

Voices on the air: Speech education and campus radio in the postcolonial Philippine university

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Abstract

In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, faculty and students of the newly organized Department of Speech and Drama (later Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts) at the University of the Philippines (UP) were at the forefront of managing the radio station DZUP, mounting radio productions on campus and shaping the academic curricula for classes in radio speech and writing. These pioneering contributions, though significant, have yet to receive due documentation from communication scholars, researchers, and historians in the country.

In this essay, I address this gap by bringing into focus archival documents—photographs, newspaper accounts, official memos, and personal correspondences between academics and administrators—that clarify the academic department's role in the early systems and operations of DZUP. I argue that these efforts are important because of four main reasons. First, they highlight the often-overlooked relationship between speech education and campus radio in the national university. Second, they emphasize the ways in which the radio booth worked alongside the public speaking platform and the theatre stage as a fundamental space where speech-related pedagogies, performances, and practices played out. Third, they show disciplinary genealogy that links the disciplines of speech communication and mass communication in the University of the Philippines. And finally, they shed light on the pedagogical process involved in teaching, training, and transforming Filipino students into a kind of speaking subjects in the postcolonial Philippines.

Keywords: disciplinary formations, institutional genealogies, speaking subjects, media organizations, radio communication

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From the 1940s to the 1960s, an increasing number of educational institutions across the Philippines started putting up their own campus radio stations (Enriquez et al., 2012). Silliman University, for example, formally inaugurated its own broadcasting station DYSR in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental in 1950 through the cooperative efforts of several foreign mission boards (Canoy & Lopez, 1950). Strictly non-commercial and non-profit, it was “the first educational and religious broadcasting station in the Philippines” (Canoy & Lopez, 1950, p. 2). The University of Santo Tomas (UST) followed suit in 1952 when it opened DZST, dubbed the “Voice of Catholic Philippines,” which sought to propagate the faith rather than entertain listeners in the traditional commercial way (Canoy and Lopez, 1950). In 1961, as radio historian Elizabeth Enriquez (2017) notes, the DZST “was transferred to the Philippine Radio Educational and Information Center Inc. (PREIC), which was organized to manage Radio Veritas, and its call letters were changed to DZRV” (p. 511).

In the University of the Philippines (UP), the idea of establishing a campus radio station started as early as 1950, with the intention of using the medium of radio to give lessons to aid high school physics teachers. But it was only in 1957 when the contract between UP and the Radio Corporation of America materialized that DZUP became a reality (Tison 1960). It was in December the following year that DZUP, otherwise known as the “Voice of the State University,” started broadcasting its activities for the first time (“Sinco Inaugurates U.P. Radio Station,” 1958). Once regular operation commenced at year’s end, the program would run from 4:30 in the afternoon to 10:30 at night. While waiting for the approval of the budget allocation meant for its full operation and the completion of its personnel, DZUP confined itself to the following initial program:

Monday to Friday

4:30-5:00—Greetings, Announcements

5:00-5:30—Relaxation Period

5:30-5:45—VOA Concert

5:45-6:00—Literary Hour

6:00-6:30—Entertainment Music

6:30-7:00—University Hour

7:00-7:30—Music for Dinner

7:30-8:00—News and Music (Monday, Wednesday,
and Friday *Philippine Collegian*)

8:00-8:45—From the Listening Center

8:45-9:00—Amateur Hour

9:00-10:00—Concert

Saturday

4:30-5:00—Greetings, Announcements

5:00-5:30—My Country and My People

5:30-6:30—Progressive Jazz

6:30-7:00—Philippine Melodies

7:00-7:30—Interview Time

7:30-8:00—Music for Dinner

8:00-9:00—Poetry

9:00-10:00—Closing (“DZUP Commences Regular Broadcasts,”
1958, p. 2)

On September 30, 1959, the initial funding from the National Economic Council and the International Communication Administration ended (Tison, 1960). From then on, UP committed to financing the campus radio station, using it for both education and entertainment (Tison, 1960). The opening of DZUP officially marked UP’s inclusion in a growing set of academic institutions building their own campus radio stations. It also enabled the state university to broaden its efforts of providing the student body a “sounding board” for their opinions and a platform where they could be trained in all aspects of radio station operation and broadcasting. Through this initiative, UP was also able to pursue its duty of intellectually nourishing its listeners beyond the university (see David, 1982).

Three groups within the university led the actual operation and management of DZUP: the Department of Electrical Engineering, the Dean of the College of Engineering, and the Department of Speech and Drama (DSD) (Tison, 1960). According to Leticia H. Tison (1960), the Department of Electrical Engineering took on the technical aspects, supervising the technicians that did the work. The Dean of the College of Engineering, meanwhile, answered to the Radio Control Board and dealt with the matter of radio frequency signals. Finally, the then newly established DSD of the College of Liberal Arts was in charge of content, planning radio programs before they went on air (Tison, 1960). It is particularly the DSD’s involvement in the project that I am interested to bring to the fore and explore in this essay. Here, I ask the following questions with an institutional history approach: What specific roles did such an academic department, especially its respective faculty members, play in a highly technological and media-centered project? In what ways did radio communication matter to the kind of speech study and training being taught in UP? And what might this early connection between the DSD and DZUP exemplify about the forms of knowledge and practice that were enabled by the postcolonial Philippine

university to transform Filipino students into certain kinds of speaking subjects?

Several journal articles and undergraduate theses in the UP College of Mass Communication have traced the history of DZUP: from its rise as an extension of the university classroom in the 1950s, its period of expansion and development in the 1960s, through its closure at the height of Martial Law in the 1970s, and on to its revival in the 1980s (e.g., Abad, 1992; Catalan, 1992; David, 1982; Esquivel, 1985; Hwang, 1996; Mendoza, 1993; Parto & Umali, 2000). These studies have also explored DZUP as an “educational radio station” (David, 1982); a “community radio station” (Hwang, 1996); a “non-commercial AM station” (Hwang 1996); an “experimental radio station” (Mendoza, 1993); a “source of information, education, entertainment, and public service for the UP Community” (Catalan, 1992); a “powerful tool in changing the way the students and its listeners think and perceive events taking place in the university and the country” (Hwang, 1996); and the “voice of protest in the university” (Hwang 1996). Although these studies provide helpful historical outlines of DZUP’s growth, as well as clear reports on the challenges and concerns that burdened the campus radio station over the years, their examination of DZUP’s history in terms of its academic roots is only secondary. After all, these studies are not so much historical and historiographical in orientation. What they ultimately seek to offer are insights that can prospectively help university administrators and planners; accounts that can shed light on how the station specifically informs, educates, and entertains the UP community; and marketing tools and proposals that can contribute to the fund-generation campaign for DZUP.

