PROPOSED EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSIVITY (EDI) POLICY

OF THE MINDANAO STATE UNIVERSITY-BUUG

Explanatory Note

(Adopted from the MSU-IIT Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity Policy)

The pursuit of equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) in higher education institutions (HEIs) such as Mindanao State University-Buug concretizes the universal mission of HEIs and echoes the aspirations of both national and global communities. A more diverse student socio-demographic profile creates a dynamic learning environment that enhances critical thinking, encourages innovation, and strengthens the interpersonal competencies of learners.

Equity ensures that educational opportunities are accessible to all, regardless of social, economic, and demographic circumstances. Promoting inclusivity fosters a sense of community, reduces inequity and discrimination, and strengthens the University's role as a people's institution in Western Mindanao. Ultimately, implementing initiatives on equity, diversity, and inclusivity contributes to the holistic development of MSU-Buug's students and the society it serves.

As a state-funded University, MSU-Buug is expected to contribute to the Philippine government's aspirations as embodied in AmBisyon Natin 2040, the country's long-term vision of a "matatag, maginhawa, at panatag na buhay" (strong, comfortable, and secure life) for all Filipinos. This vision calls for equity and inclusivity as fundamental principles.

MSU-Buug also recognizes the finite fiscal space the government allocates to various services and sectors. Thus, an institutional policy on equity, diversity, and inclusivity shall serve as a basis for more equitable and inclusive decisions across the University's academic, administrative, research, extension, and governance functions. In doing so, this initiative helps ensure that opportunities for education and development reach those most in need.

Accordingly, Mindanao State University-Buug respectfully adopts and adapts this proposed Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) Policy, modeled after the MSU-IIT EDI Policy, for review and approval by the Board of Regents.

INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY OF THE

MINDANAO STATE UNIVERSITY-BUUG

ARTICLE I – TITLE

This Policy shall be known as the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) Policy of Mindanao State University-Buug. For brevity, it shall be referred to as the EDI Policy.

ARTICLE II – SCOPE

This Policy applies to all students, faculty, and staff of Mindanao State University-Buug across academic practices, facilities, operations, governance, and strategic directions of the University. It likewise extends to external stakeholders, including alumni, partner institutions, government and non-government organizations, and local communities that engage with the University.

ARTICLE III – PURPOSE

This policy aims to:
1.1 Reaffirm Mindanao State University-Buug's commitment to upholding the principles and practices of equity, diversity, and inclusivity across all areas of the University's tri-focal functions—instruction, research, and extension, as well as in governance and community engagement.

1.2 Serve as a guiding framework that directs the University's actions, decisions, and initiatives toward fostering a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusivity, thereby ensuring that all members of the University community are valued, respected, and empowered to contribute meaningfully.

ARTICLE IV – DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The **Mindanao State University-Buug (MSU-Buug)** is steadfast in its commitment to fostering an academic community that embraces and celebrates inclusivity and diversity. The University recognizes that an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment enhances collective learning, enriches perspectives, and strengthens the community.

MSU-Buug's dedication to inclusivity and diversity is grounded in the following principles:

Section 1. Equity and Fairness

Mindanao State University-Buug is committed to fostering an equitable and fair academic and working environment where all members of the community are given equal access to opportunities. Regardless of one's diverse backgrounds, identities, or circumstances, the University upholds fairness in policies, programs, and practices to ensure that no individual is left behind.

Section 2. Respect and Dignity

Mindanao State University-Buug upholds a culture of respect and dignity in all its engagements. Every student, faculty, staff, and stakeholder shall be treated with kindness, fairness, and

consideration. The University affirms its strong stand against all forms of discrimination, harassment, prejudice, and bias, recognizing that mutual respect is the foundation of a just and inclusive academic community.

Section 3. Access and Accessibility

Mindanao State University-Buug is dedicated to ensuring that its campus, programs, and services are accessible to everyone, especially the marginalized, underrepresented, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) and special needs. The University strives to remove both physical and digital barriers to participation by providing supportive infrastructures, inclusive technologies, and responsive student services.

Section 4. Representation and Inclusion

Mindanao State University-Buug acknowledges the importance of diverse representation across all levels of academic and administrative life. The University is dedicated to recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. It likewise endeavors to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that affirms cultural diversity and strengthens the University's role as a people's institution in Western Mindanao.

Section 5. Education and Awareness

Mindanao State University-Buug believes that education is a powerful catalyst for equity and inclusion. The University commits to promoting awareness, intercultural dialogue, and mutual understanding of different cultures, identities, and perspectives through curricular integration, co-curricular programs, seminars, and community extension activities.

