

DLSU stays true to school colors, taps Meralco's green EVs for Laguna campus shuttle service

EVs to reduce school's carbon footprint, expands conservation influence



De La Salle University President Br. Raymundo B. Suplido stands before the school's three new electric vehicles (EVs), parked in front of the Milagros del Rosario Building at DLSU Laguna. The Laguna campus has decided to use the EVs in line with its mandate of embracing sustainability as well as its cost-saving advantages.

Starting November 2017, three eco-friendly electric vehicles (EVs) will be plying routes in De La Salle University (DLSU) Laguna as part of the school's mission and vision to be a learner-centered research university attuned to a sustainable earth.

Meralco, and subsidiary, MServ, formalized a three-year lease agreement to provide the school with round-trip EV shuttle services at the DLSU Laguna community to transport hubs outside campus. In collaboration with MServ, DLSU has plans to install a charging station designed specifically for EVs.

Besides the environmental benefits, school officials noted it would be saving quite a bit. DLSU Laguna spent P270,000 a month for providing shuttle services on the Biñan campus to Paseo de Sta. Rosa route, plus operations and maintenance (O&M) costs.

By comparison, the EV program reduces that to P220,000 per month for the same route, plus O&M – and this is for three e-vehicles.

This gives DLSU Laguna savings of P600,000 per year, or 18.52 percent, from its operational budget with the use of the alternative conveyance.



Meralco executives present DLSU officials with a copper lineman statue to commemorate the official signing of a lease agreement on three electric vehicles. From left are: Dr. Gil Nonato C. Santos, DLSU Vice-Chancellor; Br. Raymundo B. Suplido FSC, DLSU President; Atty. William S. Pamintuan, Meralco First Vice President and Head of Legal; and Victor L. Risma IV, Meralco Head of Corporate Business Group – Private Sector.

A learning center learns about EVs

DLSU Laguna had transportation facilities providing services within Laguna, and between Laguna and the Taft Ave., Manila campus. But as the Biñan population grew, necessitating more travel schedules, costs started to climb.

Having attended the first ASEAN Electric & Hybrid Vehicles Summit held on June 29 to 30



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President, De La Salle University

began to grow, we needed to do more specific planning. Meralco was already studying our power needs, so we approached them (on the EVs)."

EVs are cheaper to operate and maintain, and are quieter than conventional vehicles. And since the lighter weighing EVs run at slightly slower pace of 30-45 kph, they are safer for use in a bustling school zone.

The university head said the EV use was a take-off from St. Francis of Assisi's challenge. The patron saint of animals and ecology championed embracing sustainability; of keeping a commitment to being good stewards of creation by protecting and caring for resources, and by incorporating environmental stewardship into all aspects of parish life.

"If we're saying 'sustainable' then power should be also sourced from sustainable sources. This initiative is a way of showing it in concrete. With the e-jeep, we are in effect taking a practical step towards living what we say we want to do."

Halo effect on benefits

The growing 50-hectare campus has a existing population of 3,500 – consisting of 3,000 pre-school and college students, 300 employees, and another 200 faculty members.

DLSU Laguna's e-jeeps will run 52 trips per day. With a maximum capacity of 18 passengers (plus driver), the total headcount to benefit will be around 936 passengers daily. And at roughly 202 days in an average school year, total passengers to benefit annually comes to 189,072.

While the initial schedule will consist of three lines, DLSU Laguna and Meralco's long-term goal is for the EVs to serve five, with eventual routes extending trips to other DLSU campuses.

Still, these figures don't adequately measure the overall radiant benefit of EVs.

"All those who will be using the e-jeep – whether it's students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni – they all become a bit more conscious," said Br. Suplido. "That cuts across everyone. We hope this gets the different stakeholders more committed to what we're after."

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"There is a running debate on the push for modernization in the public use of electric vehicles," said Victor S. Genuino, Meralco Vice President and Head of Corporate Business Group. "EV partnerships between the academe and Meralco, as a representative of the private sector, can show how electric vehicles are truly beneficial to all."



Representatives from Meralco and other guests are seen on board the three electric vehicles. They are later taken on a tour of the still-growing, 50-hectare Laguna campus.