



Press Release
14 January 2021

CHED and UniFAST vow more scholarships for IP communities

Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Board Chairman J. Prospero E. De Vera III vows to increase the scholarships for students in Indigenous Peoples (IP) Communities with the continued funding support for the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education (UAQTE) law or Republic Act (RA) 10931 under the 2021 General Appropriations Act (GAA).

The increased attention for IP students was announced by De Vera during his meeting with Nueva Vizcaya Governor Carlos M. Padilla, IP Board Member Sammy Balinhawang, Santa Fe Mayor Tidong A. Benito and leaders from ten (10) tribal groups held in the upland barangay of Malico, Nueva Vizcaya recently.

“President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has signed the 2021 GAA recently which increased funding for the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) which now includes the Tulong Dunong program. Many of the needy and deserving IP students are unable to avail of the TES because of lack of information and the inability of government agencies to include them in their welfare list because they live in remote upland areas,” De Vera said.

“UniFAST and CHED must now meet and link with local governments and IP groups who can assist in information dissemination and identification of beneficiaries,” De Vera added.

De Vera lauded the support of Nueva Vizcaya Governor Padilla and IP Board Member Balinhawang for bringing together Ayangan, Bugkalot, Gaddang, Ikalahan/Kalanguya, Ibaloi, Isinai, Iwak, Tuwali, Kankaney, and Kalinga leaders in Nueva Vizcaya and adjoining provinces so that CHED and UniFAST can explain the Free Higher Education (FHE) program and get their support in identifying needy students who can be assisted by government.

Governor Padilla is a well-known education advocate who co-chaired the Congressional Commission on Education (EdCom) that led to the creation of

CHED, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and Department of Education (DepEd).

RA 10931 or the UAQTE law now provides financial assistance to close to 1.8 million students in public and private colleges and universities through free tuition and miscellaneous fees and the TES. There are 16,118 TES beneficiaries in Region 2 and 1,660 in Nueva Vizcaya alone, many of them are from the IP areas.

De Vera asserted that the number of beneficiaries from IP communities must increase consistent with the dictum that those who have less in life must have more in law.

“I will be visiting and meeting with more IP leaders and local governments in the coming months so UniFAST can fully implement the commitment of President Duterte for our young people to complete their education,” De Vera said.



J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III, DPA

Chairman

Commission on Higher Education