

GA (Palanga): UM's AI-Powered Multilingual Student Support Agent for 24/7 Inquiry Assistance

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SDG Focus

KEY POINTS



Purpose: Provides 24/7 multilingual assistance, automates student services, and improves access to academic information, enrollment, and institutional support.



Target Beneficiaries: Students, parents, university personnel, and administrators.



Major Activities: GA delivers instant responses to inquiries, facilitates course planning, fee estimation, credit evaluation, and fully autonomous student enrollment, while generating real-time analytics to identify and address institutional service gaps.

Key Partners: Academic and administrative offices, including the Registrar, Student Affairs Office (SAO), Admissions, and the colleges.

Key Outcomes: GA reduced inquiry response times from one to two business days to near-instant service, automated key student transactions including enrollment, decreased campus foot traffic and staff workload, enhanced data-driven decision-making through real-time analytics, and advanced several SDGs.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

GA, short for Palanga (Bisaya for “dear/beloved”), is the University of Mindanao’s AI-powered student support agent, accessible at <https://ga.umindanao.edu.ph>. Developed by the Information and Communications Technology Center (ICTC), GA was built to solve a simple but costly problem including students and parents waiting one to two business days for answers, flooding campus offices with concerns that could be resolved remotely, while staff time was consumed by repetitive, high-volume inquiries.

GA operates 24/7 and responds automatically in English, Filipino (Tagalog), or Bisaya by detecting the language per message with no switching required. Its capabilities span the full student journey: it answers FAQs and university policies instantly; displays grades and account information securely via Google login; helps students plan their course schedules based on curriculum, remaining subjects, and preferred time slots; estimates fees broken down per exam period so families can prepare financially before committing; evaluates credits for shifters and transferees in seconds, cutting what once took days of registrar back-and-forth; and most significantly, completes fully autonomous student enrollment for all students without any staff confirmation or intervention. When a concern falls outside its scope, GA escalates to live staff with the full conversation context intact.

Beyond serving students, GA transforms how management understands the university. Its real-time analytics dashboard autonomously analyzes unanswered questions, groups related concerns, and generates a Pareto analysis without human intervention, replacing what was once a tedious, once-a-year manual review with continuous, actionable institutional intelligence.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES

Impact to the University

GA has directly transformed how the University of Mindanao delivers student services. Prior to its deployment, dedicated staff in the Registrar, SAO, and Admissions offices were routinely assigned

to handle high-frequency, repetitive inquiries including enrollment planning, credit evaluation for transferees and shifters, and fee estimation. These tasks consumed significant time of skilled personnel. GA now handles these autonomously, freeing staff to focus on work that genuinely requires human judgment and expertise.

GA has further extended its capabilities to include fully autonomous student enrollment that is available to all students and can be completed without any staff confirmation or intervention. A function that previously required students to be physically present and assisted by dedicated personnel can now be accomplished entirely through GA, dramatically reducing foot traffic and freeing enrollment staff from one of their most time-consuming responsibilities, particularly during peak enrollment periods.

The university's inquiry response time has been reduced from one to two business days to near-instant, 24/7 availability. Foot traffic at SAO, Admissions, Records, and Deans' offices has been reduced as students can now get accurate answers and complete key academic transactions remotely at any time.

What previously required staff to tediously and manually sort through inquiry logs that is done only once a year is now handled autonomously by GA. The system continuously analyzes unanswered questions, groups related concerns, and generates a Pareto analysis without human intervention. This gives management immediate, ongoing visibility into the most critical service gaps, enabling them to address the small number of unresolved concern types responsible for the majority of student confusion in real time, year-round, rather than in a single delayed annual review.

Impact to the Community/ Society

GA serves not just enrolled students but also prospective students and parents who previously had no choice but to visit campus or wait days for email responses. By responding automatically in English, Filipino (Tagalog), and Bisaya, GA removes language barriers that can disadvantage first-generation college students or families from non-English speaking backgrounds. Students can now plan their

enrollment, estimate costs, evaluate their academic standing, and complete enrollment itself at any hour, including nights and weekends, eliminating the stress and inconvenience of office hours dependency.

For transferees and shifters, who often face uncertainty about which of their previous subjects will count toward their new program, GA provides instant credit evaluation, reducing what once required days of back-and-forth with registrar staff to mere seconds. For families budgeting for tuition, GA's fee estimation feature allows informed financial planning before enrollment commitment.

Impact to SDGs. GA directly advances SDG 4 (Quality Education) by making student support services more accessible, responsive, and inclusive, including enabling fully autonomous enrollment for all students. Similarly, it contributes to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) by establishing AI-powered digital infrastructure that goes beyond a support chatbot into fully operational AI, serving as a model for educational service transformation. Its multilingual capability and 24/7 availability advance SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by ensuring that no student is disadvantaged by language, time zone, or inability to visit campus in person.

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

GA is a live, web-based system hosted and maintained by the ICTC, with no dependency on temporary project funding. Its continuous operation is supported by the university's existing ICT infrastructure. The real-time analytics dashboard, powered by GA's autonomous Pareto analysis of unanswered questions enables proactive, data-driven updates to GA's knowledge base as policies, fees, and academic offerings change, without requiring manual review cycles. The system is designed to scale up with new colleges, branches, and service areas which can be onboarded without rebuilding the platform, and GA can be embedded directly into any or all UM websites and affiliated platforms via a lightweight widget, extending its reach without any duplication of infrastructure. The model is also replicable across other universities or institutions seeking to modernize student inquiry management using AI.