In this essay, I wish to contribute to this set of scholarly literature on DZUP by bringing to the fore the unaccounted relationship of the campus radio station to speech education in a postcolonial academic institution like UP. Drawing from archival materials such as newspaper reports, personal letters, photographs, write-ups, class lists, and syllabi, to name a few, gathered from libraries and special collections of UP and Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, I elaborate on the following: a) the groundbreaking initiatives of two important academics who attended to DZUP in its nascent stages; b) the relevance of radio communication, performance, and operation to the Speech and Drama program’s curriculum; and c) the implications of mining the oft-forgotten pioneering role that speech teachers in UP actively played in the emergence and evolution of a campus radio station in the middle of the 20th century. An exposition and examination of these elements will underline the importance of speech departments in priming and driving the academic conditions where specific kinds of speaking subjects,

Figure 1.

A 1961 issue of the *Sunday Times Magazine* featuring DZUP as "The Voice of the State University."



Note: The *Sunday Times Magazine*, Archives Section, National Library of Australia.

spoken practices, and speech-related knowledge come to the fore. Even more importantly, such an endeavor will further enable a re-imagination of the institutional and intellectual histories between and among existing communication-driven disciplines in the postcolonial Philippine university.

Speech teachers and the institution of DZUP

In the late 1950s, the DSD was pivotal in securing the early systems and operations, form and content, as well as programming and orientation of DZUP. To better understand the role of this department in the making and workings of this campus radio station, it would be helpful to spotlight the initiatives and interventions of two prominent female professors: Consuelo V. Fonacier and Leticia H. Tison.

Fonacier was already a towering figure in UP in the mid-twentieth century. A graduate of the MA Speech program at Northwestern University, she was educated in a wide spectrum of concerns comprising a generalist view of speech study. She was a senior faculty in the old Department of English, the wife of Dean Tomas Fonacier of the College of Liberal Arts, and a direct and close relative of high-ranking government officials like former presidents Ferdinand E. Marcos and Fidel V. Ramos. As the organizer and first chairman of the DSD, Fonacier served as the program director of DZUP from its inception until her retirement in 1965 (Bacon, 1965a). Thus, given her educational background, her professional stature, and her personal character and connections, Fonacier was able to curry favor not only for her new department but also for DZUP (Bacon, ca. 1965b).

Wallace Bacon, Fonacier's professor at Northwestern and a two-time Fulbright Visiting Professor in the DSD in the early 1960s, testified to this pioneer's vital initiatives in the formative stages of the campus radio station. In one of his letters, Bacon (ca. 1965b) wrote:

In 1959, President Vicente Sinco, a staunch supporter of speech training, inquired about the needs for a possible University radio station. That was all Mrs. Fonacier needed to get her under way! As a 'committee of one,' her phrase for it, she simply brought the studios of DZUP into being and presented the facility to President Sinco as a surprise on March 21, 1960.

Furthermore, in various news items published in the *Philippine Collegian* and in several photographic proofs (fig. 4) found in Bacon's archival collection, Fonacier has been either reported or shown to be welcoming university administrators like Sinco and showing them the radio booth of DZUP (see "From the School of Speech Northwestern University to The Discipline of

Speech and Drama University of the Philippines,” 1962). Fonacier also wrote UP officials like Sinco’s successor, Carlos P. Romulo, either to invite them to the DSD’s spectacular events such as the yearly Speech Festival or to relay to them the achievements of the station and the institution she was running (Fonacier, 1962). What all this information shows are the strategic alliances that Fonacier painstakingly created and depended on to guarantee the institutional advancement, the smooth logistical operations, and the public exposure of DZUP and the DSD.

Figure 2.

Fonacier at her office desk in the old office of the Department of Speech and Drama.



Note: Courtesy of the Wallace Bacon (1914-2001) Papers, University Archives, Northwestern University.

Aside from embedding DZUP in a university network of authority and power, Fonacier was likewise central to building the campus radio station’s very first collection of recorded materials (“DZUP Receives New Collections,” 1960). The *Philippine Collegian* in 1960 documented Fonacier’s donation of literary records from her private collection. Among the titles were readings of the poems of Robert Frost, readings from the Bible, T.S. Eliot’s “Murder in the Cathedral,” “Plate on the Death of Socrates,” “Charles Laughton: Garden of Eden, The Fiery Furnace, Noah’s Ark and David and Goliath,” and selections from Katherine Anne Porter’s works read by the author herself. The records were played during DZUP’s literary hour and children’s theatre (“DZUP Receives New Collections,” 1960). Evelyn C. David (1982), in her case study of the campus radio station, noted that Fonacier was “the moving spirit” who called on UP alumni for help during

Figure 3.

Tison in the DZUP radio booth.



Note: Courtesy of the Wallace Bacon (1914-2001) Papers, University Archives, Northwestern University.

Figure 4.

Fonacier showing the DZUP studio and equipment to President Sinco.



Note: Courtesy of the Wallace Bacon (1914-2001) Papers, University Archives, Northwestern University.

DZUP's building-up stage (p. 8). Given her vast networks, Fonacier was able to encourage alumni based both in the Philippines and abroad to respond generously and, more concretely, donate money, furniture, phonograph records, building materials, construction supplies, electrical fixtures, and gifts of all kinds (Fonacier, 1962). Fonacier also used her connections at Northwestern in the US to solicit records that could further expand DZUP's main library. Her efforts often yielded positive and productive results (David, 1982, p. 8). For example, in a letter dated July 10, 1962, Fonacier addressed her "fellow Northwesterner" to account for their donations and to thank them accordingly:

Enclosed is a list of the records which you have so generously added to the music library of DZUP. The amount of P420.00 collected from the 22 NU alumni in Manila including Dr. Wallace A. Bacon, Fulbright professor and guest of the Department of Speech and Drama from September 1, 1961 to May 24, 1962 was used for the purchase.

This passage brings to light, first, the highly Anglophone influences and inclinations that comprised the formative years of DZUP. Second, it accentuates the literary and cultural work that accompanied the task of building a radio collection in UP. Third, it testifies to the personal and professional investments of Fonacier in the campus radio station. Fourth, it makes evident the ways in which Fonacier mobilized her network of contacts abroad to galvanize her projects at home. And fifth, it attests to this academic leader's boldness to make DZUP visible and audible not only to the university but also to overseas institutions.

