



Visayas State College of Agriculture
Baybay, Leyte
Office of the President

April 23, 1999

MEMORANDUM NO. 36
Series of 1999

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O:

Dr. Rebecco Santiago

Prof. Climaco D. Espina

Dr. Zosimo M. de la Rosa

Ms. Lourdes B. Cano

Mrs. Asteria A. Sevilla

[Handwritten signatures and dates]
4/27/99
4/26/99
4/26/99

SUBJECT: Fact - Fainding Committee

With Dr. Rebecco M. Santiago as Chairman and Mrs. Asteria A. Sevilla as Secretary, please constitute yourselves into a fact-finding committee to look into the report of Ms. Emma Irene M. Mende regarding a DOF staff committing various irregularities.

Attached is a copy of Ms. Mende's report.

Please submit your report and recommendation on or before July 15, 1999.

[Handwritten signature]
SAMUEL S. GO
President *[Handwritten initials]*

31 March 1999



Dr. Samuel S. Go
President
Visayas State College of Agriculture
Baybay, Leyte 6521-A

Dear Mr. President:

I am going to be a member of a well-established civic organization that promotes social justice for the disadvantaged sectors of society. Hence, I am morally obliged to start with this mission by bringing to your attention some of the many irregularities in the Department of Forestry with the hope that they can be corrected.

This letter centers on one senior faculty member of the Department. These are as follows:

1. Corruption of students. Failing in a subject is normal phenomenon in any academic institution. But students can be put in a miserable situation when a teacher exploits his position to personal advantage.

This professor is known for high rate of student failures in his subjects. It is good if the intention is for the student to repeat the course to learn more. The problem occurs when he allows the failed students to request the offering of the subject and he receiving an attractive sum as honorarium. The intention for increased knowledge in repeating the subject is also hardly met. Students are just given make-up activities without his supervision and lectures for these less receptive students are not seriously served.

The glaring aspect is on the manner of collecting payment from the students. There were cases wherein he collected directly from the students at his own computation. Thus, records reflected no collection of honorarium and claim for higher workload units. Records in the Registrar's Office and victimized students are at hand within the campus for verification.

This situation creates an unfavorable impression on the faculty of the department and ViSCA as a whole. Students are thinking that this professor is interested only on making money to the point that a graduating student in March 1998 had inserted P1,000.00 note in her removal exam papers. This puts ViSCA to a risk of having a reputation that instructors can be bought by students in exchange for a passing grade. Nevertheless, the act redounds to tax evasion.

Several victimized students are still within the vicinity of ViSCA and willing to testify. Many others are still resident students and just waiting for what recourse would come to them until their graduation.

2. Misuse and lack of proper accounting of revolving funds. Proceeds from payments for handouts and other sources have no periodic accounting. In fact, a student borrowed money from this revolving fund to pay this professor's honorarium on a requested subject. This happened with approval by the same professor.

Very truly yours,

I am going to be a member of a well-established civic organization that promotes social justice for the disadvantaged sectors of society. Hence, I am morally obliged to start with this mission by bringing to your attention some of the many irregularities in the Department of Forestry with the hope that they can be corrected.

He also charged to these fund food expenses for a personal visitor in his residence. He practically decides arbitrarily on the use of funds without due consultation with the faculty and staff.

He had coordinated training on agroforestry and handled the financial aspect by himself without proper financial report to the college. College facilities were used in the training but the training was administered as if it were a private undertaking. The college has records of this. This is a common knowledge in the Department.

3. Use of official facilities for personal purposes. This involves a computer unit and a motorcycle. The computer was donated to the Department by the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) when he attended training in Indonesia in 1995. It is installed in his apartment ever since and ViSCA has no knowledge of its existence. Through the Darwin Project, the computer now has a modem for e-mail and the department, which is supposed to have access to this facility, is deprived with the service.

The motorcycle acquired through the Darwin Project remains on his personal use. With project termination it becomes a property of ViSCA and a proper body should have determined use of the unit. Department faculty and staff need the motorcycle in their daily activities. The equipment can be easily checked at his residence.

4. Corruption of project funds. He attempted to charge the Darwin project P20,000.00 for identification of a herbarium specimen. This was, however, curtailed since he could not produce service contract required by ViFARD. The specimen was identified by his friends in UPLB. These people usually do not charge friends like him.

He also filed overpriced liquidation for travel expense, such as claims for chartering private vehicles at much higher rate compared to use of ViSCA vehicles. Thus the Darwin project leader Darwin stopped signing all his monetary transactions with ViFARD. From thereon he approved his travels and other project expenses by himself. Records for these can be verified in ViFARD.

5. Exploitation of subordinates. The department always needs an extra hand to handle clerical matters but this should not justify exploitation by underpayment. This is violation of minimum wage law and should not be allowed in a government institution like ViSCA. An emergency clerk in our department has been working with us for years but she is paid for 10 days per month only while working whole month. The wife of one of our laborers is serving in our mini-snack bar earning less than P50 per day and she continues to work there not to annoy this professor or the employment of her husband could be at stake.

Laborers and forest guards in the department are asked to contribute money for drinking sprees in the Agroforestry Demo Farm even during office hours. This professor is fond of asking people to sponsor celebrations such as despedidas for staff, first salary and others, and even the Octoberian students who did not graduate in the previous term because he failed them.

Junior faculty and staff have their own personal experience with this professor on drinking sprees that had a draining effect to their pockets.

6. Harassment of students. A man close to him and serving as casual forest guard in the department in the past created a conflict by selling department materials to the students. The act came to the attention of the faculty and lead to nonrenewal of appointment of the same man. This professor, however, confronted the students and threatened them with failing grades in his subjects.

Towards the last week of the deadline for graduation, he fulfilled his words such that the upholstery of his motorcycle was slashed by someone. He gave again same threatening remarks to the incoming fourth-year students as he suspected one of them did the slashing.

7. **Harvesting of timber without proper consultation.** It has been easy for him to charge payments on forest products such as bamboo, cuttings and seedlings to increase money for the revolving fund. He deters people who cut timber in the reservation. But he caused the cutting of a lot more timber without any slight consultation with the department faculty and staff. We are just servants in public office and he cannot decide on the use of college resources by himself as if he owns them. Some of these are photo-documented and can also be verified at sites.

8. **Exploitation of upland farmers.** He organized upland farmers in the reservation and asked them to render free labor in his agroforestry demo farm. These farmers were also involved in seedling production utilizing college resources. Such activities had no official blessings by the department. Worse, the seedling contract with DENR was not served successfully and damaged the department's image. The farmers are residing just in the adjacent communities for information.

9. **Unilateral decisionmaking.** He had been endorsing official recommendations to higher bodies of the college based on personal decision, many of them requiring consensus from the department personnel committee. This is particularly serious especially when involving opportunities in staff development and projects. Information coming to his office on opportunities that may be better awarded to more qualified staff is held to his advantage. This is demoralizing.

Having full trust and confidence on the transparency in your administration, I believe you will not let this past without going deeper into the details of the issues and act accordingly based on findings. I admit that this document is not giving you adequate bases for action but sources of support information are mostly at disposal within campus.

I would like to repeat that I am not taking this on a personal basis but to correct what needs to be corrected on behalf of the affected parties and ViSCA as a whole. Again, I would like to express my gratitude to ViSCA and my willingness to support the interest of the college in anyway I can.

Sincerely,

Emma Irene M. Mende

cc: Administrative Officer
Director of Instruction
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Vice President for Administration
College Secretary
Registrar
ViFARD Executive Director
Anna Lawrence - Darwin Project