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day of July, two thousand fifteen. /

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[REPUBLIC ACT NO. **10687**]

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AND
UNIFIED STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
SYSTEM FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION (UNIFAST),
THEREBY RATIONALIZING ACCESS THERETO,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

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

ARTICLE I

TITLE, POLICY, OBJECTIVES, DEFINITIONS OF
TERMS, SCOPE AND COVERAGE

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as
the "Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary
Education (UniFAST) Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to promote social justice and pursuant thereto, provide all its citizens access to quality education. Towards this end, the State shall provide adequate funding and such other mechanisms to increase the participation rate among all socioeconomic classes in Tertiary Education, especially the poor but academically able and highly motivated students. This policy should enable them to successfully pursue and complete Tertiary Education programs in quality institutions, thereby promoting equitable and Rationalized Access by poor Filipinos to quality Tertiary Education.

The existing publicly-funded national government programs for Scholarships, Grants-in-Aid, and Student Loans for Tertiary Education are hereby unified and harmonized to improve their efficiency and to ensure that deserving Filipinos are given equitable access to educational opportunities.

SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – The objectives of this Act are as follows:

(a) To allocate and utilize properly all government resources intended for students through effective beneficiary-targeting;

(b) To ensure consistency, continuity, and efficient coordination of student financial assistance policies and programs;

(c) To ensure regional equity in the distribution of student financial assistance slots;

(d) To produce a pool of highly qualified graduates and technical experts who will contribute to the country's high-level labor force through merit and talent-based Scholarships;

(e) To facilitate access to quality education through Grants-in-Aid for students belonging to marginalized sectors; and

(f) To assist students with liquidity issues through Student Loans.

SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act:

(a) *Beneficiary* refers to the recipient of any modality of Student Financial Assistance Program (StuFAP), such as Scholarship, Grant-in-Aid, or Student Loan;

(b) *Cost of Tertiary Education* refers to (1) tuition, miscellaneous and Other School Fees, (2) Educational Expenses, and (3) the cost of living allowance;

(c) *Educational Expenses* refer to expenses related to the education of a student, such as books, school supplies, and electronic devices necessary for education, but excluding tuition and miscellaneous and Other School Fees;

(d) *Grantee* refers to the student-beneficiary of a Grant-in-Aid program;

(e) *Grant-in-Aid* refers to a modality of financial assistance to poor but eligible students which generally requires a minimum level of competence to complete Tertiary Education;

(f) *Higher Education* refers to the stage of formal education, or its equivalent, requiring completion of secondary education and covering programs of study leading to bachelor and advanced degrees;

(g) *Higher Education Institution (HEI)* refers to an institution of higher learning, primarily offering bachelor and advanced degree programs;

(h) *Other School Fees* refer to those fees which cover other necessary costs supportive of instruction, including, but not limited to, medical and dental, athletic, library and laboratory fees;

(i) *Qualifying Examination System for Scoring Students* refers to the appropriate annual examination and assessment of potential Beneficiaries, which may be separately designed for undergraduate and graduate students and adopted by the Board for all prospective applicants for any one of the modalities of StuFAP, as referred to in Section 15(h);

(j) *Rationalized Access* refers to improved efficiency in the implementation of UniFAST pursuant to the principles of increased participation of the economically disadvantaged and marginalized sectors, equity in the regional distribution of economic resources, congruence of the qualifications of Tertiary Education graduates and labor market needs, and relevance to the country's national development and global competitiveness, among others;

(k) *Registry of Programs and Institutions* refers to quality-assured academic and research programs and tertiary

institutions which have been certified by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and/or the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) as complying with acceptable standards;

(l) *Scholar* refers to a student-recipient of a Scholarship grant based on merit and/or talent;

(m) *Scholarship* refers to a modality of financial assistance given to eligible students on the basis of merit and/or talent, such as laudable academic performance, and special technical proficiencies and skills and intellectual pursuits of a Scholar that give rise to research and development, and innovations as well as other creative works;

