

Report of the Student Regent to the Board of Regents

1271st Meeting of the Board of Regents

25 July 2011

Campaign for greater state subsidy

The students have consistently stood for greater state subsidy to the University and the education sector. In a resolution passed by the General Assembly of Student Councils (GASC) on 5 April 2011, the student councils agreed to declare 19 July 2011 as a Systemwide Day of Protest. UP Visayas councils issued a support manifesto on 13 July 2011 which further decried “virtual tuition fee increase” brought by changes in the tuition bracketing rules.

Other state colleges and universities nationwide joined UP on that date, transforming the event into a national day of youth action. The UP-led demonstration was successful most especially in Iloilo, where 2,500 youth, including students from UP Visayas Miag-ao and Iloilo campuses, rallied at the city center. The contingents from UP Manila and Diliman converged at Mendiola, together with delegations from other Metro Manila schools. UP Baguio and Los Banos staged indoor mobilizations.

These efforts build up understanding and agreement on key issue points of public sector funding. In UP Diliman, the students are finalizing a unity statement that includes deans and administrators, for submission to legislators on the first week of legislative session. For broader unities, the Student Regent co-convened the Ugnayan ng Mamamayan Laban sa Kumersyalisasyon ng Edukasyon (Umaksyon) together with the UP Diliman University Student Council and other student organizations. The groups’ planned activities include grassroots campaigning and lobbying among legislators.

Special concerns: Legal issues involving UP students

A. Cadapan and Empeño v. Palparan

Criminal complaint for rape, serious physical injuries, arbitrary detention, maltreatment of prisoners, grave threats, grave coercion, violation of R.A. 7438 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention Against Torture, and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

- Sherlyn Cadapan, of the College of Human Kinetics, and Karen Empeño, of the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, were abducted in 2006 in Hagonoy, Bulacan by men believed to be members of the military.
- The mothers of Empeño and Cadapan filed a criminal complaint against the identified military men and several John Does on 4 May 2011, supported by the testimonies of six witnesses.
- In a related development, the Supreme Court (SC) affirmed with finality the grant of the writ of amparo on 31 May 2011. The SC decision ordered retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado, Lt. Col. Rogelio Boac, 2Lt. Francis Mirabelle Samson, M/Sgt. Donald Caigas, and Arnel Enriquez to immediately release Cadapan and Empeño.
- The Department of Justice constituted a panel of prosecutors, led by Assistant State Prosecutor Juan Pedro Navera, to conduct preliminary investigation. Both parties have presented their respective affidavits.

- The next session of the prosecutors' panel is scheduled on 3 August 2011, for the possible submission of a rejoinder by the complainants (to the reply of the accused).

University involvement:

- The Student Regent is part of the legal research team on the criminal complaint as a member of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers, counsel for the mothers.
- The President issued a statement on 23 June 2011, calling for the expedited resolution of the cases involving the Karen and Sherlyn. He also referred to the Supreme Court decision on the writ of amparo granted to the families, which expressly ordered Army major general Jovito Palparan Jr. and five of his subordinates to immediately release the three. He said UP will closely monitor the cases.
- The Chancellor of UP Diliman joined participants to the walks and pack run around the Academic Oval organized by anti-torture advocates on 26 June 2011.

B. People v. Montajes

Criminal case for illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, of explosives and of violation of the election gun ban

- Maricon Montajes, a film major from the College of Mass Communication, was arrested in June 2010 for alleged possession of firearms and explosive in Batangas.
- She was on community integration in San Juan, and was caught in an encounter between the New People's Army and the 710th Philippine Air Force.
- Along with two others, she was placed in the custody of the 719th PAF where they claim to have experienced psychological torture, and interrogation without the presence of a lawyer.
- She was accordingly charged in the Regional Trial Court of Rosario, Batangas, and is detained at the Batangas City Provincial Jail.
- The first day of trial is set on 28 July 2011. Students plan to join the court trooping and jail visit.

University involvement:

- The Office of the Student Regent is a co-convenor of the Task Force Maricon, which coordinates efforts of formations across the UP system. This stronger role in the political campaign is obligated by a resolution passed by the GASC.
- The Chancellor of UP Diliman sent the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs on official delegation to check the condition of Maricon at the provincial jail on 25 June 2011.

