

**Re-Imagining UP Diliman**  
**as an Academic Center of Excellence:**  
Inclusive, Diverse and Public Service-Oriented

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Our country today stands at a critical juncture. Our economy is catching up with other emerging markets; its foreign policy exhibits some flexibility in the face of shifting geopolitical dynamics in the region and beyond. For the country to attain parity with developed countries, however, much still needs to be done: raise domestic productivity and competitiveness, ensure a more equitable distribution of the benefits of growth, develop robust institutions, respond to the life-threatening impact of the climate crisis, enrich cultural legacies and nurture a sense of nationhood amidst an ever-globalizing world.

The world under the Fourth Industrial Revolution is changing at an unprecedented level and pace. The emergence of digital technology is fundamentally transforming the way we live, work and relate to each other, affording new ways to create and consume, introducing new modes of service delivery. However, as with all technological change, their impact on societies, which can be beneficial or harmful, will be shaped by how we understand, use, and manage them, particularly by our policy choices.

The University of the Philippines Diliman will play a critical role in this time of change. Seldom in the history of any university do circumstances converge to open up such an enormous space for creativity, innovation, and social impact. Such historic possibilities cannot fail to excite academic leaders such as the next Chancellor who should lead UP Diliman in facing today's challenges toward securing our country's future: educating our students to adapt and thrive in a fast-changing world and mobilizing the university's best minds to craft policy and solve complex problems in the most innovative and interdisciplinary way.

### **I envision UP Diliman as a modern research university with a public mission.**

We shall build on the gains of previous administrations, learning from the successes and shortcomings of the past, to provide the resources, policy support, and environment to enable the university to attain academic excellence in teaching, research, and public service.

Within the UP System, UP Diliman has the most comprehensive range of course offerings and disciplinary programs. Its faculty and students come from different walks of life, regions, ethnicities, and political persuasions—a **diversity** that makes UP Diliman a campus like no other in our country. **The interaction of academic programs and multiplicity of identities, belief systems, economic interests, and cultural traditions provide a fertile ground for critical and innovative thinking** as well as cross-cultural understanding.

This diversity lies at the heart of UP Diliman's dynamism and strength as an academic institution that has produced many of our country's leaders and movers in politics, industry, and culture. The vibrancy of campus life provides unique opportunities for learning, helping our graduates to excel in their chosen vocations and become productive and responsible citizens, attuned to and ready to respond to real-world challenges confronting their respective communities, our country, and the region.

If given the opportunity and privilege to lead, I will promote and strategically position **UP Diliman as an inter-disciplinary hub** that will work with government, industry, civil society and social movements, as well as communities to identify and draw up holistic practical responses to policy questions and technology gaps in our country's progress into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This means bringing together the best minds in different disciplinary clusters to produce innovative and integrated solutions to development challenges.

I will endeavor to pursue academic excellence, the protection of academic freedom and integrity, democratic governance, the promotion of the well-being and dignity of the academic community, administrative and operational efficiency, and the establishment of a safe, smart, resilient and sustainable campus.

# Academic excellence

Academic excellence requires that we foster a culture of study and research that integrates disciplines and academic programs, mindful of the importance of both applied research and basic research. We will continue to cultivate the **spirit of critical inquiry** and **challenge the community** to seek **new ways of seeing and solving problems, guided by a strong moral compass**.

The problems we confront as a university community and nation are complex and multi-dimensional, and are best understood and solved through inter-disciplinary teaching, research, and extension. We will bring together the best minds across the disciplines to address these problems through research and evidence-based policy, with UP Diliman, whenever possible, serving as an incubator and laboratory for ideas and innovative projects. We will also enhance the digital infrastructure, tools, and applications that would facilitate world class research as well as enrich our teaching and learning practices.

Our students must be prepared for their professions and enabled to navigate and help shape a fast-changing society. We will **strengthen our General Education program, alongside the specializations**, so that our graduates are equipped with the necessary skills of critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, and imbued with necessary **cultural and ethical moorings** in this age of globalization and new technologies.

We will continue our support for our varsity teams and sports programs and strengthen community pride and team spirit. Music, theater, literature and art programs need to be bolstered as these contribute to the vibrant cultural life on campus. All these are integral components of a well-rounded and holistic education.