(n) *Special Purpose Education Assistance* refers to financial assistance for the conduct of undergraduate and graduate research, scientific studies, including funding assistance for the writing and publication of books, manuscripts, theses, dissertations, scientific and technical journals, or for production, filming and digital technology documentation of research and studies or development of instructional and academic materials, and science prototypes, among others;

(o) *State Universities and Colleges (SUCs)* refer to public HEIs established by national laws which are financed and maintained by the national government, and are governed by their respective independent boards of trustees or regents;

(p) *Student-Borrower* refers to a student-beneficiary of the National Student Loan Program, as defined in Section 8;

(q) *Student Financial Assistance Program (StuFAP)* refers to a system of Scholarships, Grants-in-Aid, Student Loans, subsidies and other incentives which are or shall be made available to eligible students;

(r) *Student Loan* refers to a modality of student financial assistance consisting of short-term or long-term loans which shall be extended to students facing liquidity problems, regardless of economic status, which shall be paid by the student, his/her parents, guardians, or co-makers;

(s) *Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET)* refers to the post-secondary education or training process which involves, in addition to general education, the study of technical and related fields and the acquisition of practical

skills relating to occupations in various sectors, comprising formal (organized programs as part of the school systems) and nonformal (organized classes outside the school system) approaches;

(t) *Technical-Vocational Institutes (TVIs)* refer to learning institutions offering post-secondary TVET;

(u) *Tertiary Education* refers to the stage of education following the secondary cycle which subsumes post-secondary nondegree diploma, TVET, and Higher Education programs; and

(v) *Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST)* refers to the harmonized, state-run and administered system of Higher Education and technical-vocational Scholarships, Grants-in-Aid, Student Loans, and other modalities of StuFAP under this Act.

SEC. 5. *Scope and Coverage of the UniFAST.* – The UniFAST shall consist of all existing modalities of StuFAPs for Tertiary Education and Special Purpose Education Assistance in both public and private institutions, including Scholarships, Grants-in-Aid, Student Loans and government programs in partnership with other stakeholders, among others, and which are nationally funded and/or implemented by national and local government agencies, branches and instrumentalities. A student enrolling in Tertiary Education, whether in public, private, national or local institutions, can avail of any one (1) or more of the said modalities of StuFAP.

The UniFAST under this Act shall harmonize, reform, strengthen, expand, rationalize, and re-focus all legislated or ongoing StuFAPs of the government for greater efficiency, coherence, synchronization, effective funding, and improved coordination among implementing entities in their specific jurisdiction: *Provided*, That nothing in this Act shall prevent the continuation of effective programs implemented by other government agencies or of state-funded StuFAPs with specific and targeted Beneficiaries such as existing technical-vocational Scholarship programs under the TESDA, Scholarships under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), the National Agriculture and Fisheries Education System (NAFES), Agriculture Competitiveness Enhancement Fund Scholarship (ACEFS), the Science and Technology Scholarship Act of 1994, the Fast-Tracked S&T Scholarship Act of 2013, the Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (E-GASTPE) Act, Student Grants-in-Aid Program

for Poverty Alleviation (SGP-PA) of the CHED and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) which shall continue to be under the jurisdiction of the agencies currently responsible for their design and implementation: *Provided, further*, That the beneficiary-targeting and standards for selection and retention and awards shall be compliant with the overall policies on quality, sustainability and efficiency set by the Board: *Provided, finally*, That the relevant government agencies shall submit an annual report on the implementation of their StuFAPs to the UniFAST Board.

The above provisions notwithstanding, all other requirements mentioned herein shall be complied with upon the approval of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act.

ARTICLE II

MODALITIES OF STUFAPS

SEC. 6. *Scholarship*. – A unified, improved, and expanded government-funded Scholarship program shall be instituted to promote an environment conducive for the development of bright and talented students to serve the public good and enlarge the pool of world-class Filipino researchers, artists, innovators, thinkers, and leaders.

The Board shall formulate and establish the policies and mechanisms for the identification of Beneficiaries based on objective indicators derived from credible databases, including students whose families are Beneficiaries of the poverty alleviation programs of the government: *Provided*, That Beneficiaries under the *Iskolar ng Bayan* Act shall be prioritized.

