

## An Evaluation of Student Discipline of Emilio Aguinaldo College - Cavite: A Basis for Continual Improvement

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**Abstract:** Undoubtedly, managing student discipline is one of the concerns of higher education institutions in the Philippines nowadays. However, despite the so many strategies to alleviate serious and not so serious offenses in EAC-Cavite, there have never been any established guidelines to evaluate student discipline occurrences and intervention as the basis for continual improvement. This study evaluates the major types of student discipline and analyzes its kind of offense incurred by students for Academic Year 2018-2019 from the 14 schools in EAC-Cavite which are categorically divided into five (5) clusters.

This study uses the mixed methods of research using the data gathered daily by the Discipline Officers. The data were summarized using frequency and percentage or according to the number of offenses recorded each month and the recorded incidents per cluster. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was also conducted among 20 student offenders who voluntarily provide reasons of such occurrences. The students analyzed and gave their possible solutions to improve their habits. Although this study is a nonexperimental, this implies that this evaluation documents the college-wide intervention and the role of the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) to improve their reporting technique on student discipline. Findings show that there were fewer occurrences per cluster after the intervention; however, for continual improvement purposes, this study recommends a continuous evaluation of the OSA's disciplinary procedures, intervention guidelines, and reporting strategies to enhance student services at EAC-Cavite.

**Keywords:** Student discipline, Offenses, Continual improvement

### 1. Introduction

Student discipline and management of student behavior is one of the crucial issues in higher education nowadays. While the colleges and universities try to enhance the learning environment, still, there are legal issues to be considered [1]. American adults agree on student-discipline solutions [2].

Student self-discipline help students behave responsibly [3]. As educators, we need to make changes on students' misbehavior thus, interventions such as dialogue, community service, and school's responsibilities are conducted. In Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order no. 09

series of 2019, it is stated that the CHED is mandated to promote quality education; take appropriate steps to ensure that education shall be accessible to all; and ensure and protect academic freedom for the continuing intellectual growth, the advancement of learning and research, the development of responsible and effective leadership, the education of high level professionals, and the enrichment of historical and cultural heritage [4]. As an educational institution, it seeks to form individuals who can later become productive citizens of the country and the world. They should be able to contribute positively to the progress of the Philippines and the upliftment of the human conditions. In this section, the Student Affairs and Services, must therefore, systematically and deliberately address this end objective of producing citizens suited to the aims of the country and of the humanity [5].

In the college under study, there was a student handbook that elaborates the school discipline policies and procedures. However, there have never been any established guidelines in evaluating student discipline occurrences as the basis for continual improvement. In the past years, there was only one assigned Discipline Officer (D.O) who takes charge of recording student violations. Because of this, not all, violations then were documented due to lack of personnel. It was only in AY-2018-2019 when additional two Discipline Officers were hired to investigate all these student offenses, and by recording them as part of the documentation and decision-making processes. These Discipline Officers are under the Office of Student Affairs and they work hand in hand with the Director of Student Affairs. Day by day, there are several offenses incurred by students from different schools. EAC-Cavite has 14 schools and these are clustered accordingly, such as: ESTI, HUMMS, BSI, IM, AND SHS. Every student at EAC-Cavite is regarded as true "Emilian" and who shall perform he following duties and responsibilities:

- (a) Abide by the Rules and Regulations and Code of Conduct and Discipline of EAC-Cavite.
- (b) Shall participate actively in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that support the students' holistic development and improve school and community relations.
- (c) Shall promote and maintain a pleasant environment in the school and exert extra efforts to attain a harmonious relationship with fellow students, faculty and other school personnel.
- (d) Shall maintain the academic integrity of the school by endeavoring to achieve academic excellence.
- (e) Must exert utmost efforts in his studies that will lead to the full development of his potentials (EAC Student Manual, 2012) [6].

Part of student service is student discipline which really needs to put into focus. The data gathered from Academic Year 2018-2019 was used in this study to evaluate its student discipline practices and its intervention as the basis for continual improvement. In this study, student discipline strategies and the school officials' methods in solving problems were revealed. The Office of Student Affairs acts to discipline students who have incurred major or minor offenses. Major or minor offenses are being addressed. Preventive as well as corrective measures are also considered.

