

LABORATORY ADMINISTRATION, PART I: STAFFING

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All over the Philippines there are schools with laboratories, some better equipped than others. Invariably, there arises the question of how best to manage them. The Administrator of the Laboratory Equipment and Supplies Division of a large university shares her knowledge and experience in this article. This is the first part of a series.

The University of Santo Tomas sits on a 21-hectare campus in the heart of Manila. It is composed of 15 colleges and faculties with a teaching staff of about 1,500. Non-academic personnel number over 600. The student population is 40,000. Facilities include 215 classrooms, 85 laboratories, 11 libraries, 19 auditoria and conference rooms, a seminary, chapel, museum, archives, bank, post office, gymnasium, open-air sports complex, and parking grounds. The university also owns a 788-bed teaching hospital.*

With a complex this large, tight control over specific areas of operation is necessary to ensure efficient administration. The 85 laboratories are distributed over the Faculties/Colleges of Medicine and Surgery, Nursing, Engineering, Education, Pharmacy, Science, Graduate School, UST Central Seminary, UST High School, and Education High School. The needs, management, and personnel of these laboratories are the responsibility of the Laboratory Equipment and Supplies Division of the university. Hospital laboratories and personnel are managed by a different group.

The Division keeps and updates the inventory of all laboratory equipment, instruments, chemicals, and other supplies; supervises the laboratory operations and personnel in coordination with the college deans or department heads; controls all requisitions for laboratory instruments, equipment, and supplies for the different departments/colleges including the Student Health Service; coordinates with the Purchasing Office for all foreign and local purchases of laboratory supplies; certifies for the university to all government agencies on matters related to the use of laboratory instruments, equipment, chemicals, and prohibited or regulated drugs; coordinates with the Accounting, Budget, Personnel, and Treasurer's offices on matters related to said offices for proper check and balance; renders maintenance services for the Physical Education swimming

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* Statistics on UST have been supplied by Belen L. Tangco of the UST Public Affairs Office.

pool and university building and grounds for pest control and eradication.

The Division's operating budget covers one school year (June to May). This budget pertains to the expenses incurred by the Division office only, such as salaries, maintenance, and documentation. It does not include the budget for the purchase of equipment, instruments, chemicals, and other supplies used in the laboratories of

the different colleges and departments.

Laboratory supplies that are kept in the Division's stockrooms are booked under the General Budget and are considered "university assets on stock." Supplies transferred to a department upon request are charged against that department's budget.

The Division has a staff of 16, beginning with the administrator (see organizational chart Fig. 1). Labora-