The financial amount for Scholarships shall be determined by the Board, taking into consideration the actual cost of various programs in the top public and private HEIs: *Provided*, That the financial amount for Scholarships shall not exceed the actual Cost of Tertiary Education.

SEC. 7. *Grant-in-Aid*. – To improve equity and facilitate democratic access to quality education given income poverty and inequity, Grants-in-Aid shall be made available to students belonging to poor families and marginalized sectors.

The Board shall formulate and establish the policies and mechanisms for the identification of Grantees based on objective indicators derived from credible databases, including students

whose families are Beneficiaries of the poverty alleviation programs of the government.

The financial amount comprising Grants-in-Aid shall be determined by the Board, taking into consideration the actual cost of various programs in the top public and private HEIs.

SEC. 8. *National Student Loan Program*. – The Board shall pursue a long-term plan for the development of a self-sustaining National Student Loan Program (NSLP) which shall provide qualified students short-term and long-term financial assistance for Tertiary Education. This plan shall be based on a systematic evaluation of lessons learned from current and past Student Loan schemes, both local and international.

To achieve this, the Board shall endeavor to ensure the professionalization of the NSLP's management, the establishment of an appropriate organizational setup that shall best implement the Program, and the institution of accountability mechanisms, sanctions and incentives conducive for the effective and efficient collection of loan repayments.

The Board shall explore different processes, including systematic testing and rigorous evaluation of methods to be undertaken to minimize the risk of non-repayment of loans and collection costs. It shall also encourage private sector participation to ensure the delivery of the best possible service suitable to the needs and objectives of the NSLP.

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and Social Security System (SSS) shall study the feasibility of having an automatic system of salary deduction for Student Loan repayments of members with unpaid Student Loans, pursuant to a memorandum of agreement to be executed by the Board with the GSIS or SSS, respectively, and in accordance with labor laws on deduction of payments.

The top ten (10) graduates of all public high schools shall be given priority in the grant of the Student Loan: *Provided*, That the loan granted shall be repaid in installment basis after the student graduates or leaves the educational institution: *Provided, further*, That the educational loan shall be sourced from the five percent (5%) of the total loanable portfolio of the Development Bank of the Philippines without prejudice to the creation of other Student Loan programs.

SEC. 9. *Other Modalities of StuFAPs.* – The Board may develop other modalities of StuFAPs: *Provided*, That nothing in this Act shall preclude the Board, the implementing agencies, SUCs, and public TVIs from promulgating and developing other forms of StuFAPs, such as private Scholarship or sponsorship programs, and student or graduate assistance programs, in accordance with the standards and guidelines set by the Board.

ARTICLE III

ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS AND TERMS OF AVAILMENT

SEC. 10. *Minimum Qualifications of Applicants.* – The Board shall promulgate and periodically review the qualification criteria of applicants for student financial assistance. An applicant must meet the following minimum qualifications:

(a) Filipino citizen: *Provided*, That the Board may grant exemptions to foreign students based on reciprocal programs that provide similar benefits to Filipino students, such as student exchange programs, international reciprocal Scholarships, and other mutually beneficial programs;

(b) High school graduate or its equivalent from duly authorized institutions;

(c) Possesses good moral character with no criminal record: *Provided*, That this requirement shall be waived for programs which target children in conflict with the law and/or those who are undergoing or have undergone rehabilitation;

(d) Admitted to the HEI or TVI included in the Registry of Programs and Institutions of the applicant's choice: *Provided*, That applicants may begin processing their applications within a reasonable time frame set by the Board to give the applicant sufficient time to enroll;

(e) In the case of an applicant in TVET programs, he/she shall, in addition to the criteria referred above, pass the TESDA screening/assessment procedure, trade test, or skills competency evaluation;

(f) Declare if he/she is already a Beneficiary of any other student financial assistance, including government StuFAP: *Provided*, That if at the time of application of the Scholarship, Grant-in-Aid, Student Loan, or other modalities of StuFAP under this Act, the amount of such other existing grant does

not cover the full Cost of Tertiary Education at the HEI or TVI where he/she has enrolled in, the applicant may still avail of the StuFAPs under this Act for the remaining portion;

(g) In the case of applicant for Scholarship, he/she must obtain at least the score required by the Board for the Qualifying Examination System for Scoring Students; and

(h) Possesses such other qualifications as may be prescribed by the Board.