Several studies have been conducted as regards positive results from school discipline programs [7, 8, 9]. These authors have produced an evidenced-based and best practice recommendations such as providing social activities, incentive systems, and conducting teacher-training workshops.

### *Student Discipline at EAC-Cavite*

In Article 9 of the EAC's Student Handbook, EAC students are responsible for regulating their own conduct and for respecting the rights and privileges of others (p. 68). Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the function of the college as an educational institution and respect and obey all policies of the institution, including the civil and criminal laws of the country. Failure to show respect for standards as set forth by the institution is a cause for disciplinary action (Student Manual, 2017: 68) [10]. Accordingly, there are two categories of offenses which include major and minor offenses. The following acts constitute major offenses:

- ✓ Disruptive behavior
- ✓ Assault, battery, or any threat of force or violation
- ✓ Willful misconduct resulting in injury
- ✓ Unsafe behavior while inside the school or in a clinical laboratory
- ✓ Any form of smoking
- ✓ Sexual assault as defined under Republic Act 9262
- ✓ The possession or use of any firearms, explosives, dangerous chemicals, deadly weapons, or other potentially harmful substances
- ✓ The obstruction or disruption, on or off campus
- ✓ Physical abuse
- ✓ Misrepresentation of oneself
- ✓ Extortion or blackmail
- ✓ Assisting another to do any act which would subject a fellow student discipline
- ✓ Use, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages and/or illegal narcotics/drugs on school premises
- ✓ Hacking

- ✓ Actions of force or threat of force to injure, intimidate, and oppress or threaten because of the other person's race, color, etc.

On the other hand, the following acts constitute minor offenses, according to the Student Manual (2017:73-74) [10].

- ✓ Not wearing and/or improper use of a school ID
- ✓ Wearing inappropriate attire
- ✓ Dyed hair with unnatural and/or outlandish colors and highlights
- ✓ Littering and non-observance of CLAYGO
- ✓ Brining and eating food and beverage inside the classroom
- ✓ Loitering or staying near walkways, fire exits and other restricted areas of the school
- ✓ Creating boisterous noise along the corridors during class hours
- ✓ Male students sporting long hair, and wearing earrings and ball caps, hats, bonnets, and the like while inside the EAC building
- ✓ Participation in off-campus activities bearing the name of the college without written authorization
- ✓ Adverse/sexist remarks by the student toward any member of the academic community
- ✓ Possession and/or use of pornographic materials
- ✓ Use of cellular phones, headsets and other electronic devices during class hours and examinations
- ✓ Improper, unauthorized use of classrooms, school facilities
- ✓ Playing with the institution's fire alarm and other safety and warning devices
- ✓ Posting/advertising of unauthorized notices and/or announcements

- ✓ Ignoring summons from the OSA
- ✓ Indiscriminate use of all forms of musical instruments, recorders, megaphones, bullhorns, cameras, and the like during class hours
- ✓ The use of abusive or obscene language inside the school off campus
- ✓ Public displays of affection
- ✓ Other misdemeanors not otherwise considered a major offense under the student manual.

These major and minor offenses are known by Emilians before they enter the classrooms. A General Assembly is conducted every start of the semester to all Senior High School and College students to make them aware of various policies, procedures, and guidelines of EAC-C.

### *School Officials' Means of Addressing Problems on Student Discipline*

In the study conducted by Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun (2008), they were able to implement an intervention which is a school wide positive behavioral interventions and support for two years of implementation [11]. As a result, office discipline referrals and suspensions have totally reduced. However,

the researchers have not found any recommendation to review the current student discipline practices of their institution. In contrast, this study involves intervention and at the same time, it recommends a continuous evaluation of its disciplinary procedures and guidelines to enhance and improve student services particularly its student discipline. Emilio Aguinaldo College – Cavite has its three (3) core values which include:

- ✓ **Virtue:** EAC integrates knowledge and understanding among Emilians equipping them with wisdom to choose to do only the right thing.
- ✓ **Excellence:** EAC inculcates among Emilians the habit of doing only the best in all undertakings.
- ✓ **Service:** EAC develops among Emilians a strong sense of helping others in the school, community, country and Mother nature.