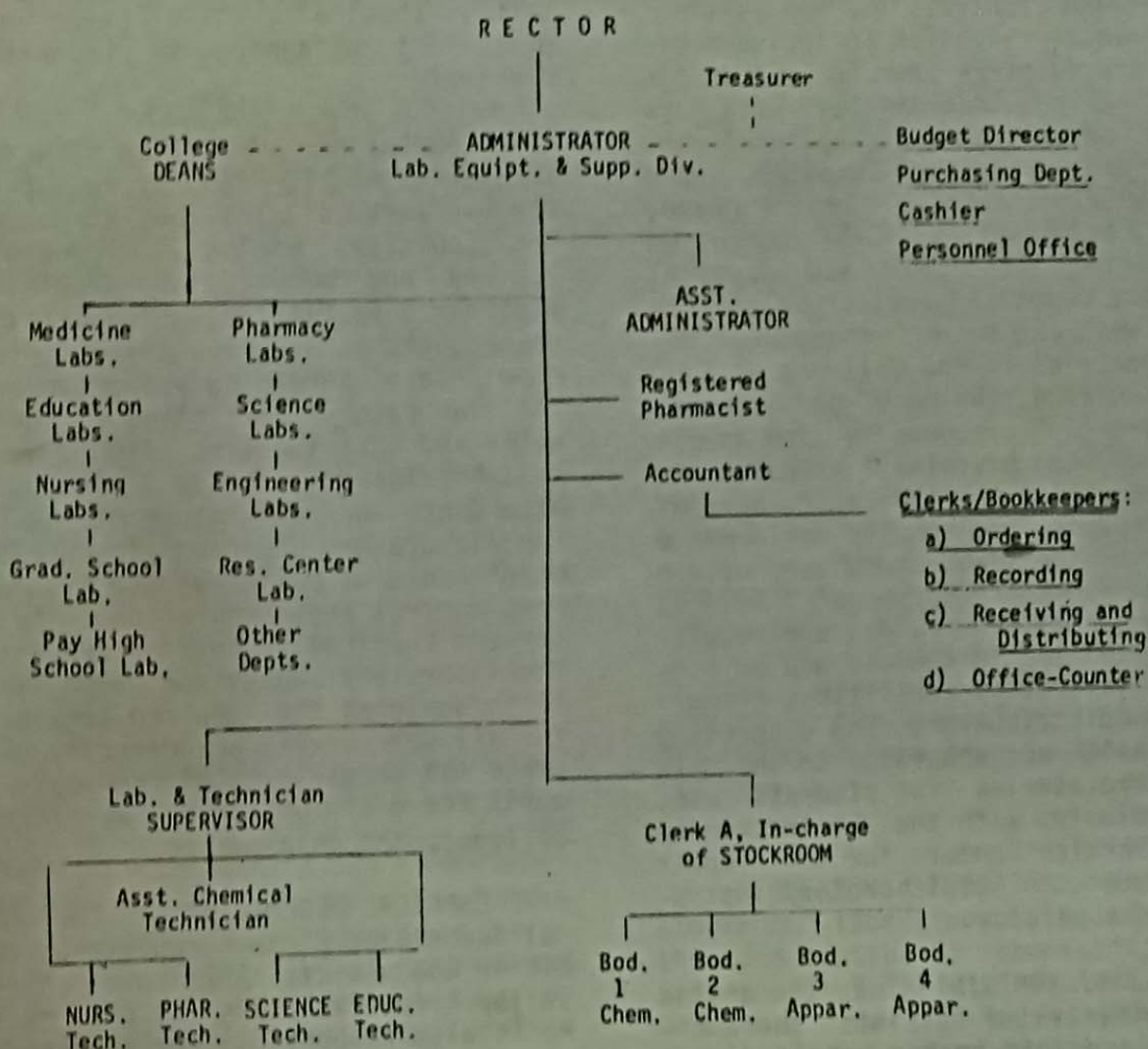


Fig. 1. Organizational chart of the Laboratory Equipment & Supplies Division.

tory personnel, while supervised by the Division, are actually budgeted under the department to which they are assigned; hence, they are not considered Division personnel. The Division staff consists of: one administrator, one assistant administrator, one registered pharmacist, one cost accountant, one laboratory supervisor, one chemical technician B, one clerk A, five office clerks, and four storeroom aides.

ADMINISTRATOR. The administrator has authority and control and the umbrella supervision over the laboratories throughout the university. The administrator approves, rejects, substitutes, and controls the requisitions for laboratory supplies, including medicines and supplies for the Student's Health Service; coordinates with Purchasing on all foreign and local purchases of laboratory supplies, and gives the final approval on the brand, quality and quantity to be purchased after proper chemical and physical tests are made; supervises in coordination with the deans, the operations of laboratories in the Colleges of Education, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Science; interviews and recommends job applicants for the Division; prepares the work schedule of the laboratory personnel; prepares and submits performance reports of the laboratory and office personnel to the Personnel Office; prepares guidelines, rules, and regulations pertaining to the use and maintenance of laboratory facilities, requisitions, distributions and dispensing of chemicals and apparatus to the different laboratories for students use; and coordinates with the UST Instrumentation Service Center for the repair and maintenance of laboratory instruments and apparatus.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR. The assistant administrator assists the administrator and acts on her behalf during her absence.

REGISTERED PHARMACIST. The registered pharmacist controls and certifies for all prohibited and regulated drugs/

chemicals ordered and dispensed for laboratory use, as required by the Food and Drug Administration.

COST ACCOUNTANT. The cost accountant maintains the Records Section of the Division; keeps books and records of all equipment, apparatus, chemicals and other supplies received or issued (including those already on stock at the Division, college laboratories, department, etc.) and breakages or replacement of the same; prepares i) reports on items received which may have been purchased, repaired or serviced; ii) cost computation reports of all local/indent orders of equipment, apparatus, chemicals, etc.; iii) annual price list of apparatus (ironware and glassware).

LABORATORY SUPERVISOR (CHEMICAL TECHNICIAN A). The laboratory supervisor oversees all the chemistry, pharmacy, physics, biology, microbiology, zoology, and computer laboratories with regards to facilities, cleanliness and upkeep, and personnel; inspects/recommends/requests necessary improvement of the laboratory facilities, such as water and gas supplies, light, working tables, lockers; keeps records of attendance and performance of the storeroom/laboratory personnel; supervises maintenance of buildings and ground for pest control and eradication. As concurrent Chemical Technician (Registered) the laboratory supervisor also samples, tests/analyzes the required samples for for all deliveries; and directly supervises the preparation of chemicals/reagents for distribution to the different colleges, and departments.

CHEMICAL TECHNICIAN B. The chemical technician B is a registered technician who assists chemical technician in the implementation of his duties. He is also responsible for the preparation of reagents and chemicals and their distribution to the different colleges and departments.

