

November 24, 2009

Dear President Yudof (University of California) and President Roman (University of the Philippines):

It is widely recognized that global markets are in a state of crisis where the distance between the well being of some and the misery of most is expanding. The contradictions of our global economic system are more severe in the Philippines than in the richer countries of the world. It is in the Philippines that one is able to witness the everyday costs paid by an entire population as a consequence of the cure all remedies of privatization, structural adjustment programs, and trade liberalization. The systematic violence of hunger imposed upon youth throughout the Philippines is supported by an educational system that pacifies and imposes the belief that “there is no alternative” to the current state of affairs. As public educators, scholars, researchers, and graduate students located in the United States we realize that the structures of profit and corporate gain imposed upon a Philippine polity is not divorced from the social conditions for educators and youth in this country. This is most evident by the current state of higher education in California. As a result of the 32 percent increase in student fees and the decision to lower enrollment at the University of California, higher education will be less accessible for working class and poor students. Filipino Americans and other students of color across UC campuses will be adversely affected. Many first generation students may become last generation students at risk of being priced out of an education. At other universities the “high-tuition/high-aid” model that the UC is moving towards has a marked record not only of reduced access but also increased student debt and inferior educational quality. In fact, according to the University Committee on Planning and Budget, this is the very reason that the UC made the decision in 2006 not to adopt a similar model.

Furthermore, in response to the crisis, support services and academic programs addressing issues important to working-class people and people of color are often the first to be cut. Already targeted is the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education. The UC Commission on the Future reportedly entertains plans that would render campuses like UC Merced and UC Riverside “teaching campuses,” with research in only certain fields being funded, posing great risk for departments like Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies. At UC Riverside, required courses such as English composition courses are cut leading to the creation of “six-year undergraduates”—that is, students unable to take basic courses due to lack of sufficient offerings. These students must now stay additional years in the hope of later completing the courses for their degrees. Students should not pay more while receiving less from institutions that were intended, as stated in the California Master Plan for Higher Education, to guarantee an affordable education to every California student. Such a goal is not possible considering since 2001 undergraduate student fees have increased 300 percent.

We support the democratic mobilization of students who have organized forces with labor unions, community organizations, and progressive educators. We stand in

solidarity with the students and faculty in the United States, the Philippines, and throughout the world who are organizing in support of public universities so that they may be accessible to all instead of only a small few. We believe that the transformation of an educational system so that it may reflect the potential of a diverse and vibrant new generation of global leaders is in fact possible. However, we recognize the path for those who struggle for democratic, just, and equitable sites of education is not without consequence. Take for example the context of Professor Sarah Raymundo's protracted efforts for academic tenure at the University of the Philippines.

Professor Raymundo has been an educator at the University of the Philippines (U.P.) since 1999 in the Department of Sociology. In February of 2008, she submitted an application for tenure to her department. In June 2008, Professor Raymundo was informed that the voting tenured faculty within the department voted seven to three in favor of her tenure as she has exceeded the necessary requirements for consideration. In fact, Professor Raymundo has garnered international praise for her scholarship linking cultural production in the Philippines to gender and globalization. She has published numerous book reviews, articles, as well as co-edited an important volume titled *Kontra-Gahum: Academics Against Political Killings* (2006).

In April 2008, the tenured sociology faculty of the University of the Philippines - Diliman in a vote of seven to three recommended the granting of tenure to Professor Raymundo tenure. Seven months later, she was informed that the faculty unanimously decided to reverse their decision and not grant tenure to her application. Furthermore, Professor Raymundo was also informed that she was no longer welcome on campus as she was instructed by Dr. Clemen Aquino, then department chairperson not to meet her classes scheduled for the term until further notice. She persisted in teaching her classes until her contract expired in May 2009. After more than a year of academic limbo, Professor Raymundo had not received clear notification of the reasoning behind her denial of tenure leaving many to believe that her tenure process fraught with bureaucratic complications is a product of her politics. Professor Raymundo was questioned several times by the Sociology Department to informally explain her involvement in the campaign to surface two U.P. student activists, Karen Empeno and Sherlyn Cadapan, who were forcibly taken by men wearing ski masks on June 26, 2006. Professor Raymundo has been one of U.P.'s most vociferous critics of the human right abuses that have impacted her campus community and the country at large. She has openly questioned the Arroyo government's role in the more than 1,000 reports cases of enforced disappearances and extra-judicial killings against educators, women, artists, journalists, urban poor, religious leaders, labor organizers, and students.

On October 28, 2009, in a statement filled with bias, contradiction, and unjust decision-making U.P. - Diliman Chancellor, Sergio Cao ruled against Professor Raymundo's appeal for tenure. In this statement, Chancellor Cao does not explain how or why the first vote in favor of Professor Raymundo's tenure was overturned by the minority (7 in favor, 3 against). Furthermore, Professor Raymundo was not granted fair and due process in addressing supposed evidence, rumors, and allegations made against her. Considering that Professor Raymundo has exceeded the minimum requirements for

tenure and the protracted, unfair, and undemocratic process in Professor Raymundo's application for tenure, we are led to believe that her denial was motivated by her politics as opposed to her academic qualifications.

The public universities in the Philippines and the United States are widely known as vibrant sites of democracy, with rich legacies of challenging the status quo, as well as contributing intellectuals and leaders to important social causes. These institutions have also performed an important role of being informal "think-tanks" for alternative models and social initiatives. The privatization, academic repression, as well as the de-funding of liberal arts, ethnic, labor, and gender studies and foreign languages have all greatly impacted youth throughout the world. We recognize that as educators, researchers, and students we are implicated in the struggle for education and as such we demand:

- An End to the Privatization of our Schools! □□
- An End to the Increase of Student Fees so that the UC System is Accessible to ALL!
- An End to Academic Repression!
- Justice and Tenure for Professor Sarah Raymundo!

Sincerely,

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