



National Union of Students of the Philippines

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Manifesto against continuing school fee increases

We, the Filipino youth, stand against the unabated increase in tuition and other fees.

In the past decade, there has been an alarming jump in base tuition rates, with the nationwide average in tuition fees increasing by 108% and the national capital region's going up by 143%. Aggravating the problem of rising tuition rates is the sudden appearance of miscellaneous fees that can be described as redundant, exorbitant, and dubious. These schools fees - along with other school expenses like uniforms and textbooks - have netted big schools hundreds of millions in profit and spots in the country's top 1000 corporations.

While profit-seeking schools have made their millions, millions of Filipino youth have lost their chance to earn their degrees due to the rising cost of education. According to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), of 100 youths who enter grade 1 only 14 will continue on to graduate with a college degree. While the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) has estimated an 83% drop-out rate for college students in the past three years.

The rise in tuition and other fees have hurt the most numerous and most vulnerable of the schools' stakeholders - the students. With the increasing costs of basic expenses like transportation and food, skyrocketing school expenses are pushing the youth to choose between an education and simply living. If a commercialized, moneymaking framework is continued in the education sector, we can surely expect drop-out rates to increase.

More than ever, the times call for a stop on unjustified and unwarranted tuition and other fees increase. This respite will greatly help students to achieve their dreams while also allowing parents a little room to breathe. The times also call on schools to be more transparent in financial matters and expenses while engaging students in genuine consultation with regard to student fees. Now is also the time for students to become more active and involved with making decisions in where school funds go, after all it is their parents' hard-earned money.

We are calling on the Palace and on the Commission on Higher Education to implement the moratorium on tuition and other fees increase, to junk CHED memorandum 13 s 1998 and replace it with a pro-student tuition regulation order, and to repeal the Education Act of 1982.