The Office of Student Affairs strictly follows the sanctions to offenses at EAC-Cavite as shown below:

Aside from the sanctions mentioned above, the OSA provides alternative sanctions such as: Supervised Community Service or Guidance and Counseling sessions.

**Table 1.** Sanctions to Offenses at EAC-Cavite (Student Manual, 2017:75)

<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>MAJOR OFFENSES</b>	<b>MINOR OFFENSES</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Offense	Parent conference with recommendation for suspension	Written warning
2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense	Disciplinary citation with recommendation for non-admission	Disciplinary Citation and Parent Conference
3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense	Recommendation for Exclusion	Recommendation for Suspension (7-14 days)
4 <sup>th</sup> Offense	Recommendation for Expulsion	Recommendation for Non-readmission

There are also times that this may be recommended by the Committee on Decorum and Investigation as a different venue to implement the Institution's policies on Student Discipline. These corrective and Transformative programs are monitored by the Guidance and Counseling Office in close coordination with the office of Student Affairs. All these sanctions and recommendations were also based on the Manual of Regulations for Private Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines. Muscott, Mann & LeBrun (2008) found that interventions could be effective [11]. Since there was a strong collaboration and assistance from other entities like in the case of EAC-Cavite, the various schools' Deans can possibly assist the Office of Student Affairs in the implementation of the Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines on Student Discipline. This should not be the sole task by the OSA, but it is the concern of all personnel. Sheets (1996) opined that the most important goal of any discipline program should be to improve students' unwanted behavior [12]. He believed that specific types of unwanted behavior will result in suspension. Thus, Sheets (p.1) also recommended its foundation, operation, and evaluation components should be reviewed [12]. In the Philippine setting, minimum standards are being followed by the institution and the strict implementation of Student Due Process Procedures. For Minor offenses, the Dean or the OSA shall conduct a proper investigation and resolve the issue. For Major offenses, it is the duty of the OSA, Director, or Dean to endorse to the Committee on Decorum the problems and investigation.

## 2. Methodology

This study uses the mixed methods of research using the data collected daily by the Discipline Officers. For AY2018-2019 at EAC-Cavite, a total of 5,000 students were enrolled. The data of offenses were gathered and

analyzed using frequency and percentage. The intervention that is, community service serves as student penalty to improve themselves.

The researchers conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach for 20 student offenders to learn the reasons of such occurrences of offense. Students were given the chance to analyze their offenses carefully, and finally, they recommended further solutions to their problems and to improve their discipline practices.

All the information gathered were summarized and analyzed for further improvement and recommendation for an in-depth study in the future.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Based on the data gathered by the Discipline Officers (DO), these are the summarized types of offenses recorded, and the summarized offenses categorized per cluster.

Initially, there was only one Discipline Officer (DO) who conducts the actual checking of students at the lobby gate. EAC-C has its 5,000 population, which could not be possibly catered by only one DO. Last year (2018), the management added two DOs who are now currently working together with the other Dos in the implementation of proper discipline among students. As gleaned on the summary of offenses, not using the proper uniform was so dominant and engaging in fist fight was the least number of offenses. Using the statistical tool on frequency and percentage, the following tables are added:

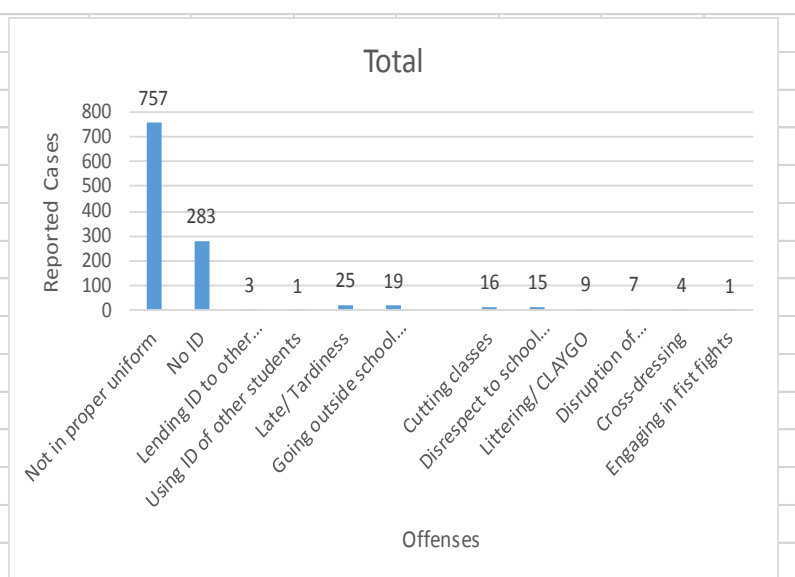
In table 2, there is the description of the offenses incurred during the school year 2018-2019 of Emilio Aguinaldo College, Cavite. The following numerical value refers to different offenses committed by the students, 1.00 for not in proper uniform, 2.00 for no ID, 3.00 for lending ID to other students, 4.00 using ID of

