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OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

Statement on Allegations of UP Students Being Forced to Join the NPA

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Once again, the University of the Philippines (UP), together with the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP), has been the target of red-baiting that can only cause anxiety among parents and students, while encouraging the military and the police to harass UP faculty and students.

The Philippine Daily Inquirer, in an article on January 14, 2019, quoted claims from Chief Supt. Edward Carranza, Director of the Police Regional Office in CALABARZON, that UP and PUP students were brought to Laguna for immersion activities and then forced by rebels to join them. The claims, Carranza said, came from former rebels who surrendered to authorities last weekend in Kalayaan, Laguna.

I want to emphasize that in UP Diliman, any out of classroom activity – from visits to museums to OJT (on-the-job training) to immersion activities (usually as part of the mandatory NSTP or National Service Training Program) and field research – have to be cleared with our Office of Field Activities. Faculty members need to submit a comprehensive description of the intended activity, with details on faculty supervision, where the students will be, who the students are, waivers (for minors) and even a certificate of physical fitness when appropriate.

The Office for Field Activities' many requirements come out of a recognition of our heavy responsibility, as administrators, to assure the safety and well-being of our students and faculty, in and out of the classroom.

At the same time, we recognize that our students' education must go beyond the narrow confines of our classrooms, or campuses. Whatever academic degree they might be pursuing, our students need to explore and appreciate the world outside of UP and to develop their competencies, linked to social realities.

This is why red-baiting tactics always alarm us. Besides causing distress to students and their parents, we worry about how the red baiting impact on soldiers and police, especially in rural areas.

In the last year alone, we have had two encounters with the military which are clearly caused by the red scare.

In May last year, researchers from our College of Science's Institute of Biology were harassed by an Army sergeant while they were doing field work in Palanan, Isabela. The sergeant threatened the researchers several times, citing their being from UP as evidence that they were rebels.

Fortunately, UP Diliman officials were able to respond with the help of the National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon and officials of the Department of Science and Technology, and the Department of the Interior and Local Governments. The military man was flown out of Palanan and local government officials have assured us our researchers will be able to safely conduct their research.

In December last year, one of our PhD students in linguistics was also harassed by military personnel while she was doing research on one of the languages in Zamboanga Sibugay. She was heavily interrogated, and her notebooks examined, the military personnel insinuating that she was a rebel, again simply because she was from UP. UP Diliman officials were able to respond quickly and we are especially grateful to Rep. Ann K. Hofer for interceding.

The two incidents show the dangers of red scare tactics, where the military or police might be emboldened to harass, threaten or even harm, students, researchers or faculty. The recent moves to profile faculty who are members of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) further aggravates the tensions.

We will continue to encourage and support out-of-classroom learning activities, while taking more precautions including obtaining prior clearances from local government officials. We also continue to coordinate with the police and the military but ask that they exert more due diligence with their men and women in the field, especially in remote areas.

Let us allow UP's researchers to further enrich our knowledge about our country's history, languages, arts and culture, ecosystems, flora and fauna, without fear of harassment.

Let us allow our *iskolar ng bayan*, many of whom come from families of government personnel, the military and the police, to pursue a well-rounded education, in touch with and caring about the world outside of UP.