



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 14, 2014

**HON. PATRICIA B. LICUANAN, Ph.D.**

Chairperson, Commission on Higher Education  
Higher Education Development Center (HEDC) Building  
C.P. Garcia Avenue, UP Campus,  
Diliman, Quezon City  
Tel: (+632) 441-0927

Dear **Honorable Licuanan:**

This letter is in regard to the proposal of certain groups to make the teaching of Filipino mandatory in higher education, either as a medium of instruction for some General Education subjects or as a set of dedicated language subjects.

As a province that has become active in promoting linguistic diversity and rights, and held many language consultations with the local education, media, and government sectors, it is prudent for the Provincial Government of La Union to contribute to the discussion on this matter.


We are convinced that the original CHED Memorandum Order No. 20 is generally a sound policy. The reduction in the General Education Curriculum (GEC) requirements from 63 to 36 units is a welcome change that will give more room for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to design flexible, timely academic programs in line with the strengths, needs, and interests of their faculty and students.

The reinstatement of 9 mandatory units of Filipino language, or any language for that matter, will be counterproductive to the effort to lighten the GEC load. The alternative proposal to mandate the use of Filipino in some of the existing GEC subjects is also problematic, for the following reasons:

- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should have the academic freedom to teach courses in any language appropriate to the specific context. The language appropriate to a specific context may take into consideration employment, availability of materials, the language competencies of the instructors, the language background of the students, community demand, the language policy of the department or school, local government laws, international partnerships, and myriad other reasons.
- In addition to academic freedom, diversity should be respected and protected. If there were any minimum language requirement, we very much hope that other Philippine languages be considered. Instead of Filipino being mandated as the sole medium of instruction for at least 3 GEC subjects, it would be more judicious and inclusive to stipulate that at least three GEC subjects be taught in Filipino *or another Philippine language*. Indeed, the Province of La Union and its academic institutions have made conscientious efforts to intellectualize Ilokano for its effective use in our students' learning. The youth, moreover, have been exploring inspiring new avenues of expression through their native language, composing Ilokano rap, writing, and even entering Ilokano scrabble competitions.

In summary, the Provincial Government of La Union supports the Commission on Higher Education in language diversity in the General Education Curriculum. This is in agreement with the positions made public by other organizations, such as Nakem Philippines and Talaytayan Inc. If CHED must stipulate any "Filipino" requirement, whether as a language subject or as a medium of instruction, we earnestly ask that other Philippine languages be considered alongside the national language as a way to fulfill it. May academic freedom and all our languages prosper as our way of life and heritage.

We thank you for your consideration and compassion on this matter.

  
**MANUEL C. ORTEGA**  
Provincial Governor  
Province of La Union