other students, 5.00 for late/tardiness, 6.00 for going outside the school premises without permission, 7.00 for cutting classes, 8.00 for disrespect for school authorities, 9.00 for Littering, 10.00 for disruption of classes/shouting, 11.00 for cross-dressing and 12.00 for engaging in fistfights. It is found out that the highest offenses incurred by the students are offense number one not in proper uniform with the highest frequency of 757 or 66.4%, followed by 283 or 24.8% students not wearing their ID, 2.2% or 25 students came late, 19 students or 1.7% of students go

outside the school premises without permission, 16 or 1.4% of students incurred cutting classes, 15 or 1.3% shows disrespect to school authorities, 9 or 0.8% for littering and not practicing CLAYGO, 7 or 0.6% for disrupting classes, 4 or 0.4% for cross-dressing, 3 or 0.3% for lending ID to others students and 1 or 0.1 for using ID of other students and for engaging in fistfights.

On the other hand, showing the most common number of offenses per cluster is evident on the table as follows:

	Kinds of Offenses Recorded	Total
1	Not in proper uniform	757
2	No ID	283
3	Lending ID to other students	3
4	Using ID of other students	1
5	Late/ Tardiness	25
6	Going outside school	19
7	premises without	
8	Cutting classes	16
9	Disrespect to school authorities	15
10	Littering/ CLAYGO	9
11	Disruption of classes/Shouting	7
12	Cross-dressing	4
13	Engaging in fist fights	1



Clusters	Total
SHS	712
IM	133
BMS	126
ESTI	106
HUMSS	70

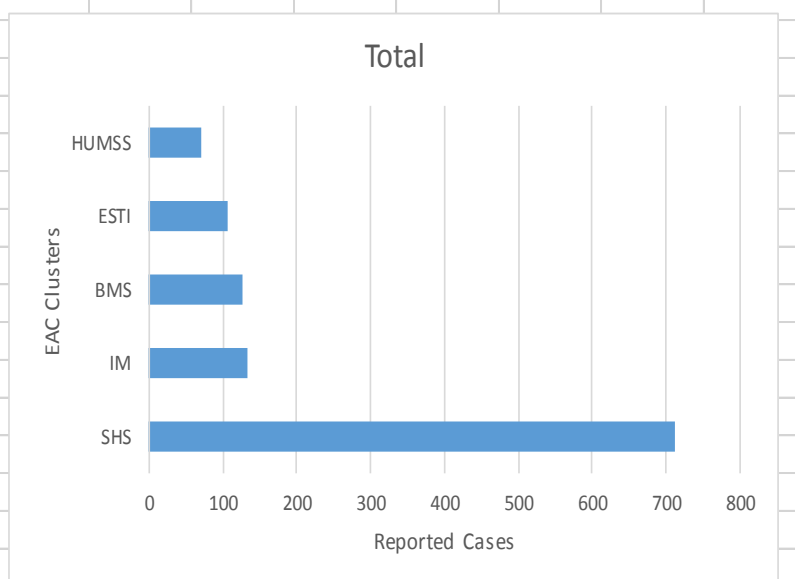


Figure 1. Offenses Incurred by Students and Recorded Number of Incidents Per Cluster