In a letter to UP President Carlos P. Romulo, Bacon (1965c) further affirmed Fonacier's commitment to developing the university radio station. Fonacier's extensive and intensive efforts, her unimpeachable cultural capital, as well as her vast social connections made it possible, according to Bacon, for the "university-sponsored station" to "present, on its programs, so many of the leading figures of its society." It is worth quoting Bacon at length to illuminate both the breadth of Fonacier's work and the exemplary achievement of DZUP even at its formative stages:

Leading men and women in government, in education, in business, in the arts—these have appeared constantly in the annual listings of the station, and they have been joined from time to time by significant international figures who have appeared on the campus. On both the entertainment and the educational levels, the programs have consistently remained of high caliber. A particularly important

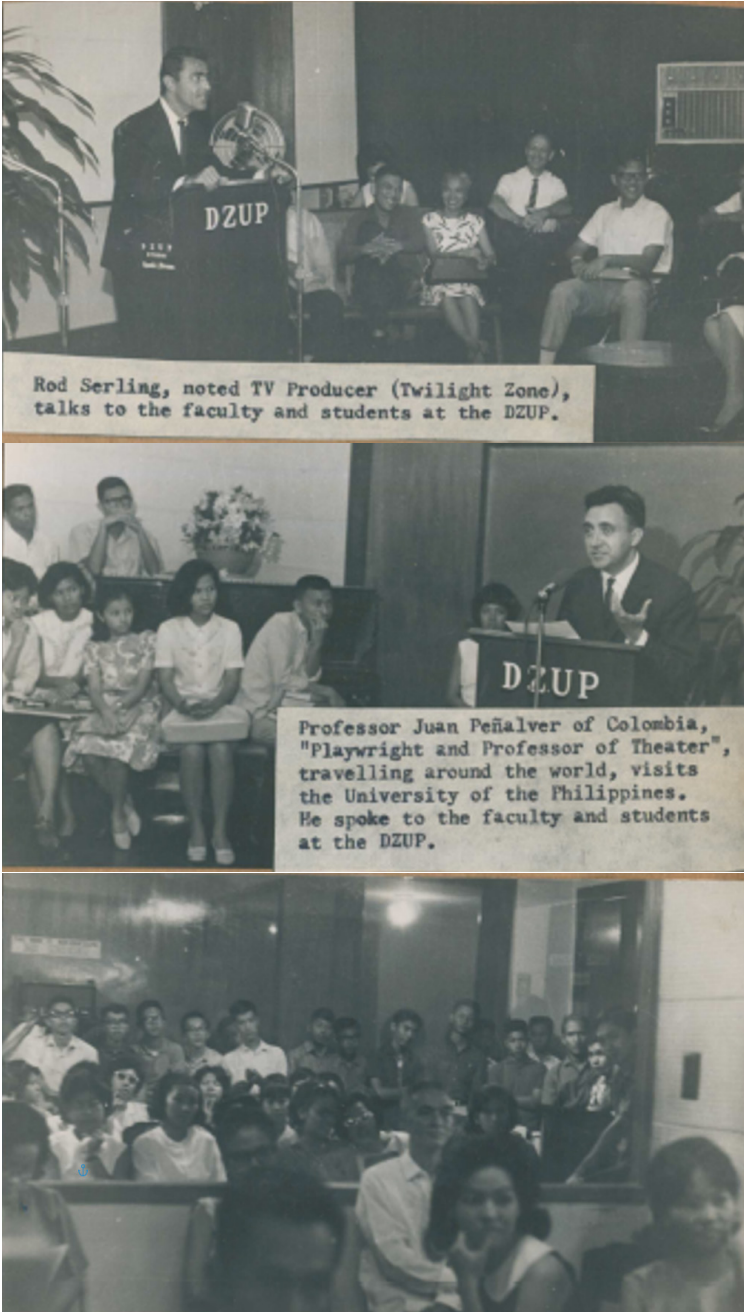
innovation this year has been the installation of receiving sets in university dormitories, and the broadcasting through such sets of foreign language lessons, along with musical and informational programs.

In Bacon's archival resources, I found a scrapbook prepared and presented as a gift by the DSD to their most eminent visiting professor. This important document is filled with priceless letters, memos, and photographs that confirm Bacon's description of DZUP as an important site of convergences in UP. For instance, figure 5 shows Rod Sterling, noted TV Producer of the show *Twilight Zone*, and professor and playwright Juan Peñalver of Colombia giving a talk to a mixed crowd of faculty and students at the DZUP studios. I find interest in these photographs and in Bacon's superlative characterization above because they put a stress on the cultural, curricular, and civic duties and functions of DZUP. They also emphasize the efforts of the DSD to ensure that the radio station was sufficiently embedded in university life and, perhaps even more significantly, that it was properly plugged into the non-academic world beyond the confines of UP. As per Bacon's (ca. 1965c) account, "leading men and women in government, in education, in business, in the arts" were incorporated into DZUP's programming. At the same time, DZUP also worked toward broadening its reach. These inward and outward movements in the campus radio station's operational work could be taken, I argue, as testaments to the ambition, efficiency, and strategy of an administrator like Fonacier.

If Fonacier was on top of DZUP's administrative concerns, Leticia Tison was in charge of training DZUP's volunteers and teaching radio courses in the DSD ("UP offers radio technique course this third term," 1959, p. 8). After obtaining her A.B. in English degree from UP in 1956, Tison immediately pursued graduate studies abroad in a one-year training program under the mentorship of Dr. Martin Maloney of the Radio, Television, and Speech Department of the School of Speech, also at Northwestern ("UP offers radio technique course this third term," 1959, p. 8). She eventually earned her Master's degree and became a founding faculty member of the DSD. Afterwards she went back to Northwestern for her PhD focusing on Radio and Television. In one of Bacon's (ca. 1965b) reports to UP President Sinco, he made the remark that "the University will have, in the person of Miss Leticia H. Tison, a teacher excellently trained and equipped to direct this part of the program of the department when she returns with her doctorate from the United States during 1965." Back in her home institution, Tison indeed became another program pioneer at DZUP. To borrow Bacon's (ca. 1965b) words, she was "largely responsible for the training and direction of the student staff of the radio station of U.P." Beyond the studio, Tison

Figure 5.

Foreign visitors speaking at DZUP.



