



## PRE-PLenary CONFERENCE ON THE FY 2020 BUDGET

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	Pre-plenary conference on the proposed FY 2020 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the state universities and colleges (SUCs)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Isidro Ungab (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Davao City), held a pre-plenary conference with the SUCs to thresh out issues and concerns raised by House Members prior to the deliberations of their FY 2020 budget in the plenary.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Paul Ruiz Daza (1<sup>st</sup> District, Northern Samar), presided over this pre-plenary conference.</p> <p>Dr. Tirso Ronquillo, president of the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC), said that under the FY 2020 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the 111 SUCs nationwide will receive a total budget of P64.87 billion, which is just 0.2% higher than the current year's budget of P64.71 billion. By expense class, SUCs' 2020 proposed budget will be distributed as follows: personnel services (PS), P43.6 billion; maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), P10.6 billion; and capital outlay (CO) P10.67 billion.</p> <p>Ronquillo informed the Committee that the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) drastically reduced the SUCs' original budget proposal of P116.66 billion by 44%. Likewise, he said that the government's spending for education is relatively low compared to its ASEAN neighbors. Ronquillo reported that based on statistics from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the 2016 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program, the government's expenditure on education is only 3.4% of the total gross domestic product (GDP) and only 11% of the total education budget is allocated to SUCs.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Daza, DBM Bureau F Director Tessie Gregorio explained that the DBM adopts the two-tier budgeting approach in evaluating the budget of the agencies, including the SUCs.</p> <p>Gregorio explained that under a two-tier budget approach, ongoing spending is considered under Tier 1 and proposals for new and expanded spending are evaluated under Tier 2. The amount allocated for Tier 2 is from the "fiscal space" or the remaining budget after Tier 1 is calculated. For the FY 2020 budget, the fiscal space amounts to P911 billion which will be shared among agencies requesting additional budget.</p> <p>Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS) sought the comment of Ronquillo with regard to the significant number of teachers on a job order employment status when there are many unfilled teaching positions in the SUCs. Ronquillo explained that the matter is due to the faculty members' lack of master's degree. (The CHED requires that teachers at higher education level must have at least a master's degree in the fields that they teach.) Nevertheless, he assured that the SUCs are assisting the faculty members by way of granting them scholarship under the CHED's Faculty Development Program to allow them to obtain their master's degree and eventually get hold of a plantilla position.</p> <p>Convinced that the SUCs need additional budget, several Members promised to find ways to augment their FY 2020 budget.</p>