tool for sustainable development and environmental protection. Delivered through a flexible online format, the training provided a comprehensive overview of EIA frameworks, including legal foundations, procedural steps, technical guidelines, and stakeholder engagement. Participants from various institutions across the country took part in interactive lectures, case studies, and workshops led by experts and practitioners in environmental science and policy. The course aimed to enhance participants' technical skills in conducting EIAs and promote environmental responsibility and informed decision-making in development planning.

5.19.3.6. Support for post-doctoral fellowships

The DBS supports faculty members for post-doctoral training. This is to expose faculty members to international standards and socio-academic culture about research and publication, to encourage faculty members to engage in high-quality research that would result in top-rate journal publications, and to encourage faculty members to network with scientists in their field. Faculty members who can avail of this support must have been accepted to a post-doctoral fellowship abroad after obtaining a doctoral degree. Provisions for official leave during this training shall be covered by a contract between the faculty member and the university, represented by the University President. In our Department, Dr. Krizler C. Tanalgo and Dr. Angelo R. Agduma are programmed to pursue postdoctoral fellowships, as indicated in the FDP 2025-2034. This is a strategic investment in academic excellence and research innovation.

5.19.3.7. Department of Biological Sciences Faculty Development Plan

Our department upholds a strong tradition of academic excellence, reflected in its comprehensive Faculty Development Program (FDP) reflected in the DBS 10-year Faculty Roadmap. We are guided by the principle that high-quality instruction, research, extension, and production are driven by well-supported and continually developing faculty members. We aim to enhance the academic qualifications of our faculty members through graduate and other advanced studies. We established our FDP to assist faculty at all stages of their careers by providing access to academic and professional development opportunities both locally and internationally.

In response to the recommendations from our early AACCUP evaluations, our department has placed a strong emphasis on faculty development. From 2011 to 2020, we crafted and implemented a comprehensive faculty development program (FDP) that served as a foundation for building faculty capacity and advancing academic excellence. During this period, several faculty members pursued advanced degrees in line with the department's long-term goals. Ma. Teodora N. Cabasan undertook her PhD in Bioscience Engineering in KU University of Leuven, Belgium and the International Rice Research Institute, while Maria Elena N. Tanabe pursued a PhD in Microbiology at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). In addition, Angelo R. Agduma earned a Master of Science in Botany, and Marion John Michael M. Achondo earned a Master of Science in Zoology at UPLB. All of them successfully completed their respective degrees with commendable dedication and performance. These achievements reflect our commitment to foster a highly qualified and research-oriented faculty.

Owing to the need for a more immediate and strategic focus, we developed a short-term Faculty Development Program (FDP) covering the period 2013 to 2016. This plan aimed to address urgent developmental goals and align with institutional priorities, particularly the strengthening of the Ecology major and the planned introduction of two additional majors, Plant Biology and Animal Biology, in the BS Biology program. During this period, several faculty members commenced their graduate studies at various higher education institutions, including Florence Roy P. Salvaña (MSc Botany), Cherie C. Mangaoang (PhD in Biology-Plant Systematics), Krizler Tanalgo (PhD

Ecology), Lothy F. Casim (PhD Molecular Biology and Biotechnology with cognate in Zoology), Cyrelle M. Besana (MSc Zoology), Genalyn P. Galas (MSc in Biology) and Leanne Jay S. Manceras (MSc in Zoology).

Building on the outcomes of previous faculty development efforts and in response to the opportunities presented by the K-12 transition years, our department developed a long-term FDP for 2016 to 2025. The FDP focused on advancing graduate education, enhancing research productivity, and promoting pedagogical innovation. The implementation of the K-12 program created a strategic opportunity for faculty development, which our department leveraged to improve its academic profile and research output.

During this K-12 transition period, several faculty members previously mentioned remained on study leave with pay, while a new set was endorsed to pursue higher graduate degrees. Florence Roy P. Salvaña began his PhD in Botany, and John Aries G. Tabora pursued a PhD in Environmental Science at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). Bryan Lloyd P. Bretaña undertook his MSc in Nematology at Ghent University in Belgium, whereas Angelo R. Agduma commenced his PhD in Ecology at Guangxi University, China. Elma G. Sepelagio pursued a PhD in Science Education–Biology, and Genalyn P. Galas enrolled in the PhD in Marine Biology program at Silliman University, Philippines. Meanwhile, Meriam M. Rubio and Renee Jane A. Ele began their PhD in Biology during this time. These developments reflect the department's commitment to cultivate a highly qualified and globally competitive faculty.

