



**Direct Response to Cagayan State University Vice President Ranhilio
Callangan Aquino
July 10, 2021**



Cagayan State University (CSU) Vice President Ranhilio Aquino has once again ranted on social media accusing the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) of withholding CSUs Smart Campus project proposal because the Commission "wanted to take over governance of the university and we resisted." He also complained that CSU was "promised the development of Smart Campus" by Commissioner Perfecto Alibin and this promise was not fulfilled.

Here are the facts:

1. When I assumed the Chairmanship of CHED in 2018, the Commission adopted a policy that all state universities and colleges (SUCs) must complete and liquidate all CHED-funded project funds before they can get any new project. This policy of strict budget execution was adopted by the Commission en banc to address the perennial Commission on Audit (COA) observation on the non-completion of CHED-funded projects since the 1990s.

This policy is known by all SUCs and many have cleared all their fund transfers and applied for new CHED-funded projects.

On record, Cagayan State University has unliquidated fund transfers from CHED (P86,310.00 past due for 31-90 days; P18,334,000.00 past due for 91-365 days; P71,976,114.24 past due over 1 year; and P1,232,724.76 past due over 3 years).

2. The Smart Campus project funded by Bayanihan 2 prioritized project proposals from SUCs that participated in the survey on connectivity and did not have unliquidated fund transfers. A priority list was made and those who have no unliquidated funds transfers were given first priority to present their projects. A total of 111 SUCs submitted project proposals and 89 SUCs were given grants of up to P25M to improve their capability to provide flexible learning. CSU was not one of the 89 simply because their priority rank was low due to their unliquidated fund transfers, plus they did not have a BOR Resolution endorsing the project proposal duly signed by the Board Chair.

3. Contrary to what Aquino claims, CHED projects are not PROMISED by any official of CHED. All CHED projects are competitively vetted by experts and CHED officials. For the Smart Campus project, the vetting panel included recognized experts such as Mapua University President Rey Vea, Holy Angel University President Luis Calingo, DICT IT Officer Nico Silva, CHED Commissioners Perfecto Alibin and Aldrin Darilag, and CHED Directors Sylvette Gunigundo and Lily Milla. All SUC Presidents who defend their proposals before the panel will attest that the vetting was thorough and no project was passed because these were "promised to them". It is an insult to the vetting panel and to all SUCs that defended their proposal to say that CSU should get a project because it was "promised to them".

Instead of continuously ranting against CHED and imagining that the Commission wants to control CSU, I strongly urge Aquino and other CSU officials to stop attacking CHED and instead use their energies to focus on practicing good governance and liquidating all projects funded by CHED so they can avail of CHED-funded projects in the future.



J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III

Chairman

CHED and UniFAST Board