We will expand the necessary support mechanisms and incentives such as outright research grants, the SOS (Source of Solutions) grants, extension grants and the IP and Technology Transfer grants for problem-solving knowledge production and application.

Journals, publications and creative works are essential to scholarship. We will implement the enabling mechanisms to encourage, support and incentivize publication and creative works by our faculty and REPS, especially junior researchers. We will work with CHED and other universities to promote and enhance the Philippine Citation Index, in order to strengthen local journals, especially in the social sciences and humanities. The promotion of scholarly studies on Philippine society, cultures and languages is important to deepen our national identity and enrich local heritage.

**Internationalization** is another requisite of academic excellence, a direction that the university has long been pursuing. However, internationalization requires an appreciation of our own culture and history because this will serve as our anchor in the globalized world. We are part of a broader community built on interdependence and respect. **In UP**, our internationalization policy should also be **firmly grounded on the recognition of our duty to our own nation**. It is a means to **improve our academic programs** and **enhance our capability to serve our country and people**.

International benchmarking with the best in the region and the world is vital for academic excellence. But while we take pride in UP's inclusion in world and national university rankings, we are aware that the rankings do not fully capture our mandate as a national university. I will propose a multi-disciplinary discussion on metrics of academic performance, such as impact factors, citation counts, and the h-index, which have heavily influenced performance evaluation in academia in recent decades. Quantification will have to be combined with qualitative measures of performance across mandated functions of teaching, research and public service. We will continue to protect our researchers from predatory publications and conferences in order to safeguard our academic integrity.

# Academic freedom and integrity

Academic excellence can only thrive under conditions of openness and respect for diversity. This means that the freedom to question, to think, to write, and to speak is granted to all, regardless of ideologies, economic beliefs, political persuasions, and cultural background.

**Academic freedom** includes the freedom to challenge orthodoxies and established ways of thinking and acting without fear of repression or punitive action. This freedom **is essential for the life of the mind and for UP's dual role as knowledge producer and social critic.** We play the role of social critic from a position of evidence-based scholarship and moral courage. This role should be recognized as a distinct duty to the nation.

The freedom to think and speak out creates an intellectually vibrant environment where our students are exposed to the widest range of perspectives. **An important goal of UP education is to sharpen their critical thinking** so that they are able **to discern and distinguish** truth from lies, and right from wrong. This is why we must defend, and will defend UP as a safe space where free thought and free speech are practiced responsibly, and where collegiality and respect prevail.

## Democratic governance

Our university calls for a peculiar style of governing. It cannot be run like any business enterprise or government agency. Its purpose is to harness the intellect, creativity, and talent of its free-thinking scholars and artists. The Chancellor, besides providing them with support services, must imbue them with a sense of purpose and inspire them toward higher goals, while leaving them to nurture their individual passions. Academics have an abundance of expertise, generosity, and idealism that can be harnessed by university leaders they respect.

The consistent and fair application of rules and standards inspires confidence among members of the community in the university's processes and procedures. To **promote transparency and accountability in decisions and actions**, we will **enhance our public information systems**, and enjoin the heads of all units to ensure the widest and quickest possible dissemination of information that affects our students, staff, and faculty. We will also put in place **functional grievance and feedback mechanisms**, from the lowest organizational unit to the highest level.

As Chancellor, I will strengthen efforts to **uphold democratic rights by conducting regular consultations on academic, personnel, and community concerns**, with a view to empowering our students, faculty, REPS and staff. The recent establishment of the REPS Welfare Council is an important step toward the meaningful participation of REPS in campus governance. I will continue to support such initiatives.

## Well-being and dignity of the academic community

The UP Community can only perform its public mission if the well-being and dignity of its members are safeguarded and enhanced. Everyone—staff, faculty, REPS, and students — plays an indispensable and complementary role in running our institution.

