

Inaugural Address
President Laarni C. Gularek
February 25, 2023

Thank you for the wonderful ceremony. It is a great honor and privilege for me to be standing here today with fellow officers having just been formally invested with the duties and responsibilities of our respective offices. I'd like to acknowledge our special guests and friends who are with us today, Mrs. Faith M. Duran, Chairperson of Suacona, our new members, members of the BOD, four of whom are here today. My special thanks to my husband, Frank, for always giving me his unconditional support. To my fellow alumni, friends, and to the social committee and the core group (made up of members who are the most committed to the organization's success) for their planning, preparation, and skillful execution of today's event. Thank you.

Today, I want to focus my message on the sustainability of our organization and how to thrive in the future. The term sustainability is far broader than just the environment. It's also social and governance. It's about ensuring a strong, healthy, and thriving organization. And sustainable leadership is a factor. We've seen it in the last 25 years since our inception, and most recently during the pandemic where the past presidents took turns at the helm. I've taken my turn twice. I think the thing to keep in mind is to also have a sustainable mindset, and our way of thinking to never give up despite the challenges. By that I mean having a positive attitude. Being happy even when you have little. Having a fun time even when you are losing. Being happy for someone else's success. Having a positive future vision, no matter how bad your current circumstances.

But it's time to pass the baton to a new slew of leadership for fresher ideas in governance. It's still a work in progress but over time, it can happen. And I am hopeful. We've amended our by-laws several times, the most recent of which was Revision "E" based on the survey in December 2021 to meet the changing needs of our membership. To the future leaders, keep in mind that a core group of members will always be by your side, supporting you and moving forward with you. However, we encourage you to demonstrate your commitment to engage likewise. Here are some ways:

- Join committees and working groups.
- Show up in meetings. Stay in the loop with what is happening in the organization.
- Participate in fundraising events and activities.
- Keep your promises.
- Be a team player. Volunteer to help. Focus on team instead of personal reasons

In closing, we can get there together. As the late president John F. Kennedy once said, "Every person can make a difference, and every person should try."

God bless us all.

Laarni C. Gularek
SUAF President, 2022-2023; 2011-2012