

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila
Eighteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

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

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11574]

AN ACT CONVERTING THE ABRA STATE INSTITUTE OF SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF LAGANGILANG AND BANGUED, PROVINCE OF ABRA INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY, TO BE KNOWN AS THE UNIVERSITY OF ABRA, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. *Conversion.* – The Abra State Institute of Sciences and Technology (ASIST) located in the Municipalities of Lagangilang and Bangued, Province of Abra, is hereby converted into a state university, to be known as the University of Abra. Its main campus shall be located in the Municipality of Lagangilang.

SEC. 2. *General Mandate.* – The University of Abra, hereinafter referred to as the University, shall primarily provide advance education, higher technological and professional instruction and training in the fields of education, agricultural technology, agribusiness management, industrial technology, arts and sciences, forestry, health sciences, information technology, and other relevant fields of study. It shall also undertake research and extension services, and provide progressive leadership in its areas of specialization in the Province of Abra and in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

SEC. 3. *Curricular Offerings.* – The University shall offer short-term technical vocational, undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate programs within its competency and areas of specialization in the fields of agricultural technology, agribusiness management, forestry, industrial technology, information technology, education, arts and sciences, engineering, and other degree courses, as the Board of Regents may deem necessary to carry out its objectives, and those which respond to meet the human resource development needs of the Province of Abra and the CAR.

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

SEC. 4. *Administration.* – The University shall have the general powers of a corporation set forth in Batas Pambansa Blg. 68, as amended, otherwise known as “The Corporation Code of the Philippines.” The exercise of its corporate powers shall be vested exclusively in the Board of Regents, hereinafter referred to as the Board, and the President of the University.

SEC. 5. *The Board of Regents.* – The governing body of the University shall be the Board of Regents, hereinafter referred to as the Board, which shall be chaired and cochaired by the Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the President of the University, respectively, 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 National Economic and Development Authority;

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

(e) Regional Director of the Department of Agriculture;

(f) President of the federation of the faculty associations of the University;

(g) President of the federation of student councils of the University;

(h) President of the federation of alumni associations of the University; and

(i) Two (2) prominent citizens from the private sector who have distinguished themselves in their professions or fields of specialization.

The Board shall appoint two (2) prominent citizens who shall be selected from a list of at least five (5) qualified persons in the Province of Abra where the University and its campuses are located, as recommended by a search committee constituted by the President of the University, 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 (2) years from the date of appointment.

The membership of the President of the federation of faculty associations, the President of the federation of student councils, and the President of the federation of alumni associations in the Board shall be coterminous with their terms of office, as provided under their respective constitutions and bylaws.

SEC. 6. *Powers and Duties of the Board.* – 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 on education, other pertinent provisions of the Constitution on education, agriculture, science and technology, and the policies, standards and thrusts of the CHED under Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Act of 1994”;

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

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

(d) Fix and adjust the salaries of faculty members, administrative officials and employees, subject to the provisions of the Revised Compensation and Position Classification System and other pertinent budget and compensation laws governing 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 University, shall constitute its special trust funds 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 University.

Any provision of existing laws, rules or regulations to the contrary notwithstanding, any income generated by the University from tuition fees and other charges, as well as from the operation of auxiliary services and land grants, shall be retained by the University and may be disbursed by the Board for instruction, research, extension services or other programs and projects of the University: *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 University 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 said funds for any reasonable purpose which, in its discretion, may be necessary and urgent for the attainment of the objectives and goals of the University;

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

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

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

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

(j) Award honorary degrees upon persons in recognition of their outstanding contribution in the fields of education, public service, arts, science and technology, agriculture or any field of specialization within the academic competency of the University, and authorize the awarding of certificates of completion of nondegree and nontraditional courses;

