



DLSU-D iCON

Inspiring Conversation with Alumni

A LIFE OF SERVICE AND SCHOLARSHIP

THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF
PLTCOL FERMEL V. DELA CRUZ, PhD

Most Outstanding Alumnus in the
Field of Law Enforcement (2018)

Bachelor of Science in Criminology,
Class of 1999



When **Dr. Fermel Dela Cruz** looks back on his life, he sees a journey defined by faith, perseverance, and a steadfast commitment to justice. His transition from being a working student in Cavite to becoming a respected educator and leader in the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) showcases the transformative power of education and the lasting values imparted by De La Salle University-Dasmariñas (DLSU-D).

Choosing Criminology: A Calling Born of Community

Dr. Dela Cruz initially intended to study electrical or chemical engineering. However, the realities of crime and social challenges in Cavite ignited a deeper passion for justice within him. Encouraged by his friends, he decided to enroll in the Bachelor of Science in Criminology program at DLSU-D, under the College of Law Enforcement Administration and Public Safety.



The program provided not only rigorous academic training but also a strong foundation based on Lasallian values of faith, service, and integrity. It was here that he found his true calling. The combination of theory and practice prepared him not only to enforce the law but also to live out justice as a way of life.



Student Life: Perseverance Amid Challenges

Dr. Dela Cruz's years at DLSU-D were characterized by resilience. As a working student, he attended classes in the mornings and worked at a textile company in the evenings, where he was responsible for quality control and oversaw the dyeing of fabrics to support his education. He faced financial challenges, navigated cultural diversity among his classmates, and managed the demands of leadership roles in the ROTC.

Serving as an ROTC officer and Student Council President tested his resolve, but he thrived, earning a spot on the Dean's List and being recognized as a University Scholar. Some of his fondest memories involve on-the-job training in forensic simulation classes, where he led crime scene investigations, gathered evidence under pressure, and collaborated with peers, all while being guided by professors who mirrored real policing scenarios. These experiences forged strong bonds and instilled confidence in his skills as a criminology student.

Mentors such as Dr. Rodel Esmilla, former dean Dr. Alrien Dausan, forensic chemist Mr. Edwin Purificando, retired Police Brigadier General Virgilio Boado, and the late Dr. Rachel Patacsil had a profound influence on him. They challenged him with real-world case studies and emphasized the importance of integrity, which helped shape his philosophy as both a police officer and an educator.



Entering the Police Service

After graduating, Dr. Dela Cruz passed the Licensure Examination for Criminologists and joined the Philippine National Police (PNP) in 2000 as a recruit in the National Capital Region Police Office. By 2008, he had been appointed as a police inspector, serving at the precinct, station, provincial, regional, and national levels.



As the deputy chief of police in Dasmariñas City, he and his team tackled serious crimes and led operations against illegal drugs. Many of his colleagues were former classmates and students from DLSU-D, highlighting the strong Lasallian network within law enforcement. Together, they worked to make Dasmariñas a safer place to live, work, and conduct business.



The life of a police officer comes with its share of sacrifices. In 2015, overwhelmed by the pressures of the job, he contemplated early retirement. However, a quote he came across during that period rekindled his determination: "If you want to be a successful or effective leader, consider every stumbling block as a stepping stone to your success." Inspired by this message, he decided to persevere, understanding that his role was not merely a job, but a true vocation.



Scholar and Educator

Education has been a central focus of his journey. He earned a master's degree from the Philippine College of Criminology and went on to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice in 2017 as a University Scholar. He is currently a government scholar in the Master in Public Safety Administration program at the Philippine Public Safety College.



In 2022, he was transferred from his position as Deputy Chief of PNP Administration to the Philippine National Police Academy, where he was appointed Chief of Professors.

Currently, he serves as department head of forensic science and learning resources, while also teaching at DLSU-D's College of Criminal Justice and College of Professional and Graduate Studies. With 25 years of experience in the teaching profession, he has mentored countless students, instilling in them the values of integrity, empathy, and service.

His personal philosophy resonates with his students:

“The greatest gift you can give someone is your time, because if you are giving your time, you are giving a portion of your life that you cannot get back.”



Faith, Family, and Leadership

Despite his demanding schedule, Dr. Dela Cruz prioritizes his family, referring to them as his “last sanctuary.” They serve as his inspiration and the reason behind his every endeavor. His leadership style, grounded in Lasallian values, emphasizes empathy, fairness, and integrity. He believes that preventing crime requires collaboration with the community and that justice should be administered with transparency and trust.

His mantra is clear:

“Perform your job with the fear of the Lord, within the limits of the law, within the ambition of the law, and by putting your trust in God at all times.”



Looking Ahead: A Legacy of Empowerment

In the next five to ten years, Dr. Dela Cruz envisions himself as a police colonel or brigadier general, focused on becoming a policymaker and curriculum developer in public safety education. He aspires to leave a legacy of empowering officers through education, promoting restorative justice, and enhancing community trust in Philippine policing.

His advice to future Lasallians and criminology students is both a challenge and an inspiration:

“If it stirs your soul to share and seek the truth, then dive in.”

He also emphasized that DLSU-D prepares students to face challenges, shaping them into champions who will make a positive impact on future generations.



Epitome of Lasallian Justice Education

Dr. Fermel Dela Cruz's journey, from working student to police educator, from scholar to leader, embodies the Lasallian spirit of faith, service, and integrity. His life serves as a reminder that justice is not just enforced; it is lived, taught, and passed on to future generations. Through his dedication, he continues to shape not only safer communities but also the hearts and minds of those who will carry the torch of justice into the future.

