

Report of the Student Regent to the Board of Regents

1272nd Meeting of the Board of Regents

25 August 2011

Campaigns

Students and student institutions have concentrated on forming the widest unity and soliciting the active participation of organizations, colleges and other formations.

The unity statement, drafted with inputs from the deans and professors, features these key points:

- UP is alarmed that state support for education and other social services under President Aquino is diminishing in measures, and deteriorating in quality.
- We assert that the government must prioritize education and basic social services.
- We demand that the government commit to ensuring quality and affordable education at the basic and tertiary level, through adequate funding for the sector.
- Sufficient state subsidy to education makes it truly democratic, scientific, and geared towards serving the nation.
- We will collectively organize and launch campaign activities, especially those which simultaneously appeals to creativity and artistry.
- We are ready to hold mass demonstrations when necessary.

This has been endorsed by five regents, two vice-chancellors, twelve deans, and the workers' union. Although staunchly supported by the dominant political alliance in UP Diliman, it is also signed by other university-wide political parties, thus it is a significant show of force.

It will be submitted to members of Congress in September.

Local campaigns

UP Baguio

- The students policy positions, such as on state subsidy to education, land reform, reproductive health and nationalism, were on full display during the Freshie Night 2011, where the theme was "Dangal at Kagalingan lalay sa Bayan:Pagiging Iskolar ng Bayan lyong Panindigan". It was especially touching to see how the freshmen appreciate the spirit of being a UP student, "a social agent of change".
- Members of the student council and some student groups are increasingly concerned with the restricted use of facilities. For example, the use of the lobby has been prohibited citing changes in the administration outlook. Also, a curfew has been imposed on account of student safety, but performing groups instead move practices to public areas. The student council has been advised to dialogue with the Office of Student Affairs (OSA).

UP Los Baños

- The UPLB administration has taken steps to streamline the varsity program, which students have interpreted as moves to abolish the teams. The administration admits that it may withdraw funding from several groups. Instead, it hopes to have a more extensive

intramurals and local tournaments to involve more students. While warm to the idea of more sports games, the varsity teams and the student council have taken a strong position against abolition of teams, asserting that the sports program should be holistically developed.

- The UPLB chancellor selection has surfaced long-standing issues such as the large class policy, campus repression, military presence, mandatory ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps), deteriorating facilities, and increasing dorm fees.

UP Visayas

- The UP Visayas chancellor selection has highlighted students' anxiety over the facilities, such as additional laboratories for the School of Technology, which nominees have promised in their programs of action. Given the expected UP budget cut for 2012, students worry that the source of funding would come from student fees, or from land leases that would infringe upon the academic space and atmosphere.
- Students have also insisted on representation in policy making bodies, and particularly on involvement in the selection of the OSA director. In some units, the OSA director is the equivalent of the vice-chancellor for student affairs.

UP Manila

- The UP Manila chancellor selection has specifically brought out a perennial concern: dormitories for students. The Manila campus has been acknowledged to have one of the highest density in the UP System. Nominees have laid out plans for student service facilities including a cafeteria, gymnasium, tambayans.

UP Cebu

- Students of UP Cebu are restless over the decision in the trial of Dean Enrique Avila, as he is due out from preventive suspension by the end of August. The decision is expected from the Administrative Disciplinary Tribunal anytime.
- As with UP Visayas, the students have concerns about representation in policy making bodies. Their autonomy raises several questions from the student council about changes in their powers, rights and responsibilities.

Activities

Students Congress

The main theme of the **2011 UP Students' Congress** is "**UP Strikes Back**", a pledge to critical, constructive, and collective engagement of the youth in nation-building. Discussions and resolutions will revolve around the current situation of the education, health, and other social services sector, the education crisis, and human rights violations. We will have special workshops on the environment and on peace in Mindanao.

These congresses will bring together students on the following dates and venues:

3-4 September | Luzon-wide Students' Congress | UP Los Baños, Laguna

For students from UP Baguio, UP Diliman, UP Manila, UP Los Baños, and UPM SHS in Baler

10-11 September | Mindanao-wide Students' Congress | UP Mindanao, Mintal, Davao City
For students from UP Mindanao and UP Manila School of Health Sciences (UPM SHS) in Koronadal

16-17 September | Visayas-wide Students' Congress | UP Visayas, Tacloban, Leyte
For students from UP in the Visayas Miag-ao, Iloilo, and Tacloban campuses, UP Cebu, and UPM SHS in Palo

The objectives of the Students' Congresses are:

- To strengthen the capacity of students and youth organizations of the University of the Philippines for socio-political, cultural, and environmental advocacies
- To draw out sound opinions and critical sentiments from the student community in order to formulate positions and constructive action plans on common concerns
- To increase understanding and cooperation among the students in the campaign for greater state subsidy to education, and to end the education crisis
- To inculcate the spirit of community integration, service to the people, and genuine Oblation

All students are invited to be part of the Congress. It will also serve as an opportunity to garner support for the new UP administration and fete the president on the occasion of his investiture.

Student Trustees and Regents National Congress

The Student Regents of UP, the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, and the Philippine Normal University, together with the National Union of Students of the Philippines organized the 1st Student Trustees and Regents National Congress on 25-29 August 2011 at the Bicol University, Legazpi City, Albay.

The congress aims to:

- Establish a national federation of Student Trustees and Regents (tentatively to be called, Starfed)
- Plan for a comprehensive and strategic campaign for higher budget for state colleges and universities
- Train student leaders in basic and technical skills for effective student leadership

Over 100 student leaders from state and local universities and colleges all over the country have confirmed.


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