C. People v. Aguilar (UPLB 5)

Criminal complaint for violation of Article 153 of the Revised Penal Code, tumults and other disturbances of public order

- At 8:40 am on 19 June 2011, Calamba police were assigned to the event, the unveiling of the statue of Rizal in front of the Calamba City Hall. Guest of honor was President Benigno Aquino III.

- While the president was making his speech, a group of people shouted “Ninoy (sic) hindi ninyo tinutupad ang inyong mga pangako, kayo ay walang silbi at inutil, dapat bumaba ba kayo sa pwesto ninyo bilang presidenti (sic) ng Pilipinas!”
- The police arrested seven rallyists, five of whom were students or former students of UP Los Banos. They were detained at the Calamba city detention center.
- The accused were released on P1,000 bail each on 21 June 2011. Their arraignment at the Municipal Trial Court of Calamba City is scheduled on 2 August 2011. They have engaged the services of a private lawyer but would like to seek the advice of UP lawyers as well.

University participation:

- The Student Regent talked to a member of the UP Law faculty to review the merits of the case.

D. Libel charges filed by UP Cebu Dean Enrique Avila against UP Cebu Computer Science professor Chito Patino, the Philippine Collegian and writer Keith Mariano have reportedly been dismissed

Policy review

The Office of the Student Regent launched on 30 June 2011 a policy evaluation of the Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program (STFAP). This is in anticipation of the administration’s policy review within the school year.

For the month of July, STFAP Review sought from students the common problems regarding the program. Online and manual survey forms were released systemwide, and the accomplished forms were collected by designated liaisons for nine geographical units within the first three weeks of July. Only undergraduates were requested to accomplish the survey, as graduate students cannot avail of the STFAP (with the exception of Juris Doctor students). The survey had 3,408 respondents.

Unit	Number of Respondents	Undergraduate Population
Diliman	1,808	18,000*
Los Banos	549	10,000*
Manila	371	5,000*
Visayas (including Tacloban)	272	3617
Baguio	245	2500*
Pampanga	120	533
Cebu	108	1049
Mindanao	100	949
TOTAL	3,408	

* Estimated population only, pending release of official enrollment data

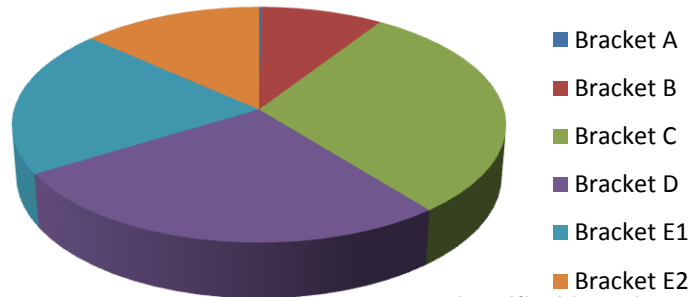
The Student Regent also sat in a forum panel with the officer-in-charge of the Office of Student Scholarships and Services (OSSS) and UP Economics professor Emmanuel Esguerra in a forum on 12 July 2011.

I. Significant Findings

- Less than half of students apply for STFAP.
Visayas: 70%
Diliman: 45%
Mindanao: 41%
Pampanga: 37%
- Those who apply land on higher brackets than the one they applied for.
Visayas: 93%
Mindanao: 92%
Diliman: 90%
Cebu: 84%
- Those who applied generally have difficulties with the system.
Pampanga: 60%
Visayas: 56%
Cebu: 44%
Mindanao: 44%
- In Diliman, students who apply for STFAP aim for bracket C, where tuition is P600 per unit.

Graph 1. Bracket applied for of Diliman respondents

A-.25%
B-9.7%
C-32.34%
D-29.1%
E1-21.89%
E2-14.43%



In support of data from the UP administration, majority of the students are upper-tier brackets. The disparity is most significant in Diliman, where nine out of ten pay P1,000 per unit and up. classified into the

Graph 2. Bracket assignment of Diliman respondents

A- 13.0744%
B- 66.68%
C-10.45%
D- 8.1%
E1-1.64%
E2-.05%

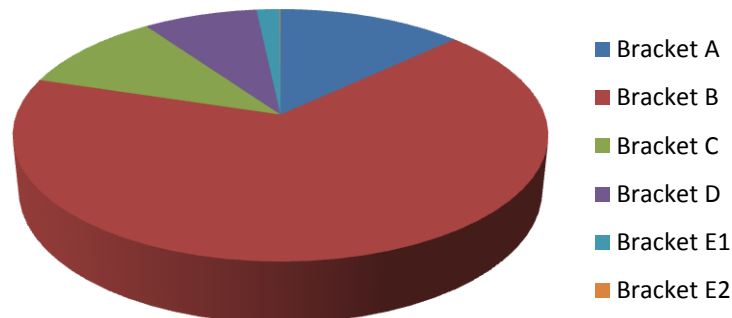


Table 1. Bracket assignment in the first semester of 2010, data from OSSS

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES STFAP - Alphabetic Bracketing Scheme (ABS)									
		STFAP-ABS Brackets							
CU	AY	A	B *	C	D	E **	E1 ***	E2 ***	Total
Diliman	2007	45	18,712	741	124	57	-	-	19,679
	2008	43	16,111	1,257	198	75	-	-	17,684
	2009	34	15,033	901	542	-	141	42	16,693
	2010	29	16,094	1,111	794	-	200	38	18,266

II. Common concerns and difficulties encountered during STFAP application

- Some documents required are not listed on the STFAP form.
 - The list of documentary requirements appears to be arbitrary; some applicants are told to submit additional papers.
 - It is time consuming and very expensive. Most students have to get the additional requirements from the province. Requesting the documents, notarizing and sending them to the student to the respective units is very costly.
 - Documents provided by the government take time to be released.
 - Documents that should only be provided by freshmen are also asked to be provided by upperclassmen.
- Some scholarships personnel are ill-mannered, disagreeable, and unfriendly.
 - They are unapproachable and do not answer queries of students politely.
 - Students are discouraged by personnel to apply for STFAP; thus they are automatically put into bracket B.
 - Personnel are not consistent in evaluating STFAP requirements.
- Slow assessment of STFAP forms and its late release
- Yearly submission of the same documents and most of the time, additional documents were required and yet, the student's bracket will be change.
- Students with sibling have different brackets.
- Inconsistencies of student bracket in CRS and the list released to OSSS.

III. Students' Suggestions regarding STFAP

- "The staffs should be friendly. That the bracket for the deserved ones are given righteously. That they should release the results earlier so that the parents could prepare money. That default bracket is not A. That STFAP should be removed"
- "Take into consideration number of dependents and educational expenses with respect to each household income"
- "Perhaps it would be more helpful for the student if he/she will be asked of his/her family's current situation, and use this information as well in assigning a bracket."
- "The bracketing based on annual gross income is not followed. The other reasons of bracket assignment are unknown to me even to this day. It does not consider the number of siblings. It considers too much the stuff owned by the person without

- making sure if the stuff owned is old, is just a present, or how the stuff was obtained. It does not consider the expenditures of the person's family very well. The annual income considered is gross, part of which cannot even be used by the family. The annual income bracketing scheme hasn't factored in the inflation rates of today. Source of income is not well noted”
- “Be more considerate. Do not ask for documents which aren't needed anymore just to prolong the process. It's as if they're just trying to test whether or not the person is really determined to apply”
 - “The process for STFAP application should be simpler because some students do not apply because of the long and complicated process that will, almost always, deny their application”
 - “The system of implementation of this so-called ‘Financial Assistance Program’ is highly inconvenient and absolutely inefficient. To make matters worse, the selection process is very slow, and the brackets upon release misrepresent the real financial situations of many applicants. In other words, the STFAP brackets obscure the truth. Such meager performance of a system whose objective is to aid the needy in attaining quality education unquestionably defeats the purpose of the system. STFAP in my honest opinion must be abolished. The word ‘State’ in the phrase ‘State University’ must instead be put back in its proper place. For if this kind of system continues, the trends in inflation will eventually cause an inevitable and irreversible domino effect wherein more and more financially needy individuals will opt out of enrolling in the country's "premier state university".
 - “In answering letters of appeal from different students, it must be stated on the letter of reply why is it rejected or approved or certain explanations regarding the appeal”
 - “Sana mas clear yung list ng mga requirements na kailangang ipasa kasi may ibang mga papers na hinahanap na hindi naman indicated sa form..para isang pasahan na lang at hindi na pabalik- balik pa sa office nila””
 - “Make the process fair to every applicant. Consider other factors first before jumping into conclusions or results. This is a serious matter. Many may be forced to withdraw their intent to school at UP because of high matriculation fees and other payments. Hindi dapat maging hadlang ang kahirapan sa pag-aaral ninuman.”