SEC. 11. *Disqualifications and Limitations.* – The right of any Beneficiary to avail of the benefits of the StuFAPs under this Act shall not apply if the student fails to comply with the requirements for good academic standing and such other conditions that may be formulated and imposed by the Board: *Provided*, That the Board shall consider the supervening circumstances of each Beneficiary that may have an effect on his/her studies, such as death, lingering illness of a family member, or other personal reasons.

The Board shall not unduly deprive eligible applicants of student financial assistance: *Provided*, That said students may be directed by the Board and/or the implementing agency to enroll in priority courses, as may be identified by the CHED or TESDA, based on the national development plans and labor force demands, in order to avail of student financial assistance: *Provided, further*, That the Board and/or implementing agency shall not deny financial assistance to applicants or Beneficiaries already enrolled in non-priority courses, especially if the priority courses are not offered in the Tertiary Education institution of the student's choice.

SEC. 12. *Terms of Availment of StuFAPs.* – The Board and/or the implementing agency may, prior to the grant of Scholarship or Student Loan, or other modalities of StuFAP, impose reasonable terms and conditions of availment.

SEC. 13. *Sanctions.* – The Board and/or the implementing agency may impose reasonable sanctions to any Beneficiary of a Scholarship, Student Loan or other modalities of StuFAP who has been found to have violated any of the provisions of his/her contract.

ARTICLE IV
THE UNIFAST BOARD

SEC. 14. *Creation of a UniFAST Board.* – To carry out the purposes of this Act, there is hereby created a UniFAST Board, hereinafter referred to as the Board, which shall be attached to the CHED, composed of the following:

- (a) The CHED Chairperson as *ex officio* Chairperson;
- (b) The Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) as *ex officio* Co-Chairperson;
- (c) The TESDA Director-General as *ex officio* Co-Chairperson;
- (d) The Secretary of the Department of Education (DepED) as *ex officio* member;
- (e) A representative from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as *ex officio* member;
- (f) A representative from the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) as *ex officio* member; and
- (g) A representative from the National Youth Commission (NYC) as *ex officio* member.

SEC. 15. *Powers and Functions of the Board.* – The Board shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (a) Formulate and approve policies and strategies for UniFAST, and review existing policies to ensure consistency with policy framework under this Act;
- (b) Coordinate with the implementing agencies of existing StuFAPs in the formulation, approval and issuance of guidelines towards the development and promotion of the UniFAST;
- (c) Provide necessary support to implementing agencies, technical or otherwise, to ensure the effective implementation of this Act;
- (d) Prepare, approve, and submit to the CHED its own budget proposal, in addition to the individual budget proposals prepared by the various implementing agencies, including vetting, modifying and integrating all requests for public funding of Tertiary Education StuFAPs;

(e) Promulgate the minimum guidelines, rules and regulations for determining qualified Beneficiaries of student financial assistance for Tertiary Education;

(f) Provide general guidelines for the drawing up of contracts with the student Beneficiaries specifying the rights and obligations of the parties that may include a service clause or such other stipulations of cost recovery the Board may deem in the best interest of the public and consistent with, or responsive to, national, social, economic, and human resources development plans, subject to Section 12;

(g) Monitor, assess and make impact evaluation of StuFAPs and projects, with the end in view of determining whether these programs shall be adopted, continued, or terminated;

(h) Adopt a Qualifying Examination System for Scoring Students for merit and talent-based StuFAPs and determine the eligibility for Grants-in-Aid and other modalities of StuFAPs;

(i) Provide and promote a supportive policy environment for the growth and development of private sector participation for Scholarships, Grants-in-Aid, Student Loans or other modalities of StuFAP;

