

Maria Graciela G. Gonzaga, MD

Dr. Maria Graciela Garayblas Gonzaga graduated from the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. She is a diplomate and fellow of the Philippine College of Physicians and the Philippine Society of Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology. She was a Takeda Science Foundation scholar in Gifu University, Japan as well as a scholar of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium. She also took her Master of Science in Health Development and Management from Chulalongkorn University as Rockefeller Foundation scholar.

As an academician, she rose from the ranks, having served the Department of Medicine as supervisor of Medicine 2 and supervisor of clinical pharmacology. She also served as consultant in Internal Medicine in the University of Santo Tomas Hospital. As a consultant, she was involved in the training of the residents giving emphasis on Internal Medicine as a specialty. She emphasized good history taking, thorough physical examination, proper decorum and communication skills, evidence based medicine with health economics, patient safety, and ethics and morals. She encouraged teamwork among the healthcare providers and involved patients and relatives in decision making encouraging a “medical junta”, all for the best interest of the patients. She always applied knowledge management and translation in the management of patients.

She started the UST Bioavailability Unit, a grant given by AUSAID. She became Faculty Secretary, Assistant Dean and eventually Dean of the Faculty of Medicine from 2006-2013. An innovative educator, she prepared better the graduates of the medical school to become complete physicians by including clinical epidemiology and ultrasound in the curriculum from first to fourth year. These enhanced the students’ knowledge for research, clinical skills and point of care all for the patients’ welfare and benefits. She introduced elective rotations in pathology, addiction medicine, emergency medicine and forged a memoranda of agreement with University of California, Irvine; Wayne State University and Ford Medical Center; University of South Carolina; National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland; Tzu Chi University to name some. She also encouraged external rotation of students in USA, United Kingdom, and Japan. During her term, about 50 medical students went to Harvard Medical School for observership and exposure. At the same time, she encouraged exposure of students to local communities and encouraged student participation in medical missions all over the country which she herself joined. She supported faculty development by sending some of her faculty to train abroad. It was during her term that distance learning in Masters in Pain Management was introduced with license from University of Sydney. She encouraged workshops among the faculty who are engaged in clinical trial research thru good clinical practice and good manufacturing practice programs. She even extended this to the Food and Drug Administration personnel. She established linkage with the American Heart Association making the University of Santo Tomas the training center of basic and advanced life support programs.

She served as president of the Association of Philippine Medical Colleges as well as the Philippine Society for Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology, Director of the Philippine Clinical

Epidemiology Network and Vice President of the International Association of Catholic Medical Schools and member of the Country Coordinating Mechanism which handles projects supported by the global fund and former member of the PMA Commission on Ethics, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation's Peer Review Committee and National Bioavailability Board of the Food and Drug Administration and a member of the Technical Committee on Medical Education and Regional Quality Assurance Team of the Commission on Higher Education.

As a researcher, she has published papers in reputable local journals and served as chair of the UST Hospital Institutional Review Board for nearly 15 years. She was also a member of the Department of Science and Technology's capacity building committee and institutional development board and served as one of the judges in the research contest as well as the outstanding researcher awards.

As a clinician, she continues to practice internal medicine and spends time helping our less fortunate fellowmen. She has been joining the UST Medical Missions Inc. activities from Luzon to Mindanao since 1979. She was with the group that went to New Washington, Aklan and Tacloban, Leyte immediately after Yolanda devastated the area. In the early years of her practice, for two decades, she rendered service to her hometown in Obando and even did house calls. As a practitioner, she knew her limitations, when to refer patients to other specialists and subspecialists, a trait she always teaches young colleagues. She discusses patient's condition with the other attending physicians yet maintain highest standards of confidentiality and professionalism. She informs referring physicians, especially those coming from the provinces, regarding condition of the referred patient and if the patient is confined, she sends him or her back to the primary care physician once hospitalization is over.

She retired prematurely from the Faculty of Medicine after being appointed member of the Board of Medicine of the Professional Regulation Commission, a post she holds until her appointment as Expert Panel Member of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation.