

Why We Need University Campuses ? : Establishing Polytechnic University of the Philippines Campuses and Other State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) Across Regions of the Country

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ABSTRACT:

In the Philippines, the development of university campuses has become a major strategy to expand access to higher education and to promote regional development. The study examined the significance of the establishment of campuses of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) and other State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) with particular focus on their contribution to accessibility to education, development of the workforce, and community-based innovation. The study employed descriptive analysis and utilized institutional data on enrollment, graduates, faculty, academic programs, and campus distribution, supplemented by relevant literature and policy documents. The findings showed that PUP satellite campuses and other SUCs have significantly contributed to broadening access to public higher education particularly in the underserved and geographically challenged areas. Enrollment and graduation trends demonstrated increasing demand for affordable and accessible tertiary education, while faculty and program distributions reflected the growing institutional capacity of multi-campus systems. The study also reported that campuses contribute to local development through the production of employable graduates and the sponsorship of community-responsive programs, research, extension services and partnerships. But challenges around funding, infrastructure, people, governance and institutional sustainability remain evident. The study concludes that the continuous development and enhancement of university campuses are crucial for the advancement of inclusive education, regional equity, workforce development and sustainable local development.

Keywords: Community-based Innovation, Higher Education Access, Regional Development, University Campuses, Workforce Development,

1. Introduction

Higher education plays a critical role in the development of a country as it equips people with

the knowledge, skills and competencies required for employment, social mobility and participation

in economic and civic life. Globally recognizes access to higher education as a key enabler of inclusive development, poverty reduction and human capital formation. State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines provide affordable and accessible tertiary education, especially for students from low-income, rural, and geographically disadvantaged communities, and this function was further institutionalized by Republic Act No. 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, which institutionalized free tuition and other school fee subsidies in public higher education institutions. The Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) is one of the largest public higher education institutions in the country in terms of student population. It has expanded through branches and satellite campuses in different provinces and municipalities to democratize access, respond to local development needs and promote inclusive growth. The PUP and other SUC campuses help to address financial and geographical barriers in terms of relocation, transportation, and urban-based schooling by bringing tertiary education to the communities, consistent with studies that consider satellite campuses as a response to the educational inequality among underserved communities (Almaden, 2024; Evale, 2016). Despite the continued growth of SUCs and satellite campuses, their significance must be systematically and empirically investigated, because campuses are not merely physical places for teaching, but also centers of institutional, student, local and community development. The campus environments affect students' experience, well-being, retention, and academic performance (Gür, 2024; Hajrasouliha & Ewing, 2016; Wang et al., 2025). Campuses are also capable of contributing to local economies as engines of growth, job creation, industry support, and innovation through research, extension, and partnerships (Benneworth et al., 2024; Lv et al., 2024; Rossi & Valentina, 2018). However, for multi-campus systems, strong governance, quality assurance, faculty support, and mission alignment are essential (Brown, 2014; Pharr, 2014; Healey, 2015). Thus, this paper aims to examine the significance of campus

establishment in PUP and other SUCs through a review of access, enrollment, graduation, institutional capacity, workforce development, community-based innovation, and the challenges that affect the sustainability of multi-campus public university systems.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Understanding the Importance and Role of Campuses

Campuses are the heart of higher education, as sites for instruction, research, student development, and community engagement. Campuses are more than just a place to conduct classes. They are a physical presence of the institution, a source of academic opportunity and social development for a community. To increase access to education and reduce regional inequality in countries with a geographically dispersed population, the establishment of campuses outside major urban centers has been adopted as a strategy. This is particularly critical for students from disadvantaged and geographically remote communities where the cost of travel, the cost of relocation and limited family income often make tertiary education inaccessible. Satellite campuses help to address these barriers by bringing higher education closer to students' localities, thus democratizing access to college education (Almaden, 2024; Evale, 2016).

Campuses impact more than access they influence student experience, academic success and well-being. Campus facilities, accessibility, walkability, transportation, green spaces, and student support services can impact retention, graduation, productivity, mental health, social interaction, and academic performance. Hajrasouliha and Ewing (2016) emphasized the connection between campus design and students' retention and graduation rates while Gür (2024) stressed the significance of campus life, transportation, accessibility, and facilities to students' quality of life. Campus design and walkability were also found to impact student productivity, mental health, social interaction, and academic performance (Wang et al., 2025). These studies demonstrate that campuses are critical not only for expanding access to higher

education, but also for influencing the learning environment experienced by students.

2.2 Context, Governance, Challenges, and Opportunities of Campus Development in the Philippines

The campus development in the Philippines is tightly tied to the objective of increasing access to quality higher education, especially considering that the country is made up of many islands and geographically diverse communities. Transportation costs, resettlement costs, the lack of higher education institutions in their vicinity, and the low income of their families are common barriers to students from remote provinces accessing universities in urban centers. Satellite campuses help overcome these barriers by increasing access to local communities to public higher education and reducing regional disparities. This is especially significant for students from rural, low-income, and underserved communities as satellite campuses reduce the practical and financial barriers to college attendance (Almaden et al., 2024; Evale, 2016). Proper planning, regulation, and alignment with the goals of Philippine higher education are needed for campus development. The creation of the campus is supported by several legal and policy frameworks. CHED was created through Republic Act No. 7722 or the Higher Education Act of 1994, which gave it the mandate to regulate and supervise higher education institutions. Republic Act No. 8292 or the Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997 gave SUCs corporate powers and fiscal autonomy. Republic Act No. 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act increased the demand for accessible public higher education through free tuition and subsidies in SUCs. Republic Act No. 11396 or the SUCs Land Use Development and Infrastructure Plan Act emphasized long-term and sustainable campus planning. Moreover, CHED Memorandum Order No. 10, series of 2012, gives the guidelines on the establishment of extension classes and campuses and requires institutions to show readiness in academic programs, faculty, facilities, infrastructure and financial capacity before approval. These policy foundations notwithstanding, challenges in

funding, quality assurance, resource allocation, institutional support and program relevance continue to be experienced in campus development. Creating and sustaining campuses involves a continuing investment in classrooms, laboratories, libraries, instructional materials, qualified faculty, administrative personnel and student support services. Also, some institutions depend on the support of the local government units, which may lead to inequalities in resources and development of the campuses. Uncontrolled rapid growth can intensify the gap between main and satellite campuses regarding faculty qualifications, research capacity, facilities and academic services (Almaden et al., 2024; QAA, 2017). Another important concern is whether the academic programs offered in satellite campuses are in tune with the local labor market needs, community priorities and development objectives. Therefore, satellite campuses should be treated not as subsidiaries but as integral parts of the institution with comparable academic standards and support systems. Well-planned and well-governed campus development is an educational and developmental strategy because it increases access to higher education, builds human capital, supports local workforce development, creates local jobs, enhances community partnerships, promotes regional equity, and helps SUCs fulfill their public service mandate.

2.3 The Impact of Establishing a Campus on Socio-Economic and Educational Development

Campuses are important educational and socioeconomically because they bring the higher education closer to students who may not have the financial capacity to study away from home. In the Philippine context, the availability of nearby public institutions makes access, enrollment and retention easier especially for low-income students (Evale, 2016). Campuses also contribute to workforce development beyond access, by supplying graduates who will be active in local and national labor markets. When academic programs are aligned with the needs of the community and industry, campuses help build human capital, improve employability

and support regional productivity. Socioeconomically, campuses have the potential to boost local economies through increased demand for transportation, food services, housing, school supplies, printing services and other community-based businesses. Faculty, administrators, maintenance and service workers also have jobs. The growth of SUCs and Local Universities and Colleges has widened access to higher education and spurred inclusive growth (PIDS, 2024). In this regard, the Polytechnic University of the Philippines exemplifies how a multi-campus system can democratize access to public higher education, especially for economically disadvantaged students and communities outside the main campus.

3. Methodology and Data Sources

This study used descriptive analysis to examine the importance of establishing satellite campuses across the country. Institutional data from the PUP Institutional Planning Office were used to describe campus composition and assess the role of campuses in local development. Relevant literature and policy documents were also reviewed to explain the legal basis and significance of satellite campus establishment. To support the analysis, the study also considered President Ramon Magsaysay State University as another SUC with satellite campuses by examining its data on employment, enrollment, graduates, and campus distribution to show the role of campuses in improving access to education in their respective localities

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Access to Higher Education

The enrollment data of both PUP and PRMSU show that campus expansion plays an important role in widening access to public higher education. In the PUP System, total enrollment increased from 82,477 in AY 2021–2022 to 104,229 in AY 2025–2026, with 38,054 students enrolled in satellite campuses in AY 2025–2026, representing 36.51 percent of the total PUP enrollment (see Table 1). This indicates that more than one-third of the PUP student population is served outside the Main Campus. Similarly,

PRMSU recorded an increase in total enrollment from 10,576 in 2019 to 16,199 in 2024 (see Table 2). The Iba Campus remained the largest campus, while Botolan, Candelaria, and Sta. Cruz also showed enrollment growth. These trends suggest that both PUP and PRMSU campuses respond to continuing regional demand for accessible and affordable higher education.

The enrollment patterns of both universities also show that campuses differ in size, maturity, program availability, and institutional capacity. In PUP, campuses such as Sta. Rosa, Lopez, Sta. Maria, Sto. Tomas, Biñan, and Quezon City recorded relatively high enrollment, showing strong regional demand for public higher education.

Table 1. Number of Enrollees in PUP from AY 2021–2022 to AY 2025–2026

Campus	AY 2021-2022	AY 2022-2023	AY 2023-2024	AY 2024-2025	AY 2025-2026
Main Campus	51,190	51,244	54,526	60,639	66,175
Alfonso, Cavite	681	660	694	662	602
Bansud, Oriental Mindoro	483	508	569	638	709
Biñan, Laguna	1,727	1,871	1,886	2,190	2,403
Cabiao, Nueva Ecija	664	690	678	681	654
Calauan, Laguna	475	609	674	787	869
General Luna, Quezon	772	801	780	796	791
Leyte, Leyte (new campus)	0	0	0	126	188
Lopez, Quezon	2,818	2,582	3,128	3,491	3,652
Margondon, Cavite	1,615	1,700	1,660	1,794	1,902
Mariveles, Bataan	1,767	1,650	1,692	1,932	2,015
Mulanay, Quezon	1,083	1,051	1,160	1,275	1,340
Parañaque City	1,089	1,029	1,048	1,344	1,480
Pulilan, Bulacan	607	587	623	698	771
Quezon City	1,718	1,634	1,781	2,083	2,287
Ragay, Camarines Sur	1,081	1,168	1,169	1,257	1,297
Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro	611	526	753	860	829
San Juan City	1,738	1,744	1,950	2,046	1,954
San Pedro, Laguna	1,395	1,474	1,502	1,567	1,578
Sta. Maria, Bulacan	2,753	2,747	2,724	2,834	2,875
Sta. Rosa, Laguna	3,260	3,463	3,659	3,904	4,152
Sto. Tomas, Batangas	2,505	2,499	2,492	2,567	2,602
Taguig City	1,754	1,758	1,740	1,818	1,890
Talisay, Batangas (new)	0	0	0	84	221
Unisan, Quezon	691	690	726	777	993
TOTAL	82,477	82,685	87,614	96,850	104,229

In PRMSU, Iba continued to be the main center of student activity, while selected satellite campuses showed steady growth. However, the decline in Masinloc's enrollment highlights the need to review local demand, program offerings, and possible barriers to participation.

Table 2. Enrollment Data per Campus in PRMSU from 2019 to 2024

Campus	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Iba	7,124	8,451	10,192	10,733	11,495	11,922
Castillejos	651	502	669	659	658	662
San Marcelino	1,152	1,181	1,174	1,209	1,220	1,213
Botolan	362	479	566	581	628	654
Masinloc	589	672	759	663	566	460
Candelaria	95	104	137	177	196	255
Sta. Cruz	603	741	892	1,010	1,004	1,033
Total	10,576	12,130	14,389	15,032	15,767	16,199

4.2 Graduate Production and Educational Outcomes

The graduate data of PUP and PRMSU further demonstrate that campus expansion contributes not only to student access but also to educational completion and workforce development. In the PUP System, the number of graduates increased from 7,114 in 2021 to 18,760 in 2025 (see Table 3). For AY 2024–2025, satellite campuses produced 7,632 graduates, representing 40.59 percent of the total graduates of the PUP System.

