

Meralco energy solutions reflect Ateneo passion for innovative thinking

Utility's subsidiary provides expertise for academe's EV charging station, e-jeeps

Ateneo de Manila was ahead of its time when it built its electrical wiring underground back in the 1950s. They continue to spearhead energy practices by being the first school to introduce an in-campus e-jeep shuttle service, complete with its own EV charging station.

Ateneo de Manila prides itself with continually producing the country's top college graduates by ingraining the spirit of creativity and innovation.

This intense passion for revolutionary thinking is best reflected in the school's electric vehicle (EV) program, launched in collaboration with the country's leading power expert, Meralco.

Meralco end-to-end solutions

The first school to introduce an in-campus e-jeep shuttle system, Ateneo was widely hailed by EVAP (Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines) for embracing eco-friendly awareness and transforming the school into a sustainable establishment.

Operated by Meralco subsidiary, MServ, the school's fleet of six 14-seater e-jeeps provide shuttle services for about 1,000 faculty, 1,100 staff, 20,700 students, and the rest of the Ateneo community.

University President Fr. Jose Ramon "Jett" Villarín SJ, a climate scientist by training, explained that the EVs were a response to "a hyperconnected world" characterized by "things being decommissioned and rendered obsolete." An example of such is the overdue antiquation of smoke-belching public utility jeeps and buses, which according to EVAP contributes up to 80 percent of air pollution.

"What we're trying to do here is to change the culture," said Villarín. "We hope that the students who are under our care, someday they will lead, wield the levers of power, and make a decision for sustainable and shared mobility."

To complete the EV ecosystem, MServ helped design and set up Ateneo's very own charging station, going even further by mapping out the campus' shuttle routes.

"We are trying to ensure that the campus does not have a large carbon footprint and the e-jeeps contribute directly to that effort," said Villarín.

Continuing a history of viability and innovation

Established in the 1800s, Ateneo is the third oldest university in the Philippines. Fr. William Francis Masterson transferred Ateneo from its former location at Padre Faura, Manila to its current one at Loyola Heights, Quezon City in the 1950s.

"When Masterson built this campus, even the wires were underground. You don't see electrical wires. Even back then, Ateneo applied energy practices ahead of its time," said Villarín.

As Ateneo was advanced in years, Meralco was called on to provide infrastructure rehabilitation assistance.

"The campus is more than 60 years old, so we're embarking on a comprehensive upgrade and rehab of the campus grid. Underground wires are more expensive but that's the spirit of innovation that I'd like to sustain. We are grateful to Meralco for helping us ensure that our power will be reliable and efficient."

Villarín said that their curriculum "has a very strong push for liberal arts education to create a foundation in meeting a very complicated, fast pace, rapidly changing world." Ateneo has also created Areté, a place for stimulating, adaptive, and multi-dimensional thinking meant to generate new ideas, products, and services that will drive a global economy.

For efforts in adopting energy initiatives that lead to a more sustainable tomorrow and imbuing creativity and innovation in the country's future leaders, Ateneo de Manila University was recognized as a Meralco Corporate Commercial Luminary.

"As a product of the Ateneo system, they hold a special place in my heart," said Meralco Senior Vice President and Head, Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications Alfredo S. Panlilio. "The university is a bastion of higher learning, and Meralco will continue to provide them the energy solutions it needs to produce tomorrow's captains of industry and innovation."

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- Fr. Jose Ramon "Jett" Villarín SJ
President, Ateneo de Manila University



Meralco's subsidiary MServ has been providing operation and maintenance services for Ateneo's six 14-seater e-jeeps and EV charging station since 2009.



(From left) Ateneo President Fr. Jose Ramon "Jett" Villarín SJ and Meralco Head, Private Sector Relationship Management for Utilities Joy Mendoza stand beside one of the school's eco-friendly e-jeeps.



(From left) Meralco Senior Vice President and Head, Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications Alfredo S. Panlilio, Fr. Villarín, Meralco President and CEO Oscar S. Reyes, and Meralco Vice President and Head, Corporate Business Group Victor S. Genuino are on stage as the Ateneo head proudly shows off the school's Meralco Corporate Commercial Luminary Award.