As we approached the conclusion of our 2016–2025 FDP, we proactively crafted a new long-term 2025–2034 FDP. This forward-looking plan was designed to further enhance faculty competencies, promote interdisciplinary collaboration, and align with the department's vision of academic excellence. A key objective of this new FDP is for all regular faculty members to earn PhD degrees in Biology or allied fields, while our Contract of Service (COS) faculty obtain their master's degrees. Several faculty members are set to begin their doctoral studies: Cromwell Jumao-as, Prince Buisan, and Bryan Lloyd P. Bretaña will pursue a PhD in Microbiology within this period. Cyrelle M. Besana will pursue a PhD in Zoology or Animal Science, Bona Abigail Hilario-Husain plans to enroll in a Doctorate program in Environmental Science/Sustainability while Jamaica Delos Reyes will pursue a Doctorate degree in Genetics. In addition, our COS faculty members are encouraged and supported to pursue graduate studies. Kier Dela Cruz is set to take a master's degree in Ecology, while Asraf K. Lidasan will pursue graduate studies in Restoration Ecology.

5.20. DBS Hiring Plan

Our department prioritizes recruitment of competent and promising talents with strong academic credentials and a passion for teaching and research, who can help us realize our department roadmap and vision. Guided by our DBS Hiring Plan 2016-2025 and 2025-2034, we hire a faculty workforce that is appropriate to the department's competency requirements. For example, Jamaica Delos Reyes, who holds a Master of Science in Biology and is a PhD in Genetics candidate from Ateneo de Manila University and UPLB, respectively, joined the department in 2022, while Prince Nur Hakeem Buisan, an MSc in Microbiology graduate from the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, became part of the faculty in 2024. New faculty members are selected through

a merit-based hiring process and guided by senior colleagues to ensure smooth integration into the academic environment. Faculty are supported through a collegial atmosphere, clear pathways for professional growth through our FDP, and a strong institutional commitment to employee welfare and academic development.

5.21. Curriculum Design, Development and Revision

Our commitment to quality is demonstrated through the USM Quality Policy Statement, which outlines initiatives for continual improvement in instruction, research and extension services. In the design, development, and revision of its curricula, USM employs a structured and participatory approach to ensure alignment with global, national, and regional standards, stakeholder needs, and evolving industry demands. It involves faculty members, curriculum coordinators, department chairpersons, deans, the College and University Curriculum Review and Development Committee, the Academic Council, and the Board of Regents. This process encompasses and results in the creation of new syllabi and the revision of existing ones to maintain relevance and quality in academic offerings. Regular curriculum reviews are scheduled to assess and update the course content and structure. The university also emphasizes stakeholder involvement in curriculum development, incorporating feedback from students, alumni, employers, and industry partners. This inclusive approach ensures that programs meet the expectations of various stakeholders and adhere to quality standards.

For new programs, the process begins with a program proponent drafting a curriculum aligned with CHED Memorandum Orders (CMOs) and benchmarking it against similar offerings from other HEIs. A feasibility study and stakeholder consultations informed the curriculum's viability and alignment with employment needs and socio-cultural contexts. The proposed curriculum is then reviewed by the department and college-level curriculum committees before endorsement by the College Academic Council. Revised curricula undergo similar steps, incorporating research findings and stakeholder inputs. At the university level, the University Curriculum Review and Development Committee (UCRDC) verifies the curriculum's compliance with academic requirements, followed by validation by the University Academic Council, which scrutinizes alignment with national and global development agendas. Once endorsed, the final version is transmitted to CHEDRO XII for notation and submitted to the Board of Regents (BOR) for approval. Upon approval, the curriculum is implemented and monitored, with provisions for revision every four years or as necessary. Source: USM-EDU-003-Rev.4.2024.07.19 Design and Development and Revision of Curriculum.

