

POLICY ON CAMPUS BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Rationale

The University of Mindanao recognizes biodiversity conservation as a fundamental pillar of sustainable development and institutional responsibility. The university acknowledges that its campuses, research sites, and demonstration areas are part of interconnected ecosystems that sustain life, provide essential ecosystem services, and influence community resilience against climate change.

UM is committed to protecting native and endemic species, restoring degraded landscapes, reducing ecological footprints, and ensuring that all forms of land use - academic, research, infrastructural, and agricultural - adhere to sound environmental principles.

This policy provides an integrated framework for the protection, enhancement, and sustainable management of terrestrial ecosystems across all UM campuses and affiliated field sites, consistent with the institution's mission to advance science, community development, and environmental stewardship.

Scope

This policy applies to all UM campuses, field stations, experimental forests, research centers, and demonstration farms, including but not limited to the Forestry Experimental Forest, Agroforestry Demonstration Farm, and Institute of Biodiversity and Environment (IBE) and Coleoptera Research Center (CRC) biodiversity monitoring sites.

It covers:

- Campus landscaping and tree planting activities
- Research and educational use of terrestrial ecosystems
- Construction and infrastructure development planning
- Waste and pollution control affecting terrestrial and aquatic habitats
- Community-based conservation and extension programs
- Partnerships on land rehabilitation, reforestation, and species monitoring and protection.

This policy shall also apply to any third-party or partner institutions conducting activities within UM-managed land ecosystems.

Guiding Principles

UM's biodiversity and environmental management initiatives are guided by the following principles:

Ecological Integrity. The university shall maintain the ecological health of its land ecosystems by conserving native species, preventing habitat loss, and promoting natural regeneration.

Sustainable Land Use. Degraded areas within university-managed lands shall be restored through reforestation, agroforestry, and soil and water conservation practices.

Education and Research Integration. All land-based activities shall optimize ecological, educational, and social benefits while preventing degradation or overexploitation.

Scientific Management. Land use decisions and restoration practices shall be evidence-based and informed by ongoing research, biodiversity inventories, and environmental assessments.

Climate Resilience. The University shall incorporate nature-based solutions that enhance climate change mitigation and adaptation across campuses.

Management of Invasive Species. UM shall adopt proactive strategies to control the introduction and spread of invasive alien species through regulation, risk assessment, and monitoring.

Biodiversity Integration in Development. Biodiversity values shall be integrated into all planning, infrastructure, and development projects, ensuring minimal ecological impact during construction or land alteration.

Education and Participation. Biodiversity conservation and environmental management shall be integrated into academic curricula, faculty research, and student engagement programs.

Collaboration and Partnerships. UM shall collaborate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), local government units (LGUs), indigenous communities, and partner institutions for shared management of ecosystems.

Policy Statement

Biodiversity Conservation and Species Monitoring

- UM shall identify, monitor, and protect IUCN Red Listed and nationally threatened species within and around university-managed lands.
- The IBE-CRC shall maintain an institutional biodiversity database documenting flora and fauna, including conservation status, habitat data, and population trends.
- Biodiversity monitoring shall form part of the university's regular environmental audit and research agenda.
- Restoration programs shall prioritize the propagation of native and endemic species to support ecosystem rehabilitation and genetic diversity.

Land and Habitat Management

- All UM campuses shall maintain Green and Conservation Zones identified for reforestation, carbon sequestration, or native vegetation preservation.
- Landscaping, gardening, and maintenance works shall promote native plant species and prohibit those classified as invasive by DENR and Global Invasive Database.

- Soil and water conservation practices shall be employed in all agricultural and infrastructure projects.
- The University shall develop and periodically update a Campus Biodiversity Management Plan (CBMP) to guide restoration and maintenance efforts.

Ecological Integration in Infrastructure Planning

- Environmental considerations shall be embedded in the early stages of campus planning and construction, including environmental impact screening and vegetation mapping.
- Infrastructure projects shall minimize tree cutting and habitat disturbance; compensatory planting shall be implemented for any unavoidable vegetation loss.
- All new buildings shall integrate green spaces, rainwater catchment systems (if applicable), and permeable surfaces to support ecological balance.
- The Office of Physical Plant Management and General Services and IBE shall jointly review all campus development proposals to ensure biodiversity-sensitive planning.

Control of Alien and Invasive Species

- The University shall implement measures to prevent, monitor, and manage the introduction and spread of alien or invasive species on campus.
- Any introduction of non-native biological materials for research, demonstration or ornamental use must undergo risk assessment and receive clearance from IBE.
- Awareness campaigns shall be conducted to educate students, faculty, and staff on the impacts of invasive species.
- The University shall coordinate with DENR and DA-BPI in implementing alien species control and disposal measures.

Education, Research, and Community Engagement

- UM shall promote environmental literacy through curriculum integration seminars and research activities focused on ecosystem services and land conservation.
- The IBE, CRC, ESD, and Biology program shall implement extension projects on reforestation, agroforestry, and watershed rehabilitation in collaboration with partner communities.
- Students shall be encouraged to participate in fieldwork, biodiversity surveys, and citizen science programs.

Implementation and Review

The Institute of Biodiversity and Environment (IBE) shall serve as the primary implementing body, in coordination with the Coleoptera Research Center (CRC), Environmental Studies Department (ESD), and Office of Physical Plant Management and General Services (PPMGS):

1. Annual biodiversity audits and land-use assessments shall be conducted.
2. Reports shall be consolidated into an Environmental and Biodiversity Performance Report submitted to the Vice-President for Research and Innovation Center.
3. The policy shall be reviewed every three (3) years or as required by new legislation, scientific findings, or institutional priorities.

Signed:

(Sgd) GUILLERMO P. TORRES, JR.

University President

References

- Republic Act No. 9147 (Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001)
Republic Act No. 9729 (Climate Change Act of 2009)
Republic Act No. 11038 (Expanded NIPAS Act of 2018)
DENR Administrative Order No. 2016-11 (National List of Threatened and Invasive Alien species)
UN Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land