

# Democratizing UP Education



A report submitted by the Study Group on Admissions  
created through Administrative Order No. PAEP 13-70 of 22 July 2013  
to University of the Philippines (UP) President Alfredo E. Pascual

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## Executive Summary

*Academic excellence is “Tatak UP” or the distinctive mark of UP education. However, excellence must not be synonymous with wanton exclusivity. Consistent with its status as the country’s national university (as stated in Republic Act No. 9500), UP education must be inclusive. It must implement uniform and affordable tuition and other fees “befitting UP as state supported institution for higher learning regardless of socio-economic class.” If the concept of “Iskolar ng Bayan” is to be maintained and even promoted, there should be no socio-economic divide between and among UP students. UP should not be discriminatory in the sense that “those who can afford should pay more.” There should be uniform affordable tuition fees for all. If there is one goal that should be nurtured at UP, it is “scholarship and academic excellence.” The Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program (STFAP) has become anti-poor despite earlier claims that it was established to make UP education affordable for students admitted into UP, particularly those coming from poor families. It is in this context that the STFAP {the bracketing method} could be compared to India’s caste system.*

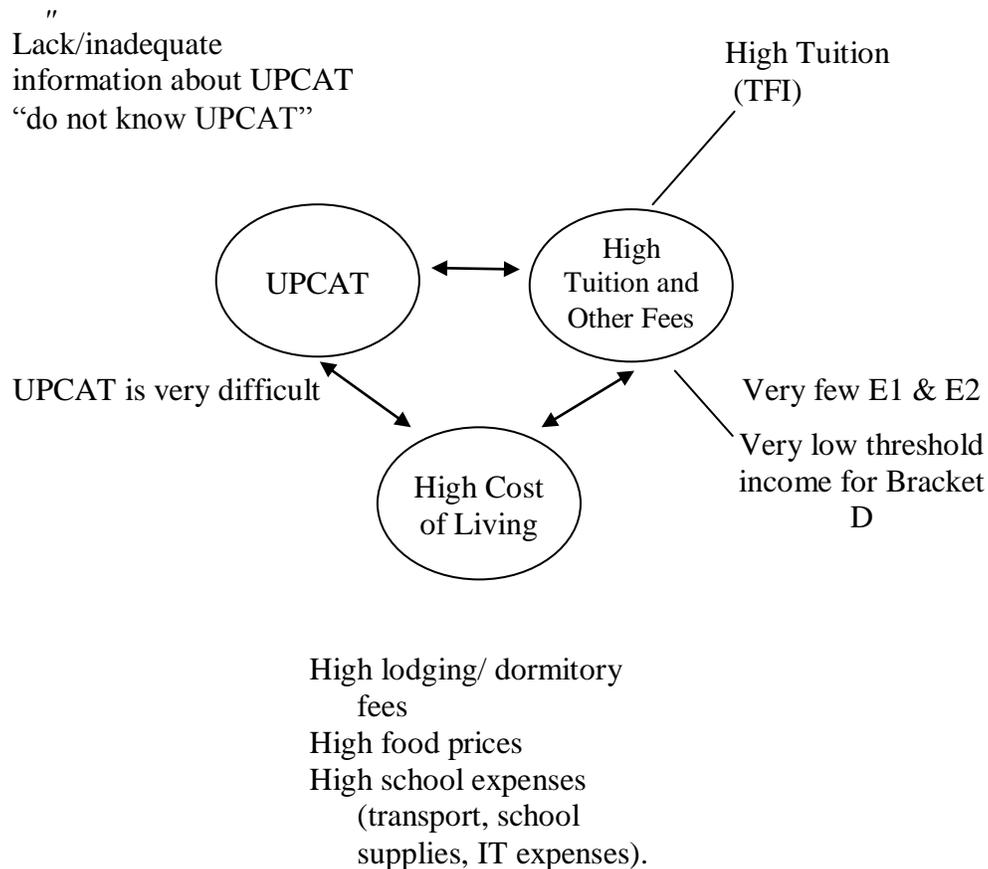
*The consulted UP students, faculty and staff point to a situation where access to UP by the poor sectors of our society is now being sacrificed. The death of Kristel Tejada was an unfortunate outcome of a trend where the poorer students are getting smaller or are being edged out. Why is this happening? Are UP policies now departing from the University’s mission to attract the best high school graduates in the entire country regardless of their socio-economic status?*

*Composed of seven members, our study group was created through the UP President's Administrative Order (A.O. PAEP 13-70) of July 22, 2013. It was tasked to review the admissions policy of the UP System. For a period of almost four months, our study group visited all the constituent universities of the UP System and held consultations with the faculty and non-teaching staff, students and alumni. We took note of the constituents' suggestions as well as recommendations. After gathering relevant data and reviewing related studies, the findings of the study were synthesized.*

*Three (3) interrelated drivers (Fig. 1) explain why the number of students coming from the poor sector of our society are getting smaller or why they are being “edged out” of UP, and they are as follows (not in any order): 1) UP College Admission Test (UPCAT); 2) High Tuition and Other Fees (particularly the STFAP) and 3) High Cost of Living.*

### **1. UP College Admission Test (UPCAT)**

*In the pursuit of academic excellence and to remove bias in selecting the best and brightest among high school graduate in the country to enroll in UP, UPCAT was started to be administered way back in 1968. In general, however, selection has been incurring “bias” against or in favor of certain sectors of society. During the consultations, we heard repeatedly the following arguments:*



*Fig. 1. The interactive effects of UPCAT, tuition and other fees, and cost of living that cause the edging out” of the poor students in UP*

*There is lack of information about UPCAT. Some parents or students do not even know that there is an UPCAT. At the extreme, some students/parents do not even know that UP even exists!*

*The following affirmative actions are necessary:*

- (a) UP should launch an information campaign about UPCAT in particular, or UP in general, using local and national multimedia (radio, TV, newspaper), and the Internet.*
- (b) Seek the cooperation of LGUs, high school principals/superintendents through the Department of Education in disseminating information about UPCAT.*
- (c) UPCAT application forms should be made available at the UP website for downloading and printing by interested students.*

*The UPCAT is very difficult, based on consultations we conducted. Students from private schools have a distinct advantage over those from public schools. This relates to lower quality of education, learning environment and support systems available to the students among the poor families. This could be extended to the womb (the mother/childhood days) of poor students.*

*What can be done immediately are as follows:*

- (1) *UPCAT review must be made accessible, available and affordable through any of the following means:*
  - (a) *Books, manuals and other review materials must be printed and readily available at bookstores nationwide. UPCAT review materials must be made available at the UP website that is easily downloadable and/or printable.*
  - (b) *Private review centers should be inclusive of the poor in their approach. For every 1 paying UPCAT reviewer, there should be 1 free UPCAT reviewer (1:1 pay-free ratio).*
  - (c) *Request alumni and students to help in the information dissemination or campaign by making review materials available and accessible, or in conducting/facilitating the review themselves in cooperation with the LGU, DepEd or High School Principal/Superintendent).*
- (2) *There should be a waiver of UPCAT application fee for students coming from the poor families. Since there is no guarantee of passing, poor parents do not readily give money to their children to pay for UPCAT application fee.*
- (3) *Prospective UPCAT takers coming from poor families in distant places should be accommodated for free in dormitories of UP exam centers the night before the examination. They should be able to apply for free accommodation conveniently, including via online. As soon as they arrive, the students should be provided with subsidized meals.*
- (4) *The UPCAT formula must be reviewed to undo or remove some biases or unscientific aspects of “palugit and pabigat” in the equation, including the adjustment factors (AF) for leniency and/or strictness in giving grades of some high schools. In other words, a serious review should be done on the mathematical equation used in computing the UPCAT scores.*
- (5) *Due recognition and rewards should be given to high school performance in computing the UPCAT grades. Consistent with Sec. 9 of R.A. 9500, high school salutatorians and valedictorians of public high schools should be given higher weights in the computation of UPAI (i.e., from 0.4 to 0.6);*

From

$$\text{UPAI} = 0.6 \text{ UPCAT score} + 0.4 \text{ HSWA}$$

To

$$\text{UPAI} = 0.4 \text{ UPCAT score} + 0.6 \text{ HSWA.}$$

*This will give more weight to their three years of efforts rather than the four-hour UPCAT exam. Since this will give them higher scores, in turn, it will give them higher chances to be included within the UPCAT cut-off score in their chosen colleges of the constituent universities (CUs).*

(6) *Furthermore, to reward their high school performance, the following shall be done:*

- (a) *Valedictorians who passed UPCAT shall be awarded as UP President Scholars and Salutatorians as Chancellor Scholars. They will get free tuition and other fees and other allowances. They will also be given free and automatic slots in student dormitories for freshmen if they are found to be poor.*
- (b) *In addition to our Oblation Scholars, rewards for academic excellence must be expanded to recruit the best and the brightest students. The following shall be awarded entrance scholarships:*
  - 1) *The top 10 in UPCAT by CUs shall be awarded as UP President Scholars.*
  - 2) *The top 11-20 students in UPCAT in CUs shall be awarded as Chancellor Scholars.*
  - 3) *The benefits shall be similar to valedictorians and salutatorians. Note: The basis shall be the raw score in the UPCAT exam (i.e., excluding the HSWA).*
- (c) *The President and Chancellor Scholarship Awards shall be sustained if the scholar obtained a grade of at least 1.25 for the President Scholar and 1.5 for the Chancellor Scholar.*
- (d) *Should they fail to maintain such grade point averages, they can avail of other scholarship grants . This means that the award and the incentives that go with it shall be on a per semester basis.*

### **UPCAT as the only way for freshmen to enter UP?**

*Consider the following:*

- (a) *Why does a single four-hour exam determine the rest of a student's chances to enter UP?*
- (b) *It is known already that the advantage of a better high school education (better training/teaching facilities, overall school environment) is dominant only during the first two to four semesters as they take mainly general education courses. The handicap of students who have studied from less-endowed schools are offset through their initiatives of putting more time and energy in studying.*

*Increasingly, universities abroad are complementing entrance exams (SAT/ACET) by interviewing the students who have passed those exams. Some colleges in UP (College of Fine Arts) are already interviewing students, which means that UPCAT scores are not the sole basis of admission into UP Other colleges may opt to do the same. In addition to the UPCAT score, an interview is necessary so that the students may be briefed on the nature of their profession and the expectations from them once they enroll and graduate from these disciplines.*

*A ladderized or “No-UPCAT option” in fact is being successfully implemented in the UP Manila SHS medical program. This can also be tried in other disciplines like*

*agriculture, forestry and veterinary medicine. For the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, it can be a non-degree option. The Associate in Agriculture was tried in the 1960s. Why it was stopped should be studied further and how it can be successfully implemented now. There is an existing model in the UPLB College of Forestry as briefly described below. In a similar manner, after finishing Associate in Agriculture, the students have the option to proceed to B.S.A. if they are interested and are academically capable to pursue graduate studies later ( MSc, PhD ). A Diploma in Agriculture which was offered in the 1980s but discontinued should also be reviewed and it can be offered again with modification as a post-baccalaureate option. For the post-baccalaureate Diploma in Agriculture program and similar Diploma programs, they may proceed to the MSc up to the PhD program.*

*For the College of Forestry at UPLB, there is an existing Certificate in Ranger Forestry. Their graduates in this program can proceed to BS Forestry or work for a while as Forest Ranger or any related employment.*

*Indeed, academic excellence is the distinctive mark of UP education but other ways to make UP education inclusive must be explored.*

## **2. High Tuition and Other Fees**

*Next to Ateneo de Davao University, UP Mindanao has the highest tuition in Mindanao. It is interesting to note that Mindanao State University is charging only P100/unit. UP Baguio, on the other hand, is charging the highest tuition per unit in the North. Saint Louis University (SLU) has the highest tuition fee per semester as the students enroll in 24-28 units. Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) is charging P12/unit only while Central Luzon State University is charging P130/unit. These data are necessary to compare the tuition at UP.*

