SUCs' PhP4.28b DAP will boost their capacity for quality higher education -- CHED

October 29, 2013, Quezon City -- In an effort to support the administration’s controversial Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) sheds light on the PhP4.28 billion DAP allocation for the state universities and colleges (SUCs).

Laid out in 2011, the DAP investment intends to enhance the capacity of SUCs to modernize and upgrade infrastructure and facilities, fund research, development and extension (RDE) activities to benefit their communities, strengthen the capability of SUC executives, and provide access for poor students. It has provided the much needed boost to the SUCs' 2011 and 2012 budgets.

As of September 2013, PhP3.96 billion out of the PhP4.03 billion or 98.26% has been released to the SUCs with the University of the Philippines (UP) and Mindanao State University (MSU) Systems receiving more than half of the investment at PhP1.383 and PhP1.039 billion, respectively.

Some noteworthy projects under upgrading infrastructure and facilities include UP-Baguio's five ongoing construction projects namely their Residence Hall, Human Kinetics Program building, College of Arts and Communication building, Kolehiyo ng Agham building and the Galerya Kordilyera. While the MSU-Marawi main campus is proud to have 14 high-impact infrastructure projects and equipment upgrades in the pipeline that consists of the soon to be erected three-storey Science and Technology building and state-of-the-art Computer Center. The latter’s groundbreaking event was attended by President Benigno S. Aquino III himself.

For RDE activities, the PhP560 million DAP allotment has been disbursed to 22 SUCs for the conduct of 128 projects through the help of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies. The approved RDE projects focus on priority themes such as climate change impacts and mitigation, disaster science, biodiversity, agriculture and food security, health, alternative sources of energy, education, and other societal concerns at the regional and national levels. These projects are expected to produce at least 20 research and development technologies to be disseminated in 500 barangays and to benefit more than 100,000 households in the next three years.

With the assistance of the Development Academy of the Philippines, the executive
development program for SUCs' presidents, vice presidents, other academic and administrative officials has provided short term training courses to 800 participants. These courses have been designed to enhance their competencies in strategic planning, quality assurance and improvement, develop world class universities, research and development management, extension management, performance-based budgeting, asset development for resource generation and management, among others. To date, 60% of the PhP165 million allotment has been utilized.

Finally, the Student Grants-in-Aid for Poverty Alleviation (SGP-PA) is the government’s innovative and generous scheme that intends to arrest poverty by increasing the number of college graduates among the poorest of the poor households or the conditional cash transfer beneficiary families. The grantees are identified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and are encouraged to enroll in priority courses such as science and technology, agriculture/fisheries and entrepreneurship. In turn, they get full support for tuition, monthly living stipend and other allowances. SGP-PA graduates are expected to acquire high value jobs that will lift their families out of poverty and generate employment/entrepreneurship within their families, relatives and communities. The program currently supports 4,004 qualified students with a budget of PhP500 million.

CHED is confident that with the 44% increase in the SUCs budget this year, that includes PhP3.365 billion for capital outlay, our SUCs would be able to sustain the reforms and development efforts initiated from the 2011 DAP investment. This is a testament to the government’s commitment to steadily increase investment in education from 2.9% of GDP in 2010 all the way to 4.9% in 2016, thereby reaching the international benchmark spending for education in developing countries.

Issued this 29th of October, 2013 at the Higher Education Development Center building, CP Garcia Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

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