

July 15, 2025

DR. PROSE IVY G. YEPES

President

Visayas State University

Visca, Baybay City, Leyte

Dear **Dr. Yepes**:

I am writing to apply for the Associate Professor V permanent position at the Department of Pest Management, Visayas State University. I am a licensed agriculturist with six years of teaching experience in the academe. I am an Associate Professor V at Northern Iloilo State University – Barotac Viejo Campus, handling crop protection and genetics subjects. I obtained my Ph.D. in Agriculture in 2018 under a Combined Master's and PhD program with a dissertation in molecular plant pathology from Chungbuk National University in South Korea, under the Woojung Education and Culture Foundation Scholarship and Graduate Research Assistantship program. I also graduated Magna Cum Laude and the class valedictorian with a degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, major in Crop Protection, specializing in Plant Pathology at Visayas State University in 2009.

I have a strong background in molecular plant pathology research, which is evident in my six first-authored publications on disease resistance in high impact factor, Scopus journals, with 63 citations and nine patents in South Korea on genetically engineered rice for disease and pest resistance. My Ph.D. dissertation examines the genome-wide transcriptome dynamics that led to the incompatible interaction of rice with *Xanthomonas oryzae* pv. *oryzae*. By performing RNA sequencing and gain/loss-of-function techniques, I was able to infer putative resistance genes that delayed disease development in transgenic rice. This work has deepened my interest in exploring the molecular battlefield of key pathogens infecting economically important crops using omics technology to elucidate resistance genes network that can be employed for crop improvement programs.

Currently, I am implementing, as a project leader, two research projects on isolation and molecular characterization of bacterial community from biofertilizers and formulation of microbial inoculants for improvement of growth, disease resistance, and yield performance of vegetables with a total of Php 1,873,000.00 grants. These research projects have broadened my perspective on biocontrol as a viable alternative means of controlling crop disease problems.

With the advanced research facilities and flourishing research culture at VSU, I believe I could further promote the competencies of DPM, especially the plant pathology field, by securing research grants, implementing extension projects that address the disease problems in crops of farmers, establishing linkages with other faculty members and institutions, and publishing in international peer-reviewed journals and applying for IP protection for future research outputs.

Most importantly, to obtain a faculty position at VSU would be an excellent opportunity to translate my academic and research training into mentoring students and nurturing aspiring scientists. As a lecturer, I will share my academic training and research experience to instill advanced knowledge in molecular plant pathology by employing updated teaching materials and programs to hone students' learning experience.

Enclosed are credentials for your perusal. I would be happy to send the additional documents desired. Thank you very much for taking the time to review my application

Very truly yours,



MARJOHN C. NIÑO, Ph.D.