

H. No. 9334

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila
Nineteenth Congress
Third Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-second day of July, two thousand twenty-four.

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 12296]

AN ACT CONVERTING THE SULU STATE COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF JOLO, PROVINCE OF SULU, INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE SULU STATE UNIVERSITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the "Sulu State University Charter".

SEC. 2. *Conversion.* — The Sulu State College (SSC) in the Municipality of Jolo, Province of Sulu, including all its satellite campuses, is hereby converted into a state university to be known as the Sulu State University (SSU).

SEC. 3. *General Mandate.* – The SSU shall primarily provide advanced education, higher technological and professional courses, and training programs in agriculture, education, engineering, forestry, arts and sciences, and other relevant fields of study. It shall promote advanced instruction, research, and extension services and provide progressive leadership in its areas of specialization.

SEC. 4. *Curricular Offerings.* – The SSU shall offer short-term technical-vocational, undergraduate, and graduate courses in the fields of agriculture, education, engineering, forestry, arts and sciences, and other courses, as the Board of Regents may deem necessary to carry out its objectives, and those which respond to the human resource development needs of the Province of Sulu and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM): *Provided*, That the SSU shall comply with the policies, standards, and guidelines of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for the offering of courses and the introduction of new or revised programs.

The existing reasonably sized laboratory high school shall continue to operate under the supervision of the College of Education of the SSU to serve the in-campus requirements of its students.

SEC. 5. *Administration.* – The SSU shall have the general powers of a corporation set forth in Republic Act (RA) No. 11232, otherwise known as the “Revised Corporation Code of the Philippines”. The administration of the SSU and the exercise of its corporate powers shall be vested exclusively in the Board of Regents and the President of the SSU.

SEC. 6. *The Board of Regents.* – The governing body of the SSU shall be the Board of Regents, hereinafter referred to as the Board, which shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the CHED and vice-chaired by the President of the SSU, and with the following as members:

(a) Chairperson of the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education of the Senate;

(b) Chairperson of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education of the House of Representatives;

(c) Regional Director of the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev);

(d) Regional Director of the Department of Science and Technology;

(e) President of the federation of faculty associations of the SSU;

(f) President of the federation of student councils of the SSU;

(g) President of the federation of alumni associations of the SSU;

(h) Representative of the non-teaching personnel association of the SSU; and

(i) Three (3) prominent citizens from the private sector who have distinguished themselves in their professions or fields of specialization.

The Board shall appoint three (3) prominent citizens who shall be selected from a list of at least five (5) qualified persons from the Province of Sulu, as recommended by a search committee constituted by the President of the SSU, in consultation with the Chairperson of the CHED and other members of the Board, based on the guidelines, qualifications and standards for the position set by the Board. They shall serve for a term of two (2) years from the date of appointment.

The presidents of the federation of faculty associations, the federation of student councils, and the federation of alumni associations, and the representative of the non-teaching personnel shall be coterminous with their terms of office, as provided under their respective constitutions and bylaws.

SEC. 7. *Powers and Duties of the Board.* – The administration of the SSU and the exercise of its corporate powers are vested in the Board, which shall have the following specific powers and duties in addition to its general powers of administration and the exercise of all the powers granted to the Board of Directors of a Corporation under Section 35 of RA No. 11232:

(a) Promulgate and implement policies in accordance with the declared State policies on education, other pertinent provisions of the Constitution on education, agriculture, science and technology, and the policies, standards and thrusts of the CHED under RA No. 7722, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Act of 1994”;

(b) Approve the curricula, instructional programs, and rules on student discipline drawn by the Administrative and Academic Councils, as herein provided;

(c) Appoint, upon the recommendation of the President of the SSU, the vice presidents, chancellors, deans, directors, heads of the campuses, faculty members, and other officials of the SSU;

(d) Prescribe the salaries of faculty members and administrative officials and employees, subject to the provisions of RA No. 11466, otherwise known as the "Salary Standardization Law of 2019", civil service rules and regulations governing hours of service and such other requirements and conditions, and other pertinent laws, rules and regulations;

