

NAST PHL at 50: Bringing the ALAB of Science within Reach of Every Filipino

The National Academy of Science and Technology Philippines (NAST PHL) has reached a historic milestone in 2026, as it celebrates its 50th anniversary! Since its establishment in 1976, the Academy has served as the country's premier advisory and recognition body, bringing together the nation's most distinguished minds to guide policy, inspire innovation, and cultivate a culture of inquiry grounded in national development.

Guided by the theme "*ALAB: Agham ang Liwanag na Abot-Kamay ng Bayan*," (Science is the Light Within Our Nation's Reach), this golden jubilee underscores the transformative power of science as a beacon of empowerment. The theme perfectly encapsulates NAST PHL's vision: ensuring that the benefits of science are not distant or exclusive, but accessible, relevant, and firmly within the grasp of every Filipino.

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A Half-Century of Impact

For five decades, NAST PHL has been the cornerstone of the Philippine scientific landscape. Through its esteemed roster of National Scientists, Academicians, and Corresponding Members, the Academy has consistently championed evidence-based policymaking, national development planning, and science education.

Leaders in fields covering agricultural, health, mathematical and physical, biological, engineering and technology, and social sciences, NAST PHL members have consistently pushed the boundaries of human knowledge. More importantly, they have translated rigorous research into tangible, life-saving, and economy-boosting benefits for communities across the archipelago.

Celebrating Legacy and Creativity

The 50th anniversary celebration is both a commemoration of achievements and a reaffirmation of the Academy's enduring commitment to the future. Anchored on the **ALAB** theme, the year-long celebration features a range of activities that highlight both legacy and forward-looking aspirations. These include scientific forums, public engagement initiatives, collaborative partnerships, and creative showcases designed to bring science closer to the Filipino public and ignite greater interest in scientific pursuits.

To mark the start of the anniversary festivity, NAST PHL, together with the Philippine Science Heritage Center (PSHC), celebrated the "Two Birthdays, One Big Science Party" event last 16 December 2025. This special gathering served as a vibrant platform to celebrate science as a shared cultural and national endeavor while commemorating the contributions of both institutions in promoting science, technology, and innovation in the country.

In keeping with the spirit of the celebration, the official hymn of NAST PHL was launched. It is a symbolic and unifying piece that captures the Academy's identity, values, and enduring commitment to scientific excellence. The hymn was composed by National Artist Raymundo "Ryan" Cayabyab, whose contributions to Filipino music have long been recognized both locally and internationally. The lyrics were written by NAST PHL President, Academician Jaime C. Montoya, reflecting a deep understanding of the Academy's mission and aspirations.

The unveiling of the hymn aims to strengthen institutional pride and unity within the Philippine scientific community. Music serves as a powerful medium through which the ideals of science, such as curiosity, rigor, collaboration, and service, can be expressed and shared. The UP Singing Ambassadors' performance brought the composition to life, creating a memorable and inspiring moment for all who attended.

Aside from the NAST PHL Hymn, the official NAST PHL 50th Anniversary Logo was also unveiled. More than a visual symbol, the logo represents the Academy's

openness to creativity and public participation in celebrating science. The design competition, which attracted entries from across the country, is a testament to how art and science can intersect to communicate ideas in meaningful and engaging ways.

The launching of the NAST PHL hymn and the 50th anniversary Logo are not merely ceremonial milestones but a reflection of NAST PHL's broader vision, which is to make science more inclusive, visible, and meaningful to everyday Filipinos. The Academy recognizes that science plays a critical role in shaping industries, informing policies, and improving lives. In line with the **ALAB** theme, the celebration seeks to bring science closer to the people and inspire a deeper appreciation for its role in national development.

Lighting the Path Forward

Looking ahead, the Academy continues to position itself as a key driver of innovation and policy advice in the Philippines. In a time marked by rapid technological advancements and complex challenges such as climate change, food security, public health, and digital transformation, the importance of science-based decision-making cannot be overstated. NAST PHL remains committed to providing independent, credible recommendations that support sustainable, inclusive growth.

Equally important is the Academy's commitment to nurturing the next generation of scientists. Through mentorship, recognition programs, and engagement with students and young researchers, NAST PHL aims to inspire future leaders who will continue to advance scientific knowledge and innovation. The 50th anniversary serves as both a celebration and a call to action, encouraging greater investment in science education and research.

As NAST PHL commemorates its golden anniversary, it does so with gratitude to the scientists, partners, and stakeholders who have contributed to its journey. The milestone reflects the collective effort and shared vision of those who believe in the power of science to uplift society.



Figure 1. (a) DOST Secretary Renato U. Solidum, Jr., (b) NAST PHL President Academician Jaime C. Montoya, and (c) 50th Anniversary Steering Committee Chair Academician Reynaldo B. Ve in attendance during the AM session of “Two Birthdays, One Big Science Party.”



Figure 2. [L to R] NAST PHL President Jaime C. Montoya, Acd. Reynaldo B. Ve, Kevin Eugene White, and DOST Secretary Renato U. Solidum, Jr. during the awarding of the winning entry for the NAST PHL 50th Anniversary Logo Design Contest.



ALAB IN YOUNG HEARTS. Invited students enjoy the festivities of the “Two Birthdays, One Big Science Party.” Their engagement highlights NAST PHL’s commitment to making science accessible and its goal of inspiring inclusive development for the nation’s benefit.