



Republic of the Philippines

Benguet State University
2601 La Trinidad, Benguet



BENGUET STATE UNIVERSITY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AGENDA



BSU AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AGENDA

I. Background and Legal Basis

In accordance with **Republic Act No. 10931** or the *Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act*, State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) are mandated to promote equitable access to higher education, especially for students from marginalized and disadvantaged sectors. Section 2(c) of the Act emphasizes prioritizing students who are academically able and come from poor families. Furthermore, the **Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)** of RA 10931 require SUCs to formulate **affirmative action programs** to enhance access for disadvantaged students.

This agenda aims to institutionalize affirmative action mechanisms that promote equitable access, retention, and success for students from historically marginalized and underserved groups. It aligns with national mandates and supports institutional goals for inclusive excellence, social justice, and sustainable development.

II. University 5-point Affirmative Actions Agenda

1. Inclusive Access to Higher Education

Ensure that students from marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented sectors—such as persons with disabilities (PWDs), and those from low-income families—are given equitable opportunities to enter and succeed in the university.

2. Equity Based Admission and Retention Policies

Establish clear, transparent, and humane admission and retention guidelines that prevent discrimination and actively support students from diverse backgrounds.

3. Integrated Support Systems for Equitable Student and Staff Advancement

Establish comprehensive academic, financial, and psychosocial support mechanisms—such as bridging initiatives, structured mentorship, and targeted subsidies—to ensure affirmative action beneficiaries are equipped to succeed across all stages of their university experience. Training and support to faculty and staff are also in place to effectively implement and administer these support mechanisms.

4. Equity in Resource Allocation

Ensure that university resources (e.g., scholarships, learning materials, facilities) are distributed in a way that prioritizes students with the greatest need. This also includes strategic investments in programs and support systems to achieve fair and equitable outcomes.

5. Research-based Program Effectiveness

Implement mechanisms for regular assessment of affirmative action initiatives to ensure continuous improvement, transparency, and accountability.

III. Target Beneficiaries

In the context of Benguet State University, **Disadvantaged Students and Students in Disadvantaged Situations (DiS-SDiS)**, refer to students who face systemic barriers to equitable educational access and outcomes. They are students whose socioeconomic, geographic, educational, cultural, or psychosocial situations pose significant barriers to equitable access, participation, and success in higher



education. These situations may be temporary or persistent, and are assessed through a combination of institutional data, community profiling, and self-declared evidence. These students may belong to one or more of the following priority or marginalized groups.

- 1. Students from Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs):**
Students from physically isolated communities with economically marginalized populations, as identified by NEDA and/or DSWD.
- 2. Persons with Disabilities (PWDs):**
Students with permanent physical, sensory, mobility, or psychosocial impairments, certified by a government physician.
- 3. Students from Other Marginalized Groups (OMGs) and Students with Special Needs (SSNs):**
Students that are economically marginalized due to displacement, natural calamities, cultural or religious backgrounds, or other analogous reasons; including students with special needs such as pregnant students, single-parent students, students from single parent households, students who are victims of abuse, working students, or students in other prohibitive situations; assessed by the BSU Office of Student Services.
- 4. Students from Families with Low Socioeconomic Status (L-SES):**
Students belonging to the lowest income quintile (bottom 20% of households), as certified by the Municipal/City/Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (SWDO) or DSWD Regional Office.

Accommodations, interventions, and other affirmative actions shall be **responsive to the classifications of identified priority groups**, ensuring that interventions are both relevant and proportionate. Not all services shall apply uniformly across groups; instead, the program shall adopt a **differentiated support framework** that aligns with institutional guidelines, resource availability, and documented student needs. Identified students in priority groups have the right to decline benefits of affirmative actions or can be reclassified or removed from priority groups when systemic barriers to access, support, and success are removed or have become irrelevant.

IV. BSU AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS (PROGRAMS, PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES)

The University's Affirmative Action Agenda recognizes that students from identified priority groups may face distinct and varying barriers to access and success in higher education. In response, affirmative actions are **classification-sensitive accommodations**, wherein specific services and interventions are provided based on the nature and degree of disadvantage experienced by each group. These accommodations shall be guided by institutional criteria and subject to periodic review for relevance, effectiveness, and equity.



1. CAREER AND ACADEMIC ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Prior to formal application for admission, the University shall implement a structured **pre-admission process** designed to promote informed decision-making, equitable access, and institutional transparency.

This process includes the dissemination of program-specific information, eligibility requirements, and guidance on academic expectations. Prospective students shall be engaged through a coordinated **career coaching and guidance initiative**, as well as a targeted **career campaign**, to help them assess their academic readiness, career alignment, and program fit.

