

Vol.1 No.1 October 2023

DLSU-D iCON

Inspiring Conversation with Alumni



JOHN JEFFERSON BESA, MD
BS BIOLOGY 2018



**MARIA MARISSA
IRINEO - GOLLA, MD**
BS BIOLOGY 1998



NICOLE DENOLO, MD
BS BIOLOGY 2015



ADVANCEMENT &
ALUMNI RELATIONS
OFFICE



aaro@dlsud.edu.ph



[dlsud.aaro](https://www.facebook.com/dlsud.aaro)



+63 46 481 1900



1st floor Severino de Las Alas Hall

FOR A GREATER PURPOSE: DLSU-D Alumni Championing Better Health Care for All

by Rio Ramos -Mazo

In a world where the pursuit of dreams often takes the backseat, there are individuals who shine as beacons of hope to those who are often neglected and have limited, if not no access, to basic health services. There are those whose journeys echo a profound sense of purpose and dedication to the service of humanity.

Meet our three Lasallian doctors whose deep faith and genuine compassion had led them to take the path less travelled.



JOHN JEFFERSON BESA, MD

BS BIOLOGY MAJOR IN HUMAN BIOLOGY Class of 2018

College of Science and Computer Studies

De La Salle University - Dasmariñas

DLSU-D ICON
Inspiring Conversation with Alumni



Vol.1 No.1 October 2023

Helping People in a Way that Others Can't

An unexpected illness set Dr. John Jefferson Besa, affectionately known as JJ, on the path to his current profession. In his youth, he contracted dengue fever, which led to his hospitalization. This experience exposed him not only to the hospital environment but also to the intricacies of healthcare services. He was deeply moved by the tireless efforts of doctors caring for patients and found himself thinking, "I want to help people in a way that others can't." From that moment on, his dream was to become a doctor.

This determination led him to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Biology degree at De La Salle University - Dasmariñas (DLSU-D). It was during his time at the university that his commitment to serving others was further ignited. Dr. JJ credits his Lasallian education for molding him into a well-rounded and service-oriented individual. The university's quality curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and formative programs provided various opportunities for personal and professional growth. Notably, he developed strong public speaking skills in Filipino, a valuable asset in his current role in public healthcare.

Dr. JJ recognizes the immense influence of the Lasallian mentors who guided him during his college years. The faculty and staff were not only competent but also collaborative, compassionate, and approachable. He fondly remembers individuals like "Mang Juan," a laboratory staff member, who was exceptionally helpful and patient with him and his classmates as they navigated laboratory equipment.

