Our Distinguished Keynote Speaker, Dr. Oscar M. Lopez
The President of the University of the Philippines, the Honorable Alfredo E. Pascual
Members of the UP Board of Regents
Members of the Philippine Congress
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Chancellors of UP Constituent Universities
Officials of the University and Other Branches of Government
Valued Guests
Fellow Faculty Members
Members of the Graduating Class of 2012

Maayong hapon sa inyong lahat.
Welcome to the 101ST General Commencement Exercises of the University of the Philippines Diliman.

On behalf of the UP Diliman community, I thank Dr. Oscar M. Lopez for generously accepting our invitation to speak before the graduating class today.

We have gathered here today in the UP Amphitheater, ready and willing to endure the sharp afternoon heat of a Philippine summer, in order to celebrate an important occasion in the lives of many individuals. This day is yours, and to the people who will always believe in you.

To the candidates for graduation, this afternoon’s program marks the end of 15 or more long years of rigorous academic training, and the beginning of a transition to a different chapter in your lives as young, productive, and responsible adults.

To the parents and guardians, today’s event signifies the culmination of many years of hard work, sacrifice, and self-denial, all so that your children could be provided with the best education possible. Kindly accept my humble congratulations.

To my colleagues in the faculty, we are now concluding four or more years of teaching and mentoring a particular generation of talented students. We fervently hope that we have been able to instill in the hearts and minds of the members of the Graduating Class of 2012, a genuine love of country and a lifelong love of learning.

Between AY 2001-2002 and AY 2010-2011, which covers a period of 10 years, UP Diliman produced a yearly average of 3,863 graduates that included 630 recipients of master’s degrees and 69 doctorates. This afternoon we are recognizing 3,995 candidates for graduation consisting of 3,278 undergraduate, 656 master’s, and 61 doctoral students.

I am happy to announce that 1,103 of these students are graduating with honors - 19 are summa cum laudes, 222 are magna cum laudes, and 862 are cum laudes. The numbers imply that roughly 30% of the candidates will earn his or her bachelor's degree with academic distinction. In the 1990’s, only thirteen percent (13%) graduated with honors.

UP Diliman students represent the best minds of their generation. In August 2011, almost 73,500 high school seniors took the UP College Admission Test, with 48,486 specifically wanting to study in UP
Diliman. Only 3,821 were qualified for admission into any of the 67 undergraduate degree programs, which means that only one out of every twelve UPCAT examinees was successful.

At the end of this program, our new graduates will join the 400,000 or so new college graduates who are produced yearly by the Philippine higher education system. Expectedly, the competition for good jobs will be fierce. But, as UP graduates, you have a unique advantage. UP has not only taught you how to think critically, but also how to act decisively. UP teaches you to lead.

Since there are so few of you in this country, UP Diliman graduates such as yourselves bear the responsibility of becoming leaders in your chosen fields of discipline or specialization. Through leadership by example, you will inspire others in your respective offices and workplaces not only to excel but also to be honorable.

UP needs to perform better in order to accomplish its purpose as the national university of the country. The yearly advanced manpower contribution of UP Diliman has remained critically low given the multidimensional challenges that our country is facing today. The number of high school students that UP Diliman qualifies for admission every year has stayed constant at 3,820 in the last 13 academic years even though the Philippine population has been growing at a critical rate of 2 percent per annum since 1980. The resident population of the country experienced a net increase of 20 million from 1999 to 2010. More than 20% of those who have qualified for admission also do not proceed to enroll in UP Diliman, and the reasons are not merely the lack of financial resources or the rise of competing private schools.

UP Diliman is still unable to increase the number of PhD graduates that it produces yearly. Presently, it employs more than 500 full-time PhD faculty members representing 36% of the total number of regular faculty members, but only 61 doctoral degrees will be awarded today. One of our goals as the country's premier academic institution is to bring forth at least 150 doctorate awardees every year.

Essential to enhancing the performance of UP Diliman is its capability to recruit, hire, recognize and retain PhD faculty members who are not only prolific researchers but also successful mentors of PhD students. The administration of President Alfredo Pascual is implementing a number of programs to address this difficult challenge.

To our dear graduates today, we wish you good luck and more power. You are here because you have proven—to your teachers, to your parents, and to yourselves—that you have what it takes to succeed, to triumph over years of challenges that those who have not had the inclination to study at UP can only imagine. And now is the time to remember, and to substantiate—to yourselves, and to all Filipinos—that you are an iskolar ng bayan, a child of the University of the Philippines. Remember that you are special not only because you have been trained in the best university of the country but because you are duty-bound to serve our people. Prove to our fellow citizens that investing in UP is the right thing to do for the country.

Daghan kaayong salamat at mabuhay po kayong lahat.

REFERENCES:
2. Office of the UP Vice President for Academic Affairs
3. [www.indexmundi.com/philippines/population.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/philippines/population.html)