In keeping with its commitment to inclusive education, the University shall ensure that disadvantaged students—identified based on institutional priority groups—are made aware of available contextual considerations and support mechanisms. These provisions shall be implemented in accordance with institutional guidelines and shall form part of the formal **Affirmative Action program**.

The pre-admission process reflects the University's dedication to fostering a fair, well-informed, and student-centered approach to higher education access, ensuring that all applicants are empowered to make meaningful academic and career choices.

2. ACCESS AND RETENTION SUPPORT PROGRAM

The University affirms its commitment to inclusive and equitable access to higher education. Recognizing that students may come from diverse backgrounds and face varying degrees of systemic barriers, the admission and retention policy for undergraduate programs is designed to provide fair opportunities for entry and sustained academic success.

To uphold the principles of fairness and broaden access, the University shall apply **contextual considerations** to support applicants identified as disadvantaged students. These considerations shall be implemented in accordance with approved institutional guidelines/policies and shall form part of the formal **Affirmative Action program**.

Retention mechanisms shall promote academic integrity, student well-being, and continuous improvement. Identified disadvantaged students shall be provided with structured academic advising, performance monitoring, and access to enhancement programs, as needed, to support their continued progress and program completion.

This program reflects the University's commitment to fostering a learning environment where all students are given meaningful opportunities to thrive, succeed, and contribute to society.



3. EXTENDED STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

The Office of Student Services (OSS) plays a vital role in ensuring that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background or physical circumstances, have equal access to student support services. In alignment with the principles of affirmative action, the OSS extends equitable student support services to disadvantaged students. This initiative is anchored on the university's commitment to inclusive education, social justice, as well as several national and international legal mandates.

In line with this, the following student support services are proposed for development and enhancement to better address the needs of these disadvantaged student groups.

- 1) Grants-in-Aid Policy to provide additional financial grants.
- 2) Enhancement of Student Housing Policies (Ladies', Men's and College Dormitories to include priority availment provisions.
- 3) Policy on Academic Performance Monitoring
- 4) Policy on Psychological Assessment Procedure and Logistics for PWDs
- 5) Revised Student Assistantship Program
- 6) Policy on the use of the iCARE (Inclusive Center for Assistive Resources and Empowerment) Hub

4. TARGETED ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM

In support of the University's Affirmative Action Program, each college is tasked with implementing extended curricular support systems tailored to the needs of disadvantaged students. These support mechanisms are designed to promote academic success, retention, and personal development by addressing gaps in preparation and access. Colleges shall provide targeted interventions such as bridge programs, academic mentoring, skills enhancement workshops, and flexible learning pathways. Through these initiatives, the University ensures that disadvantaged students are not only admitted, but are also empowered to thrive and complete their chosen programs with confidence and competence.

In addition the OSS through the GCU shall form peer support groups of disadvantaged students that have academic difficulties. These peer support groups shall receive extended lectures, discussion, and/or tutoring from expert faculty members.



PROJECTS/ PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

1. CAREER AND ACADEMIC ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Projects/Programs/Activities	In-charge	Budget	Implementation
Dissemination Information	OSS Vocational & Placement Unit	-	September 2025
Career Campaigns for Academic Readiness	-OSS Vocational & Placement Unit -College Representatives	P50,000 for traveling expenses	October to December 2025
Career Campaigns for Program Fit and Alignment	-OSS Vocational & Placement Unit -College Representatives	-	Period of Admission Application

2. ACCESS AND RETENTION SUPPORT PROGRAM

Projects/Programs/Activities	In-charge	Budget	Implementation
Revision of Admission and Retention Policies to include Affirmative Actions	-OUR -Colleges	-	September 2025
Dissemination Information	OUR, OSS, Colleges	-	After approval of policy
Policy Implementation	OUR, OSS, Colleges	-	Effective SY 2026 - 2025

3. EXTENDED STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

Projects/Programs/Activities	In-charge	Budget	Implementation
Grants-in-Aid Proposal	OSS Student Scholarships & Grant Unit	P1.5M (via TDP-SUC)	November 2025
Policy Revisions and Directives for Priority Availment of Support Services	OSS All Units UHS ULIS	-	November 2025



Establishment of iCARE Hub and Procurement of Assistive Technologies	OSS Director	P100k (1% PWD Fund)	November 2025
Other Extended Support Services	OVPA and OSS	-	As planned

4. TARGETED ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM

Projects/Programs/Activities	In-charge	Budget	Implementation
Extended Curricular Support (Tutoring, Bridging, Mentoring)	Colleges and Departments	-	October 2025
Differentiated Instructions	All Faculty Members	-	August 2025
Training of Faculty and Staff on Universal Design for Learning	HRMO-HRDO GAD	P100k (1% PWD Fund)	January 2026 onwards

V. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Established database of disadvantaged students and students in disadvantaged situations for targeted implementation of affirmative actions and monitoring.
- Increased opportunities for disadvantaged students and students in disadvantaged situations to higher education.
- Enhanced success rate of disadvantaged students and students in disadvantaged situations in terms of graduation and employment rate.
- Increased financial resource allocations for affirmative action initiatives.
- Improved university services and increase in customer satisfaction from target clients.

