The October 4 meeting with the ASFES Board of Trustees surprised me in more ways than I can imagine – but a pleasant surprise, if I may add.

I was sick for the past two weeks prior to the scheduled BOT meeting. I haven’t really fully recovered but nonetheless, I spent two days (Oct. 2 and 3) trying to get back to my usual 100% self and at the same time studying, reviewing and familiarizing myself with all the pertinent reports and documents needed for the said meeting. As in previous encounters with the BOT, I tried to anticipate all the possible questions that might caught me off guard. But knowing how meticulous the BOT members are, you can never really confidently say that you are ready for them, until after you go out of the room asking yourself how you could have possibly missed on that one important detail they have just raised.

Instead of discussing our budget performance as of September 30, the BOT members made the session a day of affirmation – exactly what we needed after almost two years of handling our respective schools. The BOT members made us feel that we were being appreciated for all our efforts and that while they try to push us beyond our limits, they understand and support us in case we commit mistakes.

I was asked to list my top three priorities for the school, but ended up with four: (1) the construction of a new building for the Senior HS and administrative offices, including the elevation of the first floor classrooms, (2) the introduction of a special program in journalism in our curriculum effective SY 2020-202, which Fr. Deo referred to as our schools “pink elephant,” (3) start of a succession program in school leadership by sending our grade level coordinators to graduate school on an ASFES scholarship program, and (4) making the school a LET Review Center for Education graduates from Macabebe, Masantol and Apalit.

Ma’am Nelgon and Fr. Deo gave me the chance to expound and defend these priority items. I think they saw what I was envisioning for the school and appreciated the reasons I cited for choosing these four. When I was done explaining these plans, Fr. Deo asked me to include another project which was to take the number one priority in my list – my HEALTH!

Fr. Deo encapsulated everything I was missing. He said that I have no business taking care of the school and my students and faculty if I am not taking care of my health. Admittedly, there is no way I could possibly look after the welfare of my students and my teachers or supervise the physical improvement of my school if my health was deteriorating every single day. He reminded me to love myself, look after myself and watch my health. What better way to end the session than with these words of genuine concern from our BOT members.