

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 8630



Introduced by **Rep. ANGELO MARCOS BARBA**
2nd District, Ilocos Norte

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) IN NEW
CLARK CITY, CAPAS, PROVINCE OF TARLAC, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill provides for the establishment of a National College for Science and Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) to be located in New Clark City, Capas, Tarlac.

Section 17, Article II of the 1987 Constitution provides that:

“The State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.”

Further, Section 1, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution states that:

“The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.”

In light of the most recent issues that concern certain state universities and other private higher education institutions that were identified as the breeding ground or recruitment arena of left-leaning political groups, the country would be greatly benefited by the establishment of a national college that would offer purely STEM courses with great emphasis on research and development to train our young people for the task of nation-building and as an alternative choice for parents and students alike who would wish to have a more conducive venue for learning.

Moreover, the curricula of the degree courses that shall be offered by the proposed national college will include mandatory courses that will inculcate patriotism, civic responsibility, and social awareness amongst the students. The proposed institution will not offer degree courses in social sciences, philosophy, humanities, liberal arts and law so as to insulate it from the precarious ideologies of the Left. It shall be jointly managed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

The STEM College shall incorporate the fields of science, engineering, computing technologies, architecture, urban planning and health and medical sciences. It is likewise envisioned to rival the prestige of studying and becoming a graduate of the University of the Philippines (UP) system. Its primary focus will be on the creation of innovative and practical solutions to real-life problems; discovering and applying new knowledge and new ways of thinking about the environment, sustainability, health and well-being; launch advanced technologies and spur digital transformation through research, education and training in collaboration with a wide range of partners, including but not limited to immersive practicum of students with and in relevant government departments and agencies.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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

SECTION 1. *National College for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).* – There is hereby established a National College for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in New Clark City, Capas, Province of Tarlac, hereinafter referred to as the College.

SECTION 2. *General Mandate.* – The College shall primarily provide advanced higher education, professional instruction and training in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as well as in computing and information sciences, medical and life sciences, allied health sciences, and architecture and urban planning with great emphasis on research and development strategically geared towards nation-building through scientific progress and innovation.

SECTION 3. *Curricular Offerings.* – The College shall offer undergraduate and graduate courses within its areas of competency and specialization in the various fields of science and technology such as but not limited to agricultural and food sciences, astronomical sciences, biological and life sciences, biotechnology, chemistry and

materials sciences, environmental, geological and meteorological sciences, fisheries and aquatic sciences, and physics; engineering disciplines such as but not limited to agricultural engineering, chemical engineering, civil engineering, computer engineering, electrical engineering, electronics engineering, industrial engineering, mechanical engineering, materials engineering, metallurgical engineering, and mining engineering; mathematics; other mathematical sciences such as but not limited to actuarial, financial and econometric sciences, computer and computational sciences, data and information sciences, and statistical science; medicine; allied health sciences such as but not limited to dentistry, dietetics and nutrition, medical laboratory sciences, nursing and midwifery, pharmacy, physical therapy and rehabilitation science, public health and epidemiological sciences, radiologic technology, and speech pathology; architecture; industrial design; urban, regional, and environmental planning; and other degree courses as the Board of Trustees may deem necessary to carry out its objectives, and respond to the human resource development needs of the country as a whole.

SECTION 4. *Administration.* – The College shall have the general powers of a corporation as set forth in Republic Act No. 11232, otherwise known as the “Revised Corporation Code of the Philippines.” The administration of the College and the exercise of its corporate powers shall be vested exclusively in the Board of Trustees and the president of the College.

SECTION 5. *Governing Board.* – The governing board of the College shall be the Board of Trustees, hereinafter referred to as the Board, which shall be chaired and co-chaired by the chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the president of the College, respectively, with the following as members:

- (a) Chairperson of the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture of the Senate;

- (b) Chairperson of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education of the House of Representatives;
- (c) Director-General of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA);
- (d) Director-General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
- (e) Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA);
- (f) Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- (g) Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH);
- (h) Secretary of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT);
- (i) Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- (j) President of the federation of faculty associations of the College;
- (k) President of the federation of student councils of the College;
- (l) President of the federation of alumni associations of the College; and
- (m) Four (4) prominent citizens from the private sector who have a distinguished career or track record in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and any other field or specialization that is being offered by the College.