*Based on the current STFAP bracketing system, UP charges P1,500/unit for Bracket A (the so-called millionaires' bracket) which is 11.54 times what a student pays at CLSU, 15 times what a student pays at MSU and 125 times what a student pays at PUP. While it is true that UP implements a socialized tuition system, the E1 and E2 grantees are a slim minority at 6% and 1%, respectively in UPLB, less than 5% in UP Diliman, UP Baguio, UP Mindanao for E1 and E2 combined. Of the 111 SUCs, UP is charging the highest tuition. The range of what SUCs charge is from P500/semester to P35,000/semester (UP).*

*If the number of STFAP E1 and E2 grantees is used as indicator of the socio-economic status of UP students, 90% or more are capable of paying tuition (2013 data). But this may not be so considering the number of students who are applying for student loans, scholarships, and part-time jobs to finance their studies. When we examined the STFAP in 1989, about 43% were in the non-paying bracket (1 to 5) in UPLB. There are only 7% (E1 and E2, 6% & 1%, respectively) by 2013.*

*The 1989 and 2006 STFAP were implemented differently. Many students are not applying for STFAP at all (73% as of 2012). Should this mean they are rich or UP tuition is affordable or relatively cheap for them?*

*If the flashy cars, top-of-the-line cellphones, laptops and other anecdotal evidence are to be considered, it cannot be denied that many of UP students are coming*

*from rich families. But this is a consequence of the 3 drivers as cited earlier (Fig. 1). The poor students are being edged out and they are replaced by the richer ones.*

*But how many are these students? If STFAP is used as reference point, the poor-to-rich ratio is 80:20 (Mendoza & Simbulan, 2013 April 15, PDI). This data is debatable, however. The students' families were simply being made to appear rich due to the Atanacio Income Function.*

*The self-rated poverty report by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) shows that more than half of Filipinos perceived themselves to be poor. Then, what is exactly the family income which should be considered as above poverty threshold income? An earned expendable income (liquid cash) of about P360,000 per year is our estimate. The monetized assets that will push up the predicted income (Atanacio et al. income function and now the MORES ISEC indicators) of the family, or more than a million pesos, must not be included.*

*Because of this, **our recommendation is to implement a UP tuition system that is uniform and affordable for all.** A socialized tuition regime is ironically undemocratic.*

*Iskolar ng Bayan is the main philosophy of UP education. To abandon this educational philosophy could be too costly to bear in training the future leaders in the country. UP runs parallel to the Philippine Military Academy. Despite the criticisms against or wrongdoings of some PMA graduates, nobody has entertained the idea of closing or not supporting it. National security, after all, is a primary consideration. The same is true for education. If we are to consider education as too costly, consider the opposite case.*

*It is not that quality education can only be obtained at UP. However, RA 9500 has declared UP as the country's national university. The state should fully support UP befitting its status as a national university.*

*The earnings from tuition and other fees (P1.2 billion) are huge. But in the grander scheme of things, it is "small" if we consider the role UP plays in the country – training of future leaders in the sciences, arts, culture and post-graduate education to improve governance, research, public service, science and technology development for the country.*

*It must be stressed that Thailand is now supporting five national research universities, investing 31% of the education budget to tertiary education.*

*For the 2014 proposed national budget, the Philippines is only spending about 11.0% of P31.9 B for the entire 111 SUCs which include UP. It was 15% in 2006. Should the 15% be retained, the half a billion pesos of net earnings from tuition will become small. More so, if the 31% tertiary budget allocation for education of Thailand is followed (or even just the 25% tertiary budget allocation given by Malaysia), then the SUCs including UP shall have adequate funds. An additional P1-billion budget for UP (to cover tuition and other fees) is a sound, meritorious, futuristic investment or cash transfer where the return on investment (ROI) and multiple tangible and intangible benefits for the country are immeasurable.*

### 3. The High Cost of Living

*The high cost of living is relative as it is a function of one's own earnings or disposable income. The SWS data show that more than half of self-rated poverty was due to high cost of living (e.g., food prices, electricity/water bills, etc.). Because of the difficult daily subsistence of the poor, it is increasingly difficult for them to think about sending their gifted children to UP unless they are accommodated in dormitories, food is subsidized or they are given meal allowances or their scholarship programs are adequate to allow them to survive while studying. There are, after all, numerous school-related expenses (e.g., books, Internet rental fees for surfing/downloading references, printing reports, interviewing resource persons in case studies, educational field trips).*

*A poor parent once said to the offspring, "If you study in UP, I cannot send sufficient allowance regularly." Income from the farm is seasonal and irregular. A taxi driver can hardly offset the 24-hour boundary and fuel and take home sufficient net earnings for the daily expenses (an average net earning of P500/24-hr taxi car rent).*

*At UPLB, the estimated average monthly expenses range from P6,000 to P8,000 per month to cover dormitory and school expenses. UPLB can only accommodate less than 30% of students in the dormitories. The rest are renting bed spaces, apartment houses, or private lodging houses paying P1,500-P5,000 per month. The monthly expenses for students at UP Diliman and UP Manila are much higher. A P4,000-weekly allowance per students is average. Bed space can be as high as P5,000 monthly or more around UP Manila.*

*UP is doing a lot to address these concerns but these do not solve fundamental problems in the admission processes and other systems that are currently in place at UP. For one, STFAP Brackets E1 & E2 grantees remain at less than 10 percent. In UPLB, there are 100 scholars (total from different sources) out of 12,800 students. There is a program "meal now pay later!" at P100/day. There are other individual initiatives done by faculty and REPs to feed students.*

### UP Democratization

*The ideal UP is where academic excellence and equity prevails. This is rightly summed up in Sec. 9 of RA9500:*

*"The national university shall take affirmative steps which may take the form of an alternative and equitable admissions process to enhance the access of disadvantaged students, such as indigenous peoples, poor and deserving students, including but not limited to valedictorians and salutatorians of public high schools, and students from depressed areas, to its programs and services. No student shall be denied admission to the national university by reason solely of age, gender, nationality, religious belief, economic status, ethnicity, physical disability, or political opinion or affiliation. The national university recognizes the separation of Church and State. It shall guarantee religious freedom and shall not discriminate on the basis of religion."*

*Democratizing UP requires addressing the 2 major divides, namely: geographic and socio-economic.*

*(a) The geographic divide*

*The Philippine is an archipelagic country. To address this geographic divide, autonomous constituent universities (CUs) have been established in various major islands. But there must be efforts to address the inequity. Mindanao has 25% of the Philippine population but UP Mindanao has only less than 2% of the UP student population. There must be progressive increase of UP Mindanao studentry, evolving it into the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest constituent university (UPLB is now the second largest; the largest is UP Diliman having 35% of UP students). UP Mindanao should be the vehicle of UP for the “peace and development” initiative in Mindanao, and for promoting cooperation in the EAGA region (East Asia Geographic Area).*

*Consider the following: In Luzon, we have UP Baguio, UP Diliman (including UP extension in Pampanga; UP Tarlac was closed in 1973), and UP Los Baños, and Open University. Added together, their student populations account for more than 80% of the UP studentry. Luzon has only 55% of Philippine population.*

*The Visayas islands (17% of the Philippine population) has UP Cebu (autonomous college), UP Iloilo, UP Miag-ao and UP Tacloban. These units account for 15% of UP students. Why UP Mindanao is the laggard is no longer the issue. We need to address how to accommodate 20% of all UP students in the next 2 to 3 decades. UP Mindanao must be a comprehensive university. A master plan must be prepared for UP Mindanao.*

*Why is there a need to promote a geographic or location access for UP? The constituent universities (CUs) idea started it. Data on student composition of UP CUs are instructive. UPLB, UP Diliman, UP Baguio students and other CUs mainly (60-80%) come from their doorsteps or nearby provinces.*

*There are two options in narrowing the geographic/location divide:*

- (a) Open additional satellite campus as in the case of UP extension in Pampanga for UP Diliman (40% of students in UPEP could not have been studying in UP if not for UPEP. Their parents cannot afford the cost of living in UP Diliman. In this context, there may be a need for the UP administration to consider setting up UP Diliman, UP Manila and UPLB extensions in Palawan, Bicol; or UP Visayas extension in Samar, UP Mindanao extension in Sulu, Basilan, Zamboanga and Maguindanao.*
- (b) Develop and enrich the sandwich program. This could be further modified into location and distance learning modes. Fortunately, UP started earlier to implement distance education through the Open University.*

*Some courses (e.g., GE courses) can be taken on-location at satellite campuses while others are handled through e-learning. The current e-UP initiative is a step in the right direction. The Open University has been successfully implementing distance education both in the graduate and undergraduate levels. Distance learning modality have to hurdle many challenges too but mostly in the cultural, and attitudinal sides, which jointly amplify the digital divide in the society. However, in a decade or two, this will change. Again, a committee must be tasked to put details in these proposed hybrid or sandwich degree programs.*

*(b) The socio-economic divide*

*Democratizing the socio-economic divide in UP is partly solved by addressing the geographic divide of UP. But there remains the need for more comprehensive and integrative approaches (systemic and value chain) to address this in the short, medium, and long terms.*

*If the “Iskolar ng Bayan” distinctive brand of UP education is to be maintained and promoted, there should be no socio-economic divide between and among the students. “Sa UP pantay-pantay mayaman man o mahirap ang pinanggalingang pamilya.” UP, therefore, should not be discriminatory. An inclusive UP education means uniform affordable tuition fees for all! There should only be one goal that should be nurtured: “scholarship and academic excellence.” UP should nurture the best and the brightest of our youth regardless of their socio-economic status.*

*(c) Needed: National support for "One UP"*

*The national government should provide adequate support to reach the goals of bridging those divides. Whether the current UP and National leaderships are to be blamed or not for the altered paradigm of UP education is no longer important. It is fruitful to find faults but not healthy to point fingers!*

*Let’s be united and leave behind us the geographic and socio-economic divides. As we claim “One UP”, we should say **“Tindog UP”** once more for the present and future generations of the Filipino People.*

## Democratizing UP Education

### 1.0. Introduction

Education is an important process by which a society harnesses its vast human resources in order to build a progressive society. Because it is a social responsibility, the 2008 UP Charter has mandated the State to institutionalize – thru the University of the Philippines – a mission that fulfills this.

But not a year goes by without reports of increases in miscellaneous and laboratory fees in the country's national university. This has been ongoing since 2007 when the University implemented the 300% increase in tuition, as approved by the UP Board of Regents in its December 2006 meeting.

Students and their faculty and staff allies point to a situation where access of the poor sectors of our society is now being sacrificed. The death of UP Manila student Kristel Tejada was an unfortunate outcome of a trend where the poorer students are getting fewer or are being edged out. Why is this happening? Are the policies of the State University now departing from the mission of the University to attract the best high school graduates in the entire country regardless of their socio-economic status, and especially the disadvantaged and financially challenged sectors of Philippine society?

Our study group, which is composed of seven members, was created mid-2013 through the UP President's Administrative Order (A.O PAEP 13-70 of July 22, 2013). It was tasked to review the admissions policy of the UP System. The study group worked for a period of almost four months, visiting all the constituent universities of the UP System and holding consultations with the faculty and non-teaching staff, students and alumni. We took note of the constituents' suggestions as well as recommendations. We thought at first that we could review our admissions policy independent of the series of tuition increases and the socialized tuition programs and the general cost of living once a student decides to enroll and study in any unit of UP. We could not.

The tuition increases and socialized tuition are leading toward the corporatization of the University. As shown by the data in this study, which came from the UP System and its constituent units, the University's admissions system and its support system/retention program are found to be inadequate in attracting, increasing and keeping the underprivileged but deserving students in our society. The information that the study group was able to collect speaks for itself.

As regards recommendations, we have taken the step to likewise look into the main admissions mechanism, the UP College Admission Test (UPCAT) which we have included in our study and reviewed from the vantage point of equal access.

Inadvertently, the data showed that if there is a UP unit that deserves to be given more support so it can give more access to disadvantaged Filipinos, it is UP Mindanao, one of the UP System's neglected regional units. UP Mindanao is also, so to speak, fertile ground for making U.P more accessible. In terms of Mindanao being the 2nd largest island, its contribution to GDP, and to account for its population, it is very much underrepresented in the profile of the UP student population nationwide.