Note: Courtesy of the Wallace Bacon (1914-2001) Papers, University Archives, Northwestern University.

also facilitated learning about radio in the classroom. She taught a three-unit course on radio technique, which “deal[t] on [sic] the application of techniques in the use of sound music and special effect as applied to types of radio programs” (“UP offers radio technique course this third term,” 1959, p. 8). The course was available to students who had finished classes in Speech and English. Tison handled the course from the 1960s and throughout her time in UP. One of Tison’s former students, the theatre director Behn Cervantes, who eventually became Tison’s colleague in the DSD, affectively recounted his teacher’s love for radio communication. In his column for the *BusinessWorld*, Cervantes (2001) wrote:

You gave me a great love and respect for radio communication, its many intricacies, technical possibilities as well as excitement. I think you passed it on to all your students because you so enjoyed the medium yourself. The thrill of the grand scope of radio communication you infected us with so that to this day I listen to radio in awe, wonder and great appreciation. (par. 3)

Some pictures I examined show that Tison enjoyed the medium of radio and took the task of teaching radio communication to countless students with seriousness and passion. Figure 3, a photograph from the Bacon archives, shows a young Tison seated on a chair, resting her hands on a table, wearing her headphones, and surrounded by radio consoles inside the new DZUP studio installed on the first floor of the Liberal Arts Building, now known as Palma Hall, in UP. At present, this studio is called the Leticia H. Tison room in her honor.

Further demonstrating Tison’s reach as a radio teacher is another document from Tison’s (ca. 1983-1984) own archival materials deposited in the UP Main Library containing the class list and the series titles produced for her Speech 160: Basic Radio Techniques class in the 1st Semester of 1983-1984. This rare material shows the names of Tison’s former students, such as Irma S. Adlawan, Ma. Shamaine E. Centenera, Dennis N. Marasigan, and Roderick M. Paulate, who all would eventually make a mark as prize-winning stars in Philippine theatre, TV, and cinema. Furthermore, this material exemplifies the kinds of radio series, shows, and scripts that these students had to put together in a radio class in UP. Even more importantly, together with Bacon’s remarks and Cervantes’s affectations, what this resource suggests is that, despite the logistical and budgetary constraints that DZUP continuously faced from its establishment (see David, 1982), there was a stable and systematic academic training in the areas of radio

communication taking place under the auspices of the DSD and via the careful guidance of speech teachers like Tison.

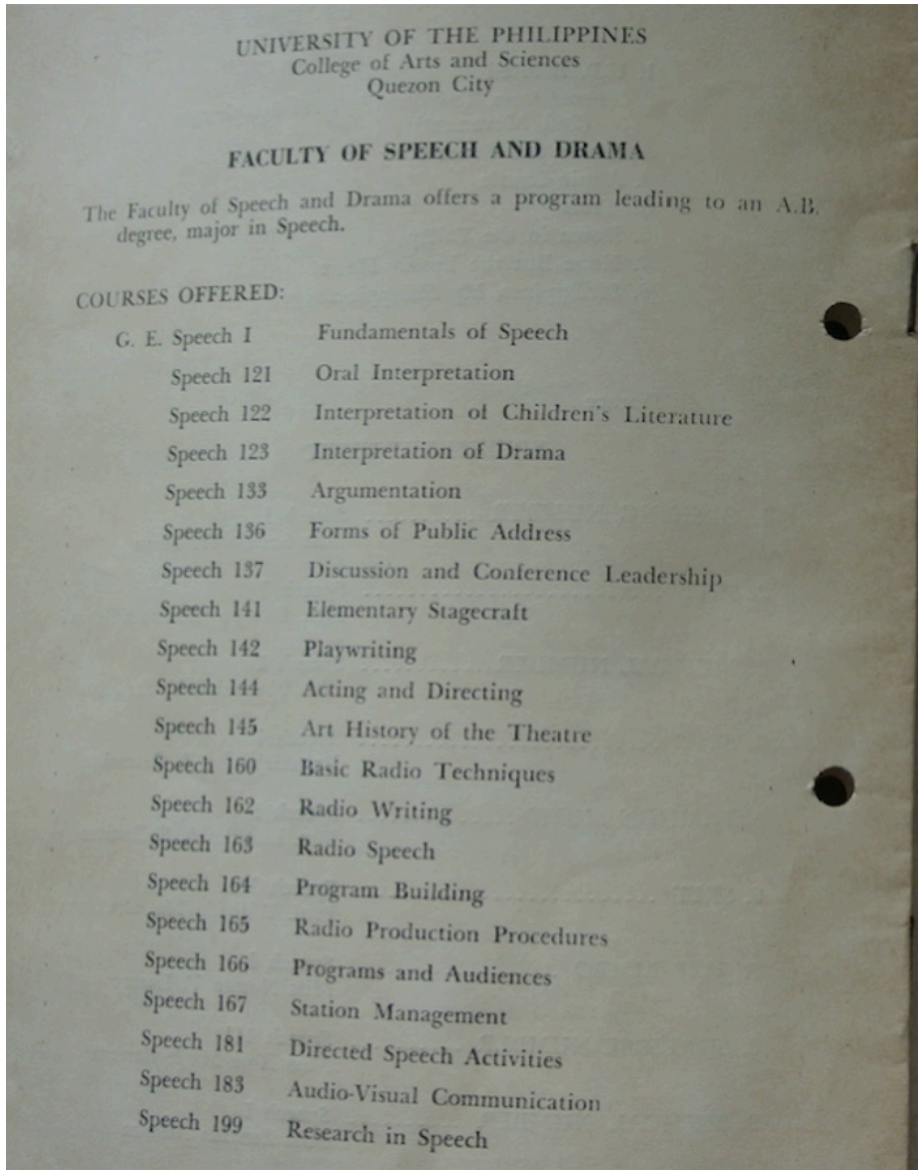
Radio education and practice in the speech curriculum

Formerly a part of the Department of English and Comparative Literature, the DSD became a separate department in 1959 (“Department of English Split Into 3 Separate Divisions,” 1959). Such a move enabled speech and drama professors to establish an autonomous department whose principal interest was the formal study, instruction, research, and performance of oral communication as an academic field. As these professors said: “The present Department of English has become very unwieldy. It is necessary that more concentration be given to teaching of the English language and literature; and in order that this can be effectively done the department that should take charge of it should not be burdened with other courses that may dissipate its attention” (“Minutes of the 661st meeting,” 1959, p. 24). Additionally, they stated that “[o]ur students need much training in Speech. They need both regular and remedial courses in this subject...It is absolutely necessary that Speech and Drama be created under a separate department so that courses under this could be better attended” (“Minutes of the 661st meeting,” 1959, p. 24).