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

(l) Develop academic arrangements for institutional capability building with appropriate institutions and agencies, whether public, private, local or foreign, and appoint experts/specialists as consultants, part-time or 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 bodies of other state universities and colleges (SUCs) within the Province of Abra and the CAR, under the supervision of the CHED and in consultation with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), in restructuring the University to make it more efficient, relevant, productive and competitive;

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

(p) Authorize an external management audit of the University, 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;

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

(r) Import economic, technical and cultural books and publications;

(s) Enter into joint ventures with business and industry for the profitable development and management of economic

assets, the proceeds of which shall be used for the development and strengthening of the University;

(t) Receive, in trust, 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 University and subject to the limitations, directions and instructions of the donor, if any;

(u) Extend the term of the President of the University 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;

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

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

(x) Where most advantageous to the University, privatize the management of nonacademic services such as health, food, building or grounds or property maintenance, and such other similar activities;

(y) 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

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

SEC. 7. *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 the majority of all its members holding office at the time of the meeting: *Provided*, however, That the Chairperson of the Board or the President of the University is among those present in the meeting.

In case the CHED Chairperson cannot attend a meeting of the Board, a CHED Commissioner duly designated by the CHED Chairperson 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 University, 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, 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 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 regular members 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, 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. 8. *The University President.* – The University shall be headed by a President, who shall render full-time service and be appointed by the Board, subject to the guidelines, qualifications and standards set by the Board, based on the recommendations of a duly constituted search committee. The University President shall have a term of four (4) years and shall be eligible for reappointment to another term: *Provided*, That in order to effect the smooth transition of the college to a state university, the incumbent President of the ASIST, if qualified, shall serve as the first President of the University.

Within six (6) months before the expiration of the term of office of the incumbent President of the University, the Board shall constitute the Search Committee for the Presidency.

The Board shall designate an Officer-in-Charge of the University in case of a 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 Officer-in-Charge shall serve only during the unexpired portion of the term.

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

The salary of the President of the University shall be in accordance with Republic Act No. 11466 or the “Salary Standardization Law of 2019,” and by such other laws amendatory thereto, which may hereinafter be enacted, and shall be comparable to that being received by the presidents of similar educational institutions.

The President of the University shall be assisted by a Vice President for Academic Affairs, a Vice President for Administration, and a Vice President for Research, Extension

and Training, who shall all be appointed by the Board upon the recommendation of the President of the University.

SEC. 9. *The Secretary of the University.* – The Board shall appoint a Secretary who shall serve as such for both the Board and the University and shall keep all records and proceedings of the Board. The Secretary of the University shall serve upon each member of the Board the appropriate notice of board meetings.

SEC. 10. *The Treasurer of the University.* – The Treasurer of the Philippines shall be the *ex officio* Treasurer of the University.

SEC. 11. *The Administrative Council.* – There shall be an Administrative Council consisting of the President of the University as Chairperson, and the vice presidents, deans, directors and other officials of equal rank as members, that shall review and recommend to the Board the policies that shall govern the administration, management and development planning of the University.

SEC. 12. *The Academic Council.* – There shall be an Academic Council that shall formulate academic policies. It shall be composed of the President of the University, who shall act as Chairperson, and all academic staff with the rank of at least an assistant professor, as members.

The Academic Council shall also have the power to review and recommend the curricular offerings and rules of discipline of the University, subject to the approval of the Board. It shall fix the requirements for the admission of students, as well as for their graduation and conferment of degrees, subject to the review and approval of the Board through the President of the University.

It shall exercise disciplinary power over the students of the University and shall issue rules and regulations on student discipline, subject to the approval of the Board.

SEC. 13. *Heads of University Campuses.* – The Campus Directors shall respectively serve as heads or administrators of the University's campuses and render full-time service.

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 ASIST shall continue to serve as such.

SEC. 14. *The 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 University: *Provided, 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.

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

SEC. 16. *Scholarship Programs/Admission.* – The University shall provide scholarship and other affirmative action programs to assist poor but deserving students who qualify for admission to the University.

