

One for all, all for one

[Education](#), [University](#)



One for All, All for One (Large Class Scheme) University of the Philippines Los Banos started piloting large classes on the first semester of AY 2007-2008. This new policy offers some of its courses having 120 or more students per lecture class. It aims to optimize the number of students intake and as well as the university's resources. With the implementation of Memorandum No. 001, the large class scheme, many students and professors stood against it and even came into the point of being discussed in social networking sites and media such as news papers and television networks. This major issue brought the rage among UP students and professors that were against the implementation of the large class policy. UP professors were never been this vocal about implementations of policies of the former UP administration. This opposition indicated the thought of quality vs. quantity in the UP education. Large class scheme will consist of 120-160 students per lecture class which is four times more than the previous lecture class sizes and taught twice weekly with an hour each. This was the reason why UP students and professors rallied against the policy. They know, this will greatly affect the quality of education especially with social sciences courses where students need to engage and grasp the lecture. This scheme will lose the relationship among students and teaches and deep discussions about the lessons. The administration aimed to address major issues of the university such as bottleneck courses where limited number of students was allowed to enroll due to the limited offered courses and class size and to increase student accommodation in the university. These bottleneck courses are mostly general education courses which cause delays to students' graduations and are under Revitalized General Education Program (RGEP), where courses are

taught by senior faculty members. These senior faculty members should be able to persuade students to learn as well as entertain new ideas and opposing views. The existence of bottleneck courses was because of the lack of resources including facilities and equipments as well as qualified instructors to teach those courses. Former Chancellor Velasco saw this policy to allow more student intake and reduce bottleneck courses issues. This policy would not be implemented without the aim of a good and better agenda for the university as well as the residents of the UP system. The Former Chancellor Velasco pinpointed the welfare of the faculty members in having enough time to allot it to their researches and graduate studies. Not only with faculty members but as well as the university's research function this policy has advantage of. The policy also aims to retain quality education even with the large class scheme. With all of the oppositions made with this policy, Chancellor Velasco strongly defended how this policy will help resolve major issues of the university especially regarding the existence of bottleneck courses. The instructors required to teach these courses have major requirements that cause the hindrance for them to teach. One of the few requirements is they must be specialized in the course they teach and must have a deep understanding of the Filipino society and culture. Another is that they should relate their specializations to different types of knowledge. An ideal RGEP teacher is the one who had a lot of experience in teaching and is aware of all the issues of own country and historical events. These ideas limited the instructors to teach bottleneck courses. My stand with the memorandum is that it missed the fact of having in-depth discussions that are needed for quality education. As for my personal

experience, I was having a hard time absorbing my Math 37 lecture classes because of how it has been taught. Imagine teaching mathematics with the use of projectors instead of showing how a problem can be solved. All I can think of is memorize how it has been solved and during the exam, I hardly answer all of the mathematical problems which lead to a failing grade. I agree on large class policy when it comes to science courses as it has no change even though the class size is smaller since discussions of science lessons will not be affected all though students' participation is not ensured since all may be distracted to do some unnecessary things like mobile surfing, texting, chatting and doodling on their notebooks. In the end, students learn nothing and just rely on their notes to memorize but not to really understand the lessons. The downfall of this large class scheme is students will not feel comfortable because their ideas will not be voiced out at all, some students feel shy answering professors questions because of being scared of giving a wrong answer with many students listening. Unlike with small classes, students will have a better relationship with each other and will feel comfortable. Another idea is that most large classes lost having interactions, mostly professors will just use the projector when teaching and read what is projected, viola! An hour after feels like nothing has entered our brains since all what is written on that screen was just read and no explanations at all. Others also do not ask any questions and just continue reading until the end of lecture time which is the reason why students neglect listening and instead get bored during lecture classes. Not only the students were affected but the own UPLB system itself. More student intake and accommodation means more resources are needed for quality

education. The ratio of teachers versus the students will decrease too, with this; more teachers will be needed to accommodate the higher number of students. More students require larger rooms too, thus budget must be increased too; another reason for tuition fee increase. Do we still need to see more of the rallies about the TOFI or large class policy to make a move? How can the UPLB students see the need of the tuition fee increase whereas all we see are bollards and pillars all over the university instead of renovation buildings older than me and producing new chairs compared to those rusting ones. Welfare of the students and professors are less prioritized. Why? In a classroom, not all of the fans are working, the chairs are broken, and the blackboard is also broken. Quality education is not just about the things we learn because the environment also affects the students' willingness to go to school and learn. But the fact is, no matter how good the teacher, how small the class, how focused on quality education the school may be none of this matters if we ignore the individual needs of our students. Roy Barnes Individual needs of the students are also required for a quality education. I have experienced a professor who blames large class policy because of the problems syncing lessons of our lecture class and recitation classes.

Resources: <http://upissues.wordpress.com/2010/02/20/uplb-appeal-letter-to-uplb-chancy-on-large-class-scheme/> <http://old.uplb.edu.ph/news/uplb-news/uplb-link/810> <http://elbizens.multiply.com/journal/item/58/NO-TO-LARGE-LECTURE-CLASSES-IN-UPLB-SAKBAYAN> <http://www.upiu.com/other/2010/03/23/UPLB-Teachers-Stand-on-the-Large-Class-Policy/UPIU-3721269360739/> <http://www.nordis.net/?p=6127>