

## Professors give better opportunities for the deaf



The professors from all over the world who recently attended the 'Teaching English as a Second Language' workshops at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID). Far right in the photo is Jonathan Tusalem, a professor at the DLSU-College of Saint Benilde and the lone Filipino delegate to the workshop series co-sponsored by PEN-International.

"PHYSICAL disability is never a hindrance to success."

Certainly, teacher Jonathan Tusalem heard this adage countless times. But it wasn't until he witnessed a group of hearing-impaired students singing at the Deaf Evangelistic Alliance Foundation (DEAF) School in Laguna that he believed in the saying — and went on his way to do something to help.

It was in 1983 that Tusalem encountered the foundation's choir. The experience moved him so much that he decided to pursue a career working with the deaf, learning of the richness of their culture, language, and world.

An educator from the DLSU-College of Saint Benilde, Tusalem was the only Filipino to participate in "Teaching English as a Second Language," a series of workshops recently offered by Postsecondary Education Network International (PEN-International), which in turn, is a program funded by the Nippon Foundation of Japan.

PEN-International is based at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), a college of Rochester Institute of Technology in New York where more than 1,100 deaf students study and live with around 14,000 non-deaf students in the campus.

The Rochester Institute has linkages with the DLSU-CSB's School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies where teacher Tusalem works.

Director of PEN-International Dr. James DeCaro shares about NTID's 30-year experience on teaching deaf students. "Irrespective, we learned as much from our visitors as they learned from us during this week of intensive professional development."

It was DeCaro, former dean of NTID, who invited the group of educators to "come and share expertise and exchange teaching ideas" with nearly a dozen other teachers, whose colleges and universities are part of PEN-International.

Tusalem was one of 12 participants from across the globe. Aside from DLSU-CSB, other schools that joined the workshops included the Bauman Moscow State Technical University in Russia, Tsukuba College of Technology in Japan and Charles University in the Czech Republic.

During morning and afternoon sessions taught by veteran NTID faculty members, participants learned about and discussed instructional approaches to teaching English: How to teach reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and how to use Web-based technology for educating students who are deaf.

A second strand of workshops covered more technical topics, such as computer network design, networking student computer labs, videoconferencing technologies, and how to design and install "smart classrooms.

"What I've seen with the meet is the real America," Tusalem shares, noting that American missionaries actually started deaf education in the Philippines. He added that the experience and information gathered would be of use to his institution in the coming years.

In the Philippines, it was the DLSU-College of Saint Benilde's School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies (SDEAS) that offered an undergraduate degree in Applied Deaf Studies for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. The institution is committed to innovate in the different areas of education for the deaf and develop them into creative Christian community builders.

The SDEAS is also offering opportunities for further education to its enrollees through scholarship grants. The Bachelor of Arts Degree in Applied Deaf Studies, as well as various certificate programs, has graduated many deaf students who now find themselves well adjusted to a hearing, working environment. Recently, the Applied Studies program underwent a curriculum revision to allow the students to specialize either in Multimedia Arts or Entrepreneurship.

"By learning about the programs implemented in such institutions, most importantly in RIT-NTID, we are sufficiently guided in the initiatives that we are currently undertaking. We are very optimistic that, through the Nippon Foundation's supported program, our institution can contribute more to the empowerment of our deaf community," said CSB Executive Vice President R. Holmes.

Holmes and SDEAS Dean Ms. Theresa de la Torre, who had gone earlier to RIT-NTID for a weeklong series of meetings to firm up CSB's participation in the PEN-International program, are slated to visit Tsukuba Institute of Technology in Japan this month for another series of meetings and training on aspects of deaf education.

Such cooperative efforts between DLSU-CSB and PEN-International are providing opportunity for deaf students worldwide. Soon, deaf students can enjoy multi-national classes and seminars when PEN-International establishes both satellite and Internet connections with DLSU-CSB.

"This workshop is just the first step to improve the education of people with hearing disabilities — the first step in helping them succeed with their own credentials," DeCaro ends.