The Board shall appoint the four (4) prominent citizens from a list of at least ten (10) qualified persons, as recommended by the search committee to be constituted by the College president, in consultation with the CHED chairperson and other members of the

Board, based on the standards and qualifications for the position set by the Board. They shall serve for a term of two (3) years from the date of appointment.

Membership in the governing Board by the president of the faculty associations, the president of the student councils, and the president of the alumni associations shall be coterminous with their terms of office as provided under their respective constitutions and bylaws.

SECTION 6. *Promulgation and Implementation of Policies.* – The Board shall promulgate and implement policies in accordance with the declared state policies on education and other pertinent provisions of the Constitution on education, agriculture, science and technology, as well as the policies, standards and thrusts of the CHED under Republic Act (RA) No. 7722, otherwise known as the “*Higher Education Act of 1994.*”

SECTION 7. *Powers and Duties of the Board of Trustees.* – In addition to its general powers of administration and the powers granted to the board of directors of a corporation under existing laws, the Board shall have the following specific powers and duties:

(a) Promulgate and implement policies in accordance with the declared State policies and the provisions of the Constitution on education, agriculture, science and technology, as well as the policies, standards and thrusts of the CHED under the Higher Education Act of 1994;

(b) Approve the curricula, instructional programs, and rules of discipline drawn by the administrative and the academic councils herein provided;

(c) Appoint, upon the recommendation of the president of the College, the vice presidents, deans, directors, faculty members, and other officials and employees of the College;

(d) Fix and adjust the salaries of faculty members and administrative officials and employees, subject to the provisions of the Revised Compensation and Position Classification System and other pertinent budget and compensation laws, including those that govern the hours of service and such other duties and conditions as it may deem proper; grant them, at its discretion, leaves of absence under such regulations as it may promulgate, any provision of existing law to the contrary notwithstanding; and remove them for cause in accordance with the requirements of due process of law;

(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 College, shall constitute its special trust funds, and shall be deposited in any authorized government depository bank: *Provided*, That all interests that will accrue therefrom shall form part of the same funds for the use of the College;

Any provision of existing laws, rules or regulations to the contrary notwithstanding, any income generated by the College from tuition fees and other charges, as well as from the operation of auxiliary services and land grants, shall be retained by the College, and may be disbursed by the Board for instruction, research, extension services or other programs and projects of the College: *Provided*, That all fiduciary fees shall be disbursed for the specific purposes for which these are collected: *Provided, however*, That if, for reasons beyond its control, the College shall not be able to pursue any project for which the funds have been appropriated and allocated under its approved program of expenditures, the Board may authorize the use of the funds for any

reasonable purpose which, in its discretion, may be necessary and urgent for the attainment of the objectives and goals of the College;

(f) Adopt and implement a socialized scheme of tuition and other school fees for greater access to poor but deserving students in accordance with Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the "*Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act*;"

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

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

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

(j) Award honorary degrees upon persons in recognition of their outstanding contribution in any of the fields of specialization that are within the academic competence of the College, and authorize the awarding of certificates of completion of non-degree and non-traditional courses;

(k) Establish research and extension centers to promote the development of the College;

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

(m) Adopt modern and innovative modes of transmitting knowledge for the promotion of greater access to education such as the use of information

technology, dual training system, open distance learning, and community laboratory;

(n) Collaborate with the governing boards of state universities and colleges (SUCs) within Region III, under the supervision of CHED and in consultation with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), in restructuring the College to make it more efficient, relevant, productive and competitive;

(o) Absorb non-chartered tertiary institutions within the Province of Tarlac and Region III, as branches and extension or external centers, in coordination with CHED and in consultation with DBM, and offer therein programs or courses to promote and carry out equal access to educational opportunities, as mandated by the Constitution;

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

(q) Develop consortia and other economic forms of linkages with local government units (LGUs), public, private, local and foreign institutions and agencies, in the furtherance of the purposes and objectives of the College;

(r) Import scientific and technological books and publications;

(s) Enter into joint ventures with business and industry for the profitable development and management of the economic assets of the College, the proceeds from which shall be used for the development and strengthening of the College;

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

(u) Extend the term of the president of the College 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 has been decided by the search committee;

(v) Delegate any of its powers and duties provided to the president and other officials of the College, as it may deem appropriate, so as to expedite the administration of the affairs of the College;

(w) Establish policy guidelines and procedures for participative decision-making and transparency within the College;

(x) 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;

(y) Where most advantageous to the College, privatize the management of non-academic services such as health, food, building or property maintenance, and such other similar activities; and

(z) Promulgate rules and regulations, as may be necessary, to carry out the purposes and functions of the College.