In structuring the DSD and its academic curriculum, Fonacier drew heavily from her training in the School of Speech at Northwestern. In fact, she tried to replicate in UP what is now more commonly known as the “Midwestern” or “Illinois” model of a speech study program. “The Midwestern-style department,” according to communication historian and scholar William Keith (2009), “would typically have four areas: 1) public speaking and debate, 2) theater and performance, 3) speech disorders, and 4) (with the advent of radio) some type of mass media” (p. 25). Following this model allowed the faculty members of the DSD to institute courses in oral interpretation, public address, group discussion, drama, radio, directed speech activities, and research. Speech I, a course on the fundamentals of speech, became required of all university students (Benitez, 1961). Over the years, as figure 6 indicates, the undergraduate curriculum expanded to include a course in audio-visual communication and additional courses in theatre. In 1977, largely in accordance with institutional and disciplinary trends in US academia and as a response to the shifting concerns and broadening expertise of its faculty members, the DSD changed its name to the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts (DSCTA) (“Renaming of the Department of Speech and Drama to Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts,” 1977). Even with this titular transformation, however, the influence and impact of the Midwestern

Figure 6.

A page showing the available speech and drama courses in the official program of the annual Speech Festival held by the DSD.



Note: Courtesy of the Patricio Lazaro Papers, University Archives Division, Main Library, University of the Philippines.

model of speech communication have continuously bore on the curricular structure and pedagogical processes underpinning the DSCTA up to the present.

Guided by this model, it was unsurprising to see the DSD taking the lead in developing, housing, and offering courses in all aspects of radio station operation and broadcasting. In the early 1960s, the DSD was already boasting of a series of subjects such as the following:

- Speech 160: Basic Radio Techniques
- Speech 162: Radio Writing
- Speech 163: Radio Speech
- Speech 164: Program Building
- Speech 165: Radio Production Procedures
- Speech 166: Programs and Audiences
- Speech 167: Station Management

Speech 160 was interested in the “application of the techniques in the use of sound, music, and special effect as applied to types of radio programs” (“UP offers radio technique course this third term,” 1959). Speech 163 touched on the “fundamentals of microphone technique”; trained students in “speaking, acting, and announcing for the broadcast media”; offered “basic training in planning and writing of radio and television talks”; and used “voice recording” to teach “critical analysis” (University of the Philippines Diliman General Catalogue, 2014, p. 150). And Speech 165 allowed students to participate in broadcasting activities such as the “production and direction of radio programs, with emphasis on the drama and documentary types” (University of the Philippines Diliman General Catalogue, 2014, p. 150).

Indeed, this array of courses serves as a testament to the role of the DSD in situating and advancing radio education not only in UP but also in the country. That there was a total of seven newly formulated courses on the topic in the overall curricular offerings of the DSD affirms the import of radio to Philippine speech education and the dedication of speech teachers to enhance the practical knowhow of speech and drama majors in radio operations and productions. But more noticeably, considering the apparently pragmatic and procedural concerns of its radio-related courses—how to write radio scripts, how to modulate one’s voice for broadcasting purposes, how to assemble shows and programs, how to mount a production, and how to manage a station—the DSD did not shy away from industry-based interests and inquiries, and that it did not see any contradiction nor division between theory and practice. As an academic department placed within a college known significantly for its humanistic tradition, one that for the longest time separated its knowledge systems and scholarly endeavors from

market-driven movements and investments, the DSD was one of the early few that affirmed the tight relationship, rather than the binary, between theory and practice, epistemology and methodology, and, not least, university education and industry experience or exposure.

However, this lineup of speech courses in UP's Speech and Drama Department was not a novel arrangement in mid-20th-century academia. In the 1930s, various scholars in America had already taken note of the link between radio communication and speech departments. For instance, in his 1933 essay "The Radio Influences Speech," L. B. Tyson argued that speech departments could supply radio stations with announcers who should have "a clear, distinct speech, a voice pleasing to the ear and with as much vocal personality as possible" (p. 220). Moreover, speech departments could hasten their lessons in voice and diction by deploying radio programs on dramatic presentations, literary readings, and speech and drama workshops. For Tyson, "listeners can become acquainted with the niceties of speech, with the correct pronunciation of proper names, with the value of voice inflection, good enunciation, and forceful word-usage. They learn certain words and phrases that adequately describe certain situations" (p. 223). Meanwhile, in his 1947 essay "Training for Radio," Hale Aarnes posed the question: "Well, what meanings, what added meanings, does radio give to speech?" (p. 20). Aarnes was of the mind that effective communication was the basis of good radio. Hence, students who wanted to participate in the expanding industry or market of radio needed to develop their knowledge of and attitude toward the human voice. They would have to cultivate "a highly sensitive ear" that may enable them not only to attune themselves with the "personal, intimate speech of radio" but also to provide "adequate response to the variability of language" (p. 20). Furthermore, in a speech program, students should be able to learn "that radio calls for maturity of voice"; that "the radio program must have 'something to say'"; and that cultivating "'showmanship' of an idea" and a "psychology of a local, regional, or national audience" (p. 20) is needed in the radio industry. "If we can efficiently train the listeners and the personnel of tomorrow's radio to use the medium more realistically," Aarnes further asserted, "then we will have taken the one effective step which is open to us along the road to improvement" (p. 20).

This apparent belatedness of speech education in UP raises some questions about the particularities of the development of the field in the country's premier institution of higher learning. For example, it is worth asking about the significance of seeing radio courses being taught by the Speech and Drama Department. It is also interesting to probe why speech teachers were at the forefront of radio programming, broadcasting, and, most especially, education in UP. And finally, it might also be crucial to

find out how speech and drama students harnessed their knowledge in their main object of disciplinary inquiries through the various aspects and operations of radio. Apart from exploring the historical particularities of a tradition of thought and practice in the University of the Philippines, these questions likewise aim to bring to the fore the conceptual rationales behind the relationship between the Speech and Drama Department and DZUP.

In the absence of a department, college, institute, or school focused on the teaching of mass communication in UP in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, the DSD became, by default, the institution responsible for the programming of DZUP. The radio booth became crucial to the life of UP students, but even more especially to speech and drama majors. This space allowed them to go beyond the predominantly textual orientation of their humanistic education. It gave them an outlet to express the spoken word and perform other communicative acts and even production work as they took on roles such as radio technician, radio announcer or broadcaster, radio show producer, and radio station manager, to name only a few. Instead of focusing exclusively on tasks such as reading books, writing literary pieces, publishing academic essays or scholarly articles, students were also preoccupied with putting together and directing a show, learning to project their voices to a technological medium, running a station, and transmitting or broadcasting their productions. What this signaled, I argue, was not a mere bifurcation between the written and the spoken, the printed and the embodied but, rather, an expansion and diversification of the various knowledge and abilities a speech and drama student could explore, enrich, and enact.