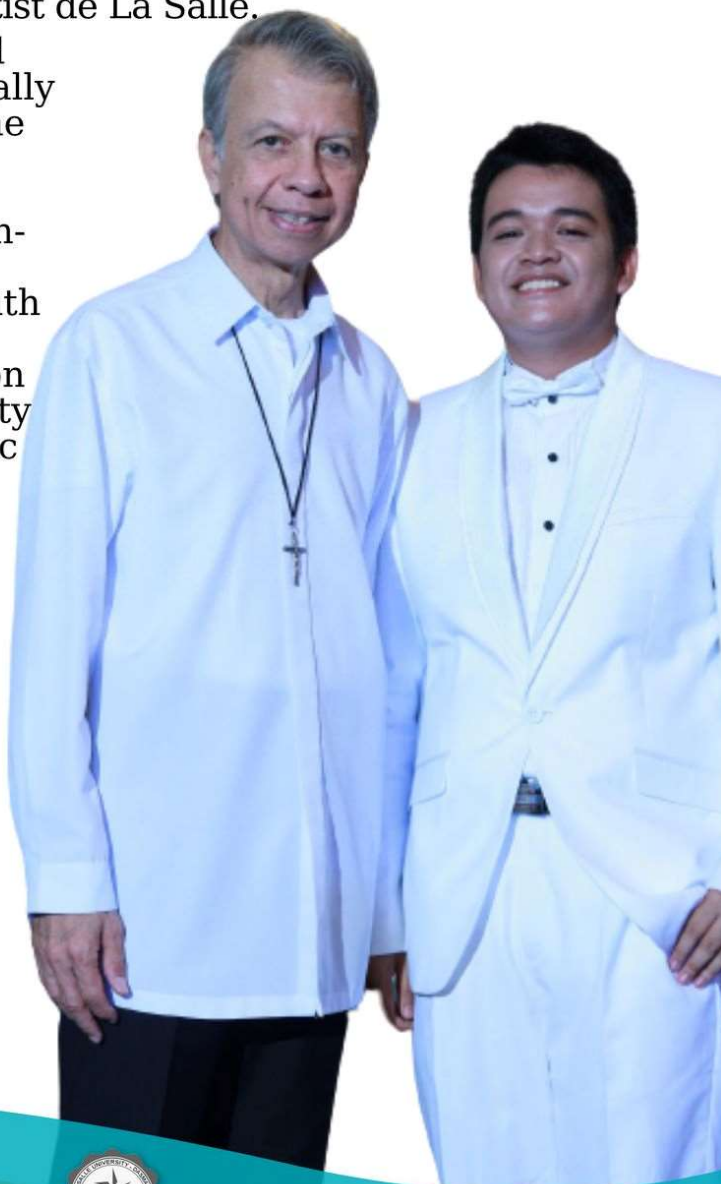


Dr. JJ also acknowledges the significant role played by his involvement in the Campus Peer Minister (CPM) group, an auxiliary organization managed by the Campus Ministry Office. Through the guidance of the Campus Ministers including Ms. Diana Roque, currently the Director of the University Lasallian Family Office (ULFO), he was accompanied to recognize God's presence in his life.

Two individuals stand out as particularly influential and inspiring in Dr. JJ's journey. Dr. Cristina Salibay, his former teacher in the College of Science and current Vice Chancellor for Academics and Research, left a lasting impact. She was strict and highly competent in the classroom, but outside it, she displayed a caring and compassionate nature that made her feel like a second mother to her students. He also remembers Br. Augustine "Gus" Boquer FSC, the former President of DLSU-D, who introduced him to the life and vocation of a Lasallian Brother. Dr. JJ participated in a week-long live-in program with the Lasallian Brothers, gaining insights into their way of life and delving into the teachings of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

These experiences further fueled his desire to serve others, especially those in dire need. Exposed to the harsh realities of society, he felt compelled to answer this call, ultimately choosing a less conventional path. After completing his residency, he decided to work with the Culion Foundation, Inc., a social development organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for Filipinos through public health and community development programs.

Currently, Dr. JJ focuses on the prevention and control of tuberculosis (TB), engaging with the public, jeepney drivers, vendors, etc., to educate them about TB and encourage them to access the free medication and healthcare services provided by the government. Through this work, he realized the importance of collaboration among different sectors and groups to fully address public health concerns, a principle



he was reminded of from his time at DLSU-D: "communion in mission." For Dr. JJ, addressing health issues must go hand in hand with tackling poverty and other related challenges.

On a lighter note, Dr. JJ is also part of the social media world through the Kwentong Callroom Podcast. This podcast, launched in May 2022, is now being produced by ANIMA Podcasts. Dr. JJ and his best friend engage in conversations about the daily and profound aspects of a doctor's life.

Dr. JJ aspires to complete his postgraduate degree in Public Health, viewing it as a crucial step in advancing his mission to make healthcare a basic right for all, rather than a privilege for the fortunate few.



...he realized the importance of collaboration among different sectors and groups to fully address public health concerns, value he was reminded of from his time at DLSU-D: "communion in mission."

His goal is to ensure that fellow Filipinos receive the treatment they need, regardless of their social status or background. Our young doctor also hopes to enrich his prayer life, a value instilled during his time at DLSU-D. Dr. JJ remembers his experience as a CPM Volunteer when he dedicated time to quiet reflection, meditative prayer, and moments of simply feeling God's presence.

By the way, one thing he misses the in DLSU-D is the "omelet rice" he used to enjoy with his friends at a cafeteria located outside the university.

CURRENT AFFILIATIONS AND UNDERTAKINGS

CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
Department of Medicine, College of Medicine,
University of the Philippines Manila.

PROJECT LEAD, CULION FOUNDATION, INC
"Installation of TB Programs in Communities/Groups", a project contracted by the Philippine Business for Social Progress and funded by The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria

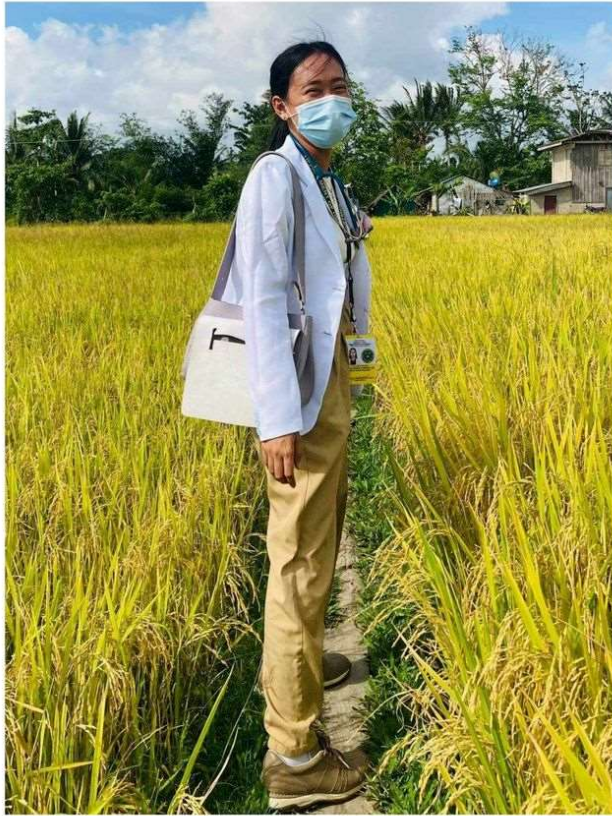
PHYSICIAN, Internal Medicine
Philippine General Hospital



NICOLE DENOLO, MD

BS BIOLOGY MAJOR IN HUMAN BIOLOGY Class of 2015
College of Science and Computer Studies
De La Salle University - Dasmariñas

Healing Hearts, Serving the Barrio with a Lasallian Spirit



Dr. Nicole Denolo is not your ordinary physician; she is a passionate healer, a dedicated leader, a caring friend, and, most importantly, a proud advocate of the Lasallian mission.

Currently serving as a Doctor to the Barrio under the Department of Health in Quezon Province, Dr. Nicole's meaningful journey began during her high school years when she watched a documentary film that left an indelible mark on her heart. It was a tale of compassion, resilience, and selflessness displayed by healthcare professionals in underserved communities. This cinematic encounter ignited a passion within her. And was further strengthened during her college days when she was immersed to social issues concerns through the awareness raising activities she experienced while studying in DLSU-D.

Dr. Nicole's first day as a Doctor to the Barrio was a rollercoaster of emotions. She felt a mixture of anxiety, fear of the unknown, and excitement, all while being assigned to a remote area far from her comfort zone. Yet, this blend of feelings only fueled her commitment to pursue her mission and turn her dreams into actions. Throughout her journey, she faced numerous challenges, each shaping her into the resilient and empathetic individual she is today. The most significant test of her career came during the COVID-19 pandemic, where she had to step up and ensure strict adherence to health protocols within her community.



Her adaptability, willingness to step out of her comfort zone, and her role as a leader were put to the test. It was a challenging endeavor, but Dr. Nicole emerged as a true front-line hero, protecting her community from the virus. Our beloved doctor also wears several hats in her role as a Doctor to the Barrio. She is a dedicated physician, tirelessly treating her patients. She is a charismatic leader who inspires and rallies her community to pursue what is most relevant for them. At times, she becomes a friend, a mother or a sister, especially to those in need, offering not just medical care but also a compassionate heart.

She is grateful for the quality education she received from DLSU-D: one that not only focuses on academic excellence but also on instilling the value of serving others, society, and God.

She is grateful for the quality education she received from DLSU-D: one that not only focuses on academic excellence but also on instilling the value of serving others, society, and God. According to her, being a member of CPM at DLSU-D was the cherry on top, because it allowed her to deepen her faith and live out the Lasallian core values of Faith, Zeal for Service, and Communion in Mission. What makes her journey all the more remarkable is the unequivocal support she received from her parents. Inspired by her aspirations, they stood firmly by her side as she embarked on a meaningful journey of service.





As she looks forward to her future, Dr. Nicole plans to finish her degree on Master's in Public Management, majoring in Health Governance. This endeavor aligns perfectly with her mission to provide essential healthcare services to those who are unable to access them due to limited resources.

Her three-year stint as a Doctor to the Barrio will end in February 2024. It is a bittersweet goodbye to something she had fallen in love with. If given the opportunity, she will renew her contract and serve as the Doctor to the Barrio. For now, she will cherish the remaining days she will be spending in her missionary work.

Given the chance to speak to St. John Baptist de La Salle today, Dr. Nicole would express her deep gratitude for the gift of Lasallian education. She would thank St. John Baptist de La Salle for the inspiration he provided through the ministry of Lasallian education, shaping her into the compassionate, dedicated, and inspirational figure she has become.