The existing MS Biology Curriculum is in accordance with CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 6, s. 2011 Policies and Standards for Graduate Programs in Biology: Master of Science in Biology (M.Sc. Biology). The old M.Sc. Biology curriculum had two concentrations, Ecology and Plant Physiology. In April 21, 2015, it was proposed to revise this curriculum and change it into a generalized field for M.Sc. Biology. The second reading for this revision happened on October 27, 2015 and was submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School on October 30, 2015. The M.Sc. Bio program of USM is structured with the end view of grounding graduate students with advanced concepts of the biological sciences and the conduct and publication of research. It

was evaluated for the issuance of Certificate of Program Compliance in 2019 and was awarded the COPC through COPC no. 91, s. 2020.

5.22. BS Biology Program Admission Process Underwent Systematic

Planning

Admission to M.Sc. Biology at USM requires high academic standards and a structured evaluation process to ensure the readiness of applicants for advanced studies. The applicant must be a Bachelor's degree holder from an CHED-recognized University/College with a minimum Grade Point Average of 2.50 or higher. A key requirement for all incoming graduate students is the Graduate Level Test (GLT). For master's programs, a passing GLT score falls within the range of 474 to 524, corresponding to a quality index of "Average" (2.50). Applicants whose scores fall below these ranges may still be admitted but are required to complete six units of additional coursework as a condition of enrollment. The GLT is administered online by the Center for Educational Measurement (CEM) through a proctored platform.

Applicants must also submit original copies of the following documents to the Office of the Registrar:

1. A duly accomplished application form (completed online)
2. The Notice of Admission (filed at the Graduate School)
3. The latest official Transcript of Records (TOR), marked "Valid for Transfer" or "Issued Upon Request"
4. An Honorable Dismissal (for non-USM graduates)
5. A copy of the GLT result
6. A PSA-issued birth certificate and marriage certificate (for married female applicants)
7. Two (2) passport-size photographs (2"x2")
8. Sealed letters of reference from two former professors or supervisors

5.24. Planning of Student Coursework

The planning of coursework for M.Sc. Bio students requires close coordination with their assigned academic advisers/program coordinator to create a clear and structured program of coursework to help both the student and the adviser stay on track toward the degree completion. This is to make sure that the student takes the right subjects in the right sequence and avoid unnecessary delays. This also ensures that the student completes the minimum number of units, including core courses, electives and thesis requirements as required by M.Sc. Biology.

5.26. Career Possibilities

The M.Sc. Biology program at USM provides students with an in-depth background suitable for pursuing a career in teaching and/or biomedical research or related fields. Students may work on research or academic projects tailored to their individual needs within the areas of expertise of their advising faculty. Our graduate program can also establish a strong foundation for professional training in medicine, research, and Ph.D. programs.

5.27. Planning and Allocation of Financial Resources

The annual budget of the University is prepared within the context of existing budgetary laws, policies, and regulations of the government. It conforms to the plans of the university and ensures effective, efficient, and economical methods of achieving its objectives. Any income generated by the University from tuition and other fees and charges, as well as those derived from the operation of auxiliary services, are retained by the University and constitute a special trust or revolving fund for the use of the University, subject to existing accounting and auditing laws and regulations. The funds are deposited in any authorized government depository bank, and all interest that accrue there from form part of the same fund.

The total USM budget includes provisions from the national budget (RA 8522). The object of expenditure from the national budget is used for personal services, miscellaneous and other operating expenses (MOOE), and capital outlay. Pursuant to the government policy of enjoining state tertiary schools to be on a self-reliant operation with respect to their maintenance and operating requirements, the University has endeavored to keep its local generating projects afloat and viable in order to produce the additional revenue needed to maintain and sustain its performance concerning its mandated functions. Local funds include the collection of tuition, laboratory fees, and other charges. The University is also engaged in income-generating projects which increase its revenue.

In view of the government's policy of decreasing its subsidy to state schools for their MOOE and to sustain the performance of its mandated functions, the University has continued to intensify further collaborative tie-ups with other agencies and institutions as a way of sourcing more funds from external sources. Under these collaborations, the university provides the required physical and manpower resources, while the collaborating entity provides the required funding. Department of Biological Sciences' additional sources of fund.