IV. THE ROADMAP

To ensure the effective execution and sustainability of the university's affirmative action programs, the following mechanisms shall be established:

Activities	Description	Target Implementation
Creation of the Affirmative Action Committee	A dedicated committee shall be formally designated to oversee the strategic implementation, coordination, and evaluation of affirmative action initiatives	July 2025



	across all academic and administrative units.	
Affirmative Action Agenda and Planning for Affirmative Actions	A comprehensive program shall be developed to articulate BSU's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This includes identifying priority areas, setting measurable goals, and aligning initiatives with national and institutional mandates.	August - September 2025
Crafting and Approval of Policies Integrating Affirmative Action	Specific policies shall be drafted to embed affirmative action principles into recruitment, admissions, faculty development, and administrative practices. These policies will undergo consultative review and formal approval by appropriate governing bodies.	September 2025 - December 2025
Full Implementation of Approved Affirmative Actions	Affirmative action policies formally approved shall be operationalized across relevant offices. Implementation shall include orientation, capacity-building, and integration into existing systems and workflows	January 2026
Monitoring and Review of Affirmative Actions, Crafting of Proposals for other Affirmative Actions	Regular monitoring and systematic review of affirmative action policies/programs shall be conducted to assess effectiveness, ensure alignment with institutional goals, and recommend necessary adjustments based on emerging needs and data.	August 2026 onwards
Targeted Student Support	Colleges and the Office of Student Services shall continuously monitor the academic progress, well-being, and engagement of disadvantaged students, ensuring timely interventions and support mechanisms are in place.	Continuous Implementation



Capacity Building through the Gender and Development Office:	The Gender and Development Office in coordination with the Human Resource Development Office shall lead the implementation of training programs and seminars aimed at equipping university personnel and faculty with the skills and sensitivity required to effectively support and engage disadvantaged students.	September 2025 - December 2026
Establishment of an Affirmative Action Unit at the Office of Student Services	The OSS shall establish an affirmative actions unit and shall take over the functions and responsibilities of the Affirmative Action Committee. It shall continue and develop the affirmative action agenda and be a hub for inclusive practices, resource development, and specialized support services, fostering a learning environment that embraces diversity and promotes equity.	December 2026-onwards

Prepared by:

Committee on University Affirmative Action Programs

ERLYN HONEYLETTE C. MARQUEZ	BERNADETTE M. BAO-IDANG
JULIE A. BUASEN	KARA S. PANOLONG
RAMON C. FIANGAAN JR.	CHARLIE M. DAGWASI
DIVINA M. YANGO	SHERLYN C. TIPAYNO
STANLEY F. ANONGOS, JR.	MARVIN T. VALENTIN
IMELDA G. PARCASIO	JUDE TAYABEN
FLORENCE POLTIC	

Secretariat: ARLEENE C. AGYAO
DECIMAE CARANTES

ASTRID DENISE B. CAUAN



Annex A: Basis for the Affirmative Action Agenda

I. INTRODUCTION

This annex presents the initial research conducted by the University Affirmative Action Committee of Benguet State University (BSU), which served as the foundation for the development of the Affirmative Action Agenda. The findings herein identify priority sectors, regional disparities and institutional gaps. These insights informed the crafting of context-responsive, inclusive, and legally anchored affirmative action proposals.

II. TARGET SECTORS FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

A. Disadvantaged Students (DiS)

Definitions of Disadvantaged Students

The concept of “disadvantaged students” has been defined across various scholarly and policy frameworks, reflecting a multidimensional understanding of educational inequity. These definitions inform the scope and design of Benguet State University’s Affirmative Action Agenda.

Socioeconomic Disadvantage

Disadvantage is frequently linked to socioeconomic status, where students from low-income households face systemic barriers to educational access and success. According to Fiveable’s Education Policy Review (2023), disadvantaged students are those who lack access to quality resources due to poverty, underfunded schools, and limited academic support. This framing emphasizes structural inequality and the need for targeted interventions.