Table 2. Offenses

	Offenses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	757	66.4	66.4	66.4
	2.00	283	24.8	24.8	91.2
	3.00	3	.3	.3	91.5
	4.00	1	.1	.1	91.6
	5.00	25	2.2	2.2	93.8
	6.00	19	1.7	1.7	95.4
	7.00	16	1.4	1.4	96.8
	8.00	15	1.3	1.3	98.2
	9.00	9	.8	.8	98.9
	10.00	7	.6	.6	99.6
	11.00	4	.4	.4	99.9
	12.00	1	.1	.1	100.0
		Total	1140	100.0	100.0

Table 3. Cluster

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	712	62.5	62.5	62.5
	2.00	133	11.7	11.7	74.1
	3.00	126	11.1	11.1	85.2
	4.00	106	9.3	9.3	94.5
	5.00	63	5.5	5.5	100.0
		Total	1140	100.0	100.0

In table 3, there is the description of the different clusters during the school year 2018-2019 of Emilio Aguinaldo College, Cavite. The following numerical value refers to different clusters, 1.00 for SHS, 2.00 for IM, 3.00 for BMS, 4.00 for ESTI, and 5.00 for HUMSS. The table further revealed that SHS department has the highest number of students who committed offenses with a total frequency of 712 or 62.5%, followed by the IM department with 133 students or 11.7%, then the students from BMS department with 133 or 11.7%, next is from ESTI department with 106 students or 9.3% and last is from a HUMMS department with 63 students or 5.5%.

In the FGD, 20 students were invited to discuss about the offenses. When asked about the first offense of not wearing the proper uniform, they explained the following:

*"We have just come from volleyball practice, so we had no time to change our clothes."*

*"My uniform does not fit me anymore."*

*"I am a working student and I have no parents to help me provide with my needs."*

The researchers listened to them carefully, and suggested to try their best to

follow the rules and regulations of EAC-C. There should always be a way to solve their problems, thus, the researchers asked them personally what could be the best solution to their problems. Most of them agreed to budget their time wisely and be responsible as students. If they follow this advice coupled with a right attitude to do things right, there is no chance of violating the said offense. When asked about the second offense of having no ID, most of them stated that they just forgot them at home, some were damaged and the others lost them. Again, the students discussed some possible solutions like:

*"Having the right attitude and be responsible at all times."*

The third and fourth offenses seemed related with each other. When asked about lending ID to other students and using ID by other students, they opined that they need to protect their peers from violating the policy, so they had to lend their IDs with them. The students agreed to start doing the right thing to avoid penalties. Tardiness was the fifth offense and they had a common reason for this and that was because of traffic. However, the researchers suggested to them that there is no better way than to wake up early and be prepared at all times. The sixth offense is being outside the school premises without permission. This was because the students felt bored about their subjects and they wanted to go out for a while and come back later on. This was also related to the 7<sup>th</sup> offense which is cutting classes, and this was because of no interest to study. Some of them revealed that:

*"Some teachers were absent, so we need to leave the room and enjoy using the computer outside the campus."*

When asked about the 8<sup>th</sup> offense that is, being disrespectful to school's authority, the students stated that:

*"We just want the teachers to notice us."*

*"We lost our control, but we didn't mean to do it."*

These students revealed that discipline starts at home. Therefore, there is a need to give sanction to those who disrespect the school's authority by calling their parents in school or by giving them suspension. In this way, students will learn from their mistakes.

When asked about littering/Clean as you go (CLAYGO), students admitted that:

*"We are just so lazy and have no discipline."*

*"There was no garbage to put our trash."*

Students' solutions to these problems were very practical.

*"Put waste to proper waste bins."*

*"Talk to the students and warn them about discipline and responsibility."*

*"Call our parents and let them witness what we were doing."*

When asked about the disruption of classes, students said that they do not have self-control most especially if they saw their friends from afar. They get excited at calling their names, even if they knew that this caused a disruption of classes. The students believed that they could still change this behavior. Perhaps, constant reminders of class teachers including some good signages would help eradicate this problem.

When asked about the cross dressing problem, students would like to show their various styles of dressing. They also wanted to be famous or different from the others. As part of their solution, the students agreed to give penalty to those students who was doing this offense.