SECTION 8. *Meetings of the Board.* – The Board shall regularly convene at least once every quarter. The chairperson of the Board may, however, upon three (3) days' prior written notice, call a maximum of two (2) special meetings whenever necessary.

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 College must be present in the meeting.

In the absence of the CHED chairperson, a commissioner of the CHED duly designated by the CHED chairperson as the representative in the meeting, shall have all the rights and responsibilities of a regular member: *Provided*, That during the meeting, the president of the College, as vice-chairperson, shall be the presiding officer: *Provided*, *further*, That this provision notwithstanding, the chairperson of the CHED is hereby authorized to designate a CHED commissioner as the regular chairperson of the Board, in which case said CHED commissioner shall act as the presiding officer.

In case the chairpersons of the House and Senate Committees on Education shall not be able to attend the Board meeting, they may designate their respective representatives to attend the meeting, who shall have the same rights and responsibilities as a regular member of the Board.

The members of the Board shall not receive any salary, but shall be entitled to reimbursements for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the attendance to the meetings of the Board or in connection with other official business authorized by the resolutions of the Board, subject to existing laws and regulations.

SECTION 9. *College President.* – The College shall be headed by a president, who shall render full-time service and shall be appointed by the Board, subject to the

guidelines, qualifications and standards set by the Board, upon the recommendation of a duly constituted search committee.

The Board shall designate an officer-in-charge (OIC) of the College in case of any 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, pending the appointment of a new president: *Provided*, That the OIC shall serve only during the unexpired portion of the term.

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

The salary of the president of the College shall be in accordance with the Revised Compensation and Position Classification System, as amended, and other pertinent budget and compensation laws, and shall be comparable to that being received by the presidents of similar educational institutions.

The president of the College shall be assisted by a vice president for academic affairs and a vice president for administration, who shall be appointed by the Board upon recommendation of the president.

SECTION 10. *Administrative Council.* – There shall be an administrative council consisting of the president of the College as chairperson, vice presidents, deans, directors and other officials of equal rank, as members, whose duty is to review and recommend to the Board the policies governing the administration, management, and development plans of the College.

SECTION 11. *Academic Council.* – There shall be an academic council to be composed of the president of the College, who shall act as chairperson, and all the academic staff with the rank of at least an assistant professor, as members.

The academic council shall have the power to review and recommend the curricular offerings and rules of discipline of the College, subject to the approval of the Board. It shall fix the requirements for the admission of students, as well as for their graduation and the conferment of degrees, subject to review and approval by the Board through the president of the College. It shall have the disciplinary power over students of the College and shall formulate academic policies, and rules and regulations on discipline, subject to the approval of the Board.

SECTION 12. *Secretary of the College.* – The Board shall appoint a secretary who shall serve as such for both the Board and the College, and shall keep all records and proceedings of the Board in addition to other duties and responsibilities. The secretary shall serve upon each member of the Board the appropriate notice of Board meetings.

SECTION 13. *Treasurer of the College.* – The Treasurer of the Philippines shall be the *ex officio* treasurer of the College.

SECTION 14. *Faculty.* – No political belief, gender preference, cultural or community affiliation or ethnic origin, nor religious opinion or affiliation shall be a matter of inquiry in the appointment of faculty members of the College: *Provided, however,* That said appointment shall be subject to the guidelines, qualifications and standards set by the Board: *Provided, further,* That no member of the faculty shall teach for or against any particular church or religious sect.

SECTION 15. *Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy.* – The College shall enjoy academic freedom and institutional autonomy, pursuant to paragraph 2, Section 5 of Article XIV of the Constitution.

