

UA&P unions gain support amid looming strike

COALITIONS of labor unions and student groups have expressed solidarity with employees of the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P), as faculty and staff prepare for a strike over stalled wage talks and onsite work requirements.

The UA&P Union of Faculty Members (UA&PUFM) and the UA&P Union of Allied Employees (UA&PUAE) filed a notice of strike in early August, citing what they described as a bargaining deadlock with university management.

The dispute centers on demands for salary increases and resistance to a return-to-office policy, which the unions say disregards the economic difficulties faced by teachers and staff.

Since the strike notice was filed, the unions have received public backing from groups such as the Solidarity of Workers in Private Education (SWIPE), Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT)-Private Schools and Council of Teachers & Staff of Colleges and Universities in the Philippines, the unions said in a joint statement on Thursday.

Also supporting their case are the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights in the Philippines and Samahan ng Progresibong Kabataan, it added.

These organizations echoed calls for wage adjustments and criticized policies that they say worsen the financial and professional burdens of private school employees.

“This shows the reasonableness and justness of our demands, especially given that we benchmarked our collective bargaining agreement to industry standards,” UA&PUAE President Keith Pang-aniban said in a statement.

The UA&P management did not immediately reply to an e-mail seeking comment. *BusinessWorld* also reached out via the university’s official Facebook page but did not get a response.

Under the Labor Code, a strike grounded on a collective bargaining deadlock may be carried out 30 days after a notice is filed, provided that it is approved by a majority of union members.

It may push through seven days after the Department of Labor and Employment’s National Conciliation and Mediation Board (NCMB) is notified.



UAPASIA

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The UA&P unions are scheduled to meet management in an NCMB conciliation session on Friday, the UA&PUAE said.

“We are undergoing conciliation mediation in NCMB,” UA&PUFM President Ferdinand D. Delos Reyes said in a Viber message, adding that the university management “did not reach out” to the unions for talks.

The unions have “exhausted all possible legal means,” in pressing for their demands, according to the joint statement, citing a SWIPE statement from Aug. 11.

ACT-Private Schools had also called on UA&P to recognize the economic realities facing teachers, the unions said, citing an Aug. 10 statement from ACT.

“We believe that our fellow private school educators’ call for just economic benefits and wages are all the more essential, especially under current circumstances where economic crises, soaring prices, and rising costs of living persistently burden our teachers,” according to the ACT statement cited by the UA&P unions. — **Kenneth Christiane L. Basilio**

Rating, from SI/1

Consumption is expected to get a boost as inflation fell to a near six-year low of 0.9% in July. The July inflation rate was the lowest in nearly six years or since the 0.6% print posted in October 2019.

For the first seven months of the year, inflation averaged 1.7%, a tad higher than the BSP’s 1.6% full-year forecast.

LIMITED TARIFF IMPACT

Meanwhile, the Philippine economy will likely see “limited” impact from the higher US tariffs.

“R&I believes that the impact of reciprocal tariffs imposed by the US is estimated to be limited. This is because the tariff rate is kept low at 19% and the proportion of exports to the US in the overall economy is small,” it said.

The US began imposing a 19% tariff on Philippine goods entering the US starting on Aug. 7. The US is one of the top destinations for Philippine-made goods.

“R&I believes that the present level of current account deficit does not necessarily have negative implications in the assessment of creditworthiness, given its potential as basis of future economic growth,” it said.

Data from the central bank showed the current account deficit widened to -3.7% of GDP in the first quarter, versus -1.9% in the same period in 2024. The BSP expects the current account deficit to be -3.3% this year, and -2.5% in 2026.

R&I said the Philippines has a sufficient level of foreign exchange reserves in comparison with imports.

“In terms of international investment position, debts exceed financial assets but net debt hovers at a low level in comparison with GDP. R&I believes that external risk is small in light of these points,” it said.

At the same time, R&I said it expects the Philippines’ fiscal deficit to continue declining in line with the government’s plan.

“R&I believes that government debt ratio will remain within manageable level with the progress in reducing fiscal deficits,” it added.

Government data showed the Philippines’ debt-to-GDP ratio had risen to 63.1% as of end-June, its highest level since 2005. The figure remains above the 60% threshold that multilateral lenders view as manageable for developing economies. The debt ratio is expected to ease to 61.3% by yearend.

The BSP welcomed R&I’s affirmation of the investment grade rating as it reflects the country’s “robust growth, low inflation and strong external position.”