Finally, the last offense which had the lowest number of occurrences was the fist fight. Students tend to have low-temper or over sensitive about their feelings that will lead to a fist fight. Both parties, perhaps, wanted to prove something about themselves, which most of them, agreed that it will never do good if they lose their temper. Having a



presence of mind is one solution to this and being patient and humble to their peers.

All these offenses made them realize that mistakes really come anytime in their lives; however, they should be willing to change and improve for the better. That is why, all these students believed that there was no problem regarding the OSA's method of disciplining them because it was their attitude that caused them to be punished. The community service as an intervention was the most common solution to all their offenses they conducted at EAC-Cavite. The 20 student offenders believed that the intervention helped them a lot as an individual and as students. Some of their comments on the intervention include:

- It gives us time and a good opportunity to meet new people, administrators, students, visitors, and parents;
- It develops our positive attitude from correcting their mistakes to change for the better;
- It provides us the opportunity to understand discipline and responsibility are important virtues they need to possess as Emilians;
- It encourages us to work harder and understand instructions carefully from various heads of the departments.

To summarize the solutions, they had come up with, the students agreed to start reflecting and analyzing their mistakes and move on to focusing their studies. They revealed that they are willing to improve on these areas:

- Time management at home and at school
- Self-discipline and self-control
- Stress management
- Responsibility and Accountability
- Right attitude
- Emilian core values

Dubelle (1997) encourages educators to enhance their skills by helping students to establish right decisions for themselves. The community service indeed provided the students an avenue to grow personally and professionally most especially when they socialize themselves from the personnel in each department. As Dubelle's points out, "as educators influence students, their increased self-discipline is likely to emerge" [3].

### *The Community Service as an Intervention*

The process flow of the community service of student violator can be seen in the figure below:

The process of community service was made simple for the students, which is considered as student development that will enhance and deepen their leadership skills and social responsibility (Art. VIII, CHED:6). Students have very clear understanding about this process and they actually do enjoy doing the community service to various departments. Although it was a big challenge to work in a place where they had no idea about, the students completely enjoy the task given to them. As they went about this community service task, the number of offenders was lessened as most of the students already knew the consequence when they incur three types of offenses that will lead to this intervention process.

Most of the department heads at EAC-C were very accommodating and happy about the results of their services. In the study of Green (2009), he challenged the district-level administrators in addressing and improving student discipline through the implementation of a district-wide student discipline plan based on positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS) [13].



**Figure 2.** Intervention Process for Community Service at EAC-Cavite

Because of the study, the author has come up with descriptions of its planning and implementation activities, communication, new practices, accomplishments, as well as lessons learned in the overall process. Moreover, on the study conducted by Luiselli (2005), described the effects of a whole-school positive behavior on school discipline issues and academic results of students [14]. This is in collaboration with the teachers that in it really turned out to have decreased discipline problem after the intervention process. Green (2009) and Luiselli Putnam, and Sunderland (2002) have unique ways to address the discipline problems in their respective schools [9, 11]. Both have an intervention process to resolve the discipline problems; however, Luiselli's study is found to be more appropriate to the teaching and learning process because it correlated much to the teacher's improvement in terms of improved instructional methods and classroom activity engagements. Furthermore, Castolo (2007) also affirmed that handling discipline has many approaches to deal with most especially

in the classroom [15]. The teacher must be creative in classroom management approach in order to fit in his/her personality and instructional intentions.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

School discipline is not the sole responsibility of an office such as the Office of Student Affairs. This should be a collaborative effort among all faculty members, deans, and heads of EAC-Cavite. In the college under study, the roles of OSA pertaining to student discipline are very significant to enable change and for continual improvement. Not in proper uniform is the highest offense incurred by the SHS department with a total of 757 students. This implies that most of the offenders come from the SHS department and they need to be re-oriented with the policies and procedures of EAC-C including their parents for awareness purposes. This study suggests that improved student discipline was accomplished due to the intervention provided to the students.

However, it is recommended that this research should be elevated into a more in-depth study to improve the monthly reporting technique by showing the type of offenses and the clusters in a matrix type to have a clear view on the number of offenses and in which cluster those offenses belong to. The OSA's intervention guidelines as well as disciplinary procedures should be reviewed annually as mandated by CHED in Article VI that basic services necessary for the well-being of students should be given the top priority.

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