UP Mindanao should be able to address the higher education needs of the six million Muslims, most of whom (90% approximately) are in Mindanao. There are about 14 million indigenous peoples (IPs), 60% of whom are in Mindanao and 30% in the Cordillera Region. Affirmative actions need to be done to bring more Muslims and IPs to UP (Sec. 5 of R.A. No. 7885). Of the identified 10 poorest provinces of the country, 5 are in Mindanao (Davao del Norte, Zamboanga del Norte, Maguindanao, Lanao del Norte, Surigao del Norte). There is no need to emphasize that the “peace and development” needs of Mindanao should be reflected in its physical and human resources’ capability building.

The proportion of the population who are below the poverty threshold was Very High in five of six Mindanao regions, ranging from 42% to 52.9 percent. And of the six regions, poverty has increased in 3 regions (Davao, SOCCSKSARGEN, and ARMM), has remained unchanged in one (Davao), and has declined in two (Zamboanga and Caraga). The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) registered the highest poverty incidence at 52.9% in 2012, up from 49.7% in 2009. The highest poverty incidence in the country was observed in Lanao del Sur (74.4%) and Maguindanao (65.5%) – both from the ARMM (Diokno, 2013, <http://www.econ.upd.edu.ph/perse/?p=2404>)

At this point it is important to note that reducing funds to support the State's premier university means that corporatization will transform the University, or corporate ethics will eventually dominate the operations of the University. The design of the "globalization" agenda and perspective of relying less on State support for tertiary education or for the country's national university only lead to greater commercialization of UP education. This can only mean that only those who have the means to pay can have access to it, further edging out the poor. UP should set a quantitative target in its affirmative action pursuant to Sec. 9 (Democratic Access) of RA 9500 which states:

*The national university shall take affirmative steps which may take the form of an alternative and equitable admissions process to enhance the access of disadvantaged students, such as indigenous peoples, poor and deserving students, including but not limited to valedictorians and salutatorians of public high schools, and students from depressed areas, to its programs and services.*

*No student shall be denied admission to the national university by reason solely of age, gender, nationality, religious belief, economic status, ethnicity, physical disability, or political opinion or affiliation.*

*The national university recognizes the separation of Church and State. It shall guarantee religious freedom and shall not discriminate on the basis of religion.*

We hope that the synthesis and recommendations (affirmative actions) forwarded by this study group to review the UP admissions policy can reverse this trend.

## **0. The University of the Philippines' College Admission Test (UPCAT): Review & Recommendations**

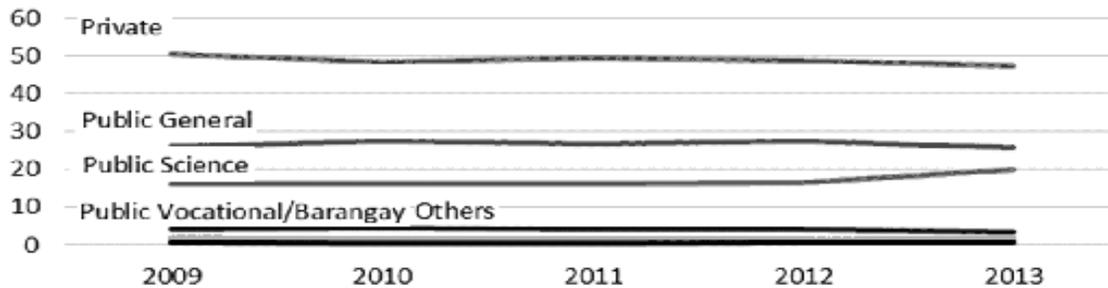
### **2.1. Brief Background**

As early as 1976, there was already deep concern about the largely upper-class composition of UP students as expressed by then-UP President Onofre Corpuz when he released a paper, "Towards a More Equitable Distribution of UP Educational Benefits". Then President Ferdinand Marcos urged the university to think about a more equitable system of admission in his commencement speech at UP Diliman (April 1976).

At present, UP is dominated by students coming from the upper socio-economic classes (SECs) of Philippine society at a ratio of 9:1 (using recent STFAP data). That there is a skewed distribution in favor of students coming from the middle and upper-middle classes of Philippine society is well-known. On the other hand, 90% of the UP budget comes from the state. Ironically, students from higher SECs who can pay the actual costs of their education through higher tuition dominate the UP student populace. In effect, the richer students are the ones enjoying government subsidy. It is true that their parents do pay taxes like anyone else, that they pass the UPCAT and that they pay higher tuition due to the STFAP. But the great majority of Filipinos are poor (i.e., more than 50% of the population). They live in environments that are far from ideal, suffer from inferior nutrition and experience lower quality primary and secondary education. Many of them do

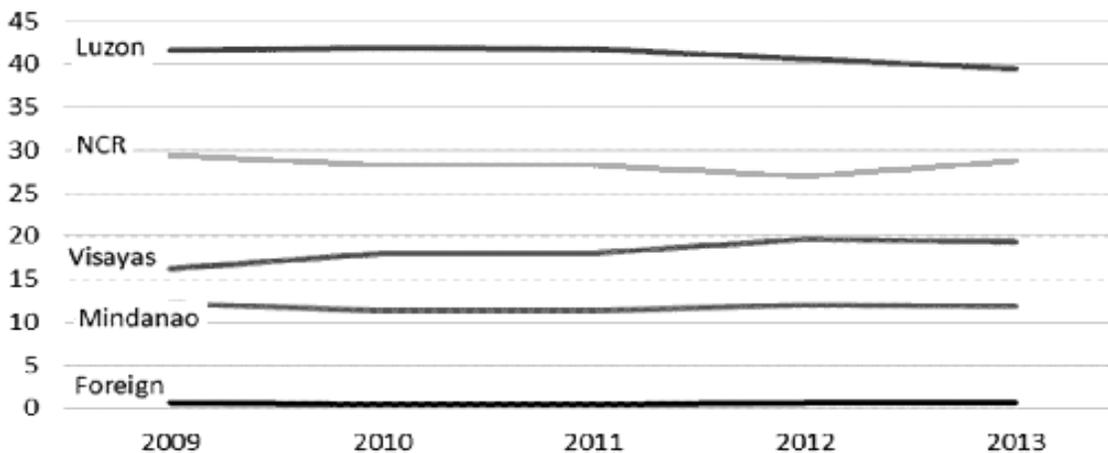
not even know that UP exists. Most do not take the UPCAT. But when they do, they do not qualify to be admitted because their scores are below the cut-off scores. The solution to this problem is not to implicitly accept the elitist character of UP education as a given by increasing tuition or implementing so-called “socialization” schemes which is likened to India’s caste system (*read next section on the review of UP tuition*). Just in time, what is needed is to exert genuine and honest efforts to change this deplorable state of affairs by democratizing admissions.

### The Current Situation



**Fig. 2: UPCAT Passers by High School Type**

From 2009 to 2013, the relative percentage distribution of UPCAT passers coming from the various types of high schools has remained roughly unchanged (See Fig. 2). Around 50% of UPCAT passers come from private schools, 20% from public science high schools, and around 30% are made up of combined students from public general and public vocational/barangay schools.



**Fig. 3: UPCAT Passers by Region**

From 2009 to 2013, students coming from Luzon and the National Capital Region (NCR) have made up around 70% of all UPCAT passers (See Fig. 3). Students coming from the Visayas and Mindanao combined make up roughly 30 percent. Representation from the Visayas, which is home to around 17% of the total Philippine population, has improved significantly in a short span of time, increasing from a little over 15% in 2009 to 20% in 2013. However, Mindanao, which makes up for 25% of the Philippine population, contributes only a little over 10% of all UPCAT qualifiers or those above the cut-off score (wherein the cut-off score represents the quota assigned in each degree/course of various colleges in every constituent university).

### 2.2. Brief Timeline of UPCAT

- 1968-69 –UPCAT is administered for the first time to all applicants (although automatic admission for specific groups is continued).

- 1971-72 – Admission to the university is based on a combination of the first three years high school average and college admission test scores (798<sup>th</sup> BOR meeting, Aug.27, 1970). This stops the automatic admission on the basis solely of UPCAT score or high-school academic performance.
- 1976 – Then UP President Onofre Corpuz expresses concern about the largely upper-class composition of UP students in his paper titled “Towards a More Equitable Distribution of UP Educational Benefits, Expressing Concern about the Largely Upper Class Makeup of UP students.” President Ferdinand Marcos, for his part, urges the University to think about a more equitable system of admission in his commencement speech at UP Diliman (April 1976).
- July 8-10, 1976 – Faculty conference is held to discuss the Democratization of Admission Policies “to make the studentry more representative of the nation’s population.”
- March 1977 – A project team headed by Dr. Romeo Manlapaz is formed. The team’s study based on 1976 admission data shows that the UP admissions system clearly discriminated against some groups and favored others “contrary to the nature of the University as tax-supported institution...” The study team makes recommendations to democratize UP. Many of them are eventually adopted like the establishment of the Learning Resource Center (LRC) and the Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program (STFAP), the latter being implemented in 1989 during UP President Jose Abueva’s time.
- 1982 – Then UP President Edgardo Angara forms a team headed by Dean Paz Ramos charged with the short-term objective of formulating specific recommendation on requests for the exercise of presidential discretion. The absolute and immediate termination of the practice is recommended because “injustice to many is too stiff a price to pay for the academic mediocrity of some.” The team also recommends a proper balance between academic excellence and equity considerations without sacrificing academic standards.
- 1984 – Angara creates an Adhoc Research Subcommittee on Freshmen Admission headed by Dr. Edgardo Pacheco to “develop an integrated and comprehensive system for admitting freshmen in UP.” The recommendations are approved by the BOR (965<sup>th</sup> meeting, February 23, 1984) with the following refinements:
  - a. UPCAT + 3-year HS average as sole mechanism for admitting freshmen.
  - b. Ranking of campus, admission quota of that campus but not lower than 2.8, except for the UP Diliman which has a cut-off of 2.6.
- July 30, 1985 – Angara issues A.O. 20 forming a committee headed by Chancellor Dionisio Rola (Chair) and Co-Chair Chancellor Ernesto Tabujara to review and evaluate the admissions programs, policies and procedures. The essential point of the Rola and Tabujara review is that “the socio-economic factor, a long source of bias to be incorporated into UPCAT by increasing the weight given to HS average from 20% to 40%,  $UPCAS = UPCAT \text{ score} + 40\% \text{ 3 HS years average.}$ ”
- 1989 – President Abueva issues his first AO, directing a team headed by VP Gemino Abad to study how the UPCAS could be improved.
- 1990-91 – The UP administration decides not to give exceptions to the UPCAT, except for pre-baccalaureate certificate or degree programs of the University.

- 1996 – The OVPAA, OVDPPI and CIDS-ERP once again reviews the democratization of access to the University. The results of their study lead to the adoption of the Excellence-Equity Admission System (EEAS) by the BOR at its 1,107<sup>th</sup> meeting on April 17, 1997. EEAS seeks to address the long-lamented uneven nature of the UP student population by admitting more of the traditionally underrepresented poor, rural-based and public high school students to the university.
- April 28, 1997 – President Emil Q. Javier issues a 2-pronged approach policy: (a) Geographic, to include 77 provinces (but with no guarantees) in the effort to obtain an equitable number of qualifiers; and (b) Special advantage to be given to graduates of disadvantaged public high schools (i.e., public general, vocational, barrio/barangay high schools, who are presumed to be poorer than average). Equity mix 70:30. The BOR approves these features:
  - a. Opportunities for working students;
  - b. Use certain weights to improve representation of provinces;
  - c. Institutionalize learning centers; and
  - d. Review STFAP “to enable a greater number of economically depressed but bright students to be admitted to UP.”
- 2006-2011 – The Excellence-Equity Admission System (EEAS) uses one equation, the University Predicted Grade (UPG), as the basis for campus admission. UPG using a regression equation is based on the Manlapaz 1976 recommendations. The reason for using regression equation is to avoid “arbitrariness in the distribution of weights to various UPCAT subtests and HSWA.” Before this, it was based on the mere intuition of the Dean of Admissions. EEAS is implemented in two rounds: Pass 1 and Pass 2.
  - a. Pass 1 - UPG +.05 *palugit* for public general, vocational and barangay high school and those belonging to cultural minority groups. *Palugit* aims to help those coming from underprivileged backgrounds. A factor of 0.1 *pabigat* is given to applicants depending on their secondary choice of campus; UP regional campuses can therefore prioritize those coming from Visayas and Mindanao rather than those who choose these campuses as their second choice. Pass 1 is open competition but since UPG is so dominant, the handicap or disadvantage of the applicant could not be considered in the various course-specific predictors.
  - b. Pass 2 is a restricted round; this is intended only for those coming from underrepresented provinces and UP dependents.
  - c. Pass 3, an unrestricted round or a continuation of Pass 1 to fill up slots which are still open after Pass 2.