“The low inflation environment is thanks to the agile and evidence-based monetary policy. This environment supports an investment climate that is conducive to economic growth,” BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. said.

In a separate statement, Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto said the rating would help attract more investments, create jobs and boost incomes for Filipinos.

“This is a victory that every Filipino should celebrate,” Mr. Recto said in Filipino. “Because this means that credit rating agencies and investors continue to have strong confidence in us. This will attract more investments, create more quality jobs, increase incomes, and lift more Filipinos out of poverty.”

Meanwhile, Union Bank of the Philippines’ Chief Economist Ruben Carlo O. Asuncion said the investment grade rating boosts investor confidence and improves the country’s access to funding.

“The affirmation by R&I reflects confidence in the country’s policy direction, low inflation environment, and stable banking sector,” Mr. Asuncion said in a Viber message. “This supports investor sentiment and enhances the Philippines’ ability to access funding at favorable terms.”

The Philippines currently holds investment grade ratings with the three major debt watchers. Fitch Ratings rates the country at “BBB,” Moody’s Ratings at “Baa2,” and S&P Global Ratings at “BBB+.” — **Katherine K. Chan**

OPINION

How to handle a boss who gets the credit

IN THE WORKPLACE REY ELBO

I have a boss who relies heavily on my assistance to do even the most important tasks he should be handling himself. The worst part is that he's overly confident in himself when he's in front of people, but often fails to give me credit for all the things that I've done for him. How do I manage the situation? — Ink Phantom.

This may not be to your liking. But be realistic. You don’t have much choice but to support your boss. There’s no other option, unless you resign or accept other assignments outside your department. But look at the positive side. You may not realize it, but your current situation should work in your favor.

For managers worth their salt, delegation is celebrated as the ultimate mark of good leadership. After all, a boss who tries to do everything ends up doing nothing well. But what happens when the pendulum swings too far — when your boss keeps passing everything to you like a hot potato in a never-ending team-building game?

Of course, the issue is when the boss is stingy in giving you proper credit. Whatever, if I were in your place, I would be more than happy to do the job for him. You may feel bitter about it now, probably because of the workload, stress and lack of credit.

However, if you play it right, it could help you fast-track your career development and your influence, not only with your boss, but with the whole organization.

It depends on the perspective. Some things could go wrong. Others might go surprisingly right. If you don’t have any choice, think of all the good things that are happening now instead of plotting your escape.

POSITIVE SIDE

Being overloaded by your boss can play in your favor. That is, if you know how to manage the workload and survive a stressful work environment. Let’s count the ways.

One, make the situation your rocket ship for skill growth. Few career development programs can match the “sink or swim” training you’re getting from an over-delegating boss. One week you’re crafting budgets, the next you’re managing client complaints or mediating conflict between workers.

Somewhere in between these difficult tasks, you’ve perfected troubleshooting the office printer. That’s where you’re experiencing an MBA without formal schooling.

Two, gain visibility in the process. Handling high-level tasks means people notice you. Suddenly, your name appears in meetings, reports and casual conversations. You become the go-to person for things that matter, not just “office supply inventory.”

If that’s not happening yet, volunteer for more assignments and aspire to be given challenging tasks. That way, you can easily prove your worth to top management.

Three, become a leader by default. Congratulations! If everyone’s looking to you for answers, then that’s a good sign that you’re being recognized with or without the presence of your boss. Don’t worry about the title and credit.

People would know it better than your boss. The team knows who gets things done, and it’s not the person with the corner office and the calendar with a quarterly foreign travel.

Four, improve your chances of a promotion. Should your boss become ill, retire, burn out, or decide to pursue their lifelong dream of opening a beach bar in Boracay, you’re the natural candidate to replace them.

After all, you’ve been performing half their job already. Your instant promotion could happen anytime, with or without a succession plan.

Five, leverage your situation. Once you realize how much you’ve absorbed, you can use it as bargaining power. At performance review time, you can always say: “I’d love to keep our professional relationship fruitful. Let me know how we could strengthen it further by adjusting my portfolio of compensation, if warranted.”

Six, enrich your resume with concrete examples. Future employers will troop to your doorsteps the moment they see your experience, complete with dollar signs in cost savings. “You handled operations, finance, HR and crisis management under one boss? That’s amazing. When can you start?” To prospective employers, you’ll look like the Swiss Army knife every organization wants to hire.