(e) Fix the tuition fees and other necessary school charges, such as matriculation fees, graduation fees, and laboratory fees, as the Board may deem proper to impose, after due consultation with the concerned sectors. The fees and charges, including government subsidies and other income generated by the SSU, shall constitute its funds to be used exclusively in the pursuit of its mandate as a state university, and shall be deposited in any authorized government depository bank. All interests that shall accrue therefrom shall form part of the same funds for the use of the SSU;

The fees and charges collected by the SSU, including government subsidies and proceeds from other income sources, as well as interests that would accrue therefrom, shall be retained by the SSU: *Provided*, That in no case shall the said income be used for the payment of allowances and other benefits not authorized by law: *Provided, further*, That all fiduciary fees shall be disbursed for the specific purposes for which they were collected.

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Board may authorize, for such reasonable and legal purposes it deems necessary and urgent for the attainment of the objectives of the SSU, the use of: (i) any unexpended balance whose fiduciary character has been *ipso facto* removed pursuant to the grant of subsidy under RA No. 10931, otherwise known as the "Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act"; and/or (ii) any appropriation for any project under the duly approved program of expenditures of the SSU, which the SSU, for reasons beyond its control, would not be able to pursue: *Provided*, That funds collected from students for specific purposes shall not be realigned or reprogrammed to other expenditures;

(f) Adopt and implement a socialized scheme of tuition and other school fees for greater access of poor but deserving students in accordance with RA No. 10931;

(g) Establish professorial chairs in the SSU and provide fellowships for qualified faculty members, and scholarships to deserving students;

(h) Receive and appropriate sums as may be provided for by law for the support of the SSU, and all other sums in the manner it may, in its discretion, determine to carry out the purposes and functions of the SSU;

(i) Set the policies on admission and graduation of students;

(j) Award honorary degrees upon persons in recognition of their outstanding contributions in the fields of education, public service, arts, science and technology, sports and human kinetics, or any field of specialization within the academic competency of the SSU, and authorize the awarding of certificates of completion of non-degree and non-traditional courses;

(k) Develop academic arrangements for institutional capability building with appropriate institutions and agencies, whether public, private, local or foreign, and appoint experts or specialists as consultants, part-time, visiting or exchange professors, scholars or researchers, as the case may be;

(l) Adopt modern and innovative modes of transferring knowledge to allow greater access to education such as the use of information technology, online programs, dual training system, open distance learning, and community laboratory;

(m) Absorb non-chartered tertiary institutions within the Province of Sulu and BARMM as branches, extension or external centers, in coordination with the CHED and in consultation with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and offer therein programs or courses to carry out the constitutional mandate of providing equal access to educational opportunities;

(n) Authorize an external management audit of the SSU, to be financed by the CHED, subject to the rules and regulations of the Commission on Audit, and institute reforms, including academic and structural changes, on the basis of the audit results and recommendations;

(o) Develop consortia and other economic forms of linkages with local government units, as well as public, private, local or foreign institutions and agencies for the furtherance of the purposes and objectives of the SSU;

(p) Import books or publications, instruments, equipment, and apparatuses for economic, technical-vocational, scientific, medical, philosophical, historical, legal or cultural purposes;

(q) Enter into joint ventures with business and industry, after consultation with the DEPED for the profitable growth and management of economic assets, the proceeds of which shall be used for the development and strengthening of the SSU;

(r) Receive, in trust, all legacies, gifts, and donations of real and personal properties of all kinds and administer and dispose of the same, when necessary, for the benefit of the SSU and subject to the limitations, directions, and instructions of the donor, if any;

(s) Extend the term of the President of the SSU beyond the age of retirement but not beyond the age of seventy (70), based on the guidelines, qualifications, and standards set by the Board: *Provided*, That the President's performance has been rated by the Board as outstanding and a unanimous recommendation for such extension has been decided upon by the Search Committee;

(t) Delegate any of its powers and duties to the President and other officials of the SSU, as it may deem appropriate, so as to expedite the administration of the affairs of the SSU;

(u) Establish policy guidelines and procedures for participative and transparent decision making within the SSU;

(v) Where most advantageous to the SSU, outsource the management of non-academic services such as health, food,

building or grounds or property maintenance, and such other similar activities;

(w) Authorize the construction or repair of its buildings, machinery, equipment, and other facilities, and the purchase and acquisition of real property, including the necessary supplies, materials, and equipment; and

(x) Promulgate rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purposes and functions of the SSU.