The creation of a nurturing and enabling environment is essential for effective study and work. The university should provide students, faculty, REPS, and staff comfortable, healthy, modern, and agile arrangements that are conducive for study, work, re-charging, and collaborating. We will **expand the services of the Diliman Learning Resource Center** and give **more support to initiatives such as the Kapihan sa Diliman**, a 24/7 study space for students. Moreover, the **provision of adequate housing, healthcare and other services must be enhanced to promote**



**well-being and dignity.** Among priority concerns is the continued **upgrading** of the **UP Health Service** and the **implementation of the primary care program** that is **consistent with the Universal Health Care Law.**

**Advancing gender equality** is a vital aspect of promoting the well-being of its constituents and of the university's transformative role. While UP has been a pioneer in advancing women and gender programs, there remains an urgent need to strengthen existing programs and support for forefront offices such as the Diliman Gender Office, the Office of Sexual Harassment, and Center for Women's and Gender Studies, including mechanisms at the college and unit levels.

There is a growing realization about the need for mental health awareness and a community-wide effort towards making the campus a psychologically healthy environment for students, faculty and staff. This endeavor will be informed by evidence-based approaches and mental health research. I will continue and push for the institutionalization of the PsycServ program and ensure that the facilities and resources necessary to respond to the mental health needs of the community are provided. We will continue to put in place programs and avenues where students and staff can nurture total (physical, mental, emotional and social) well-being.

The needs of certain sectors among our constituents, such as retiring faculty and staff, persons with disabilities, and those representing various cultural identities will be given special attention. We will conduct a social audit of policies and programs to effectively address their concerns.

**Informal settler families** have been living in the Diliman campus for several decades. We will continue to **work with the city government** and other relevant agencies to provide **relocation sites with adequate housing and access to work.** Our experts in social work, home economics, community development, urban planning and other relevant disciplines will be mobilized to address this issue, consistent with the norms and ethos of our university.

## Administrative and operational efficiency

The efficient delivery of quality services to the members of the community is important. We will review administrative procedures, identify bottlenecks, and institute corrective measures for operational efficiency that are compliant with existing laws. An urgent task is the **creation of a comprehensive data management system** that will **help** the **university administration** make **timely and effective policy decisions.** The success of the UPD Computerized Registration System (CRS) is proof that such data systems can be developed by our own faculty, students and staff. We will consult and work with relevant government agencies in order to reduce barriers to research and innovation, such as procurement rules and regulations.

## Safe, smart, resilient and sustainable campus

Safety and disaster preparedness are paramount concerns. Towards this, we must strengthen the newly-formed Public Safety and Security Office (PSSO) so it can perform its mandate to maintain peace and order, and secure lives and property. We will provide more support and training to the UP Diliman Police and the complementary Special Services Brigade for better campus security. Fire safety audits will be conducted on our buildings, and with the help of the local government, we will enhance our fire-prevention measures and incident response capabilities.

**We will in general take the necessary steps to help our community mitigate risks, prepare for, and respond to any potential campus emergencies.** We shall work with the UP Resilience Institute (UPRI) and the Quezon City government, which has been investing in recent years on building its own capacity for disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and response. A DRRM task force will be created to ensure broad-based but

focused collaboration across the unit's different colleges, offices, and actors around the goal of making the UP Diliman community more resilient to disasters.

Diliman is home not only to more than 25,000 students and employees, but also a diverse ecosystem of decades-old trees and hundreds of species of flora and fauna. **We need to reiterate our commitment to the protection and revitalization of this environment**, whose open green spaces define the overall visual image of the university community, making it unique in Metro Manila's urban landscape.

With UP experts on urban planning, biodiversity, community development, landscape architecture, and environment-oriented disciplines we shall implement a program for environmental sustainability and transform the campus into a model for the entire nation as it moves to confront the impact of pollution and climate change. To this end, we will facilitate UP Diliman's transition towards becoming a plastics-free campus and a renewable energy champion.

This program of campus renewal will only be possible with the cooperation and solidarity of all members of the community.



I have devoted all my life to UP. In all these years, I have had the privilege of learning from and collaborating with some of the best and most creative minds in the university, while mindful of the issues and challenges that our community faces every day. I have thought long and hard about the life and future of this university, and I treasure this opportunity to lead and shepherd the energy and talents of our faculty, REPS, staff and students toward realizing our ideals, values and dreams as ***Iskolar ng Bayan, Iskolar para sa Bayan.***