



Statement on CHED's 'nonpayment' of TES for grantees enrolled for AY 2021-2022 and AY 2022-2023

17 April 2024

This is to respond to the recent news reports on a complaint filed against me for the negligence of duties and responsibilities as a public official rooted in the alleged non-disbursement of the TES tranches for AYs 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

News reports said Mr. Agapito Lubaton of Marvelous College of Technology and ten students from Marvelous College and Goldenstate College of Koronadal City have now accused me of failure to provide action in the 2-year delay in payment of TES for **no apparent and valid reason**.

While my office have not received these complaints and I cannot comment on the specifics of their allegations, let me categorically state the following:

First, I deny negligence as policy decisions are made collegially by the UniFAST Governing Board composed of the DepEd, NEDA, DOLE, NYC, TESDA, DOST, ALCU, PASUC, COCOPEA, GSIS and SSS. Why am I being singled out for a policy decision that I cannot make individually but is collegially made by the UniFAST Board?

Second, Marvelous College has received a total of P157,653,600 for AYs 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, which is part of the cost for tertiary education of these Filipino students as provided under Section 7 of RA 10931.

There are 1,275 continuing qualified TES student-grantees enrolled in Marvelous College and CHED Region 12 has released the funds for them. It is therefore not true that the students have not received money from CHED-UniFAST.

Third, claims of unfairness are unfounded as subsidy amounts are set by UniFAST guidelines and approved by the UniFAST Board. The guidelines of Free Higher Education clearly state that the amount of subsidy is set by the UniFAST Board and subject to availability of funds. The claimants are therefore wrong in their argument that RA 10931 or the Free Higher Education law guarantees them a specific amount for TES. The alleged unreceived payments lack factual basis.

Fourth, budget constraints during the pandemic and the congressional realignments in the 2021 and 2022 GAA reduced the budget for the TES in RA 10931. This affected the number of TES grantees for AY 2021-2013. CHED looked for other funding sources to assist TES grantees. All continuing TES grantees of Marvelous College received their TES for AY 2021-2023 and 1,498 new TES grantees enrolled in Marvelous College received their TES for AY 2021-2023.

Lastly, no violation of ease of doing business occurred. Delays in disbursement were due to lack of funds allocated by DBM to CHED, as confirmed by regional offices. The UniFAST explained in its formal statement to ARTA that delays in the disbursement of TES in AYS 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 was due to the lack of funds allocated to the CHED for the program.

The same complaint was raised by Mr. Lubaton to the DBM. To reiterate the statement of DBM Regional Office XII, CHED has stated that funds are depleted and cannot meet additional requirements, but this doesn't signify a delay because fund utilization varies and may not cover all expenses according to CHED's guidelines and fund availability.

In summary, charges laid against me lack merit and are purely unsubstantiated allegations.



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Chairman
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