

Office of the President



ATENEOS DE DAVAO UNIVERSITY

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In Consortium with Ateneo de Zamboanga University and Xavier University

OFFICIAL STATEMENT:

ATENEOS DE DAVAO WILL NOT BE INTIMIDATED

Social media posts and articles recently magnified an incident involving a parent and his companions and body guards, on the one hand, and our college teachers and administrators, on the other hand, pertaining to a student's grade, without any regard for the confusion, fear, and anger the social media posts may have generated in the ADDU Community and in the public in general.

These posts have not, in any way, helped in conveying the truth but have only muddled the issue. In the arena of social media where fake news and sensationalism thrive in abundance, it is imperative for an educational institution and its community to be more vigilant in ascertaining and disseminating only what is true and rejecting what is false or misleading.

It is in this regard that we wish to CLARIFY and point out the following:

Contrary to the alleged "news" that a teacher was threatened by a parent with a gun, we categorically state that there was no gun immediately involved in this incident. Security footage has been reviewed and preliminary interviews have been conducted, all affirming that no weapon was actually used to threaten any university personnel. Schools are regarded as zones of peace and bringing weapons into a campus is strictly forbidden.

The incident, however, was nonetheless reprehensible insofar as statements were made that were clearly intended to intimidate and where no actual gun at hand was necessary to be intimidating. These statements have legal consequences the party/ies affected are currently looking into.

When a college student receives an unfavorable grade from his or her teacher, complaints from the student and/or the latter's parents as well as requests for reconsideration of grades are inevitable. This scenario is all too common during this time of the year.

As such, there are existing procedures a student may wish to avail of in order that s/he can be heard before an appropriate body. As a matter of policy, students are expected to present their side personally before said body, as it is part of the formative aspect of an Ateneo education to train them to be self-reliant and independent young adults. Parents who intervene on their child's behalf (no matter how noble their intentions) are often reminded of this as their intervention may only detract from the objective of teaching a child how to stand on his/her own two feet.

Nevertheless, it has become a practice for our College teachers and administrators to provide parents an opportunity to air their concerns. More often than not, a healthy dialogue takes place. We continue to welcome these opportunities to meet and talk with our students' parents for as long as these are done in a respectful and calm manner with the aim of trying to look at what is in the best interest and welfare of the student.

Once in a while though, our teachers and administrators face extraordinary circumstances that deserve to be brought to the attention of the public — to send the message that this institution and its personnel will not cower in the face of bullies.

When a parent accompanied by relatives and body guards comes in brandishing statements like "WE ARE A FAMILY OF LAWYERS AND KILLERS!" or "WE CAN TAKE DOWN THIS SCHOOL " — these are statements the ADDU as a University can only take very seriously as they threaten the safety and security of its personnel.

All the more so when said parent is a public official who is expected to be an exemplar for the rest of society, and whose public office is not to be regarded as license to strong-arm teachers into doing what the public servant demands. Especially when said public official is also a member of the Philippine Bar where public displays of arrogant intimidation such as this one, rightfully deserve sanctions as they run contrary to their Lawyer's Oath.

In this regard, the ADDU and its affected personnel will be taking the necessary steps and coordinating with the appropriate officials to ensure that complaints will be filed against said public official and lawyer. The ADDU is a Safe Zone not only for its students, but also for its teachers who ought to be able to teach and give out grades accordingly, free from intimidation and threats from parents or any related persons or personalities. Parental bullying based on public office or on one's legal profession has no place at ADDU nor in any school, public or private, in the Philippines.


FR. JOEL E. TABORA, S.J.
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