SEC. 8. *Meetings of the Board.* – The Board shall regularly convene once every three (3) months. The Chairperson of the Board may, however, call a special meeting whenever necessary: *Provided*, That members are notified in writing at least three (3) days prior to the conduct of said meeting.

A quorum of the Board shall consist of a majority of all its members holding office at the time of the meeting: *Provided*, That the Chairperson of the Board or the President of the SSU is among those present in the meeting.

In case the Chairperson of the CHED cannot attend a meeting of the Board, a CHED Commissioner duly designated by the Chairperson of the CHED as representative to the meeting, shall have all the rights and responsibilities of a regular member: *Provided*, That during the meeting, the President of the SSU, as Vice Chairperson, shall be the presiding officer: *Provided, further*, That this provision notwithstanding, the Chairperson of the CHED may designate a CHED Commissioner as the regular Chairperson of the Board, in which case, the said CHED Commissioner shall act as the presiding officer.

In case the Chairpersons of the Senate Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education and the House Committee on Higher and Technical Education cannot attend the Board meeting, they may designate their respective representatives who shall have the same rights and responsibilities as regular members of the Board.

The members of the Board shall serve without compensation other than reimbursements for actual and necessary expenses incurred, either for their attendance to the meetings of the Board

or in connection with other official business authorized by resolutions of the Board, subject to existing laws and regulations.

SEC. 9. *The University President.* – The SSU shall be headed by a President who shall be appointed by the Board, subject to its guidelines, qualifications, and standards, and based on the recommendation of a Search Committee duly constituted for the purpose of selecting the President. The SSU President shall render full-time service for a term of four (4) years, and may be reappointed to another term.

Within six (6) months before the expiration of the term of office of the incumbent President of the SSU, the Board shall constitute the Search Committee for the Presidency and shall ensure the appointment or reappointment of a President on or before the expiration of the term.

The powers and duties of the President of the SSU, in addition to those specifically provided in this Act, shall be those usually pertaining to the Office of the President of universities and those delegated by the Board.

The salary of the President of the SSU shall be in accordance with RA No. 11466, and such other laws amendatory thereto which may hereinafter be enacted, the joint circular for state universities and colleges' leveling instruments, and the guidelines of the CHED and the DBM.

In case of vacancy in the Office of the President by reason of death, compulsory retirement, resignation, removal for cause, or incapacity of the President to perform the functions of the office, the Board shall designate an Officer-in-Charge of the SSU, pending the appointment of a new President.

The President of the SSU shall be assisted by the following officials: Vice President for Academic Affairs; Vice President for Administration, Planning, and Finance; and Vice President for Research, Development, and Extension. They shall all be appointed by the Board upon the recommendation of the President of the SSU.

SEC. 10. *The Secretary of the SSU.* – The Board shall appoint a Secretary who shall serve as such for both the Board and the SSU and shall keep all records and proceedings of the Board in addition to other duties and responsibilities. The Secretary of the SSU shall serve upon each member of the Board the appropriate notice of Board meetings.

SEC. 11. *The Treasurer of the SSU.* – The Treasurer of the Philippines shall be the *ex officio* Treasurer of the SSU.

SEC. 12. *The Administrative Council.* – There shall be an Administrative Council consisting of the President of the SSU, as Chairperson, and the vice president, deans, directors, and other officials of equal rank, as members, whose duty is to review and recommend to the Board such policies governing the administration, management, and development planning of the SSU.

