



## **Statement on the fire at the UP Faculty Center Dr. Michael L. Tan, Chancellor, UP Diliman**

A general alarm fire started at the Faculty Center at 1:15 a.m. on Friday, Apr. 1, and came under control by 4:40 a.m. As of 6:45 a.m., the Bureau of Fire Protection could not declare a complete "fire out" because there were still some flames in some rooms on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, but fire trucks are on standby.

The fire was finally out 11:25 a.m.

The security guards on duty reported seeing a small flame coming out of a room at the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, and then the fire spread very quickly. When I got to the site at 1:45 a.m., the entire 3<sup>rd</sup> floor was burning and about half an hour later, began to spread to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The fire eventually spread to, and consumed half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and a small part of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

The fire affected the faculty of all the departments of the College of Arts and Letters (CAL) and, for the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy (CSSP), the departments of history, anthropology, linguistics and philosophy.

There were no injuries or casualties. The other losses are incalculable, considering all the books, research notes, archival materials that went up in flames. There was much grieving from faculty, staff and students who rushed to the site.

The following measures will be implemented today:

- 1) The entire Faculty Center building and parking area will be off limits starting today to allow an investigation from the Bureau of Fire Protection. Also, given such a long and high-intensity fire, the structural integrity of the building now needs to be evaluated so we do not take any chances. Faculty with rooms in the FC will have to be held back for a few days before they can enter the building.
- 2) Classes in the CAL building are suspended today. Faculty members who were adversely affected by the fire, *i.e.* loss of teaching materials, psychological adjustment problems (people have been talking about "grieving" —have the option of not holding their classes, even if not in the CAL building.
- 3) Both the deans of CAL and CSSP are working out arrangements for temporary faculty offices. CAL will use Pavilion 1 at the Palma complex as the office of the dean and other administrators. We will rush the work on Pavilion 2, which is for CSSP's history and philosophy departments and we hope that they can share spaces with anthropology and linguistics if needed.
- 4) The two colleges will conduct their needs assessments with Vice Chancellor for Administration Virginia C. Yap, who is ready to authorize emergency procurements.
- 5) All units in Diliman should convene meetings as soon as possible to reassess building policies, in particular:
  - a) access to rooms at night;
  - b) strict enforcement of all lights out, all appliances unplugged at night;
  - c) provision of duplicate keys for all rooms, to be kept by the building's central administration so they can access the rooms in cases of emergency.
- 6) Although the Bureau of Fire Protection recently concluded an inspection of all our buildings, everyone is enjoined to conduct another evaluation and procure whatever is needed for fire prevention and/or immediate responses to fires.

*01 April 2016*