

GMA orders SUCs to review no pay, no exam policy

President Arroyo has issued directives to state colleges and universities (SUCs) to come up with a "socially-sensitive" tuition fee scheme and reform their "no payment, no periodic examination" policy to help students stay in school despite financial difficulties.

Mrs. Arroyo issued Executive Order 792 last April 21 to help students in SUCs stay in school even if they are experiencing financial problems.

"The government must pour all savings and revenues into programs that help the poor and the middle class. This includes more and more investments in education," she said.

"Two concerns have been brought to the attention of the administration: the rigid tuition fee payment rules of SUCs and the clamor to expand the coverage

of the Student's Assistance Fund for Education (SAFE)," she added.

"The no payment, no periodic examination policy is one of the main reasons young students from poor families drop out from their SUCs. This has to change to ensure a decent graduation rate from SUC enrollees," she said.

She said "rigid tuition fee payment rules cannot be allowed to sabotage the great educational agenda of the administration."

Mrs. Arroyo also ordered the administrators of the SAFE to expand the coverage of the program.

On top of tuition, beneficiaries of the program should also receive monthly stipends to subsidize the students' transport fares, and laboratory and research allowance.

- Paolo Romero