No student shall be denied admission to the University by reason of gender, religion, cultural or community affiliation or ethnic origin.

SEC. 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 University, such apparatus, equipment or supplies as may be needed by the University, and detail employees for duty therein when, in the judgment of the head of bureau or office, such apparatus, equipment, supplies or service 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 University and the time thus served shall be counted as part of their regular service.

SEC. 18. *Assets, Liabilities and Personnel.* – All assets, real and personal, personnel and records of the ASIST, as well as its liabilities or obligations, are hereby transferred to the University: *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: *Provided, further*, That the incumbents occupying the positions shall remain in the same status until otherwise provided for by the Board: *Provided, finally*, That the University shall also accordingly upgrade or increase its human resource component as may be deemed appropriate by the Board.

All parcels of land belonging to the government occupied by the ASIST and all its campuses are hereby declared the property of the University, and shall be titled under its name: *Provided*, That should the University cease to exist or be abolished, or should such aforementioned parcels of land be no longer needed by the University, the same shall revert to the concerned LGU or to the Republic of the Philippines, as the case may be.

SEC. 19. *Tax Exemption on Importation and Donations.* – The importation by the University of economic, technical and cultural books or publications, which are for economic, technical, vocational, scientific, philosophical, historical or cultural purposes shall, upon certification by the CHED, 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 University, and used actually, directly and exclusively by it, shall be exempt from donor's tax and the same shall be considered as allowable deduction 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.

SEC. 20. Compliance with CHED Requirements. – The provisions of this Act notwithstanding, the conversion of the ASIST into 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 institution has complied with the requirements for a university status based on CHED Memorandum Order No. 46, series of 2012 (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 ASIST 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) The offering of a comprehensive range of degree programs in place 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) Existence 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) Continuing linkage and affiliation with other research institutions in various parts of the world to ensure that the research activities of the University 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 University and monitor its compliance with the requirements of the Commission.

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

SEC. 21. *Development Plan, Management Audit, and Organization, Administrative and Academic Structure.* – Within a period of one hundred twenty (120) days after the approval of this Act, the University shall accomplish the following:

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

(b) Set up its organizational, administrative, and academic structure, including the appointment of key officials of the University; and

(c) Undergo a management audit in coordination with the CHED.

SEC. 22. *Filing of Report.* – On or before the fifteenth (15th) 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 the CHED, and with both Houses of Congress, a detailed report on the progress, condition, and needs of the University.

SEC. 23. *Suppletory Application.* – The provisions of Republic Act No. 8292, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997,” shall form an integral part

of this Act and shall serve as part of the governing charter of the University.

SEC. 24. *Parity Clause.* – All other powers, functions, privileges, responsibilities, and limitations under existing laws shall be deemed granted to or imposed upon the University and its officials, whenever appropriate.

SEC. 25. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations for the ASIST. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary of the continued operation and maintenance of the University shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.


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

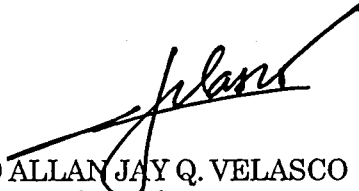
SEC. 27. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

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

SEC. 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,

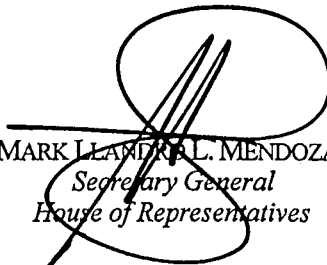

VICENTE C. SOTTO III
President of the Senate


LORD ALLAN JAY Q. VELASCO
Speaker of the House
of Representatives

This Act which originated in the House of Representatives was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines on September 1, 2020 and May 24, 2021, respectively.



MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA
Secretary of the Senate



MARK LLANERA L. MENDOZA
*Secretary General
House of Representatives*

Approved: JUL 23 2021



RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
President of the Philippines

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