SEC. 13. *The Academic Council.* – There shall be an Academic Council consisting of the President of the SSU, as Chairperson, and all academic staff with the rank of at least an assistant professor, as members.

The Academic Council shall review and recommend the curricular offerings and rules on student discipline, fix the requirements for the admission of students, as well as for their graduation and conferment of degrees, exercise disciplinary power over the students and formulate rules and regulations on student discipline, subject to the review and approval of the Board through the President of the SSU.

SEC. 14. *Academic Freedom.* – The SSU shall enjoy academic freedom pursuant to Paragraph 2, Section 5 of Article XIV of the Constitution.

SEC. 15. *The Faculty.* – No political belief, sex, gender, cultural or community affiliation, ethnic origin, or religious opinion or affiliation shall be a matter of inquiry in the appointment of faculty members of the SSU: *Provided*, That the appointment shall be subject to the guidelines, qualifications, and standards set by the Board: *Provided, further*, That a member of the faculty shall not criticize, vouch for, recruit members in behalf of, or preach about any particular religious denomination.

SEC. 16. *Heads of Campuses.* – The Campus Directors shall respectively serve as heads or administrators of the SSU's campuses and render full-time service for a term of two (2) years eligible for reappointment to another term.

They shall be appointed or designated by the Board, upon recommendation of the Search Committee and the President, subject to the guidelines, qualifications, and standards set by the Board: *Provided*, That upon the effectivity of this Act, the incumbent Campus Directors of the existing campuses of the SSC shall continue to serve as such.

SEC. 17. *Scholarship Programs and Admission.* – The SSU shall provide scholarship programs and other affirmative action programs to assist poor but deserving students who qualify for admission to the SSU. No student shall be denied admission to the SSU by reason of sex, gender, religion, cultural community affiliation, or ethnic origin, or any other form of discrimination.

SEC. 18. *Loan or Transfer of Supplies, Apparatuses, or Equipment, or Detail of Personnel to the SSU.* – Heads of national government agencies and instrumentalities may, upon the request of the Board through the President of the SSU, loan or transfer supplies, apparatuses, or equipment, or detail personnel to the SSU: *Provided*, That such loan, transfer, or detail shall not be detrimental to public service.

The personnel to be detailed to the SSU shall perform such duties as may be deemed required by the President of the SSU and the time spent for such duties shall be counted as part of the detailed personnel's regular service.

SEC. 19. *Assets, Liabilities, and Personnel.* – All assets, both real and personal, personnel, and records of the SSC, as well as its liabilities or obligations, shall be transferred to the SSU: *Provided*, That the positions, rights, and security of tenure of faculty members and personnel therein employed under existing laws prior to the conversion into a university shall be respected.

All parcels of land belonging to the government occupied by the SSC and all its satellite campuses are declared as property of the SSU, and shall be titled under its name: *Provided*, That

all parcels of land of the SSU shall revert to the original owner or donor, or the Republic of the Philippines, in the event that the SSU ceases to exist or be abolished, or should the said parcels of land be no longer needed by the SSU: *Provided, further*, That such reversion shall not impair obligation of contracts.

SEC. 20. *Duty and Tax Exemptions.* – The importation of books or publications, instruments, equipment, and apparatuses which are for economic, technical, vocational, scientific, medical, philosophical, historical, legal, or cultural purposes made by the SSU, upon certification by the CHED, shall be exempt from customs duties in accordance with the provisions of RA No. 10863, otherwise known as the "Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA)".

All grants, bequests, endowments, donations, and contributions made to and used actually, directly, and exclusively for educational purposes by the SSU shall be exempt from donor's tax, and the same shall be considered as allowable deductions from gross income for purposes of computing the taxable income of the donor in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

SEC. 21. *Compliance with the CHED Requirements.* – The provisions of this Act notwithstanding, the conversion of the SSC to a state university shall become effective only upon the determination and declaration by the CHED, based on the recommendation of a panel of experts constituted for the purpose, that the SSC has complied with the requirements for a university status based on CHED Memorandum Order No. 46, series of 2012 or the "Policy-Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance (QA) in Philippine Higher Education Through an Outcomes-Based and Typology-Based QA": *Provided*, That the panel may issue such recommendation when the SSC has substantially complied with the requirements for the grant of university status.

