

## NSU supports free education

Written by Ronnie Rotairo and Michael John Binal

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*Pursuant to Senate Bill 1304 known as the Free Higher Education for All Act, Naval State University along with other State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines was awarded with tuition-free scholarship grant to support students currently enrolled in this academic year.*

After the confirmation has been made to appropriate Php 8 billion funding from the 2017 national budget to support the program, NSU will no longer collect tuition fees from the students. “The university is thankful for being one of the recipients of the free tuition program by the administration. It is of great help to our students to pursue and finish on their courses,” said Dr. Erwin Salvatierra, Student Affairs and Services Office (SASO) Director. According to SASO, the institution has received Php 62 million budget allocation for 2017-2018 and will be halved to subsidize two semesters. “As of the first semester, reports from the Accounting office shows the total amount of students’ tuition fees pegs at Php 17-18 million, which is way less than the allocated fund of Php 31 million. The remaining budget will be supplemented for the next semester,” Dr. Salvatierra expounded. “We are encouraging out-of-school high school graduates and returnees to enroll this 2nd semester since the budget is large enough to accommodate new applicants,” he added.

### Full Effect

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Upon enrollment, all students were asked to comply all the requirements such as Certificate of Indigency and scholastic records to qualify for the educational assistance.

Student Affairs Office confirms that more than five thousand students from different colleges have already been granted as of the initial implementation.

“Unfortunately, not all students are qualified to avail this assistance. Short-term courses like Caregiving and supplemental programs like Diploma in Teaching will not be granted,” he validated.

-It was also reported that other university-grantees like Eastern Visayas State University (EVSU) and Southern Leyte State University (SLSU) have implemented a prioritization scheme due to inadequacy to accommodate its large population of students.

“We are expecting for the enrollment to increase next semester since, currently, the students have realized the full effect of this program”, he further retorted.

### **Fee-free Learning**

On the contrary, Commission on Higher Education (CHED) clarified that the budget will only cover tuition fees.

To answer the uncovered fees, Dr. Victor C. Cañez Jr, OIC University President revealed during the annual orientation last June 26 that Cong. Rogelio J. Espina, Representative of the Lone District of Biliran, donated Php 15 million assistance incurred for the laboratory fee and other miscellaneous fee.

“ We are really thankful to our beloved Congressman as Naval State University will realize a higher education free of fees ,” Dr. Cañez Jr emphasized.

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Indigent students may still obtain scholarship grants and other assistance from various external or private programs to cover up extra expenses.

Expanded Students' Grants in Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (ESGP-PA) will be covering the student-beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).

While students who are not 4Ps beneficiaries may still avail aid from Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPS) since both are CHED-offered programs.