

**STATEMENT FROM THE UP DILIMAN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL URGING THE UP  
PRESIDENT AND THE BOARD OF REGENTS  
TO RESPECT AND UPHOLD THE AUTHORITY OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL  
AND ITS CONSTITUENT FACULTY ON ALL ACADEMIC MATTERS AND TO  
HONOR THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE LONG-  
ESTABLISHED IN THE UNIVERSITY**

The University Council of UP Diliman (UPD) calls on the UP President and the Board of Regents (BOR) to **respect and uphold** the authority and judgement of the University Council and its constituent Faculty on all academic matters, consistent with long-standing norms of the University and the formal mandate of the University Council as the highest academic body of the UPD, and to **honor** long-standing principles of democratic governance that have been indispensable to protecting and advancing values of Honor and Excellence.

This statement is compelled by the recent decision of the UP President *rejecting* the judgement of a College Faculty, its Dean, and the UPD Executive Committee of Deans and Directors in a case of student intellectual dishonesty, as well as by recent decisions of the BOR *rejecting* the recommendations of the Chancellor, following from difficult, time-honored, and peer-driven Search processes, on the selection of new Deans.

On the first matter, the University Council reminds the UP President and BOR that **Intellectual Dishonesty is a purely academic matter**; acts of Intellectual Dishonesty - including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, and the fabrication/falsification/distortion or destruction of data - are violations of academic integrity for which the Faculty is specifically charged with defining and enforcing standards and norms. This is a fundamental principle upon which the 2012 Code of Student Conduct is based:

*“The faculty has the right to define standards of intellectual honesty on students, and exact norms of academic scholarship. The faculty considers acts of intellectual dishonesty as violations of academic integrity.” (p. 1)*

**Thus, Intellectual Dishonesty is fundamentally different in nature and manner of treatment from all other acts of student misconduct (such as fraud, harm to persons, and damage to property, among others).** The 2012 Code prescribes that the process governing acts of Intellectual Dishonesty be managed exclusively by academic peers, even as the due process rights of students are stringently protected. A system of oversight is exercised at all levels - between and among members of the College Disciplinary Committee (CDC), by the Dean, by the Executive Committee – which assumes integrity and objectivity of participating Faculty and lengthy and thorough deliberations undertaken by CDCs and Deans. Affirming this subsidiarity, the UPD Executive Committee, *of its own accord*, in turn requires a higher threshold of votes to overturn the evaluation and judgement of a CDC and Dean.

**It is this same respect - for the integrity, objectivity, rigor and judgement of Faculty and collegial bodies in matters of Intellectual Dishonesty - that the University Council now calls for on the part of the UP President and the BOR. Unless new and substantial information is presented on the said cases, the University Council urges the UP President and BOR, of their own accord, to unequivocally uphold the judgements rendered by the College Faculty, its Dean, and the UPD Executive Committee.**

On the second matter of appointment of Deans, **a Dean is, first and foremost, an academic leader**, if not first among equals, then, at the very least, a model of honor and excellence in the discipline. As qualification and expectation, academic leadership preempts other skills such as being good fund-raiser or able administrator, especially for a Dean of a National University that is mandated to:

*“Lead in setting academic standards and initiating innovations in teaching, research, and faculty development in philosophy, the arts and humanities, the social sciences, engineering, natural sciences, mathematics, and technology; and maintain centers of excellence in these disciplines and professions.*

*Serve as a graduate university by providing advanced studies and specialization for scholars, scientists, writers, artists, and professionals especially those who serve on the faculty of state and private colleges and universities.*

*Serve as a research university in various fields of expertise and specialization by conducting basic and applied research, promoting research and development, and contributing to the dissemination and application of knowledge...*

*Serve as a regional and global university in cooperation with international and scientific unions, networks of universities, scholarly and professional associations in the Asia Pacific Region and around the world.”*

**It is with this rationale that the search and evaluation of nominees for a new Dean has by tradition been managed and participated in by academic peers; the Faculty of each discipline are the greatest resource and have the greatest stake in the selection of Deans.** The search for a new Dean is a painstaking but time-honored process involving consultations with stakeholders, an appreciation of the needs and aspirations of our academic units, and the appreciation of the qualifications of candidates. Complications will regularly arise (e.g. forming the search committee, internal dynamics within academic units, and sometimes a dearth of nominees) requiring strategic timing and handling and occasionally resulting in delays and interim appointments. Such delays and complications however are expected and to be taken in stride, a fact of which the UP President is well-aware, having served concurrently as UP President and the Dean of the College of Law, for almost a year before a new dean was recommended and appointed.

*9 September 2019, University Council of U.P. Diliman*

Notwithstanding the difficulties involved in the Search Process for a new Dean, it is fundamentally one whose deliberations and outcomes should be borne and reflective of the participation and judgment of academic peers.

**The University Council is therefore alarmed by recent actions and decisions by the UP President and the BOR which seem to demonstrate a devaluation or disregard for the dynamics of these processes, particularly the work of evaluation performed by Search Committees and the Chancellor's recommendations for new Deans.** These UP President and BOR's actions and decisions give the unfortunate impression that political connections carry inordinate weight in the appointment of Dean and that requirements of scholarship and professional recognition may be waved aside. We specifically reference the recent rejection of the Chancellor's recommendations for new Dean in one college.

We note too in another college, the recommendation for an interim OIC was also rejected, for reasons that have not been formally explained.

By devaluing or disregarding the evaluation of academic peers in the search for their own academic leaders, the UP President and BOR undermine the efforts of a Constituent Unit to lead in setting academic standards, maintain centers of excellence, and innovate in teaching and research, among many other academic functions mandated in the UP Charter.

**The University Council calls on the UP President and BOR to recognize the role of Dean as academic leader, first and foremost, and to respect, defend and uphold the recommendations on the selection of Dean emanating from the collegial, participative and faculty-led processes of Constituent Units of the University.**

*9 September 2019, University Council of U.P. Diliman*