Through DZUP, speech and drama students could encounter and experience speech as an aesthetic form, particularly via programs such as the *Literary Hour* and the *Speech and Drama Workshop*. The former was a one-hour show that “released recordings of world-famous artists reading dramatic plays or poetry” and, whenever possible, encouraged Filipino poets to read their own works. In contrast, the latter featured “readings of plays, poetry as well as choric recitations and live dramatization of radio plays, not by world-famous artists but by major students of the department of speech and drama” (“DZUP Inaugurates Weekly Features,” 1959, pp. 1-7). Despite their differences, these shows jointly underscored the fact that radio performance was a chief source of cultural entertainment and uplift at the university. As these shows focused on releasing recorded audio materials or spotlighting recited passages and on-the-spot radio drama, they further stressed how radio could serve as a channel through which students could be exposed to diverse literary works and sound systems. Additionally, the two programs allowed students to incorporate theatrical and cultural practices

to speech. For instance, on the occasion of the imminent retirement of Fonacier from the University in 1965, Fonacier's former students, who were mostly speech and drama majors while others were already absorbed as staff members of the department, presented in the *Literary Hour* poetic and dramatic pieces from American authors such as Robert Frost and Tennessee Williams. As shown in photos included in scrapbooks prepared by the DSD and sent to Bacon, students conducted such an activity inside DZUP studios where they stood behind a podium, talked to a microphone, and performed before a spectating and listening crowd (Bacon, ca. 1965d). Similarly, as seen in more pictorial evidence, faculty members of the DSD also participated in such a program, delivering talks on topics such as "The Conflict Between Patriotism and Maternal Love in Alice Duer-Miller's *The White Cliffs*" (Bacon, ca. 1965d).

But the campus radio station not only enabled the faculty and students of the DSD to perform literary pieces and radio plays. It also provided them with a platform where their contextualized discussions on speech pedagogy, on the present and future of the discipline, and on the trends and problems in speech research and scholarship in the Philippines could reach audiences beyond the department, the college, and the university. As part of the DSD's third annual Speech Festival in 1960, a round-table discussion on "The Teaching of Speech: An Evaluation" by speech professors from various universities in Manila took place. The *Philippine Collegian* reported that Prof. Alejandro J. Casambre (UP), Lourdes Abad-Santos Benitez (UP), Dean Amalia Montecillo (PWU), Prof. Theresa Boucher (UE), Prof. Josephine Reyes (FEU), and Prof. Josefina T. Oro (PNC) led the discussion ("Lay plans for 3rd annual speech festival," 1960, p. 2). This was, according to the campus newspaper, broadcast over DZUP. In instances such as this, the campus radio station properly served its stated purpose of bridging the school to society, the discipline to the people.

The radio booth was a pit stop for various visitors to the university. Thus, it could be considered a site of confluence and interface that made it possible for students to meet and learn from different professional figures and political personalities. As figure 7 lays bare, speech and drama students obtained the chance to be in a conversation with then Senator Ferdinand Marcos inside DZUP's radio room in 1962. Captioned "A U.P. Alumnus Speaks," the photo shows Marcos speaking to a microphone, and in front of students who were sharing the same space as him. In the background, one can see some women and men, perhaps operators of DZUP, on one side of the booth, and Prof. Tison in her cubicle at the right side of the photograph. Another pictorial evidence, showing the bulletin board of DZUP, confirms that Marcos's talk was part of the educational program for the day, and that

it was scheduled from 7:00-7:15 PM, right after a program called *Tugtuging Sariling Atin* and just before another program titled *Dinner Music* (“From the School of Speech Northwestern University to The Discipline of Speech and Drama University of the Philippines,” 1962).

Figure 7.

Former Senator and would-be Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos speaking at DZUP.



Note: Courtesy of the Wallace Bacon (1914-2001) Papers, University Archives, Northwestern University.

Marcos was, indeed, quite a visitor. But he was, for sure, only one of the many esteemed guests who graced DZUP. In one of his letters, Bacon (ca. 1965b) wrote about the campus radio station’s “truly amazing program” and remarked upon UP’s alumni, who “are found throughout the nation in key positions,” “appear[ing] willingly on the programs of the station.” The American Professor further stated that: “I doubt that there is another station in the world run by a college or university which offers speakers of such national distinction as a regular feature of its programming” (ca. 1965b). Taken together, the image of Marcos at DZUP and Bacon’s remarks are essential in that they cast the campus radio station as a happening place if not an exciting venue that drew in the best and the brightest of Philippine

society. They suggest that DZUP hosted many public occasions that linked UP's speech and drama program to the larger socio-political world. It encouraged students to go beyond their regular academic curiosities and engage in contemporary discussions about culture, politics, community, and nationhood.

Amid UP's plans in the early 1960s of instituting a separate program in Mass Communication, the DSD through its staunchest defenders such as Fonacier and Bacon had to justify why radio as an academic subject and as a professional practice must remain within the domain of the speech and drama program. Bacon (ca. 1965c), in particular, argued that "[i]t is perfectly true that radio and television are basic in mass communications, but it is also true that training in radio and television production, writing, directing, acting, and announcing is vital to any self-respecting program in speech." This explanation was a defense to keep intact the integrity of the disciplinary formation and curricular structure of Speech by securing its linkages to "any of its forms (whether original or interpretative)." "Speech training," Bacon (ca. 1965c) further argued, "involves training in kinesics, in linguistics, in the aesthetics of performance, in the literature of texts to be performed, in the procedures of production—and on the scientific side it involves training (medically and clinically) in the anatomical and physiological and psychological conditions of speech." Hence, this meant that a "truly effective program in speech must provide both for general courses in the discipline, and for areas of concentration for majors in such fields as speech education, public address and group processes, speech disorders, radio-television-film, and the performing arts of theater and interpretation" (Bacon, ca. 1965c).