STOREROOM CLERK A. The storeroom clerk A receives and checks deliveries

of apparatus, chemicals and other laboratory supplies; issues apparatus, chemicals and other supplies to the different colleges and departments; keeps records and perpetual inventories of all apparatus, chemicals and other supplies; obtains samples of glassware, ironware, chemicals and other supplies for testing/analysis prior to making the purchase orders and upon delivery; directs the proper storage of all apparatus, chemicals and other supplies; and prepares the apparatus, equipments and other supplies for distribution.

BOOKKEEPER CLERK A. The bookkeeper clerk A receives, checks, and records all requisitions and other transmittals from the different colleges and departments; prepares and files all purchase requisition forms for laboratory supplies not available in the general stock; computes for the pricing/accounting and does the filing of all the colleges and departments; prepares the Summary Report of the Monthly Consumption of all the colleges and departments for submission to the Accounting Office; computes all thesis requisitions; prepares the Annual Inventory Reports at the end of the schoolyear; distributes, receives, and checks laboratory apparatus during the General Distribution and Returning of Apparatus; types important and confidential papers for the administrator.

OFFICE CLERKS B AND C. These clerks compute and prepare laboratory breakages reports of *all* students in the university for submission to the Accounting Office; issue laboratory clearances to *all* students for Honorable Dismissal, Application for Laboratory Refunds, Transcript of Records and Certificates of Graduation; issue, record and file all laboratory supplies issued to and returned by the students at the office counters; receive and compute laboratory requisitions of students working on thesis or on special projects; prepare consolidated reports of laboratory breakage of the different colleges for replacement purposes; report necessary adjustments of labora-

tory breakage charges of students, if any, to the Accounting Division; distribute, receive, and check laboratory apparatus during the General Distribution and Returning of Apparatus of the different colleges; keep and update inventory of laboratory apparatus at the general counters (fast moving apparatus); and entertain student complaints regarding laboratory breakage.

BOOKKEEPER CLERK C. The bookkeeper clerk C keeps and updates inventory on stockcards of incoming and outgoing laboratory apparatus and chemicals; assists bookkeeper clerk A in the performance of his duties and/or assumes his job in his absence, prepares statistical data of the yearly consumption of laboratory apparatus, chemicals, and other supplies; keeps records of accidental breakages and losses of inventory on stock; carries official papers to the Accounting, Purchasing, Treasurer and other offices; and assists in the General Distribution and Returning of Apparatus.

STOREROOM LABORATORY ASSISTANT. The storeroom laboratory assistant assists the laboratory technician A in the preparation of reagents, chemicals, apparatus and other supplies for distribution to the different colleges and departments; arranges and keeps apparatus, chemicals, and other supplies in their proper location in the storeroom working laboratory, and stockroom; and assists in the General Distribution and Returning of Apparatus in the different colleges.

STOREROOM LABORATORY AIDE. The storeroom laboratory aide assists in the preparation of chemicals/reagents and apparatus for distribution; cleans and keeps order in the storeroom working laboratory; and may be assigned as laboratory helper whenever the need arises.

STOCKROOM AIDE. The stockroom aide assists in the inventory of stocks and preparation of apparatus and chemicals for distribution; prepares the Issuance

of Apparatus and Returning of Apparatus Reports every semester and during the summer session; prepares all apparatus (glassware and ironware) for distribution to the students and college/department laboratories; maintains cleanliness and order in the storage areas; may be assigned as laboratory helper whenever the need arises; and assists in the General Distribution and Returning of Apparatus.

LABORATORY PERSONNEL. The laboratory personnel are those actually working in the laboratories of the different colleges and departments. They are directly under the supervision of the Laboratory Supervisor and the faculty members of the classes they assist. The budget for the laboratory personnel falls under the college department where they are assigned. The laboratory personnel are classified as: i) Laboratory Technicians, who are registered technicians, degree holders in related fields, or those possessing special expertise in microscope and instrument repairs/services, slide preparation, etc.; ii) Laboratory Helpers, who perform the duties of the laboratory personnel as discussed below; iii) Working Scholars, who are students working less than 8 hours.

There are 48 laboratory personnel assigned to the laboratories in the Colleges of Science, Pharmacy, Education, and Nursing. The laboratory personnel of the Colleges of Engineering and Medicine are not under the supervision of this office, but are managed by the Dean's Offices of the said colleges. Laboratory personnel open the laboratory in time for the laboratory classes; get laboratory supplies from the storeroom for issuance to students in the laboratory counter; assist faculty members in supervising the students in taking chemicals and apparatus from the laboratory counter; issue special instruments and glassware to students through the Vale Sheets, and inspect all items lent out before issuance and upon their return; maintain properly all apparatus and equipment in the laboratory, report to the Supervisor or storeroom office all out-of-order apparatus or fixtures. At the end of every laboratory class the laboratory personnel clean and dry all tables; check all lockers and make sure they are all properly locked (lockers left open are immediately reported to the faculty member and/or laboratory supervisor); check all gas and water outlets, making sure they are all well closed.

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