Table 3. Number of Graduates in PUP from AY 2020–2021 to AY 2024–2025

Campus	AY 2021-2022	AY 2022-2023	AY 2023-2024	AY 2024-2025	AY 2025-2026
Main Campus	4,927	11,211	11,844	11,105	11,169
Alfonso, Cavite	36	89	142	164	131
Bansud, Oriental Mindoro	65	122	103	85	97
Biñan, Laguna	54	280	507	372	515
Cabiao, Nueva Ecija	22	90	138	143	189
Calauan, Laguna	28	96	93	73	132
General Luna, Quezon	0	119	208	180	199
Leyte, Leyte (new campus)	0	0	0	0	0
Lopez, Quezon	166	609	675	569	725
Maragondon, Cavite	120	345	448	379	388
Mariveles, Bataan	228	413	406	311	355
Mulanay, Quezon	214	269	238	247	298
Pananaque City	161	206	247	227	244
Pulilan, Bulacan	57	144	121	106	148
Quezon City	173	478	388	351	347
Ragay, Camarines Sur	66	186	242	238	269
Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro	22	125	82	105	104
San Juan City	14	285	279	293	448
San Pedro, Laguna	91	354	328	320	353
Sta. Maria, Bulacan	194	691	639	517	645
Sta. Rosa, Laguna	68	616	762	757	837
Sto. Tomas, Batangas	170	653	693	505	613
Taguig City	115	378	491	373	380
Talisay, Batangas (new)	0	0	0	0	0
Unisan, Quezon	123	174	156	178	174
TOTAL	7,114	17,933	19,230	17,598	18,760

A similar pattern is observed in PRMSU, where all campuses produced graduates from 2019 to 2024 (see Table 4). Iba Campus consistently produced the highest number of graduates, while San Marcelino, Sta. Cruz, Castillejos, Botolan, Masinloc, and Candelaria also contributed to graduate production. The post-2022 increase in several PRMSU campuses suggests recovery and

academic continuity after earlier disruptions. Taken together, the graduate data from PUP and PRMSU support the idea that campuses require time to build enrollment, stabilize programs, develop facilities, and establish academic systems before producing consistent graduate outputs (Johnstone, 2010).

Table 4. Graduation Data per Campus in PRMSU from 2019 to 2024

Year	Iba	Castillejos	San Marcelino	Botolan	Masinloc	Candelaria	Sta. Cruz
2019	1,517	183	147	78	163	28	98
2020	975	57	148	34	25	14	57
2021	784	13	116	38	51	17	108
2022	1,892	175	215	78	243	17	156
2023	2,576	179	309	104	181	21	196
2024	1,805	142	183	87	111	7	165

The findings also confirm that sustained enrollment and graduation patterns provide empirical justification for the continued establishment and support of campuses in areas with unmet educational demand and capacity constraints (Altbach et al., 2019).

4.3 Institutional Capacity: Faculty, Administrative Support, and Academic Programs

Key measures of institutional capacity are faculty and administrative support, which show if a multi-campus university system can provide academic delivery, student services and quality operations. PUP and PRMSU are both defined by faculty complement as a function of campus size, enrollment demand and program offerings. In PUP, there was an increase in the number of faculty members from 2,297 in AY 2021–2022 to 2,684 in AY 2025–2026, a 16.85 percent increase over the five-year period. The Main Campus had the largest faculty complement, but some of the satellite campuses had large faculty numbers too, particularly those with larger enrollment and broader program offerings. The regular faculty of the whole PRMSU was not much changed from AY 2019–2020 to AY 2024–2025, with the Iba Campus having the highest regular faculty since it is the main academic and administrative center of the university. These trends suggest that the two universities allocate faculty according to the size of the campus, the function of the university and academic need.