In keeping with measures across the world to institutionalize mass communication as an academic field, the bill that would establish the UP Institute of Mass Communication (UP IMC) was approved by Philippine Congress in May 1965 and signed into law on June 19, 1965 by then President Diosdado Macapagal. On August 23, 1966, the UP Board of Regents passed a resolution to formally inaugurate the UP IMC as a non-academic unit providing Journalism courses leading to the AB Journalism degree (University of the Philippines Diliman General Catalogue, 2014, p. 361). In her letter to Bacon, Fonacier (1967) signified her anxiety not only over these institutional formations in the university but also over the prospects of transferring DZUP to the IMC. This pioneer was certainly protective of the campus radio station and the courses in radio within her own department's curriculum, both of which she had a heavy hand in painstakingly and persistently building from the ground up. Fonacier's (1967) worry, as cited below from one of her personal letters, brings to light

not only her insistence to retain both radio subjects and DZUP's operations within the scope of speech study, but also her proposed division of academic labor between communication-related institutions within UP.

About DZUP and the Institute of Mass Communication. I went to see Miss Panlilio two weeks ago to inquire if there is any truth in the rumors that DZUP will be taken by the Institute of Mass Communication. She said strongly, 'No!' The Institute will have its own building and equipment, but before this, they have to share with DZUP for their instruction purposes. In fact, when I went to report to Pres. Romulo when I came home after my award in 1966, I asked him about this and he said also, 'No! I know that DZUP is your baby.' So, as of today, DZUP is ours. (n.p.)

Considering how DZUP was referred to as Fonacier's "baby" and described as her department's property, the cited entry is a manifestation of academic gatekeeping. Furthermore, in line with her pressing need to confirm "rumors" about the latest structural adjustments in the university that could encroach upon her department's pedagogical and administrative mandates, it is tempting to reduce Fonacier to an old guard who was, at this juncture, on the verge of losing her influence and authority.

Aside from illustrating how territorial claims and disputes in the university looked like, I take stock of the cited quote as a manifestation of Fonacier's steadfast faith in the DSD as a central driver of radio education in UP. After all, while the abovementioned entry shows that Fonacier had agreed, no matter how obliquely, to yield DZUP to IMC because of this new institution's "building and equipment," it simultaneously shows that she could not easily forego the radio courses that the DSD developed, put in place, and had been offering for more than half a decade at that time. Thus, in Fonacier's mind, the IMC may have the programming but the DSD had the curriculum for radio education. And by extension, IMC faculty may have the technological and infrastructural breakthroughs but Speech teachers would have the instructional experience of being at the forefront of engendering and disseminating radio-related pedagogies and performances.

The relationship between speech and radio

As I have so far sketched out in this essay, the DSD's period of development and growth generated an array of textual documents, cultural activities, epistemic elaborations, curricular offerings, professional formations, and social collaborations, to name a few. Altogether, these have illustrated the entangled institutional histories between the DSD and its campus radio station. My contention is that in studying this oft-neglected juncture and

its equally unmarked elements and outputs, a better imagination of the circuits of communicative knowledge and practice, especially in the mid-20th century, may begin to emerge. Even more specifically, it foregrounds how since the late 1950s speech departments have been propagating and maintaining what I have termed in another essay as “an eloquent modernity,” which is a condition of being and becoming tightly linked to, if not preoccupied with, expressivity, communicativeness, fluency, and proficiency that generate social, political, economic, and aesthetic currency in the postcolonial Philippines (Serquiña, 2021).

In tracing the early connections between the DSD and DZUP, we can more fully comprehend the training that Filipino students had to go through in the latter half of the 20th century, especially in a university setting, to become a kind of speaking subject. What we see in the account I have provided above is that the DSD trained its students not only to become learned individuals who spoke well, performed properly, and knew the fundamentals of speech and its allied areas. These same students were also trained to be professionals with the practical knowhow and skillset for broadcast industries like radio. It also bears mentioning that these students learned speech study and practice in interconnected physical structures of training, including black box and proscenium theaters where speech festivals and theatrical productions normally took place; classrooms with elevated platforms and tiered seating arrangements where students rehearsed, presented, and listened to public speeches and oral interpretations; speech laboratories where classes in voice and diction were conducted; and, not least, radio booths where training for radio announcing, management, and broadcasting occurred. Accompanying these interconnected physical structures were diverse devices, such as consoles and microphones, spotlights and speakers, as well as tapes and lecterns, which both instilled in students speech pedagogy and enabled them to embody this speech pedagogy with and for others.

I am citing this overall physical infrastructure not only because it concretizes the spaces where students of speech performed but also because it is one basis that sets the speech classroom apart from a literature or language classroom. Such physical infrastructure also drives home the point that the notion and practice of speech in the modern Philippine university is vast and varied. That is, it is connected to rhetoric (i.e., public speaking), literary and language studies (i.e., oral interpretation), and media and communication (i.e., radio). This physical infrastructure further emphasizes that speech departments decenter textual authority and classroom hegemony in that they compel students to inhabit other pedagogical spaces, keep themselves abreast of other modes of learning

besides the book, and activate a holistically sensorial form of education which does not privilege sight or reading, literacy or writing, as the key marker of learnedness. Furthermore, this physical infrastructure suggests that speakers are not only concerned with the act of speaking as purely the oral conveyance of a message, but they must also preoccupy themselves with issues of context or environment, matters about channel or medium, and a range of assorted techniques and strategies. As far as the theater, the classroom, the speech clinic or laboratory, and the radio booth are concerned, speech is not just about the live, unmediated projection of the voice or even the oral expression of an idea. Instead, it is also about how it gets trained, refined, channeled, amplified, and circulated.

Additionally, foregrounding the contiguity of these locations is crucial precisely because it harkens back to a time in the history of communication-related institutions when roles such as “public speaker,” “communicator,” “stage actor,” “radio programmer,” “radio announcer,” and “radio programmer,” to name a few, could coexist in one person. This interconnectedness also suggests that the Philippine university was teaching, training, and transforming its students in speech and drama to become postcolonial speaking subjects who possessed different oral competencies, who could address the academic standards and industry-based demands of communication, and who could act as all-around and well-rounded figures of speech.

To follow the line that links DZUP to the DSD is to track down the oft-forgotten intersections among the genealogies of the multidimensional discipline of communication in the Philippines. Extant publications on the historical rise and development of communication as a disciplinary formation in the country often give emphasis to standalone fields of expertise, such as “Mass Communication,” “Development Communication,” “Communication Arts,” and “Speech Communication” (see Braid & Tuazon, 1999; Calingacion & Miclat, 2019; Jose, 2001; Maslog, 1990). What these publications throw into light is that prevailing historiographical concerns and outputs are more tilted toward maintaining the segregation rather than locating the intersections of the systems of communicative knowledge and practice in the country. And so, in this essay, I have tried to bring to the fore the relationship between a speech and drama department and a campus radio station largely with the view of showing that there are lines of cross-disciplinary affiliation—or what performance studies scholar Shannon Jackson (2009) calls “the largely unarchived networks of practices and ‘thinking together’” (p. 15)—that exist between and among the various iterations of communication study in the Philippines.