A misinterpretation of the EEA procedure is that Pass 1 and 2 are implemented separately. This is then revised with the introduction of the REEAS. Introduced in 2006, REEAS has a new equation UPAI (UP Admission Index) to replace UPG. The UPAI is used in UP Diliman and UP EP Pampanga; the other campuses still use UPG).

- 2007 – Then UP President Emerlinda Roman forms a committee to review the predictive ability of the UPAS and to develop alternative models to address the inadequacies of UPG. The new equation is

called Revised Predicted Grade Weighted Average (RPGWA) approved by the PAC in 2008. UPG remains the main equation for selection in the different CUs.

In the more than four decades (1968-69 to 2013-14) that the UPCAT has been implemented, it has undergone periodic reviews, revisions, changes and improvements to build on the perceived or identified weakness. Several UP presidents took turn in addressing the shortcomings of UPCAT since its inception. These were SP Lopez, OD Corpuz, E. Angara, J. Abueva, E. Javier and E. Roman. Only EV Soriano and F. Nemenzo were not specifically concerned about the UPCAT. Abueva not only made his mark by terminating admission by discretion, he also implemented the STFAP in 1989. The socialized tuition had been recommended by a study group headed by Dr. Romeo Manlapaz in 1977. Nemenzo, for his part, did not touch the UPCAT. Neither did he entertain any idea of tuition increases, opting instead to join rallies to increase the UP budget as well as other SUCs. There was no impact assessment or study of the 1989 STFAP before the Roman 2006 STFAP tuition increase was implemented.

Kristel Tejada's unfortunate death in March 2013 renewed calls for the democratization for the poor and underprivileged. It woke up the UP community to once again study Sec. 9 of R.A. 9500 (hence A.O. PAEP 13-70). It also became clear that the concern for democratization goes beyond the usual borders of admissions.

Studying at UP is not simply a matter of passing the UPCAT. The accessibility and sustainability of UP education for the poor and underprivileged are affected negatively by the following:

- (a) High cost of living in urban-based UP campuses, especially in Diliman, Manila, and Los Baños. This relates to the costs of board and lodging (e.g., food, accommodations, transportation) and various school expenses (e.g., computer time, Internet, report preparation).
- (b) For those living near UP units, the high tuition fee is still the main issue. A female student of UP Cebu said, "The impression of UP officials is that students entering UP are all rich! The burden of proof and evidence proving that you're poor rests on the student's shoulders." A male student followed this up by saying that he spent more than P1,000 pesos for documents and transportation (*pabalik-balik*) to fill out the STFAP forms.

### **2.3. UPCAT as the sole basis for 1<sup>st</sup> year enrollees at UP**

Is UPCAT the only way to select the "best and brightest" high school students? It is necessary to consider the following stages: Pre-UPCAT, During UPCAT, and Post-UPCAT.

*Pre-UPCAT* is a long process which, from the nutritionist's point of view, dates back to the womb of the mother. It includes the child-rearing environment and nutrition as well as kindergarten and basic education (primary and secondary schooling). Despite the known influences of nutrition and home environment, genetic integrity is in general preserved. This explains, in layperson's terms, the phenomenon of "late bloomers." In genetics, this is referred to as "latent gene expression." Thus, average performers in high schools (those not in the top 10) may turn out to be excellent performers in college and graduate studies or in their chosen careers later on.

By all indicators, students coming from poor families have inadequate and inferior preparations compared with their counterparts in the more privileged strata of society.

Secondary education in public schools is free. But educational facilities, due to insufficient funds, are woefully inadequate (e.g., crowded classrooms, shortage of books, insufficient training of teachers or even having no teachers at all for particular disciplines like mathematics and sciences). These may contribute to suspended gene expression of potentially bright students. These are in stark contrast with their counterparts in the private schools or in science high schools where classrooms facilities are at the optimum, with teachers

well-trained in the disciplines they are teaching. They may also be encouraged with additional motivation and supplied with their own private tutors.

It is difficult or impossible to design an UPCAT examination to capture all the above realities.

*During UPCAT.* UPCAT takers from well-to-do families are usually accompanied by their parents. During the UPCAT examinations, parking areas at the big UP campuses can end up being crowded with “flashy cars.” The poor, on the other hand, would have to take public transportation. They have to wake up early to be on-time for the exam. In UP Pampanga, there are two exam schedules: early morning (5:30 am) and early noon. The students taking the early morning exam end up having no sleep at all before taking the UPCAT. Asked why they did not travel the night before the exam, their predictable answer would be, “We do not have money to pay for lodging or for the food.”

Their luck or inborn talent may enable them to pass the UPCAT. Will they end up enrolling in UP? (*There is now a phenomenon of No Show in UP*). Affirmative action programs should be designed for these students.

The following pro-active measures are proposed for the Pre-UPCAT phase (among others):

- (a) Greater information dissemination regarding UP and the UPCAT in underrepresented regions and minority communities;
- (b) Aggressive recruitment for UPCAT takers from underrepresented regions and minority communities with additional support such as the waiving of fees, and possible financial aid for transportation and lodging costs.

*Post UPCAT.* UPCAT is ostensibly designed and conducted to select the best and the brightest. Discussed earlier were some points which complicate this hypothesis. There are three further concerns raised regarding the post-UPCAT phase:

- (a) How the UPCAT score is computed;
- (b) The cut-off score for each college (and per discipline by college) and for each constituent university;
- (c) The timing and/or release of the UPCAT score.

A critical review on UPCAT and how UPCAT score is being computed revealed the following discussion points:

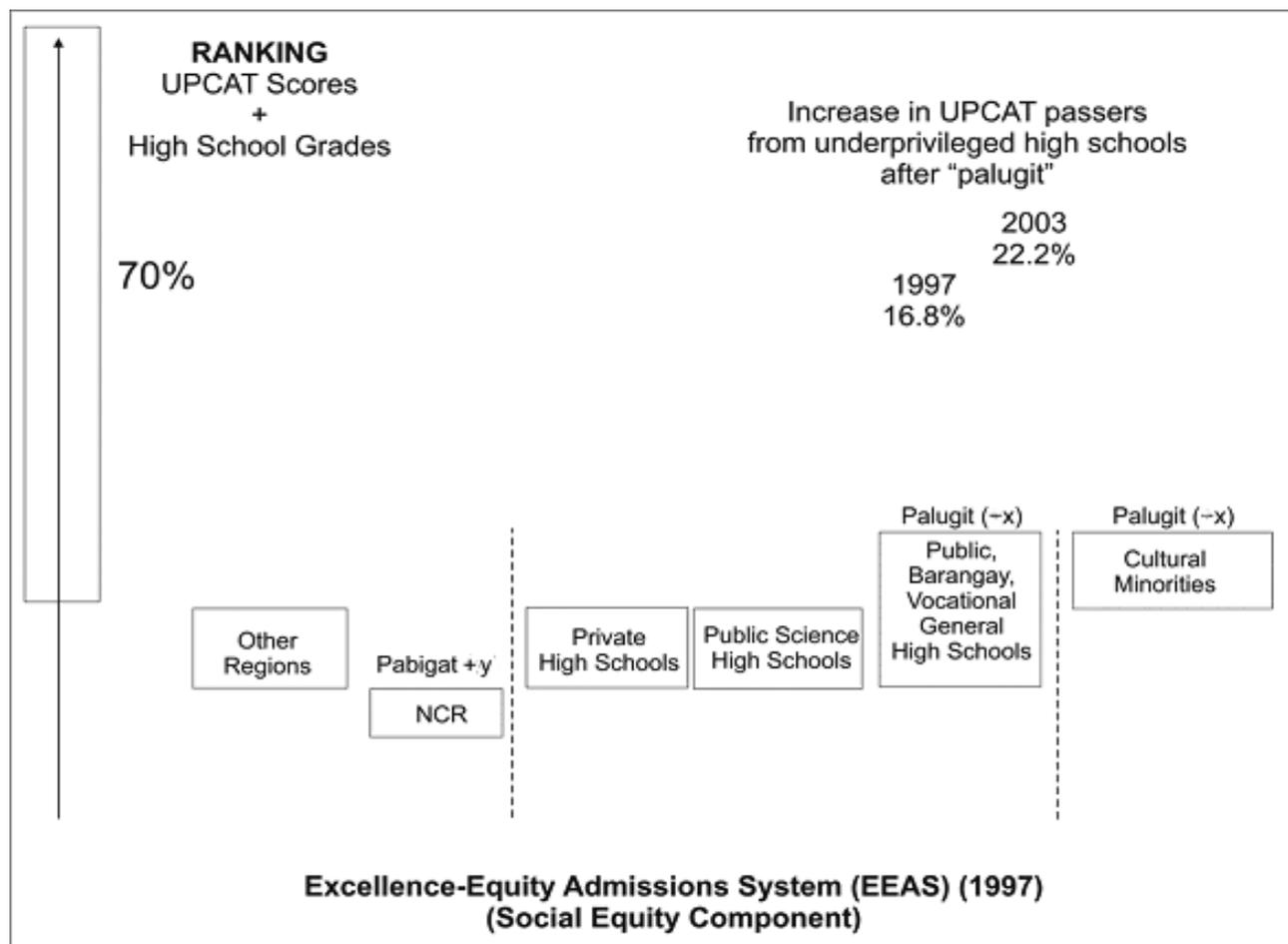
- (a) The *palugit* and *pabigat*;
- (b) The adjustment factors (AF).

The *palugit* and *pabigat* are included in the equation to account for geographic and the presumed economic status according to high-school type. The numeric values currently being used are 0.05 and 0.10 for *palugit* and *pabigat*, respectively. In the papers and studies made available to the study group by the Office of Admissions, the manner of deriving the values of 0.05 and 0.1 for *palugit* and *pabigat*, respectively, were not included.

Similarly, how the adjustment factors (AF) (i.e.,  $AF < 1$  for high schools which are presumed lenient in giving grades and  $AF > 1$  for high schools which are presumed strict in giving grades) were not discussed in the papers. AF values ranged from 0.8 to 1.3 ( $0.8 \leq AF \leq 1.3$ ) but how the lowest and highest values for the AF were derived or computed must be clarified.

Despite these questions, which mostly involve transparency in the computation and assignment of some values, the existing EEAS arguably already provides a mechanism which can be adjusted and calibrated to improve the social equity and geographical equity factors in UP Admissions. In combination with some other possible “non-UPCAT” schemes, the EEAS can be employed to improve the democratization of admissions in UP

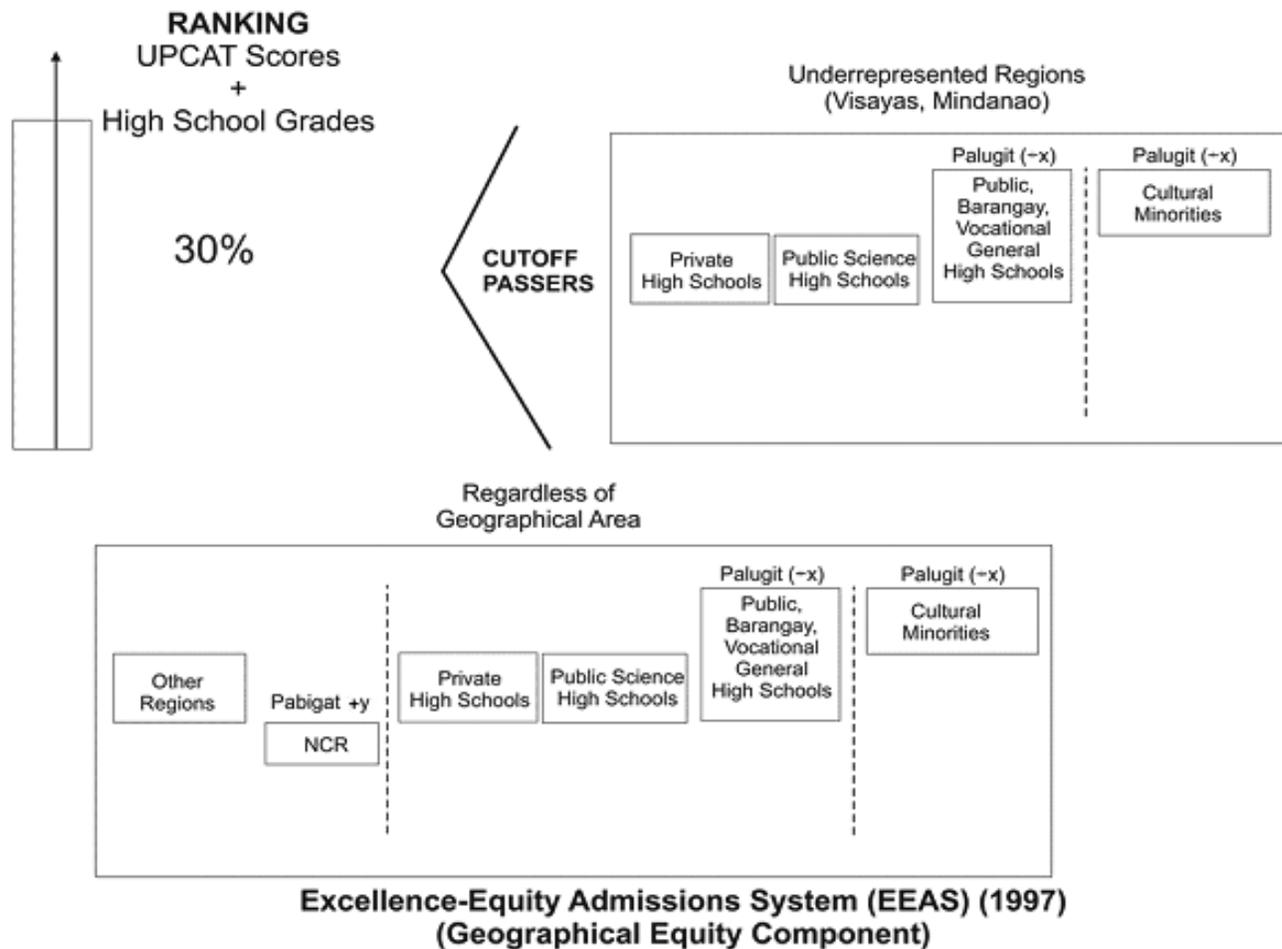
What is needed above all is the political will from the UP administration to adjust the built-in *palugit* and *pabigat* values in order to incrementally increase the numbers of UPCAT passers coming from public general and vocational/barangay schools as well as from the underrepresented regions and to address important issues which arise before the UPCAT examinations, during the UPCAT and after the UPCAT. As shown in Fig. 4, the mere factoring in of the *palugit* resulted in an increase in representation of passers coming from public, barangay, vocational and general high schools from 16.8% in 1997 to 22.2% in 2003.



**Fig. 4: Allocating the first 70% of UPCAT slots (Social Equity)**

Nevertheless, a significant flaw in the EEAS has been pointed out to the effect that the high value for the HS (high school) type coefficient (+0.16534) given to public, barangay, vocational and general high schools, which is designed to factor in the “low quality” of these schools relative to private schools, virtually cancels out the low negative value for the *palugit* (-0.05) also given to UPCAT takers from these schools. UPCAT takers belonging to cultural minorities, who are granted *palugit* as well, studying in private schools are therefore the only ones who unambiguously benefit from the *palugit*. Under the EEAS, the first 70% of all UPCAT slots are filled in this manner.

The irony of the high HS value given to public high schools is that UP, the country's national university and a public institution, can actually be seen as discriminating actively against students from poorer backgrounds. To remedy this, one could consider removing the positive value HS type coefficient given to public, barangay, vocational and general high schools. Alternatively, but less elegantly, the *palugit* value could be increased to the point that it would not be completely cancelled out or negated by the HS type coefficient. A progressive calibration of the *palugit* value would allow incremental and controlled increases in the resulting number of UPCAT passers coming from public, barangay, vocational and general high schools as well as cultural minorities. It is suggested that the total UPCAT passers from public general and vocational/barangay schools be increased to at least 40% in the next five (5) years.



**Fig. 5: Allocating the final 40% of UPCAT slots (Geographical Equity)**

Under the EEAS, 30% of the lower range of UPCAT slots are initially allotted to students coming from underrepresented regions (Visayas and Mindanao). However, the allotted slots for UPCAT passers from underrepresented regions end up not being filled up because there are no UPCAT takers and ultimately enough aggregate UPCAT passers from these regions who would make the respective cut-offs to fill up these slots.

The slots which are not filled up by students from underrepresented regions are then filled up by UPCAT passers, based on final UPCAT scores regardless of geographical area. Again, this is a well-meant measure which lacks enabling conditions. One proposal would be the same as for the first 70% of UPCAT slots, the removal of the positive value HS type coefficient given to public, barangay, vocational and general high school to the point that it would not be cancelled out or negated by the HS type coefficient and/or a corresponding adjustment of the *palugit* value would result in a larger number of students coming from public, barangay, vocational and general high schools as well as from cultural minorities who would presumably make the cut-off scores for the lower 30% of UPCAT slots. This would allow for a greater number of the 30%

slots for underrepresented regions to be filled up according to their stated allotment. Another proposal would be to review the cut-offs of selected areas of study in certain CUs to be adjusted in relation to the general cut-off of 2.8 (e.g., agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine) instead of the computer-optimized cut-off to meet the quota for the whole CU (the case of UPLB).

The more urgent need is for a mechanism to be devised to increase UPCAT passers from the greatly underrepresented Mindanao region to at least increase the number of UPCAT passers to a value approaching 20 percent. A Mindanao *palugit* could be devised in the short-term, until a better solution, namely, the expansion of UP Mindanao is accomplished. Currently, UP Mindanao students only number 1,115 or only 2% of the 54,400 UP students in 2012. (Annex A provides a discussion of UP Mindanao expansion to address the geographic and socio-economic divides in UP.)

In order not to render any resulting higher passing rates for students from underprivileged and underrepresented backgrounds moot and academic, the average percentage of around 50% of UPCAT passers coming from lower-income bracket who do not continue on to UP should be actively sought out and assured by the university of adequate if not full support.

Due recognition and rewards be given to high school performance in computing the UPCAT grades. Consistent with Sec. 9 of R.A. 9500, high school salutatorian and valedictorian of public high schools be given higher weight in the computation of UPAI (0.4 to 0.6), thus;

From

$$\text{UPAI} = 0.6 \text{ UPCAT score} + 0.4 \text{ HSWA}$$

To

$$\text{UPAI} = 0.4 \text{ UPCAT score} + 0.6 \text{ HSWA.}$$

This will give more weights to their three-year HS efforts rather than the four-hour UPCAT exam. Since this will give them higher scores, it will give them higher chances to be included in the UPCAT cut-off score in their chosen colleges of the constituent universities (CUs).

The following should also be done: (a) Valedictorians (who passed UPCAT) shall be awarded as UP President Scholars (free tuition and matriculation fees + allowance *to be estimated later*) and (b) salutatorians as CUs Chancellor Scholars. They will also be given free and automatic slots in student dormitories for freshmen students if they are poor and needy.

In addition to our Oblation Scholars, rewards on academic excellence must be expanded to recruit the best and the brightest. The following shall be awarded entrance scholarship:

- (a) The Top 10 in UPCAT by CUs shall be awarded as UP President Scholars.
- (b) The Top 11-20 students in UPCAT in CUs shall be awarded CUs Chancellor Scholars.

The benefits shall be similar to valedictorians and salutatorians. The basis shall be the raw score in the UPCAT exam (excluding the HSWA).

The President and/or Chancellor Scholarship Award shall be sustained if the scholar obtained 1.25 or better for the President Scholar and 1.5 or better for the Chancellor Scholar. If they fail to maintain such grade point average, they can avail of other scholarship grants and/or the UP tuition systems. This means that the award and the incentives that go with it shall be on a per semester basis.

#### **2.4. UPCAT as the sole basis for UP admission: Some Concluding Reflections**

The above discussion can provide part of the basis for answering the question whether or not the UPCAT should be the sole basis for UP admission.

To support the oral face-to-face-consultation the study group conducted, we formulated a feedback question “Is the current UPCAT as the sole basis for admission to UP still valid?”

Answers to this question were grouped into students, faculty and REPS. The majority of students who answered the question gave affirmative responses. On the other hand, a majority of the faculty answered in the negative. The REPS were split at 50-50.

The reality is that the youth or the current UP students who struggled to pass the difficult exam feel victorious. It is but natural that they will not simply abandon or forget what they went through. From this perspective, their answer (i.e., yes, the UPCAT should be the sole basis for admission) is valid. There were even comments such as, “I don’t even entertain the idea of removing UPCAT as the basis of UP admission” which is indicative of a certain degree of resentment with the question itself.

UPCAT was first administered in 1968. The original UPCAT takers in 1968 are in their sixties now. If they had opted to take a teaching career in UP, they would still be teaching actively. They now realize that the background of science high school students is advantageous only for the first two to four semesters in college (for the G.E. courses specifically because it is simply a review for them). After that, their advantage (reflected in the UPCAT score) fades or simply vanishes.

Should the UPCAT be the only door to enter UP for freshmen? Consider the following: Why should a four-hour examination determine the rest of one’s possibility to enter UP? Increasingly, universities abroad are complementing entrance exams (SAT/ACET) by interviewing students. The University of California at Berkeley had adopted a holistic, or comprehensive review on admissions policy. In holistic review, UC Berkeley looks beyond grades and scores to determine academic potential, drive and leadership abilities of the applicant. There is an “external reader,” one of about 70 outside readers – some high school counsellors, some private admissions consultants – who helps rank the nearly 53,000 applications a year, giving each about eight minutes of attention. An applicant scoring a 4 or 5 was probably going to be disappointed; a 3 might be deferred to a January entry; students with a 1.2 or 2.5 went to the top of the pile, but that didn’t mean they were in. Berkeley might accept 21 percent of freshman applicants over all but only 12 percent in engineering (Starkman, 2013).

The job of the external reader was to help sort the pool, to assess each piece of information – grades, courses, standardized test scores, activities, leadership potential and character – in an additive fashion, looking for ways to advance the student to the next level, as opposed to counting any factor as a negative. External readers are only the first readers. Each of the applications was scored by an experienced lead reader before being passed on to an inner committee of admissions officers for the selection phase. A new external reader required two days of intensive training at the Berkeley Alumni House as well as eight three-hour norming sessions. There, external readers practiced ranking under the supervision of lead readers and admissions officers to ensure that decisions conformed to the criteria outlined by the admissions office, with the intent of giving applicants as close to equal treatment as possible (Starkman, 2013).

Although it is not as rigid or complex as practiced at UC Berkeley, some colleges in UP (College of Fine Arts) are already interviewing students which means that an UPCAT score is not the sole basis for admission. Other colleges may opt to do the same. In addition to the UPCAT score, an interview is necessary so the students may be briefed on the nature of their profession and the expectations from them once they enroll and graduate from these disciplines.

A ladderized or “No-UPCAT” option in fact is being successfully implemented in the UP Manila SHS medical program. This can also be tried in other disciplines (e.g., agriculture, forestry and veterinary

medicine). For Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, a non-degree option – Associate in Agriculture was tried in the 1960s. Why it was stopped should be studied further and how it can be successfully implemented now. A Diploma in Agriculture can be offered as post-baccalaureate option and it can be tried in the undergraduate level. For the undergraduate level, they have option to proceed to B.S.A. if they are interested and academically capable. For the post-baccalaureate Diploma in Agriculture program and similar Diploma program, they may proceed to MSc to PhD programs.

For the College of Forestry, UPLB, there is an existing Certificate in Forestry. Their graduates in this program can proceed to BS Forestry if they opt to or they work for a while as forest ranger or any related employment.

### **3.0. U.P Socialized Tuition Systems**

If the “Iskolar ng Bayan” is to be maintained and promoted, there should be no socio-economic divide between and among UP students. The University should not be discriminatory in the sense that those who can afford should pay more. There should be uniform affordable tuition fees for all. The STFAP became anti-poor despite the earlier claims that it was to make UP education affordable for students admitted into UP, particularly those coming from poor families. Clearly, the STFAP has become the Philippine version of India’s caste system.

#### *3.1. STFAP: A Review*

Socialized tuition was envisioned as part of UP’s effort “to democratize access and admission to its academic programs while promoting fairness and social justice in the University, befitting its status as a state-supported institution of higher learning” (BOR Resolution, 30 Jan. 1989). It is a program intended to make UP education affordable (despite the tuition increases) for students admitted into UP, particularly those coming from poor families. Introduced in 1989 when UP’s undergraduate tuition was increased from almost nominal to P300/unit in Diliman, P250/unit in Los Baños, and P200/unit in regional campuses. It was revised again in 2006 when tuition increased up to PhP1,500/unit for those belonging to the highest bracket.

How do the students coming from poor families find the revised STFAP after 6 years of implementation? During our consultation with the students in UP Cebu, a Mass Com student said “The problem with UP officials, their impression is that all UP incoming students are rich. The burden of proof and evidence proving otherwise rests on the student’s shoulder!” Another student added that processing STFAP is so expensive (P1,000-P3,000 for costs of transport, photocopying documents, documentary stamp tax, notarial fees, etc.) Appeals for mismatches take same time to process again. “STFAP talagang pinahirap para kaunti ang mabigyan (Group E1 & E2 are few, less than 10%). The OSA staff of UP Pampanga claimed if she were the one to rate the STFAP applicants, 50% of them would belong to Bracket E1 & E2.

Operationally, STFAP became anti-poor despite the earlier claims that it was to make UP education affordable for students admitted into UP, particularly those coming from poor families. It is in this context that the STFAP could be compared to India’s caste system.

Former UP President Roman admitted that STFAP was designed to earn income from tuition. The need to earn income from tuition had been attributed to the declining government support to UP as well as to higher education in general. UP’s approved budget is always so much below on what is requested, usually 40% lower.

Socializing tuition was originally suggested by Dr. Manlapaz in his team’s report in 1976. Former UP President Abueva implemented STFAP in 1989, or 13 years after it was recommended. Manlapaz’s recommendation regarding socialized tuition had no details. It was merely premised on the argument that those who can afford should pay more. Through STFAP as implemented, that was not the case. In reality

students are still paying less than the full expense incurred. The table below shows UP expenses per student (Data provided by Dr. Lisa Bersales- VP for Planning and Finance, UP).

Constituent Universities (CU)	Cost of Instruction per Student
UP Diliman	P 54,051
UP Los Baños	70,785
UP Manila	74,356
UP Visayas	68,285
UP Mindanao	58,746
UP Open University	18,169
UP Baguio	40,076
UP Cebu	50,102
Average	54,321

Cost of instruction per UP Open University does not include “transfer cost” from other constituent universities that service UP Open University.

But since STFAP is difficult to be availed of by the poor students (as explained earlier), they end up not entering UP even if they pass the UPCAT (the phenomenon of No Show, *see table below*). UP Cebu and UP Mindanao topped the lists of UPCAT passers but did not enroll in their respective CUs, hence the colloquial No Show (referring to student applicants who took the UPCAT and passed but decided not to enroll).

## 2012 UPCAT Takers & NO SHOW

Campus	Quota	Primary Applicants (PA)	Qualifiers (Q)	(Q/PA)	No Show Qualifiers	% No Show
Baguio	1,400	1,831	1,405	0.77	590	52.0
Cebu	365	1,744	713	0.41	431	60.4
Pampanga	260	476	260	0.55		
Diliman	3,875	50,607	3,876	0.08	1363	35.2
Iloilo	1,692	3,749	1,695	0.45	712	42.0
Los Baños	2,800	6,588	2,806	0.43	1070	40.0
Manila	941	8,635	941	0.11		33.3
Tacloban	656	1594	519	0.33	191	36.8
Mindanao	496	1410	496	0.35		64.1
Open U	300	12	31	2.58		
System	12,785	76,646	12,742	0.17		40.0

In UP Mindanao, 53.2 % of students had STFAP adjusted income of about P250,000 and below. Next to Ateneo de Davao, UP Mindanao charges the highest tuition. UP Min is located far from the Davao city proper, which means it is not in the regular paths of jeepneys, the cheapest means of transport. Student dormitories are not sufficient. (Annex A discusses the situation of UP Mindanao.)

Why UP Cebu has also very low enrollees or high No Show is difficult to explain. Same is true for UP Baguio, which has 52% No Show. We gathered that UP Baguio charges the highest tuition fee per unit. Why Saint Louis University (SLU) appeared to charge the highest tuition fees is because the total load per semester of students could go as high as 24 to 28 units. System-wide, the average No Show for the last 10 years (2004-2014) is about 40 percent. Attempts in various CUs were done to find out why the high No Show revealed many reasons. We collated the reasons and our tabulation showed that about 50% or more could be attributed to financial reasons. We should mention that the survey was done through emails and telephone calls. Students who do not have email or telephone were not contacted. (The figure 50% could be more) The unfilled slots due to No Show are filled up by the wait-listed students. Be they rich or poor, the data shows that we are likely losing 40% of the probable best and the brightest students in UP.

As early as 1976, it was already recognized that the students coming from the upper middle or rich families are literally *edging out the poor* (Manlapaz, 1976). This means that the slot supposed to be occupied by the poorer students are filled up by the upper middle or richer students. An UPCAT qualifier and a valedictorian of their High School class in Tacloban City opted to study in the University of Eastern Visayas (UEV) because her Lola who was sending her to school could not afford UP Tacloban tuition rates. Furthermore, UEV gave her scholarships plus allowances.

The 1989 STFAP was experimental or experiential. As an experiment, the results or data on its impact to students were not gathered, analyzed, and discussed. Moreover, insights or lessons learned were not written. Whether it was really helping the poor students or not or it led to the democratization of access to UP, there was no study to that effect that was gathered by the study group. As an experiential phenomenon, the experiences derived thereon, much more the lessons learned, were also unheard of. It became the solution to the problem of lack of government subsidy. The revised STFAP during the time of then President Roman succeeded in generating income from tuition and laboratory fees (about P1.2 Billion/year is being earned, Gonzalo 2013 report on UPTFS).

Socializing tuition through the Abueva/Roman STFAP has twin objectives: (a) Let the rich pay more so the low income could pay less; and (b) let the poor be free from tuition and be given allowances. The rich really paid more (STFAP Bracket A, B, C) than the rest, but still less relative to the full cost of UP education as stated above and as shown in the table below. Since 90% of UP budget still comes from the government, and because of our regressive taxation system, the poor end up contributing more to the government coffers; in turn, subsidizing/paying the margin of tuition fees that the rich do not pay sufficient enough to cover the full expenses of UP education.

STFAP tuition discount rate to income/wealth bracket and distribution of subsidy, 2011.

Bracket	Annual Family Income (in thousands)	% of Students	Discount Rate	Tuition Charged per year	Subsidy Level	Total Subsidy
A	>P1,000	24.2	0	52,500	47,500	11,495
B	P500-P1000	25.3	0	35,000	65,000	16,445
C	P250-P500	23.6	40%	21,000	79,000	18,644
D	P135-P250	14.1	70%	10,500	89,500	12,620
E <sub>1</sub>	P80-P135	8.2	100%*	0	100,000	8,200
E <sub>2</sub>	P80	4.3	100%**	0	100,000	4,300

\*grant of miscellaneous and laboratory fees. \*\*grant of miscellaneous and laboratory fees plus stipend of P12,000 per semester.

Full tuition at P1,500 per credit unit is charged to Bracket A students and P1,000 per credit unit for all other brackets. The discounted tuition for each bracket is  $P1,000 \times (1 - \text{discount rate})$ . The subsidy rate for each bracket is estimated to be the average operating cost of about P100,000 less the discounted tuition level for the year assuming an average credit load of 35 units. Total subsidy to each bracket is the product of the percentage of students in a bracket and the subsidy rate.

That STFAP was designed to earn income from tuition had the following consequences:

- Income tax returns were not believed to be accurate, including those paid by the rank-and-file government employees (i.e., clerks, utility workers, drivers, computer operators, teachers, soldiers) and private industries who were fixed-income earners, and paid taxes deducted monthly from their payroll. Thus, the Atanacio income function was designed (as explained below) to predict the income. Hence, the poor were made to appear capable of paying the tuition.
- The procedure/process of proving that a student comes from a poor family is complex, difficult and time-consuming. The result is that only very few qualify under STFAP Bracket E1 & E2 (less than 10%).
- Students coming from poor families are scared trying out the process. To retain their dignity and self-esteem, they just “let go” their chance of entering UP, and enroll in other schools as mentioned earlier.

The Main Features of STFAP are as follows: (a) Too many forms to fill out (15 pages); (b) costly to process (P1000-P3000); (c) long waiting period of six months processing and same period if appeal is made by the students; (d) too centralized – only in UP Diliman, and (e) only one person knows how to operationalize or compute the predicted income through the Atanacio income function.

Briefly, the Roman STFAP bracketing is operationalized through the ‘Atanacio’ income function given by the equation below:

$$Y_j = \beta_i X_{ij} + \gamma_i A_{ij} + \epsilon_j,$$

where for the  $j$ th family,  $Y$  is current income,  $X$  is a vector of family characteristics,  $A$  is a vector of assets owned,  $\beta_i$  and  $\gamma_i$  are parameters to be estimated, and  $\epsilon$  is an error term.

The essential point is that several assets were given multiplier coefficients to be able to put a monetary value to  $X_{ij}$  &  $A_{ij}$  assets or personal belongings (e.g., cellphone).

What made the multiplier coefficients superfluous and unscientific are as follows: a television set has 0.1552188, washing machine 0.1302926, motorbike =0.1206098, car =0.1058442, an aircon has only 0.0752214, and a TV set, 0.1552188. A clerk has a higher multiplier coefficient (0.1340631) than a manager (0.117789). As a result, poorer families had a bigger increase in predicted income due to the bigger multiplier coefficients of the common assets. (A more detailed discussion was given by Simbulan, 2006; <http://www.inquirer.net/specialreports/education/view.php?db=1&article=20061231-40945>)

The overall results of the Roman STFAP-Atanacio income function were:

- There was an upward “increase” in income of poorer families (due to the Atanacio income function) and as a consequence bracket E move up to Bracket D to C (too few bracket E - 8% in UPLB; about in 5% in UP Baguio and Pampanga. An STFAP staff in UP Pampanga said if she were the one to assess the students, 50% of the applicants in UP Pampanga shall become bracket E’s beneficiaries).
- There was unrealistic and unjust STFAP bracketing which was aggravated further by:

- (a) For student's tuition, they were CPI-adjusted. The De Dios study claimed that UP tuition actually did not increase, rather it was just corrected or adjusted to peso devaluation or due to inflation using 1989 as the base year. The proponents argued that the CPI adjustment for tuition fee is still insufficient. Otherwise, the increase should already be 1,350% by 2013.
- (b) For parents, however, the income was not CPI adjusted; in fact, they were recomputed and made higher due to the Atanacio income function, giving the predicted income as explained above.
- (c) This was aggravated by the low threshold income (P135,001/year) from where the students should start paying tuition fees (*for bracket D*).

What is the poverty threshold income from where the students should start paying tuition? This is the question that must be settled first to realize the earlier claims that STFAP was designed to make UP education affordable for students admitted into UP, particularly those coming from poor families. Consider the following information:

- The 4th quarter of 2012 survey by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) showed that 54% of households (or an estimated 10.9 million) considered themselves *Poor* while the average annual self-rated poverty was 49% in 2009, 48% in 2010, 49% in 2011, and 52% in 2012 (Diokno, 2013). In recent quarters, more than half of families surveyed feel that they are poor: 55% in March, 51% in May, 47% in August and 54% in December 2012.
- P1, 200 per day is needed by a family of six as claimed by Partido ng Manggagawa (2013). Even assuming only P1,000 per day, this already translates to PhP365,000 as estimated poverty threshold income. This is already Bracket C under the STFAP.

### **3.2. The Reformed STFAP called *UP Socialized Tuition Systems -STS***

Pres. Alfredo E. Pascual Administration had recognized weaknesses of the revised STFAP, i.e., long and tedious application process, mismatches between assigned brackets and actual financial capacity of students, inadequate benefits for students at the lowest bracket. Since 2011, there was a group studying how the odd features of STFAP could be remedied. The first revision that the study group had accessed was titled "UP Tuition Fees Systems." It was re-titled "Reformed STFAP". The BOR approved revision is now called UP Socialized Tuition Systems or STS (BOR meeting, December 13, 2013).

We reviewed the UP Socialized Tuition Systems. In brief: the STS's main feature is the use of the MORES 1SEC instrument based on OLR (Ordered Logistic Regression). Our review showed that the bracketing derived through OLR did not differ with the linear regression yielding predicted income devised by Atanacio et al. (2006). On the merit of using the socioeconomic classification based on the MORES 1SEC instrument, the Gonzalo report was ambivalent to the usefulness of the findings where it stated: "(T)he findings cannot be used to derive representative characteristics and behavior (based on SEC-MORES) about the undergraduate student population enrolled in the 1st semester AY 2013-2014 in the UP System." But still, they used it. The MORES 1SEC indicator has 9 clusters representing socioeconomic classification. The Gonzalo study tried to fit the 9 clusters into the 6 STFAP brackets. How it was done, it was not clarified. Process-wise, the use of OLR, facilitated STFAP processing considerably. Content-wise, it is "same dog different collar," as the common expression goes.

The economic tenet of STFAP is that those who can afford should pay more, and that STFAP is believed to have democratized access and admission to its academic programs and have promoted fairness and social justice. Ironically, STFAP is one of the main drivers in the present skewed distribution of UP students in favor of the well-to-do or upper socio-economic class of the Philippine society.

Our recommendation is therefore a uniform and affordable tuition rate “befitting UP as state supported institution for higher learning regardless of socio-economic class.”

The details of our review are discussed below.

### 3.2.1. STS Bracketing using MORES 1 SEC

The STS (as approved by BOR at its meeting on December 13, 2013) has the main feature of using the MORES 1SEC instrument (MORES 1 SEC) (MORES is Marketing Opinion Research Society). MORES 1SEC instrument is based on the ordered logistic regression (OLR) model. The MORES 1SEC instrument reduced the number of data inputs to 2 pages, while the current STFAP has 15 pages, which accelerated the processing.

In the proposal, it was not included how the bracketing was done using the MORES 1 SEC instrument. It only included Annexes A & B. (Part 1. Instrument to Collect Socio Economic Data on Applicants household, Annex A and Part 2, Instrument to Collect Income Data on Incomes Household, Annex B). In our data gathering, we obtained a paper titled 1SEC 2012: THE NEW PHILIPPINE SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM written by Lisa Grace S. Bersales, Nicco de Jesus, Luzviminda Barra, Judy Mercado, Beatrice Gobencion and Michael Daniel Lucagbo. This paper was presented during the 12th National Convention on Statistics (NCS), EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City October 1-2, 2013. The URL is shown below:

<http://www.nscb.gov.ph/ncs/12thncs/papers/INVITED/Panel%20Discussion/PD-1%20SEC%202012%20The%20New%20Philippine%20Socioeconomic%20Classification.pdf>. Accessed Oct.29, 2013

Based on the paper by Bersales et al., (2013), we are raising the following points:

- (1) In the MORES 1SEC data, there are 9 clusters. How these 9 clusters were transformed to the 6 STFAP Brackets (A, B, C, D, E<sub>1</sub>, E<sub>2</sub> brackets) was not explained.
- (2) In the MORES 1SEC instrument (Annex 1), points are assigned to the various indicators. We are raising the following questions or disagreements to the various indicators that were used:
  - (a) **Area.** Metro Manila received the highest numeric points = 7 and Mindanao = 0 and the rests are as follows: Visayas = 1, South Luzon =2; North/Central Luzon = 2, Bicol = 1. Following this, **Area** for Metro Manila accounts for 23-27% of the total cluster points (24-29) in Cluster 2, and 27% for Cluster 1 points (23 and below. It makes the poor in MMLa unduly richer than their counterpart in the other locations. Conversely, students coming from well-to-do families who are outside of Metro Manila (MMLa) are benefitting from the low point that may be added to their cluster.). It should be pointed out that under STFAP, only about 5% belong to brackets E1 and E2. What about under STS? It will still be implemented this coming school year 2014. The initial run, however, showed almost the same results. Reason. To establish its merits, it was correlated with STFAP data.
  - (b) **Household Civil Status.** *Married* has only 1 point while the *not married* (single, separated, widowed, divorced) has 3 points. If the parents (the breadwinner) of the student had separated, divorced, died and he/she is living with the mother who is jobless, then, instead of having lower points, higher points are given (+2) that will accrue to his or her cluster.
  - (c) **Head educational attainment.** College graduate = 6 points, what if the parent is not working (or has been retrenched) and opted to be self-employed (HW Employment status), then, there

will be double entry ( $6 + 2 = 8$  pts) yielding a total of 8 points. We do not know if 6 points will be deducted by the computer programme.

- (d) **Fuel types for cooking.** LPG = 4 and wood & charcoal = 1. Considering the burning efficiency of wood/ charcoal stove and the current prices of wood and charcoal, LPG is cheaper energy-wise, if the latter is also bought. The use of wood and charcoal is cited as a major reason for deforestation except for farmers in the rural areas planting acacia, madre cacao or *Leucaena* specifically for fuel wood source. The smart way of cooking is to use biomass stove (non-selective of wood to be used) and complement it with LPG stove for cooking in the morning or at crunch time.
- (e) **Head occupational status.** No jobs = 0, others = 1, managers, supervisors, government officials, corp. execs = 2. Why do corporate executives have same points with government officials (ordinary ones)?
- (f) **House type (observation).** Single detached, duplex, others = 0; Apartment/town house/condo = 2. Why are condominiums given only 2 points and an **apartment** has the same 2 points?
- (g) **For Durables.** Cellphones differ much in value. The use of cellphone (Philippines as texting capital has become a necessity). Fancy cellphones/iPhones are still expensive (the originals). It is best to identify what cellphone the student has.
- (h) **Household Income data for STFAP** (Annex B). The household income (HI) is described (translated into computable equation) as:

$$HI = [\text{Parents (f + m)}] + [\text{Brods + Sis}] + [\text{other HH i.e. OFW}].$$

Our comments are as follows:

- (a) *Contributions of brothers and sisters are not obligatory anymore in the family.* Their contribution if ever may cancel out when the costs of food + electricity, and water bills etc) are added.
- (b) Contributions of other household members may not also be regular.

### 3.2.2. The Gonzalo Report as the basis of Socio Economic Profile of Undergraduate Students of UP

Testing the instrument's Suitability for use in assigning STS bracket was undertaken from May to September 2013. According to the paper of Prof. Richard P. Gonzalo titled "Socio Economic Profile of Undergraduate Students of UP" (9 September 2013), it stated "the findings cannot be used to derive representative characteristics and behavior (based on SEC-MORES) about the undergraduate student population enrolled in the 1st semester AY 2013-2014 in the UP System."

The study is sufficient to provide representative information on the general characteristics and behavior of undergraduate students enrolled in UP Visayas, UP Cebu, and UP Los Baños, given the respondents exceeded 50% of the undergraduate population enrolled in these CUs. Moreover, the study provides identifiable characteristics and behavior about the undergraduate student population in the UP System and the rest of the CUs with less than 50% response rates.

In the report, it stated the responses as follows: UP System 32%, UP Visayas 62%, UP Cebu 55%, UP Los Baños 52%, UP Mindanao 47%, UP Baguio 28%, UP Manila 27%, UP Open University 24%, UP Diliman 4 percent. Please note that UP Diliman has 35% of all UP Undergraduate students.

The report was ambivalent to the usefulness of the findings: "The findings cannot be used to derive representative characteristics and behavior (based on SEC-MORES) about the undergraduate student population enrolled in the 1st semester AY 2013-2014 in the UP System."

But still, they used it in the socioeconomic classification of undergraduate students of UP.

### **3.2.3. On STS Bracketing**

The STS process is now computerized and decentralized. It is now 2 pages instead of 15 pages using the 2006 STFAP, hence a lot faster to process. It is claimed that the income cut-offs for brackets ABCD are inflation adjusted. Also, the allowance of E<sub>2</sub> grantees is also inflation-adjusted (2006-2012: P2,400/month to P3,500).

It was stated in the STS implementation supporting measures (No. 6a) that there shall be an appointed system level official to assume responsibility for STS implementation. It also stated (6.3) that the central systems shall be strengthened through audit or verification of information disclosure based on random sampling and imposing severe penalties for misdeclaration.

What is the percent (%) random sample? Sample size is related to travel and personnel costs. As random sample size increase from 5% to 10%, the costs double. (We hope this shall be factored in the net revenues for STS.)

What constitutes severe penalties for misdeclaration? Case in point: A brother or sister might be staying in the household but may not be contributing. There is a strong tendency for the student-applicant not to include his or her sibling.

The 2006 STFAP has been criticized in view of the voluminous forms to be accomplished. At the end, the poor students find it too hard to justify their condition. Does the recently BOR-approved STS really constitute meaningful and substantive reform?

Brackets ABCDE income-wise are inflation adjusted in the present proposal. However, Bracket D at P135,000 does not truly reflect the paying capability of the parents. It should be pointed out that the specific or actual bracket is not solely based on the income but also the MORES 1SEC cluster where bracketing, whichever is higher, will be the one to be adopted. In the paper, it was stated that E<sub>1</sub> cut-off of P135,000 per year is still above the annualized non-given/true minimum P127, 218 wage effective 1 January 2014. Also, the E<sub>2</sub> cut-off of P85,000 per year is also above the annualized subsistence threshold of P65,496 released by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) on 23 April 2013.

In the reported just wage by Partido ng Manggagawa, P1,200 per day is the income level that can provide the basic need of a family of six. This translates to P438,00 annual income. The threshold income or the paying bracket (Bracket D) has a MORES 1 SEC income of PhP 135,000. This MORES 1 SEC income of PhP 135,000 is not liquid cash but predicted income. It is presumed that this income will allow a family to pay tuition and still have money to pay other school expenses.

### **3.3. Our recommendation is a Uniform and Affordable Tuition Fees for All in UP**

The economic tenet of STFAP and the STS now is those who can afford should pay more. STFAP is also believed to democratize access and admission to its academic programs and promote fairness and social justice.

STFAP is one of the main drivers in the present skewed distribution of UP students in favor of the well to do/ upper socio-economic class of the Philippine society. STFAP did not remove the government subsidies to those who really can shoulder the cost of studying as it merely reduced it.

The 2006 STFAP procedures and requirements were made so difficult for those who are in the lower income bracket to access STFAP so that only few could avail it. “To be admitted (UPCAT exam) and study in UP is difficult. It is more difficult to get into STFAP” had been the common complaints of students and their parents.

The 2006 STFAP was no different content-wise to the current STS. It merely facilitated the process of application. According to the UP administration, the STS, “contrary to what some sectors allege is not a scheme for revenue generation.” The amount of P1.2 billion collected fees (tuition, laboratory + matriculation) speak for itself. It is “blood and sweat” extracted from the poor parents who are made to appear rich by the “predicted income function” of the 2006 STFAP and now the MORES 1SEC-guided STS.