The following operational requirements for a university, as established by the CHED, shall be complied with:

(a) Employment of full-time, permanent faculty members who possess relevant degrees in their areas of specialization, as required by the CHED, and shall have participated in research and development activities in their respective disciplines, as evidenced by refereed publications and other scholarly outputs;

(b) Offering of a comprehensive range of degree programs in all levels, from basic post-secondary to doctoral programs;

(c) Conduct of viable research programs in specific disciplinary and multidisciplinary areas of study that produce new knowledge, as evidenced by refereed publications, citations, inventions, and patents, among others;

(d) Establishment of comprehensive learning resources and support structures, to include libraries, practicum laboratories, relevant educational resources, and linkages with relevant disciplinary and professional sectors, so as to allow students to explore basic, advance, and even cutting-edge knowledge in a wide range of disciplines or professions;

(e) Maintenance of linkage and affiliation with other research institutions in various parts of the world to ensure that the research activities of the SSU are functioning at current global standards; and

(f) Conduct of outreach activities to allow the students, faculty, and research staff to apply the new knowledge they generate to address specific social development problems.

The CHED, through its regional office, shall regularly provide technical assistance to the SSU and monitor its compliance with the requirements of the CHED.

The SSC shall retain its status prior to the effectivity of this Act until it is able to comply with the requirements provided herein.

SEC. 22. *Development Plan and Organizational Structure.* – Within one hundred twenty (120) days after the approval of this Act, the SSU shall accomplish the following:

(a) Submit a five (5)-year development plan, including its corresponding program budget to the CHED and the DBM;

(b) Submit the revised Land Use Development and Infrastructure Plan in accordance with RA No. 11396, otherwise known as the “SUCs Land Use Development and Infrastructure Plan (LUDIP) Act”;

(c) Undergo a management audit in cooperation with the CHED; and

(d) Set up its organizational, administrative, and academic structure, including the designation of the key officials and other administrative personnel of the SSU.

SEC. 23. *Filing of Report.* – On or before the fifteenth (15th) day of the second (2nd) month after the opening of regular classes each year, the Board shall file a detailed report on its compliance with the requirements for a university status with the Office of the President of the Philippines and both Houses of Congress, through the Chairperson of the CHED.

SEC. 24. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriation of the SSC. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 25. *Supplementary Application.* – The provisions of RA No. 8292, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997”, shall form part of this Act.

SEC. 26. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the Board shall, in consultation with the CHED, issue rules and regulations to implement its provisions.

SEC. 27. *Transitory Provision.* – In order to effect a smooth transition to a state university, the incumbent President of the SSC shall serve as the first President of the SSU who shall not be eligible for reappointment.

SEC. 28. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 29. *Repealing Clause.* – Batas Pambansa Blg. 208, titled “An Act Converting the Jolo Community College and the Dayang-Dayang Hadji-Piandao Memorial High School, Both in the Province of Sulu, into a State College to be Known as the Sulu State College”, and

all laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, and rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are amended, repealed, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 30. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,



FRANCIS "CHIZ" G. ESCUDERO
President of the Senate



FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ
*Speaker of the House
of Representatives*

This Act, which originated in the House of Representatives, was passed by the House of Representatives on November 22, 2023, amended by the Senate of the Philippines on June 3, 2025, and which amendments were concurred in by the House of Representatives on June 9, 2025.



RENATO N. BANTUG JR.
Secretary of the Senate



REGINALD S. VELASCO
*Secretary General
House of Representatives*

Approved:

SEP 15 2025

~~Lapsed into law~~
without the signature of the President, in accordance with Article VI, Section 27 (1) of the Constitution.

FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.
President of the Philippines

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