(j) Establish and maintain, on the public websites of the CHED and TESDA, a database containing information on StuFAPs and accredited public and private Tertiary Education programs and institutions;

(k) Take all necessary actions to disseminate information on the database established and maintained under this Act in order to encourage its use by interested parties and to ensure that Beneficiaries are able to maximize the benefits from UniFAST through informed decision-making, allowing them freedom of choice among accredited public and private Tertiary Education programs and institutions;

(l) Design a program of generating funds for the UniFAST;

(m) Facilitate and tap donations, legacies, gifts and other forms of contribution, whether in cash or in kind, from both public and private sources and to tap the services and assistance of experts, in accordance with Section 20: *Provided*, That such donations, legacies, and contributions of cash or property duly received shall be exempt from donor's tax and

shall be allowable deductions for income tax purposes in accordance with Section 34-H of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended;

(n) Appoint members of the UniFAST Secretariat upon the recommendation of the Executive Director;

(o) Appoint one (1) or more legal officers with authority to file cases in court;

(p) Set up, maintain and update an official registry of quality-assured academic and research programs and Tertiary Education institutions in accordance with Section 3 of this Act;

(q) Approve the appropriate honorarium and per diem for the members of the Board, in accordance with the relevant government rules and regulations;

(r) Develop an efficient tracking system of Student-Borrowers, as well as a system of disbursement and collection of payments of loans granted under this Act, including entering into agreements with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), GSIS, SSS, National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Bureau of Immigration (BI), Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP), Credit Information Corporation (CIC), private and public banks and banking intermediaries, credit information bureaus, and other government financial institutions, inclusive of investigating and checking the whereabouts of delinquent Student-Borrowers, and setting up mechanisms for blacklisting of defaulting Student-Borrowers in application for loans, credit cards, and other credit facilities; and

(s) Perform such other powers and functions as may be deemed necessary and incidental for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 16. *Meetings.* – The Board shall hold twelve (12) regular monthly meetings in a year: *Provided*, That four (4) years after the implementation of this Act, the Board shall determine the frequency of the regular meetings which shall not be less than once every quarter.

The Chairperson of the Board may call a special meeting when necessary: *Provided*, That the members are notified in writing at least three (3) working days prior to the meeting.

In the absence of the Chairperson, the Co-Chairpersons shall preside over the Board's meetings on a rotation basis. The members of the Board may also designate a representative in his/her absence: *Provided*, That in the case of the Chairperson, Co-Chairpersons, and the Secretaries of the DepED and DOLE, their respective representatives must be occupying the position of an Assistant Secretary, or its equivalent, and higher. The proceedings of all meetings shall be recorded and the minutes thereof shall be attested to by a simple majority of all regular Board Members.

At least one (1) meeting of the Board in every quarter must be attended by the Chairperson and Co-Chairpersons and shall be devoted to a review of the performance of the UniFAST in terms of the following:

(a) Total number of current Beneficiaries;

(b) Number of dropouts from the program, voluntary or revoked, as well as the reasons behind such;

(c) Average academic performance by year of study;

(d) Breakdown of Beneficiaries by field of study;

(e) Breakdown of Beneficiaries by district and region of origin;

(f) Breakdown of Beneficiaries by place of study;

(g) Breakdown of Beneficiaries by sex;

(h) Breakdown of Beneficiaries by size of annual family income and family livelihood;

(i) Completion rate of Beneficiaries;

(j) Measures of success of financial assistance programs; and

(k) Such other matters relating to any provision of this Act.

SEC. 17. *Quorum.* – The attendance of a simple majority of the Board members is necessary in order for the Board to have a quorum to transact business.

SEC. 18. *Creation of a UniFAST Secretariat.* – There is hereby created a Secretariat to be headed by an Executive

Director to support the Board in carrying out its functions. The Board shall provide for the institutional setup, qualifications, and compensation of employees composing the Secretariat in accordance with existing Civil Service and Career Executive Service rules and regulations and consistent with the provision of the Salary Standardization Law for government personnel, and determine the size and composition of the Secretariat.

