STATEMENT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR - UP DILIMAN

UP Diliman University Council Votes for Academic Calendar Shift

The UP Diliman University Council, composed of faculty members with ranks of assistant professor or higher, voted today at a special meeting for a shift in the academic calendar’s start from June to August, effective this coming schoolyear.

Of the 456 votes, 284 (62.3%) were for a shift, 164 (35.9%) were against and 8 abstained. In a December 2013 meeting, the University Council had voted against the shift but proposed more consultations. A forum was held in February where speakers spoke for and against the academic calendar shift. A referendum conducted that same month showed almost 70% of faculty supporting the shift.

While favoring the calendar shift, the faculty had a long discussion about the need for such policy changes to involve faculty and students. The Council expressed its dissatisfaction with the way the referendum was called without their being consulted, and decided, at their meeting, to consider the referendum as an “opinion poll”.

The UP System has pushed for an academic calendar shift citing the need to internationalize UP, i.e. have more international exchanges involving faculty and students, through a calendar more synchronized with other countries. Other reasons given for an academic shift were the loss of classes because of typhoons, the December Christmas break resulting in a second semester where learning is adversely affected.

Opponents, mainly student activist groups, said the shift was a move to “sell UP” to foreign interests. They also said summer classes would be oppressive to students.

The UP Diliman University Student Council took a middle ground, calling for deferment of a shift to make sure UP is ready. Administration officials say the UP system is prepared for the shift, ready to refurbish classrooms for classes during the summer, as well as other adjustments for faculty and students.

The results of the University Council meeting will be forwarded to the UP Board of Regents, which meets on Thursday. Earlier, the regents approved a shift in the academic calendar to August for all of UP’s other campuses, except Diliman, on a pilot basis.

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