SECTION 16. *Scholarship Programs Admission.* – The College shall provide scholarship programs and other affirmative action programs to assist poor but deserving students who qualify for admission to the College. No student shall be denied admission to the College by reason of sex, religion, cultural or community affiliation, or ethnic origin.

SECTION 17. *Authority to Loan or Transfer Apparatus, Equipment, Supplies and Detail of Personnel.* – The heads of the bureaus and offices of the National Government are hereby authorized to loan or transfer, upon the request of the president of the College, such apparatus, equipment or supplies as may be needed by the College, and detail employees for duty therein when, in the judgment of the head of bureau or office, such apparatus, equipment, supplies or services of such employees can be spared without serious detriment to public service. The employees so detailed shall perform such duties as required of them by the president of the College and the time so employed shall be counted as part of their regular service.

SECTION 18. *Assets, Liabilities and Personnel.* – All parcels of land belonging to the government occupied by the National STEM College are hereby declared to be property of the College and shall be titled under that name: *Provided*, That should the College cease to exist or be abolished, or should such aforementioned parcels of land be no longer needed by the College, the same shall revert to the National Government.

SECTION 19. *Tax Exemption.* – The importation of scientific and technological books or publications made by the College upon certification by CHED shall

be exempt from customs duties in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10863, otherwise known as the "*Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA)*."

All grants, bequests, endowments, donations and contributions made to the College to be used actually, directly and exclusively by it, shall be exempt from donor's tax and the same shall be allowed as allowable deductions from the gross income of the donor 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.

SECTION 20. *Compliance with CHED Requirements.* – The provisions of this Act notwithstanding, the establishment of the institution into a state college shall become effective only upon the determination and declaration by CHED based on the recommendation of a panel of experts it shall constitute for the purpose, that the institution has complied with the requirements for a college status based on CHED Memorandum Order No. 46, Series of 2012, entitled Policy-Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance in Philippine Higher Education through an Outcomes-Based and Typology-Based Quality Assurance: *Provided*, That the panel may issue such recommendation when the institution has substantially complied with the requirements for the grant of status as a state college.

The following operational requirements for a state college, as established by the CHED, shall be complied with. As such, the college shall:

- (a) Possess full-time permanent faculty members who must possess relevant degrees as required by the CHED as well as professional licenses or professional experience in the subject areas they handle;
- (b) Offer comprehensive range of degree programs characterized by a core curriculum that holistically develops thinking, problem solving, decision-

making, communication, technical and social skills in line with the mission of the College;

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

(d) Possess learning resources and support structures that are appropriate for developing knowledge and skills in the disciplines and areas of specialization that are offered by the College, including laboratories, books and journals;

(e) Establish linkages with the community that would ensure the development of relevant academic and extension programs as well as the application of their learning outcomes; and

(f) Conduct outreach programs involving students in social development-oriented experiences that allow them to contextualize their knowledge within actual social and human experiences.

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

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

SECTION 21. *Development Plan, Management Audit, Organizational, Administrative Academic Structure.* — Within a period of one hundred twenty (120) days after the approval of this Act, the College shall accomplish the following:

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

(b) Set up its organizational, administrative, as well as academic structure, including the appointment of key officials of the College;

(c) Set in motion the establishment of at least six (6) separate degree-granting units, one in each specific areas of specialization namely, science and technology, engineering, mathematical sciences, medicine and allied health sciences, and architecture, industrial design and urban planning; and

(d) Undergo a management audit in cooperation with CHED.

SECTION 22. *Filing of Report.* – On or before the fifteenth day of the second month after the opening of the regular classes each year, the Board shall file with the Office of the President of the Philippines, through the chairperson of CHED, and with both Houses of Congress, a detailed report on the progress, condition and needs of the College.

SECTION 23. *Supplementary Application.* – The provisions of Republic Act No. 8292, otherwise known as the “*Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997*,” shall form as an integral part of this Act and shall become a part of the governing charter of the College.

SECTION 24. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 25. *Parity Clause.* – All other powers, functions and privileges, responsibilities and limitations under existing laws shall be deemed granted to or imposed upon the College and its officials, whenever appropriate.

SECTION 26. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Board shall, in consultation with CHED, formulate the guidelines to fully implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 27. *Separability Clause.* – If 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.

SECTION 28. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, and rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 29. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,