Table 5. Faculty Count in PUP from AY 2021–2022 to AY 2025–2026

Campus	AY 2021-2022	AY 2022-2023	AY 2023-2024	AY 2024-2025	AY 2025-2026
Main Campus	1,423	1,540	1,596	1,569	1,674
Alfonso, Cavite	24	14	21	24	25
Bansud, Oriental Mindoro	16	22	24	25	26
Biñan, Laguna	36	41	50	50	51
Cabiao, Nueva Ecija	18	16	19	23	23
Calauan, Laguna	40	40	41	42	46
General Luna, Quezon	7	7	8	13	9
Leyte, Leyte (new campus)					9
Lopez, Quezon	66	102	94	94	97
Maragondon, Cavite	62	70	63	54	59
Mariveles, Bataan	63	64	59	57	52
Mulanay, Quezon	41	52	45	47	44
Panañaque City	23	27	28	38	41
Pulilan, Bulacan	18	20	17	19	22
Quezon City	54	50	53	59	55
Ragay, Camarines Sur	32	37	32	32	15
Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro	24	23	23	23	26
San Juan City	50	51	55	62	64
San Pedro, Laguna	47	60	57	50	58
Sta. Maria, Bulacan	56	55	59	58	53
Sta. Rosa, Laguna	55	72	66	68	68
Sto. Tomas, Batangas	61	80	73	76	75
Taguig City	52	61	59	56	61
Talisay, Batangas (new)					2
Unisan, Quezon	29	31	29	27	29
TOTAL	2,297	2,535	2,571	2,566	2,684

Table 6. Total Regular Faculty per PRMSU Campus, 2019–2025

Campus	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Iba	178	175	180	176	186	186
Castillejos	22	23	24	23	21	21
Botolan	27	27	25	23	24	25
Candelaria	14	13	10	10	10	9
Masinloc	15	16	17	13	14	13
Sta. Cruz	13	14	14	14	14	15
San Marcelino	51	51	47	40	39	40

But the data also point to the need to accompany faculty growth and stability with adequate administrative support and long-term staffing plans. In 2021, the number of administrative employees in PUP was 831 and in 2025, 757 or decreased by 8.90 percent. This decline can affect campus operations, student services, planning, records management, and overall administrative efficiency, particularly as enrollment and campus demands increase. The stability of regular faculty in PRMSU ensures continuity in instruction but the limited increases in plantilla faculty indicate budgetary and staffing limitations. PRMSU hired Contract of Service faculty to meet instructional demand, especially in campuses with increasing enrollment or program requirements. Although the COS faculty are involved in the operational aspects of teaching, this could lead to potential issues in job security, retention, faculty development, and the continuity of the academic

process. The institutional capacity is also influenced by the maturity of the campus and its resources as reflected in the academic program offerings.

Table 7. Administrative Employees in PUP System

Campus	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
OP	35	35	33	33	37
OEVP	26	25	23	23	27
OVPA	306	286	275	275	264
OVPF	82	81	78	78	78
OVPSAS	76	74	71	71	74
OVPRD	27	30	28	28	28
OVPA	129	127	120	120	114
OVPC	4	4	4	4	4
Cavite	7	6	6	6	6
Mindoro					1
Laguna	5	6	4	4	2
Laguna	3				
Quezon	16	16	12	12	11
Cavite	11	12	12	12	12
Bataan	12	12	11	11	9
Quezon	11	15	14	14	13
City	13	15	15	15	12
Sur	13	13	12	12	16
Sablayan	2	2	2	2	2
City	5	5	5	5	5
Laguna	1				
Bulacan	2	2	2	2	1
Laguna	7	7	7	7	8
Batangas	17	18	17	17	15
City	16	16	14	14	13
Quezon	5	5	5	5	5
Grand Total	831	812	770	770	757

From 2019 to 2024, most of the satellite campuses in PRMSU have offered stable academic programs, except for Iba Campus, which has expanded its offerings from 26 to 28 programs. Thus the main campus has more room to grow and specialize, while the satellite campuses seem more concerned with program continuity and quality assurance. This pattern also appears in PUP where campuses with higher enrollment and a more robust faculty complement are better able to sustain broader academic offerings. The joint experiences of PUP and PRMSU indicate that the development of campuses should not simply aim to increase enrollment but also to ensure that each campus has the necessary faculty, administrative support and academic programs that correspond to student demand and local development needs.