THE BALANCING ACT

Here’s the bottom line: when bosses over-delegate, they put themselves at risk of irrelevance and their workers at risk of burnout depending on their perspectives. But for you, the same situation can serve as a hidden fast-track plan — if you play it smart.

The trick is to balance two things: survival and strategy. Take the opportunity to learn, showcase your skills and build influence, but also guard your boundaries so you don’t flame out before you cash in on the benefits.

After all, being the unofficial boss has its perks — as long as you have the authority, which you have to secure in writing (via e-mail) from your boss.

One caveat, though. Too much delegation can feel like being trapped in an overworked internship program that never ends. But if you take it in a positive light, it might just be the best leadership boot camp you never asked for.

Ask questions and receive REY ELBO’s insights for free. E-mail elbonomics@gmail.com or DM him on Facebook, LinkedIn, X or via <https://reyelbo.com>. Anonymity is guaranteed.



Infrastructure, from SI/1

For the first half of 2025, overall infrastructure and capital outlays disbursements inched up by 1.4% to P620.2 billion from P611.8 billion in the same period last year.

This was 0.1% or P800 million below the P621-billion program for the first semester.

“Although infrastructure expenditures posted a notable 20.8% (P45-billion) annual growth in first quarter this year, it contracted by 9.3% (P36.6 billion) in second quarter amid the election-related prohibition on public spending covering the entire month of April up to the first two weeks of May,” the DBM said.

Meanwhile, overall infrastructure disbursements, which include infrastructure components of subsidy or equity to government corporations and transfers to local government units, were flat at P720.3 billion in the January-to-June period from P720.5 billion a year ago.

It also exceeded the overall infrastructure spending program of P718-billion for the first half by 0.3%.

The DBM said growth in infrastructure transfers to local government units, particularly their development fund equivalent to 20% of the National Tax Allotment, was offset by lower National Government-implemented infrastructure activities and reduced subsidies to state agencies like the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

Subsidies provided to state-run firms stood at P7.45 billion in June, 26.68% down from P10.16 billion a year earlier.

Budgetary support to the NIA plunged by 68.21% in June to P2.39 billion from P7.52 billion in the same period in 2024.

“Nevertheless, the total infrastructure spending for the first semester was registered at 5.3% of GDP (gross domestic product), in line with the 5.3% full-year target for this year,” it added.

Based on the 2026 Budget of Expenditures and Sources, the government set its full-year infrastructure spending program at P1.51 trillion, equivalent to 5.3% of the GDP.

In the following months, the DBM said line agencies are expected to ramp up requests for release of allotments for their programs, activities, and projects in the second semester as implementation activities normalize post-election ban.

“These may also include unutilized cash allocations from the second quarter that line agencies can still request this second semester so they can process payments and make disbursements to suppliers or contractors for completed and delivered goods or rendered services,” it said.

Among the anticipated spending drivers for the succeeding months are progress billings from multiple finished or partially completed road and transport infrastructure projects and releases for defense modernization program.

“Increased infrastructure spending at around 5%-6% of GDP for the coming years, as also seen in recent years, would still lead to sustained growth in infrastructure spending,” Mr. Ricafort said. — **Aubrey Rose A. Inosante**

Former COMELEC commissioner joins DivinaLaw



DivinaLaw is proud to announce the appointment of Atty. Gregorio “Goyo” Larrazabal as Senior Partner. A seasoned election law expert and former Commissioner of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) from 2009 to 2011, Atty. Larrazabal brings with him decades of experience in public service, electoral reform, and legal advocacy.

Atty. Larrazabal was chairman of the COMELEC steering committee, which oversaw the successful conduct of the Philippines’ first nationwide automated elections. Throughout his tenure in public service, he worked closely with multi-sectoral teams to improve the integrity and efficiency of the electoral process.

Beyond his work in government, Atty. Larrazabal has remained a strong advocate for voter empowerment, continuing his efforts to

raise civic awareness and promote democratic participation well after his time in COMELEC.

“With Goyo on board, we are not just strengthening our Election Law Practice — we are adding a proven leader whose integrity, expertise, and track record will inspire confidence among clients and colleagues alike,” said Atty. Nilo Divina, Managing Partner of DivinaLaw. “His dedication to safeguarding democratic processes mirrors our own commitment to excellence and principled advocacy.”

With Atty. Larrazabal and his associates joining the firm, DivinaLaw reinforces its position as one of the leading full-service law firms in the country. The addition of his expertise marks a significant step forward for DivinaLaw as it continues to provide innovative and exceptional legal solutions to its clients.