

Developing Astronomy Research and Education in the Philippines

R. M. D. Sese¹ and M. B. N. (Thijs) Kouwenhoven²

¹University of the Philippines Los Banos, the Philippines

²Kavli Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Peking University, P.R. China
email: rmdsese@gmail.com & kouwenhoven@pku.edu.cn

Abstract. In the past few years, the Philippines has been gradually developing its research and educational capabilities in astronomy and astrophysics. In terms of astronomy development, it is still lagging behind several neighboring Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, while it is advanced with respect to several others. One of the main issues hampering progress is the scarcity of trained professional Filipino astronomers, as well as long-term visions for astronomy development. Here, we will be presenting an overview of astronomy education and research in the country. We will discuss the history and current status of astronomy in the Philippines, including all levels of education, outreach and awareness activities, as well as potential areas for research and collaborations. We also discuss issues that need to be addressed to ensure sustainable astronomy development in the Philippines. Finally, we discuss several ongoing and future programs aimed at promoting astronomy research and education. In essence, the work is a precursor of a possible white paper which we envision to submit to the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) in the near future, with which we aim to further convince the authorities of the importance of astrophysics. With the support of the International Astronomical Union (IAU), this may eventually lead to the creation of a separate astronomy agency in the Philippines.