Apart from the budget allocated by the University and the College, the Department finds ways to increase its allocated budget to perform more of its mandated functions. The Department has its own income-generating projects. The University Water Testing Laboratory is a profit-oriented laboratory of the Department. It caters water quality analyses to local water suppliers in the province of Cotabato and nearby provinces. The Department has its own share in the Multimedia Center of the College that is responsible in the production of laboratory manuals or guides. Moreover, the

Department continually establishes and maintains its established networks with international, national and local partners for instruction, research and extension financial assistance. Sponsored trainings of human resources and laboratory apparatus and equipment by collaborative partners augment the additional needs of the Department.

5.28. Preparation of Budget Proposal

The Department of Biological Sciences is given a portion from the University Budget. This annual allocation is split into areas such as personal services, laboratory facilities, research, extension, maintenance and repair of equipment and physical structures, and other important expenditures. Not later than the end of the first quarter of every year, a duly constituted Committee on Budget Preparation with the Vice President for Administration and Finance as Chairman and the heads or representatives of the various units of the University as members convene to consolidate and submit to the University President the annual budget proposal of the University for the ensuing year for recommendation and submission to the appropriate higher authorities for approval. The Department is involved in the preparation of annual budget proposal. Prior to the convening of the Committee on Budget Preparation, the Chairpersons of the various academic departments and section heads of administrative offices of the University submit to the Committee, through their respective representatives, the annual budgetary requirements of their offices to be prepared in accordance with the prescribed guidelines, which requirements shall be justified on the basis of the actual needs of each office and the development programs of the university. Pending approval of the annual budget for the current fiscal year, the University shall operate on the basis of the budget of the preceding year. Below is example documents needed for the budget proposal of the Department submitted to the Committee on Budget Preparation.

5.29. System of communication to feedback the needs of the programs and the unit

The needs and concerns of the unit are raised to the higher authorities following the organizational/hierarchal structure of the University such as:

Department Level --> College Level --> University Level

5.30. Existing code, manuals, and procedures

The University passed the requirements of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001:2015. The standard sets the criteria for a quality management system. Several documents discussing policies and approved process

and protocols were recorded to create and maintain a procedure that is consistent for all. Some of these are: USM Code, Student Code, Faculty Manual, USM Research, Development & Extension Manual. Some important procedures are the following:

A. Laboratory

- [1] Procedure for Borrowing and Returning Laboratory Materials and Equipment
- [2] Procedure for Inventory Management of Laboratory Materials, Equipment and Facilities
- [3] Procedure for Preventive and Corrective Maintenance of Laboratory Instruments and Facilities
- [4] Calibration of Laboratory Equipment
- [5] Conduct of Laboratory Activities
- [6] Procedure for Safety of Students and Laboratory Staff
- [7] Use of Facilities and Borrowing of College Equipment

B. Research

- [1] Procedure for Thesis Title/Advisor
- [2] Procedure for Change of Title/Advisor
- [3] Procedure for Thesis Outline/Manuscript Defense
- [4] Student Research Engagement Procedure

C. Faculty

- [1] Procedure for Faculty Workload
- [2] Procedure for Curriculum/Prospectus Development/Revision
- [3] Procedure for Course Syllabus Preparation and Revision
- [4] Procedure for Instructional Materials/Workbook Development/Revision
- [5] Procedure for Academic Advising
- [6] Procedure for Conduct of Laboratory Activities
- [7] Facilitating Remedial Intervention for Poor Academic Performance
- [8] Management of Table of Specification, Test Construction and Administration
- [9] Design Development and Revision of Curriculum
- [10] Assessment of Academic Performance and Submission of Grades
- [11] Evaluating Learning Outcomes, Test Construction and Administration
- [12] Procedure for Facilitation of Examinations
- [13] Make-up Class Procedure
- [14] On-the-Job Training Procedure
- [15] Competence, Awareness and Training Procedure
- [16] Work Instruction for (FTF) Change/Rectification of Grades
- [17] Work Instruction for Online Submission of Grades

Extension and Community Engagement

- [1] Community Engagement Procedure

Administration (Department Level)

- [1] Procedure for Classroom Observation
- [2] Procedure for Faculty Performance Evaluation
- [3] Distribution of Faculty Workload Procedure
- [4] Preparation of Faculty Workload and Monitoring of Attendance Procedure

- [5] Procedure for Delivery of Instruction (Face to Face)
- [6] Work Instruction for Monitoring of Online Delivery of Instruction
- [7] Procedure on Evaluation of Instructional Materials

5.31. Best Practices

5.31.1 Participatory and Data-Driven Planning Culture

What distinguishes our planning process from others is its strong foundation in participatory and evidence-based decision-making. Our plans and programs at USM are shaped by performance data, stakeholder feedback, and comprehensive assessments, enabling the university to craft responsive, relevant, and forward-looking strategies for transparency, and alignment with our institutional goals.

