

## Belmonte assures UP of academic freedom protection

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Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte yesterday assured the faculty and staff of the University of the Philippines (UP) of the city government's support for academic freedom amid concerns over the unilateral abrogation of an agreement preventing uncoordinated entry of military personnel in its campuses.

"I was a lecturer at the UP before, and I know how important academic freedom is in an educational institution. True learning will only happen in an environment where there is a free discourse of ideas by all members of the community," said Belmonte.

"In Quezon City, academic freedom will always be protected and upheld," she added.

Belmonte, who has postgraduate degrees in Archaeology and Museum Studies, previously taught masters' students at the UP Archaeological Studies Program.

For his part, Rafael Calinisan of the Quezon City People's Law Enforcement Board said any abusive conduct by police officers – whether inside or outside the university – will be dealt with accordingly.

"We pledge that disciplinary action awaits possible abusive conduct by policemen inside the UP Diliman campus," he said.

"Please be reminded that we all live in a democracy where basic freedoms, including academic freedom, must be upheld," added Calinisan.

UP has an existing agreement with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), which prohibits police personnel from entering the campus without coordination.

The DILG said it will also review the agreement following the decision of Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana to abrogate their similar accord with the university.