And similar to Dr. JJ, our Doctor to the Barrio also misses the omelet rice and “stromboli” bread in the University Food Square.

CURRENT AFFILIATIONS AND UNDERTAKINGS

DOCTOR TO THE BARRIO

Department of Health
Center for Health and Development
CALABARZON, POLILIO, QUEZON

MASTER IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN HEALTH GOVERNANCE (on going)

Ateneo School of Government,
Ateneo de Manila University





MARIA MARISSA IRINEO - GOLLA, MD

BS BIOLOGY MAJOR IN HUMAN BIOLOGY Class of 1998

College of Science and Computer Studies

De La Salle University - Dasmariñas

An Unyielding Force for Healing

Dr. Marissa was captivated by the environment at DLSU-D as it offered a learning atmosphere like no other. It was here that she first experienced a sense of family and the unconditional concern expressed by her teachers, classmates, and everyone she encountered. Transitioning to a new culture, from Germany to the Philippines, it was difficult at first for Dr. Marissa, not to mention, adapting to the prescribed school uniform and breaking three school shoes in one semester! She fondly remembers Acacia Avenue, once a rough road, which she had to traverse daily. There were many challenges, but she bore them with grace and determination. These challenges did nothing to diminish her love for DLSU-D. In her words, "I am proud of DLSU-D." This is where her innate compassion was further nurtured, thanks to the opportunities DLSU-D provided. According to her, DLSU-D students were taught not only to excel academically but to reach out to others, especially those in need. Thanks to the opportunities DLSU-D provided. According to her, students were taught not only to excel academically but to reach out to others, especially those in need. She expresses her appreciation of the university when she said, "I am proud of DLSU-D."



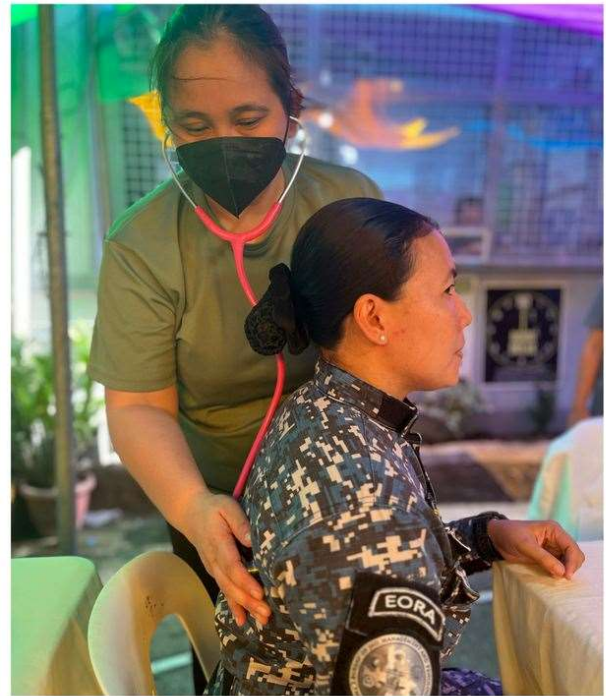
"I am proud of DLSU-D."



Dr. Marissa had to postpone her dream of becoming a physician after she bore her first child. As a dedicated and hands-on mother, she was committed to being there for her children, especially during their formative years. She thought that her dream of becoming a doctor would remain un-fulfilled, but the unwavering support of her parents, and her husband, Dr. Nathaniel Golla, currently the Vice Chancellor for Academics and Support Services of DLSU-D, encouraged her to return to medical school. With their support, she persevered and graduated. "My father truly believed in me, and that's all it took for me to fulfill my dream," she warmly recalls. Mother Teresa of Calcutta remains a well-spring of inspiration for Dr. Marissa. Her missionary spirit, deeply rooted in her faith, blossomed during her time at DLSU-D. Our beloved doctor's commitment to serving was further strengthened because of her admiration for individuals who devoted their lives to serving others, notably Dr. Charles Yu. She drew inspiration from his generous spirit, especially when tending to his patients. His good deeds and kindness extended not only to those under his care but to all who worked alongside him, leaving an indelible impression.

Two Lasallian Brothers also had a profound impact on her life. Br. Andrew Gonzales FSC was the first Lasallian Brother she encountered and shook hands with. She regarded him as a promising and dedicated leader of the De La Salle System. Br. Augustine Gus Boquer FSC, on the other hand, stood out for his boundless compassion. According to Dr. Marissa, whenever Br Gus visited the De La Salle University Medical Center (DLSUMC), he would engage with patients, lending an empathetic ear to their concerns. He was also the driving force behind improving the ward to serve more people.