**Table 8. Total Contract of Service Faculty
PRMSU Campus 2019-2025**

Campus	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Iba	87	107	135	135	160	120
Castillejos	15	8	14	11	11	12
Botolan	3	4	5	8	6	3
Candelaria	0	2	2	4	4	4
Masinloc	9	13	9	11	6	4
Sta. Cruz	7	12	12	8	12	12
San Marcelino	12	7	7	15	15	13

The data from PUP and PRMSU suggest the need for balancing enrollment, faculty, administrative support and program development in institutional capacity. PUP shows an increase in faculty complement but a decline in administrative staff. PRMSU shows steady regular faculty, use of COS faculty and moderate program growth. These findings show the importance of multi-campus systems ensuring consistency in faculty support, instructional resources, administrative services, and academic standards across campuses (Gamboa, 2020; Healey, 2015; Zhang & You, 2022).

**Table 9. PRMSU Campuses Number of
Academic Programs**

Campus	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Sta. Cruz	3	3	3	3	3	3
Candelaria	2	2	2	2	2	2
Masinloc	3	3	3	3	3	3
Iba	26	26	26	26	27	28
Botolan	3	3	3	3	3	3
San Marcelino	8	8	8	8	8	8
Castillejos	4	4	4	4	4	4

4.4 Implications for Theory, Practice, Policy, and Limitations

The PUP and PRMSU findings reinforce the notion that campuses are more than just physical extensions of a university; they are also institutions of access, equity, workforce development and community development. Data shows campuses increase access to public higher education, produce graduates, support local workforce needs and strengthen regional development. In practical terms, the two universities show the need for differentiated campus planning, as the campuses differ in enrollment size, graduate output, faculty complement, administrative support, program offerings, and stage of development. Campus improvement should therefore be based on real

campus needs, institutional capacity and local development priorities.

The findings highlight the need for continued government support to SUCs and their satellite campuses for policy. There should be regular allocation of budget for campus growth, infrastructure investment, staffing of plantilla positions, faculty development, administrative support, and evidence-based planning. The results further support the continued implementation of policies such as Republic Act No. 10931 and CHED guidelines on campus establishment, emphasizing the importance of quality assurance, regularization of satellite campuses, and institutional accountability. However, the study is limited by the use of available institutional data from PUP and selected data from PRMSU which may not be representative of all SUCs in the Philippines. It relied on descriptive analysis and did not include interviews, surveys, and statistical modeling to capture the direct experiences of students, faculty, administrators, and local stakeholders. Despite these limitations, the overall findings suggest that campus development has strong educational and developmental value provided that expansion is supported by adequate funding, governance, quality assurance, workforce planning, infrastructure development and long term institutional support.

5. Conclusion

The study looked into the importance of establishing campuses of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) and other State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in various parts of the Philippines. The findings indicate that satellite campuses are vital in increasing access to higher education, especially for students from low-income, underserved, and geographically remote communities. These campuses bring public tertiary education closer to local areas and reduce barriers associated with transportation, relocation and educational costs.

Results also show that satellite campuses contribute to enrollment growth, production of graduates, workforce development, and community-based development. The increase in

enrollees and graduates is a testament to the sustained demand for accessible and affordable higher education. Academic programs, faculty support, research, extension services and community partnerships enable campuses to contribute to building human capital, supporting local industry and strengthening regional development.

However, the study also stresses the importance of continued support to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of campus development. Universities should continue to improve satellite

campuses by properly allocating budgets, developing infrastructure, developing faculty, planning academic programs and providing student support services. Growth of the campus should be guided by evidence-based planning that takes into account enrollment demand, local development priorities, workforce needs and institutional capacity. Future studies may explore the experiences of students, faculty, administrators, and stakeholders, and the long-term effects of campus establishment on graduate employability, community impact, and regional educational equity

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