5.31.2 Our planning process is integrated with Quality Assurance Systems

Our planning framework is integrated with quality assurance mechanisms such as ISO 9001:2015 standards, AACCUP accreditation requirements, and the Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS). This planning culture strengthens accountability of each unit and enhances the effectiveness of implementation of strategies and for continuous improvement of our processes.

5.31.3 Our department has a dynamic and functional faculty development plan

One of the best practices of our department is the implementation of a dynamic and functional Faculty Development Plan (FDP) that ensures continuous growth and responsiveness to the evolving demands of higher education. This plan is not a static document but a living framework that is regularly reviewed and updated to align with institutional goals, CHED policies, and global trends in biological sciences. What makes our plan functional is its clear implementation mechanisms, including individual development tracking, priority setting based on departmental needs, and institutional support for scholarship and capacity-building as outlined in our Linang Tao Learning and Development Management System manual. As a result, our FDP not only enhances faculty competence but also reinforces the department's commitment to academic excellence benefiting both our students and the broader academic community.

5.31.4 DBS and USM champion non-permanent faculty learning and development with financial aid

Kier C. Dela Cruz, a Contract of Service (COS) faculty member teaching Ecology at the Department of Biological Sciences (DBS), was one of only 26 young professionals from tropical regions selected to participate in the Advanced Field Course in Ecology and Conservation (AFEC-X) held from

October 14 to November 28, 2024 at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden, Chinese Academy of Sciences, in Yunnan, P.R. China.

Despite his COS status, Mr. Dela Cruz was granted official permission by the University of Southern Mindanao (USM) to travel and attend the intensive six-week field course. Notably, the university demonstrated its unwavering support by continuing to provide his salary throughout the training period, helping him manage his expenses and fully participate in the program.

The AFEC-X is a rigorous program designed for early-career graduate students and young scholars in ecology and conservation biology. It emphasizes both theoretical foundations and advanced research skills, aiming to enhance the capabilities and confidence of young scientists. The program also seeks to develop international conservation leaders, build regional research networks, and promote collaboration within the Asia-Pacific region, strengthening China's role in tropical biology research and biodiversity conservation.



Figure 5R. Kier C. Dela Cruz and other participants, lecturers, organizers during the 16th Fieldcourse in Ecology and Conservation at XTBG, China.

5.31.5 DBS values academic asset and leadership sustainability through mentorship

We believe that a strong and well-established culture of mentorship is vital to faculty development and institutional continuity. At the Department of Biological Sciences, mentoring extends beyond classroom instruction, it

nurtures future academic leaders by providing guidance in both teaching and research. An example of this is the mentorship of Asraf K. Lidasan and Kier C. Dela Cruz in the fields of Ecology and Conservation. Under the guidance of Dr. Krizler C. Tanalgo and Dr. Angelo R. Agduma, both have been trained in teaching and research methodologies in Ecology. As a result, they are now among the department's most published and highly cited emerging academics at USM. Their exposure to a culture of academic excellence has inspired them to pursue graduate studies in Ecology. Mr. Dela Cruz is set to begin his Master of Science in Ecology at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden in China through the Chinese Government Scholarship Council, while Mr. Lidasan plans to pursue a Master of Science in Restoration Ecology at the University of the Philippines in Baguio City. Similarly, in the field of Microbiology, Dr. Maria Elena N. Tanabe has been instrumental in mentoring Cromwell Jumao-as and Prince Nur Hakeem Buisan. Mr. Jumao-as is preparing to undertake a Doctor of Philosophy in Microbiology at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, while Mr. Buisan is working toward securing admission to a PhD program abroad. These mentorship success stories emphasize our commitment to build a pool of skilled and inspired educators, researchers and leaders of USM.