



29 April 2020

**MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 46**

Series of 2020

**T O: All VSU Constituents**  
**R E: Continuation of 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester SY 2019-2020 Without Residential/Face-to-Face Instruction**

After a series of teleconferences with CHED along with other SUC Presidents, the University has conducted consultative meetings with its various core members including the University Administrative Council (UADCO) on 14 April 2020, the College Deans and Department Heads, and the VSU COVID-Task Force in the morning and afternoon of 16 April 2020, respectively. It has also participated in a coordination assembly with the local IATF of Baybay City, Leyte.

In view of this and pursuant to CHED COVID Advisory No. 6, dated 13 April 2020, the University arrived at a concerted stand which was approved by the VSU BOR in its meeting held on April 28, 2020 on the continuation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester SY 2019-2020 without residential or face-to-face instruction after 30 April 2020, and proposed a plan of action (including completion of academic requirements for students) for the rest of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2019-2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that students in all levels (high school, college, & graduate students) except graduating MS & PhD students residing in the City of Baybay are no longer required to physically attend classes in the campus. This position strives to attain a balanced approach that prioritizes the health and welfare of all VSU constituents without compromising academic quality.

For brevity, the reasons for this concerted stand are as follows:

- On 17 April 2020, DOH Region 8 has confirmed the first COVID case within the Province of Leyte (in the Municipality of Burauen, about 75km from VSU). This and the recent report of COVID-19 cases has confirmed local transmission within Region 8, particularly in Tarangnan, Samar. In the recent press releases of the Department of Health Regional Office 8 (7 April 2020 and 14 April 2020), Dr. Minerva P. Molon emphasized the importance of staying at home and strict social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus. In the event of further escalation, Region 8 will be in severe chaos, considering that the region needs to send its samples to Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu for confirmatory tests. Region 8 has only 89 hospitals with less than 4,000 beds serving a population close to five million. Moreover, there seems to be a threat looming, given the growing number of suspected cases within the Leyte Province.
- VSU serves students who come from various regions of the country, with at least 900 students coming from outside of Region 8. With the current situation of COVID positive cases across the country, a potential source of inoculum (carrier) that can spread the infection cannot easily be ruled out. The risks involved cannot be taken lightly, given the fact that the University lacks the capacity to do mass testing and a suitable quarantine facility. Moreover, a considerable portion of its student population lives in university dormitories and cottages. Furthermore, a considerable proportion of the University faculty and staff reside within the campus, many of whom are vulnerable senior citizens with comorbid conditions.

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- Many owners of apartments, cottages and related student housing facilities located outside the University signified that they won't allow students to come and occupy their housing facilities unless the students have completed a prior quarantine within the University. This is unlikely to happen as the University simply does not have the capacity to accommodate and support all students in a case like this.
- Some parents have signified that they would no longer allow their children to come back to the University until the COVID-19 issue is settled.
- Members of the University Health Services (UHS) and other frontliners lack sufficient PPE and relevant facilities in the event a positive case arises.
- Apparently, the safety and preservation of lives is of utmost concern. This concern was raised by all of the core members of the University, including the academic department heads, during its recent consultation meeting.

Given all these, the University is in a better position to heed to the call of its core constituents and implore alternative ways in trying to engage the seemingly new normal it is forced to embrace. Thus, in connection with the non-resumption of classes, the University has agreed for VSU employees to continue to adopt flexible/alternative work arrangements (whether in the office or at home) so as not to impede the delivery of services of the University. Weekly planned outputs and skeletal workforce schedules shall also be imposed. Specific details are as follows:

- The University shall continue to support and provide weekly food packs to stranded students (approx. 370) until 30 April 2020. Once the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) has been lifted, they will be advised to go back to their respective homes. Those who cannot do so, or wish to stay (especially those from other islands in the Visayas and Mindanao that are imposing local lockdowns), will still be supported by the University.
- Starting 20 April 2020, faculty members will be required to prepare and format instructional materials/comprehensive course content that will be online-ready and should be submitted on or before 29 May 2020. The Department of Computer Science and Technology of the University (DCST) along with the VSU-WebTeam shall be tasked to conduct webinars and produce instructional materials on how to format course content into online-ready materials using Google Classroom or Moodle.
- Graduate (MS and PhD) students from within Baybay City, Leyte may still enter the campus and continue with their thesis experiments provided they have been cleared by the University Health Services (UHS) or Baybay City Health Office (CHO). They shall also be strictly supervised and monitored by their respective advisers following ECQ protocols.
- Maximum consideration shall be given to graduating undergraduate students. For undergraduate thesis student, supplemental activity such as, but not limited to, an exhaustive review of literature shall be required. Intern/OJT students who were pulled out due to the lockdown/quarantine shall not be required to go back to their respective Host-Training Establishments (HTE's) and/or areas of OJT/internships. Instead, they will be assessed based on the number of hours they have completed, and other relevant supplemental activities to be

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done (online or submitted offline) shall be required as appropriate. The same will be determined by their respective coordinators in coordination with the respective Department Heads, College Deans and the Office of the Vice President for Instruction.

- Flexible learning systems with or without internet connectivity will be explored. Students who are required to submit certain requirements but lack good internet connectivity shall be allowed to submit the same once the University has opened again.
- All students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester shall be graded with numerical equivalents according to existing guidelines, based on their current record/assessment. Students may also be given supplemental requirements prior to the close of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester which shall be submitted online or by any other means where internet connectivity is an issue.
- To provide more time for students to complete their requirements, the deadlines for submission of grades and other requirements will follow the schedule stipulated in the approved School Calendar for SY 2019-2020, as follows:
  - Graduating (Senior) High School Students – 22 May 2020
  - Non-graduating High School Students – 29 May 2020
  - Graduating College/Graduate School Students – 15 June 2020
  - Non-graduating College/Graduate School Students – 22 June 2020
- Final clearance for graduation will be required only when graduates claim their Diploma, Transcript of Records and other graduation credentials.
- No in-person graduation rites shall be conducted. The University however is on the process of planning a virtual graduation ceremony via the VSU WebTeam.
- Summer classes will not be offered by the University. Pre-requisite courses will be offered as co-requisites during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester 2020-2021. Moreover, students will be allowed to take overload units, or double enroll subjects where appropriate.

For strict compliance.

  
**EDGARDO E. TULIN**  
University President