The Secretariat shall exercise the following functions:

(a) Provide technical and administrative support services to the Board's policy-making and implementation functions;

(b) Review, evaluate, and assess programs, plans of action, and agenda of the Board, and concomitantly recommend the approval or cancellation of such programs, plans of action, and agenda of the Board;

(c) Review, evaluate, and assess programs, plans of action, and agenda of the implementing agencies, including proposals for funding, and recommend the approval or cancellation of such programs, plans of action, and agenda of the implementing agencies to the Board;

(d) Maintain and update a repository of data and information on all StuFAPs for Tertiary Education administered by any government agency, branch, or instrumentality and create and maintain a comprehensive database system on the government's StuFAPs accessible to the public, pursuant to the policy of transparency and good governance;

(e) Recommend, manage, and monitor the processes of contracting out the implementation of UniFAST activities which would be best accomplished by third party providers, as approved by the Board; and

(f) Perform such other powers and functions as may be determined by the Board.

SEC. 19. *The Executive Director.* – There shall be an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the Board and shall have the rank of an Assistant Secretary. The Executive Director shall have a minimum of seven (7) years managerial experience, be a holder of at least a Master's degree, and be a Career Executive Service eligible. The Executive Director shall perform the following functions:

(a) Serve as the primary coordinator of StuFAPs for Tertiary Education students being implemented by various government agencies, branches, and instrumentalities;

(b) Manage relationships with partner agencies;

(c) Exercise leadership, supervisory, and administrative functions over the Secretariat;

(d) Ensure the provision of accurate and timely technical inputs and feedback to the Board to guide it in its policy-making functions;

(e) Ensure the proper dissemination and implementation of Board decisions;

(f) Submit an annual report on the operations, status of programs funded, and financial conditions of the Secretariat, including recommendations for the budget in the ensuing year; and

(g) Perform such other duties and functions as may be determined by the Board.

ARTICLE V

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, REPORTING, AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

SEC. 20. *Financial Management and Accountability.* – All public funds allocated to the government StuFAPs for Tertiary Education shall be managed according to standard government accounting and auditing rules and regulations. In addition, specialized processes and procedures shall be developed to enhance transparency and accountability suitable to the program or project for which the fund has been provided.

SEC. 21. *Accounting and Reporting of UniFAST StuFAP Funds.* – A separate book of accounts shall be kept by each implementing agency for the UniFAST StuFAP Funds. It shall follow standard government rules and regulations for accounting. Implementing agencies of the StuFAP Funds, however, may adopt additional measures to ensure its safety, particularly in authorizing payments and processing of disbursements from the funds: *Provided, That* such additional

measures shall facilitate a convenient and efficient means of delivering financial assistance to the Beneficiaries.

A mid-year and annual report shall be prepared by all implementing agencies. The report shall have two (2) parts: a financial statement and a report of operations showing the accomplishments of the fund. These reports shall be submitted to Congress and the Department of Budget and Management to inform and aid in decision making and shall be made available to other interested parties for valid and acceptable reasons. The list of Beneficiaries and the amount of financial assistance received shall be made available upon request.

SEC. 22. *Responsibility of National Government Agencies Implementing StuFAPs.* – The agencies and instrumentalities implementing StuFAPs are required to submit reports, make their selection process transparent to the public, and comply with the requirements that the Board may impose to ensure that these programs are in line with the national policy framework on student financial assistance.

SEC. 23. *Performance Monitoring and Impact Assessment.* – The UniFAST shall be evaluated rigorously by the Board in terms of its impact on desired results and its progress towards achieving them shall be monitored regularly. The Board shall clearly define those results and their target values. Impact evaluation shall be measured against, among others:

(a) Education outcomes such as enrolment in level IV-accredited HEIs, as may be determined in the Implementing Rules and Regulations, and number of graduates (by type of study program);

(b) Economic indicators such as income and employment of Beneficiaries after graduation; and

(c) Indicators for contributions to community service and public good.