Educational and Systemic Barriers

Townend et al. (2025), in their systematic review on equity in assessment, define educational disadvantage as the presence of cultural, linguistic, geographic, or systemic barriers that prevent learners from accessing equitable learning opportunities. This perspective highlights the importance of inclusive assessment practices and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Intersectional Disadvantage

Clare et al. (2023) argue that disadvantage is not monolithic but intersects with ethnicity, geography, disability, gender, and care status. Their scoping review from the York St John University Institute for Social Justice underscores the layered nature of disadvantage and the need for holistic support systems that address multiple identity-based barriers.

International and National Policy Definitions

UNESCO (2020) defines disadvantaged learners as those excluded from quality education due to systemic inequities, advocating for inclusive and equitable learning environments. In the Philippine context, Republic Act No. 11509 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (CHED, 2021) identify disadvantaged students as those from Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA), Indigenous Peoples (IP)



communities, and families earning below ₱450,000 per annum. These criteria are used to prioritize scholarship allocation and institutional support.

The CHED IRR of RA 11509 further specifies that “deserving students” include those from low-income municipalities with high poverty incidence, aligning with the broader goals of equity and regional development. This legal framing provides a concrete basis for BSU’s affirmative action policies and programmatic targeting.

B. Persons with Disabilities (SWD)

Learners with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that hinder full participation in education without reasonable accommodation. This sector is covered under CHED, DOH, NCDA, and TESDA guidelines.

C. Students with Specific/Special Needs (SSN)

Includes IPs, solo parents, children of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), working students, and those with rare medical or social conditions. These students require tailored support mechanisms to ensure equitable access and success in higher education.

Law / Issuance	Key Clause / Relevance
RA 9710 (Magna Carta of Women) – Sec. 13(c)	Prohibits expulsion/refusal for pregnancy
RA 7277 (Magna Carta PWD) – Sec. 2	Equal educational rights; remove barriers
RA 9442 (PWD incentives) – Sec. 32	Educational assistance for PWDs
RA 10524 (PWD IRR)	Defines “reasonable accommodation” for PWDs
RA 11036 (Mental Health Act) – Secs. 5(d), 23	Mandates non-discrimination & accommodations in education
RA 11039 (4Ps Act)	Recognizes support for disadvantaged students
RA 11469 (Bayanihan) – Sec. 4(aa)	Enables education continuity during emergencies
CHED-DOH-DepEd Joint Memo	Precedent for flexible crisis learning
1987 Constitution – Art. XIV	Education as a right; accessible to all

III. REGIONAL CONTEXT: CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

A. Poverty Incidence (2023)

In 2023, Benguet province had the highest share of poor families in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), accounting for 27.5 percent, or 5,610 poor families. Abra followed closely with 27.4 percent, or 5,600 families, while Baguio City had the smallest share, contributing only 2.6 percent, or 530 families.

In terms of the population classified as poor, Benguet province accounted for the second-largest share with 25.2% or 32,490 individuals. Abra had the highest contribution with 26.6% or 34,300 individuals. In contrast, Baguio City had the smallest share with 2.3% or 2,980 individuals.

B. GIDA Barangays

There are over 550 GIDA barangays across the Cordillera region. Among the most remote are Tanudan, Boliney, and Barlig. The table below shows the number of



barangays which are considered as GIDA in CAR. In Benguet, there are 97 barangays identified as Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas.

CAR	550
ABRA	88
APAYAO	48
BENGUET	97
IFUGAO	136
KALINGA	97
MOUNTAIN PROVINCE	84

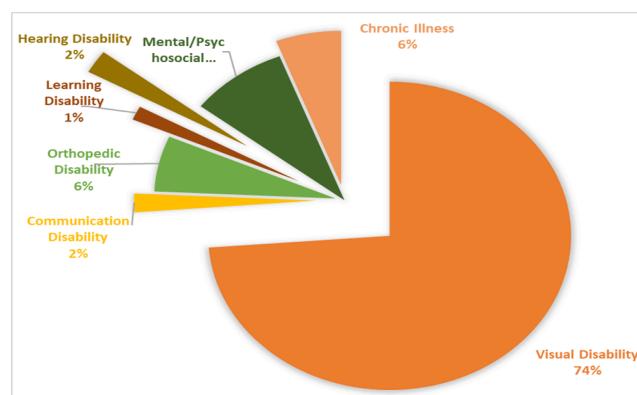
C. BSU Student Profile

Based on the Student Information Survey (SIS) for First Semester, SY 2025 - 2026 conducted to profile the students in the University, the following information were gathered:

- Total student respondents: 12,168

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Low Socio-Economic Status	11,000	90.40%
Students from GIDA	1,047	8.60%
IP	12,127	99.66%
PWDs	207	1.70%
Student Parents	297	2.44%

The graph below presents the distribution of disabilities of students based on the responses of the students.



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