According to Dr. Marissa, working in a hospital allows her to practice her faith every day. Since DLS UMC and De La Salle Health Sciences Institute (DLS HSI) is a Catholic institution, she can freely live out her faith, without fear of being persecuted or judged. She prays with her patients, shares her faith with colleagues, and extends a helping hand whenever possible. Being a Lasallian, she strives to assist her colleagues and help them overcome their weaknesses while nurturing their strengths. Dr. Marissa views her work as an opportunity to embody her



spirituality as a Lasallian, a life imbued with faith, compassion, and service. Dr. Marissa's leadership shone brilliantly when the DLS UMC Molecular Laboratory was transformed into a COVID-19 testing facility at the height of the pandemic. It was designated as a COVID Center by the Cavite Provincial Government. Under the stewardship and guidance of Dr. Charles Yu, head of the Center, Dr. Marissa took on the role of managing it on the ground as she navigated the uncharted waters with grace and determination. As a front liner, she helped set up the system, supervised the planning process, trained the medical personnel, and took charge of the daily operations, all while facing the inherent dangers posed by the virus. She boldly accepted the challenge, driven by the belief that someone had to step forward to help others in need.



Before the pandemic, Dr. Marissa operated a clinic for a year, charging a nominal fee of Php 150.00 per patient. Yet, her compassion knew no bounds. There were times when she waived any fees, particularly for those who were in dire need and lacked the means to pay. Her work extended beyond the walls of the clinic, echoing the principles of selfless service that DLSU-D instilled in her.

In every endeavor and interaction, Dr. Marissa carries the name of De La Salle. She views herself as a bearer of the Lasallian legacy and strives to bring the face of Jesus into all that she does. Her actions transcend mere professional duty; they reflect a profound commitment to serving the greater good. Dr. Marissa Golla is more than a physician; she is also an educator, an administrator, a researcher, and a social mobilizer, all in one. Her multifaceted approach to life embodies the Lasallian spirit of service, commitment, and compassion. In the halls of DLSU-D, she found her calling. Dr. Marissa Golla is indeed a 5-star Lasallian, and her brilliance shines in her life.

CURRENT AFFILIATIONS AND UNDERTAKINGS

Co- Chair

Regional TB MAC, Region 4A

Medical Officer -

Philippines Site
R2D2 TB Network - UCSF Center for TB, USA

Co-Chair and Member -

Cavite Provincial TB MAC Cavite, Philippines

Medical Research Officer - DLSMHSI CTR

Associate Director, CTR DLSMHSI CTR

DLSMHSI - RePORT Liaison Officer DLSMHSI, Philippines

Senior Medical Officer, CoACH DRTB DLSMHSI, Philippines

Clinic Physician, Research DLSMHSI CTR, Philippines

Associate Director, DLSMHSI CTR

Special Part time Lecturer DLSMHSI College of Medicine, Philippines



LIVE THE ANIMO...Live to Serve

DR's. JJ, Nicole, and Marissa's journey are testaments to the unwavering spirit of true Lasallians. They have continuously pushed the boundaries of service, even in the face of daunting challenges. Their dedication to serving the marginalized and underprivileged is the embodiment of the teachings and examples of St. John Baptist de La Salle. We are called to live out our faith, to be of service to others, in communion with fellow Lasallians and others. May their stories ignite the Animo spirit in us so that we may continue to be beacons of hope and embodiment of what and how it is to be a Lasallian.

LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS...forever!

DLSU-D iCON

Inspiring Conversation with Alumni

DLSU-D iCon features DLSU-D Alumni who continuously live out their Lasallian identity and mission in their profession, field of expertise, and social engagement. It is one of the ways the university continue to engage with its alumni towards fulfilling the shared mission of human and Christian education.

DLSU-D iCON is published through the official Facebook Page of the DLSU-D Advancement and Alumni Relations Office and the DLSU-D website. Do you have a story to share? Send us a message and let us have an inspiring conversation.



Jefferson Buenviaje, Director
Rio Ramos - Mazo, Alumni Engagement Officer
Maria Concepcion L. Peralta - Secretary

Special Thanks to: Ms. Wynne Angelynne O. Chui - Faculty, Information and Communication Technology Center

Volunteer Editor of DLSU-D iCon



aaro@dlsud.edu.ph



dlsud.aaro



+63 46 481 1900



1st floor Severino de Las Alas Hall