Performance and progress shall, in addition, be measured with regard to: (i) number of students covered by Scholarships, Grants-in-Aid, Student Loans, or other modalities of StuFAP; (ii) type of study program; (iii) level of HEI enrolled in; and (iv) initial economic status. Tracer studies and survey data for experimental and quasi-experimental analyses shall be undertaken to produce credible impact evaluation studies, as may be determined by the Board: *Provided*, That major

programs of the Board are to be evaluated within five (5) years from the date of its implementation.

SEC. 24. *Congressional Oversight Committee.* – There is hereby created a Congressional Oversight Committee on the UniFAST composed of five (5) members each to be chosen from the membership of the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture and the House of Representatives Committee on Higher and Technical Education. The members from the Senate shall be appointed by the Senate President based on proportional representation of the parties or coalitions therein with at least two (2) Senators representing the minority. The members from the House of Representatives shall be appointed by the Speaker also based on proportional representation of the parties or coalitions therein with at least two (2) Congressmen representing the minority.

The Oversight Committee on the UniFAST shall have the power to oversee the implementation of this Act, including an inquiry into the book of accounts of the Board: *Provided*, That the Secretariat of the Oversight Committee shall be drawn from the secretariat personnel of the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture and the House of Representatives Committee on Higher and Technical Education. Funding for the expenses of the Committee shall be taken from the appropriations of both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The Board shall be required to submit to the Congressional Oversight Committee, on a periodic basis, the financial statements, policy statements, issuances and other documents and information of the Board, subject to existing laws and regulations.

ARTICLE VI

APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 25. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, specifically for the creation of the Board and the Secretariat and the initial implementation of this Act, shall be charged against the current year's appropriation of the CHED. The budget for the implementation of existing StuFAPs and any modality that may be established shall be charged against the budget of the implementing agencies. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 26. *Other Sources of Funds.* – Other sources of funds such as grants, donations, and other forms of assistance from local and foreign donor agencies, other public or private entities, and other private domestic and international sources may be tapped and facilitated by the Board to support the program, subject to regular auditing guidelines and procedures: *Provided,* That in case of donations from foreign sources, acceptance thereof shall be subject to existing government rules and regulations.

All donations, grants, endowments from various sources and other contributions given to specific agencies for StuFAPs shall be retained by the identified donee agency for that specific purpose in accordance with government auditing rules and regulations.

Cost-sharing or counter-parting schemes among national government and local government units (LGUs) shall also be encouraged to support the implementation of the UniFAST.

ARTICLE VII

IMPLEMENTATION

SEC. 27. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Board shall constitute itself, in consultation with relevant stakeholders in Tertiary Education, and promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations necessary for the proper implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days from the constitution of the Board.

ARTICLE VIII

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

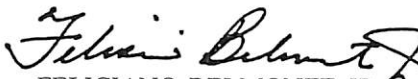
SEC. 28. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, parts or provisions of this Act which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

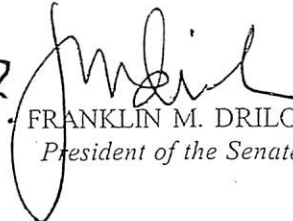
SEC. 29. *Non-Impairment Clause.* – Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to diminish, impair, or repeal rights recognized, granted, or made available to disadvantaged, marginalized, or specific sectors under existing laws.

SEC. 30. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, Implementing Rules and Regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly, including the provisions of Republic Act No. 8545 on Tertiary Education.


SEC. 31. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.


Approved,


FELICIANO BELMONTE JR.
*Speaker of the House
of Representatives*


FRANKLIN M. DRILON
President of the Senate


This Act which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 2679 and House Bill No. 4591 was finally passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on August 3, 2015 and August 4, 2015, respectively.



MARILYN B. BARUA-YAP
*Secretary General
House of Representatives*


OSCAR G. YABES
Secretary of the Senate

OCT 15 2015

Approved:


BENIGNO S. AQUINO III
President of the Philippines



CERTIFIED COPY:




MARIANITO M. DIMAANDAL
DIRECTOR IV
MALACARANG RECORDS OFFICE

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