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CSB gives deaf better chances at education 08/28/2002

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Jonathan Tusalem's first encounter with the deaf was in 1983 when he was in a group of hearing-impaired students singing at the Deaf Evangelist Alliance Foundation (D.E.A.F.) School in Laguna. 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.

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

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PEN-International is based at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), a college of Rochester Institute of Technology (Rochester, New York, USA), with whom the DLSU-CSB's School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies has vital linkages. NTID, the world's first and largest technological college for students who are deaf and hard of hearing, enrolls more than 1,000 deaf students who study and live with 14,000 hearing students on campus.

"We have 30 years of experience teaching deaf students here at NTID," said Dr. James DeCaro, director of PEN-International and the group's host. Irrespective, we learned as much from our visitors as they learned from us during this week of intensive professional development."

DeCaro, former dean of NTID, invited the group of educators to "come and share their 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 veterans NTID faculty members, participants learned about the 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 today,” Tusalem said, praising the weeklong activities, “is the real American,” noting that American missionaries actually started deaf education in the Philippines. He added that his experience and the information gathered will be put to good use by the DLSU-CSB’s SDEAS.

The DLSU-College of Saint’s Benilde’s School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies (SDEAS) is the first tertiary educational institution in the country to offer an undergraduate degree in Applied Deaf Studies for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, committed to being an innovator in the different areas of education for the Deaf and seeking to develop them into creative Christian community builders while building a strong sense of urgency for Deaf needs and issues. The SDEAS prides itself on offering opportunities for further education 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 Visual Arts or Business Technology.

“By learning about the programs implemented in such institutions,” says CSB executive vice

president R. Holmes , “most importantly in RITONTID, we are sufficiently guided in the initiatives that we are currently undertaking. We are very optimistic that, through the Nippon Foundation’s supported program. DLSU-CSB will contribute even more to the empowerment of our deaf community.”

Such cooperative efforts between DLSU-CSB and PEN-International are rapidly becoming a cornerstone of the latter’s work. The two-year old organization quickly has been expanding opportunities for deaf students worldwide through collaborative efforts with colleges and universities. Its long-term goal is to establish both satellite and Internet connections so that multi-national classes and seminars can be offered. DLSUCSB is one among many institutions that have established linkages with PEN-International.



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