

## **Opening Remarks**

### **BALANGKAS: Symposium on Potential New GE Courses**

*Chancellor Michael L. Tan*

This year, only around 1,500 students passed the UPCAT due to the effects of the K to 12 program. Students have begun to enter the Senior High School level, and the University is expecting the full batch of Senior High School graduates to enter UP by August 2018. It is imperative, then, for the University to make adjustments on its curricular offerings in light of the movements in the educational system in the Philippines. We have no choice but to respond to these changes, since the High School curriculum is now different with the implementation of the K to 12.

These adjustments are even more crucial for UP's GE program. There have been issues in the past regarding the implementation of the Revitalized General Education Program in the University. The UP System began proposing revisions to the GE program in 2013, initially with a "System 8" proposal (8 GE subjects) which drew protests from Diliman. Questions were raised about the need to even revise, the exclusion of history and Filipino, and the consultation processes.

As a result, the system went into a more consultative process, organizing a System-wide GE conference in February 5-6, 2015. Diliman played a key role in the conference and in a series of mini-conferences to craft GE courses.

Some of these courses are not essentially new, such as Filipino and Kasaysayan, which are integral courses in the University's General Education program. They have been redesigned in keeping with the changes in the Philippines' educational system. Others are entirely new, such as the GE course proposed by the College of Human Kinetics.

Diliman's horizon is August 2018. The University Council meeting on Monday, January 25 will decide on the proposed minimum number of GE units as well as the required courses. The UC meeting will not just discuss the core courses to be offered by the different academic units, but also degree program changes. Following this, the University will move to adjust the curricula of all the degree programs in the University. A Minor degree design is being looked at in terms of the curricular changes, since this will increase the competitiveness of our graduates and provide more career options for them. Pilot teaching of some new GE courses can begin during Academic Year 2016-2017.

But today, let's listen to the proposed new GE courses. We're not here to debate, but rather appreciate the hard work that has been put into the conceptualization of the courses and to consider the best options for our students and the University.