While Fonacier's letters are riddled with anxieties over interdepartmental raiding of courses in the midst of what might be called a war of positions and resources in UP, what I have attempted to give strong emphasis here are the ways in which Fonacier's determination to establish an academic department and supervise a radio station had rendered possible the coexistence, no matter how briefly, of what is now frequently referred to as the different "strands" of communication programs in UP Diliman. Indeed, a consideration of Fonacier's efforts can shed a new light on the phrase I have used in this essay's title: "Voices on the Air." This phrase often serves as a marker of the success of technology to mediate and then transmit any verbal and vocal stimuli across space and time. What is usually forgotten in our appreciation of this idiom, however, is the very human being whose voice has been trained, cultivated, and finally transmitted via technological means. I am paying attention to this almost trite expression, therefore, as a way of foregrounding the intricate and intertwined association between human and machine, between speech and technological media, between the personal and the public, between the singular speaking subject and the mass audience. Even more crucially, I take "voices on the air" as a reminder that there are institutional genealogies that need to be mapped in order to see the links, rather than the divisions, among terms such as "speech," "human," "mass," and "media" in the rather complex discipline of Communication. Indeed, what these points make clear is that instead of upholding any academic apartheid, what we need to come to terms with and navigate is the ecology that constitutes and is, in turn, constituted by communicative knowledge and practice in the postcolonial Philippine university.

Finally, in reliving how speech teachers not only served as the once administrators, programmers, directors, and announcers of campus radio stations, but also the early developers of radio communication education, we sense a daring agency among academics to plan, inaugurate, control, and shape certain infrastructures and institutions, and to claim roles and responsibilities, explore uncharted territories, and argue their positions, especially at a time when even the postcolonial Philippine university had yet to be fully formed. Fonacier, in this regard, was an exemplary personality in that she maximized her expertise in speech, her network in Philippine and American academies, her administrative hold over a department and its faculty and students, and her social station in life to help build DZUP's programming and develop its shows and systems in conversation with curricular and pedagogical concerns, cultural activities, and civic practices.

As the many letters between her and Bacon would testify, and as Bacon's accounts of her would show, Fonacier's agency and legacy lay in her relentless interventions to bring the campus radio closer to students

and faculty members, on the one hand, and to absorb public culture and society into the campus radio, on the other hand. For the first point, it is crucial to underline the fact that apart from setting the program of DZUP in the late 1950s and early 1960s, she also vigorously solicited musical records from myriad individuals and institutions; directly wrote to university officials so that they could take notice and even fund this technological breakthrough; as well as generously gave recommendations to and doggedly scouted scholarships for colleagues and students so they could pursue their education in television and radio, in oral interpretation, or in general speech. It is equally important to remember that Fonacier was, after all, on top of efforts to constantly invite university presidents, Philippine senators, scholars, and teachers from other academic institutions, and industry leaders to visit DZUP. Hence, Fonacier was notable for showing that along with her capacity to generate social networks and tend to institutions came her desire to construct curricular discourse and instigate extra-curricular practice.

The general histories written about university radio stations in particular and about Philippine broadcasting in general often feature broadcasters, announcers, programmers, operators, owners, patrons, and voice talents. What surely needs to be added to these chronicles, however, are the roles, positions, and commitments of educators who had the authority to direct and determine the shape and substance of radio education at a time when such an academic or curricular interest was still nascent or totally nonexistent in the postcolonial Philippine university. While this essay has been mostly interested in speech educators in UP who served as radio administrators and programmers in the mid-20th century, it is definitely worth stating that there were similar figures in other Philippine universities. Think of Sarah K. Joaquin who supervised the radio station of the Far Eastern University in the early 1950s (“College education via the airwaves,” 1952, p. 12). Or think of the American Abby R. Jacobs who, in the post-World War II Philippines, came back from the US to continue her service as a faculty member at the English Department of Silliman University and, eventually, to become the director for programming of the campus radio DYSR (Simpkins, 2014). “Her knowledge in radio programming and creative writing,” according to Ligaya Magbanua Simpkins (2014), “led to new course offerings in the English department in script writing, radio announcing, and studio procedure” (p. 62).

DZUP was officially transferred to the Institute of Mass Communication or IMC in 1987 to cater to mass communication students (Feliciano, 2017). Even so, the Speech Communication and Theatre Arts Department continued to teach its old set of radio-related subjects in its curriculum

up until it overhauled its BA Speech Communication program in 2018. After a long time of following a generalist approach to the teaching of speech communication, the DSCTA finally decided to go for a specialized understanding of its object of intellectual interest. This watershed moment signals that the DSCTA is a) veering away from the broad sympathies of its early model of speech study; b) determining which specific academic concerns would make it or not to its new curricular configurations; and c) redefining what a speech faculty and student must become. The faculty instituted areas of concentration—rhetoric, performance, interpersonal communication, and instructional communication—as a way of consolidating their academic strengths and asserting their institutional identity. This relay of revisions and transformations has impinged upon not only the status of the few remaining radio courses in the department’s course offerings but also, and even more significantly, the self-understanding of the DSCTA as an institution historically invested in teaching and training students in the basics of radio communication.

It seems that the strategic distancing of the DSCTA from radio study is in motion and will only continue. Moreover, its curricular investments in rhetorical and relational communication are properly placed and potentially expected to yield more specialized pedagogical and scholarly practices. This seems to compromise the hard stances that the pioneers (such as Fonacier) and allies (such as Bacon) of the DSCTA took and defended in the early 1960s. It may, indeed, look like a turn away from tradition and a surrender of longtime causes. It can also be regarded as an acknowledgment of the dedicated work of UP’s College of Mass Communication in administering DZUP and in providing the most comprehensive set of specialized courses on what are now generally referred to as the broadcasting arts under the mantle of the Broadcast Communication Department. But just as Fonacier had to confront the transformations taking place in both the curricular programs and structural design of UP in the 1960s, current speech communication faculty members are similarly pressed to face the dynamically changing disciplinary demands and trends in the study of communication. There is no other option but to take these necessary steps forward. And while these inevitable and unstoppable reforms in the curriculum carry on as planned, the task of documenting the pioneering role of the DSCTA not only in establishing a campus radio but also in jumpstarting radio education in UP, no matter how briefly, should be, without a doubt, all the more urgent and necessary.

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