The STS is not consistent to the inaugural speech of President Alfredo E. Pascual of making UP a great university. It is making UP as the lead institution of higher education and prime mover of the CHED Roadmap for Public Higher Education (RPHER). RPHER is the Aquino administration’s blue print for higher education. It was signed by the presidents of the 110 SUCs. One of the objectives of RPHER is for the leading 22 SUCs to shoulder 50% of their budget by 2016. UP still receives 90% subsidy from the government even with the present STFAP fees collected.

In the 2006 STFAP, less than 10% are beneficiaries under bracket  $E_1$  &  $E_2$  and less than 5% do not pay tuition and receive allowances. This indirectly implies that about 90% now of UP students can really afford to pay tuition fees in varying amounts? However, there are still many poor students as manifested by the huge numbers of student applying for tuition loans. But after incurring loans after loans every semester, they end up having no more money to pay and the recourse is stop from enrolling. Unlike the No Show, the study group did not have enough time to gather data on how many students apply for loans and how many have decided to stop studying.

The State must not abandon its support to higher learning now. Our ASEAN neighbors (Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia to name a few) are putting premium support to tertiary education. It must be stressed that Thailand is now supporting five national research universities, investing 31% of the education budget to tertiary education. For the 2014 proposed national budget, the Philippines is only spending about 11.0% of P31.9 B for the entire 111 SUCs which include UP . It was 15% in 2006. Should the 15% be retained, the half a billion pesos of net earnings from tuition will become small. More so, if the 31% tertiary budget allocation for education of Thailand is followed (or even just the 25% tertiary budget allocation given by Malaysia), then the SUCs including UP shall have adequate funds . Thailand has 1.6 times bigger GDP than the Philippines .

By 2015, the ASEAN Economic Cooperation (AEC) will be fully implemented. Talents and skills buildup and strengthening are the twin traits identified and recognized advantage of the Filipinos because of our command of the English language. State support must be focused on it rather than diminish it.

Supporting more poor students which represent the many in the “gene pool” assures that their potential geniuses in science, arts and culture will be honed up to contribute more to the development in this country.

Investment in education is a sure way to inclusive growth. Diminishing it shall lead to “education dynasty” of the well-to-do families of Philippine society.

In view of the above synthesis, a uniform and affordable tuition “befitting UP as state supported institution for higher learning regardless of socio-economic class” must be implemented. If the “Iskolar ng Bayan” is to be maintained and promoted, there should be no socio-economic divide between and among UP students. STFAP and now STS became anti-poor despite the earlier claims that it was to make UP education affordable for students admitted into UP, particularly those coming from poor families.

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## Annex A

## UP Mindanao Expansion: To address the geographic and socio-economic divide in UP

Mindanao has 25% of the Philippine population but UP Mindanao has only less than 2% of UP student population. There must be progressive increase of UP Mindanao studentry evolving it into the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest constituent university (UPLB is now the second, largest is UP Diliman having 35% of UP students). UP Mindanao should be the vehicle of UP for the “peace and development” initiative in Mindanao, and for promoting cooperation in the East Asia Geographic Area corridor.

UP has 7 CUs and 1 autonomous college (UP Cebu). As shown in the table below, Luzon has 4 CUs (UP Baguio, UP Manila, UP Diliman, UP Los Baños) accounting for 79% of UP students. Luzon has 55% of the Philippine population. Visayas (UP Visayan – Miag-ao, Iloilo, Tacloban campuses and UP Cebu) has 15% of the students and 18% of Philippine population. Mindanao (which has UP Mindanao in Davao City) has 25% Philippine population and only 2% of UP students. Open University (should have been an equalizer) has 5% of UP students but 80% of its students are still from Luzon. The data show that even in the pursuit of education, UP has neglected Mindanao. There is inequality in terms of the relative as well as the absolute number of students. Other UP units are so big relative to the other units – UP Diliman the flagship carrier has all the courses except agriculture and veterinary medicines. Cost effectiveness or efficiency, as invoked, dictates that a particular unit should be reflective on the discipline demanded by the province or region for this development (marine fisheries for Visayas). This should be re-visited since UP units in the various islands do not fully reflect the development needs (R/E, skills technology capability) of the major islands.

**UP STUDENTS IN THE 8 CU's**

UP BAGUIO	2,544	0.059
UP DILIMAN	21,542	
UP LOS BANOS	12,636	
UP MANILA	6,209	
<b>Luzon= 57%</b>	<b>42,931</b>	<b>0.79</b>
UP CEBU	2,750	
UP VISAYAS	5,431	
<b>Visayas= 18%</b>	<b>8,181</b>	<b>0.15</b>
UP MINDANAO	<b>1,145</b>	<b>0.02</b>
<b>Mindanao = 25%</b>	<b>2,914</b>	<b>0.05</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,171</b>	<b>1.02</b>

**UPOU=60% NCR  
20% LUZON**

.056% of Phi. Popn

UP in Mindanao was only established 15 years ago (reflective of the late recognition of Mindanao, UPLB 1908). UP Mindanao is the only unit which was established through the legislative action (R.A. No. 7889, UP Mindanao Act).

Sec. 4 of this states that:

*The Board of Regents of the University of the Philippines shall have full authority to determine the instruction, research, and extension programs, schedule of preparatory work and initial operations, organizational structure, qualifications and numbers of academic and other personnel, enrollment and other matters related to the administration and operation of the University of the Philippines in Mindanao: provided, that academic program shall put an emphasis on science, technology and agriculture education: provided, further, that the medical education program shall adopt a community-relevant step-ladder approach with the view of encouraging graduates to serve in Mindanao.*

Of the identified 10 poorest provinces of the country, 5 are in Mindanao (Davao del Norte, Zamboanga del Norte, Maguindanao, Lanao del Norte, Surigao del Norte).

The proportion of the population who are below the poverty threshold was Very High in five of six Mindanao regions, ranging from 42% to 52.9%. And of the six regions, poverty has increased in 3 regions (Davao, SOCCSKSARGEN, and ARMM), has remained unchanged in one (Davao), and has declined in two (Zamboanga and Caraga). The Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) registered the highest poverty incidence at 52.9% in 2012, up from 49.7% in 2009. The highest poverty incidence in the country was observed in Lanao del Sur (74.4%) and Maguindanao (65.5%) – both from the ARMM (*Diokno, 2013*).  
<http://www.econ.upd.edu.ph/perse/?p=2404>

It is important to note that the word “poor” is not acceptable in UP Mindanao (this was voiced out during the consultation by a faculty and administrative staff). They used the word “financially challenged” instead of “poor”. It was explained that they have the resources (land, human) waiting to be developed. They are resource-rich but financially challenged. It needs no emphasis that the “peace” campaign in Mindanao must be complemented with economic development efforts and resources inflow. Mindanao is the hub for economic trading for East Asia Growth corridor thus, UP Mindanao expansion into comprehensive university should reflect the development needs of Mindanao and the human resource needs of the EAGA growth corridor.

UP Mindanao was established, although quite late compared to the other units, to help address the manpower needs of for the peace and development of Mindanao. For instance, “*Mindanao as the Land of promise*” is the best frontier for agriculture and food sufficiency objective of the country. UP Mindanao is yet to offer courses in Agriculture. As of to date UP Mindanao does not have a College of Agriculture or even discipline/course in agriculture. What they have is BS in Agribusiness enterprise economics. Sec. 4 of RA 7889 specifically declares that agricultural education should form part of the curriculum.

The recently released poverty numbers support the view that most poor are in rural, agricultural towns – not in urban centers. Modernizing agriculture – increasing farm productivity, higher public investment in farm productivity enhancing infrastructure, providing access to credit and clearing up the land ownership of agrarian reform beneficiaries. It's easier and cheaper to create jobs in agriculture. Yet, this sector has been shrinking over time and has been the slowest growing sector in recent years (*Diokno, 2013*).  
<http://www.econ.upd.edu.ph/perse/?p=2404>

Physical infrastructure (roads, bridges, buildings, seaports) development needs of Mindanao are massive. Yet, as in College of Agriculture, there is no College of Engineering. What they have is only B Sc in Architecture.

There is no need to emphasize that the “Peace and development” needs of Mindanao should be reflected in the physical and human resources capability building. Furthermore, UP Mindanao should address the higher education needs of the 6 million Muslims most of them (90% approx.) are in Mindanao. There about 14 million IPs (60% are Mindanao,30% in Cordillera Region). Affirmative actions be done to bring more Muslims and IPs in UP

Sec. 5 of R.A. No. 7885 states that:

*The University of the Philippines in Mindanao shall provide a special scholarship program and other affirmative action programs to assist poor but deserving Muslims and other members of cultural communities to qualify for admission to the University.*

Currently, the total UP Mindanao students of 1,115 (only 2% of the total UP students of the 54,400 in 2012). This a solid evidence of “neglect” in the past UP administrations, on the role of UP in Mindanao peace and development efforts, in general. For UP Mindanao and CUs, how can we expect them to develop as fast as they could and contribute significantly to the peace and development of Mindanao if we are to consider the following situations:

- > Number of faculty items (many are still contractual despite their being able to satisfy the faculty tenure requirements)
- > College or courses/disciplines reflective or matching the capability/manpower needs of physical development, in turn, supportive of agricultural and economic development requirements of Mindanao.
- > Campus development is wanting (a chicken and egg issue). Why put up more buildings when there are few students, few faculty and REPs. But why expect many students when there are few courses (they are offered in other colleges and universities outside UP). Why expect many students when the campus is yet to be accessible through jeepneys, the cheapest means to go to UP Davao. There should have been a school bus at 1hour interval to ferry to and from, to facilitate access by the low income students including the staff of the University.
- > Also, why expect increasing number of students when, except for Ateneo de Davao, UP Mindanao charges the highest tuition fees? At best, UP Mindanao, should not charge tuition fees at all while still on the development and popularization stage in Mindanao; or scholarships should be given to High school salutatorians and Valedictorians who would like to study in UP Mindanao; free tuition fees to poor but deserving students (they should be exempted from STFAP because the burden of proving that the family is poor is like an elephant passing through the hole of a needle!).

Earlier, the approach of UP is to have the students to the 3 biggest campuses, since establishing other units outside is expensive. The idea then was to bring the students to the 3 biggest campuses of their choice and give them scholarships. But that approach was already superseded by establishment of CUs in the various islands and provinces (UP Mindanao, UP Visayas, UP Baguio and the most recent is the autonomous college of UP Cebu whose trajectories is for UP Cebu to evolve into a comprehensive university like UP Diliman to represent Visayas. Cebu is the main trading location of Visayas. It has an international airport).

The earlier presumption is that students from the different provinces or islands (Philippines is an island or archipelago country) can freely move or enroll in the various CUs (provided they pass the UPCAT cut-off score for the course discipline they plan to enroll) is valid. But the data show that UP campuses serve as easy access by location – meaning majority (about 70-80%) come from nearby provinces. Enrollment in the various CUs really captured the literal meaning of accessibility whereby 60-80% of students from the various CUs are from their doorstep or nearby provinces in the region. For instance, about 60 percent of UP Baguio come from Region 1, 2,3 and CAR (20% are from NCR who will soon transfer back to UP Diliman, Manila or Los Baños as their home is nearer). UP Diliman students (35% of the total UP students) are coming from mostly NCR, Laguna, Cavite, Bulacan, Pampanga (Pampanga is endowed with UP Diliman extension at Pampanga). This is the reason, rationale, or justification of establishing CUs in the various location of the country, which is to capture the literal meaning of “access”.

Has UP become nearer to the students? As UP Mindanao expands and tries to reach out to the many students who would like to study in UP since Sec. 5 of R.A. No. 7885 states that...*No student shall be denied admission to the University of the Philippines in Mindanao by reason of sex, religion, cultural or community affiliation or ethnic origin.*

Other campuses should be established say in Zamboanga or Basilan, in Maguindanao or Lanao, or Compostella Valley.