IV. Students’ Perceptions about STFAP

- STFAP is unsuccessful; it does not meet its goal of “making students pay only what they can afford”.
 - “The current STFAP bracketing system is flawed in the sense that it does not accurately reflect the family's capacity to pay. I did not apply for STFAP for that reason. (A cellphone automatically places a student to the highest bracket). It should also consider the REAL cost of sending a student to college. With transportation, food, school supplies and other costs today, it is getting harder for families to send a child to college, especially for families living in the provinces. This forces some Isko like me to find a job to meet their financial needs. Unfortunately, STFAP has also become a justification for raising the tuition fees. I am afraid with the current system, poor but

deserving Iskos and Iskas will have a slimmer chance of accessing their dream UP education.”

- STFAP is an income-generating scheme that erodes the public character of the University. Students believe that the state should still heavily subsidize UP education.
 - “If the U.P. wishes to remain true to its cause as the university if the scholars, then it'd be wise to scrap the STFAP now. Hindi na iskolar ng bayan ang mga estudyante ng U.P.; nawalan na ng say-say ang bansag na "iskolar" dahil hindi naman na ang bayan ang nagbabayad ng ating pag-aaral kundi ang ating mga magulang”
 - “It's being used time and again to justify the tuition fee increase. It is a contradiction with UP's public character that is supposed to be the people's university. It is a manifestation of the cuts in the UP budget, pushing the UP administration to create disenfranchising policies such as this. SCRAP IT! and Rollback the tuition
 - “I think the STFAP should be abolished, UP is a state university and students must not be burdened and obligated with paying high and different tuition fee amounts. It's the government's duty to send us to college”- UP Manila, CAS student
- STFAP inhibits democratic access into the university. Students believe that the program discriminates among UPCAT qualifiers, when the chief condition for entry into UP is intellectual potential and academic competency.
 - “UP as the premiere state university should not be put into question whether the student's financial provider has high income or not. Education is a right and therefore should be accessible to all. I suggest that we junk STFAP”

V. Next phase

The next phase of the review will fill in the other gaps in this qualitative study. Consultations and focus group discussions will be schedule within the next three months, and will mainly involve the original respondents of this survey.

The report from the first phase of the review will be presented to the student councils at the regional All Leaders' Conferences set on 15-16 August in Mindanao; 1-2 September in Visayas; and 8-9 in Luzon.

Campus updates

UP Cebu College

- The administrative case against Dean Enrique Avila, who is on preventive suspension until 27 August, started on 14 July 2011.
- Last year, students clamored for the ouster of the Dean for certain repressive policies and for questionable acts as administrator. Seven professors and two employees formally accused Avila, his budget officer Alsidry Sharif and consultant Ernesto Pineda

of various criminal and administrative violations, including alleged technical malversation, graft, misconduct and “discriminatory acts against faculty and staff.”

- Dean Avila in turn lodged libel cases against the original complainants, other students, faculty and staff, further heightening tension and hostility in the campus.
- The next trial hearing is scheduled on 27 July 2011, 9:00 at the Student Union building of UP Manila, for the testimonies of UP System officials.

UP Visayas - Iloilo

- Local alliance Sandigan para sa Mag-aaral at Sambayanan (SAMASA), mass organizations Anakbayan and League of Filipino Students decried the malicious labeling and red tagging by members of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) in National Service and Training programs, and surveillance carried out by alleged military men.
- Student (*name withheld from public report*) requests UP assistance in the investigation and prosecution of military men who conduct surveillance and who have openly harassed her and her family.

UP Diliman Extension Program in Pampanga

- Students have not been clearly instructed on student discipline; student misconduct is handled by their Student Relations Officer on a case-to-case basis.
- The Office of the Student Regent sent them 50 copies of the Diliman Student Guide published in September 1999.

UP Mindanao

- The election of student council officers was held on 15 July 2011. Elections are held contemporaneous in the UP System at the end of the second semester, but UP Mindanao's was delayed over a dispute on the ratification of the constitution.

UP School of Health Sciences - Koronadal

- The students are organizing a student council within the school year.
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