Section 6. Accountability

Mindanao State University-Buug holds itself accountable for upholding the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusivity. The University shall conduct regular assessments of its policies and practices, identify areas for improvement, and implement proactive measures to sustain a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse learning and working environment.

ARTICLE V – DEFINITION

1. Accessibility

At Mindanao State University-Buug, accessibility refers to the creation of a barrier-free physical and digital environment that enables full participation of all members of the community. The University ensures that facilities, programs, and services are designed to accommodate the needs of individuals, including persons with disabilities, so that they may engage equally in academic, co-curricular, and community activities.

2. Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as any unjust or prejudicial treatment toward individuals or groups based on their actual or perceived differences. In MSU-Buug, such acts—whether in admissions,

employment, classroom practice, or community relations—are considered unacceptable and contrary to the University's mission of inclusivity.

3. Diversity

Diversity at MSU-Buug acknowledges the wide range of human differences present within the University community. These include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, socio-economic status, national origin, and cultural background. The University embraces diversity as a strength that enriches learning and service.

4. Equity

Equity means recognizing that different individuals and groups may require varied forms of support and resources to attain equal access and opportunities. MSU-Buug is committed to addressing systemic disadvantages and providing interventions that level the playing field, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable sectors.

5. Harassment

Harassment refers to unwelcome behavior, whether verbal, physical, or digital, that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on protected characteristics such as race, gender, religion, or disability. MSU-Buug strictly prohibits harassment in any form and commits to a safe, respectful, and inclusive campus.

6. Inclusivity

Inclusivity is the deliberate and ongoing effort of MSU-Buug to create a learning and working environment where all individuals, regardless of their identities or backgrounds, feel valued, respected, and fully integrated. It involves fostering belongingness, ensuring equitable opportunities, and dismantling barriers to participation.

7. Indigenous Peoples (IPs)

MSU-Buug recognizes Indigenous Peoples as defined by the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997—communities or groups that have historically lived within defined territories, preserving their cultural traditions, languages, and institutions. As an institution situated in Western Mindanao, MSU-Buug is committed to respecting, protecting, and promoting the rights and welfare of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs/IPs) in the region.

8. Learners with Special Needs

Consistent with the Department of Education's definition, MSU-Buug refers to learners with special needs as students who require specialized education services and adjustments in school practices to fully access learning opportunities. This includes those with visual, hearing, mobility, cognitive, or communication difficulties.

9. Persons with Disability (PWDs)

In accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, MSU-Buug defines PWDs as individuals with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may limit their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

10. Representation

Representation in MSU-Buug means ensuring the meaningful presence and participation of individuals from diverse backgrounds across all sectors of the University, including leadership, faculty, staff, and the student body. Representation is both numerical (who is present) and substantive (who has voice and influence).

11. Solo Parent

Following the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of the Philippines, MSU-Buug recognizes solo parents as individuals who bear the primary responsibility of parenthood due to death, detention, incapacity, or separation from a spouse, as well as women who became pregnant as a result of abuse. The University affirms its duty to support solo parents within its community.

12. LGBTQ+

MSU-Buug uses LGBTQ+ to refer inclusively to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual individuals, and others under diverse gender and sexual identities. The University recognizes their rights, upholds their dignity, and commits to ensuring a safe, affirming, and supportive environment for all.

ARTICLE VI – EDI IN CURRICULUM

Section 1. Mindanao State University-Buug shall design, develop, and deliver academic programs that integrate and reflect diverse perspectives, histories, and cultures, recognizing the richness of multicultural and interdisciplinary approaches to learning.

Section 2. The University shall promote inclusive teaching practices by employing methods and strategies that engage all students, respect varied learning styles, and respond to the multiple intelligences and unique circumstances of learners.

Section 3. Mindanao State University-Buug shall ensure that all educational facilities, instructional materials, and learning resources are accessible to students with disabilities and learners with special needs, thereby enabling their full and equitable participation in the academic community.

Section 4. The University shall offer relevant and responsive academic programs and support services that address the needs of students with disabilities and learners with special needs, providing opportunities for them to maximize their potential and actively contribute to community and nation-building.

Section 5. Mindanao State University-Buug shall strive to allocate adequate resources and capacitate faculty and staff with the necessary skills, knowledge, and training to facilitate effective learning experiences for students with disabilities and learners with special needs.

ARTICLE VII – EDI IN RESEARCH

Section 1. Mindanao State University-Buug is committed to providing equitable opportunities for all members of the University community to engage in research. The University shall actively identify and address barriers that impede full participation, including those related to access, representation, and availability of resources.

Section 2. The University recognizes that diverse perspectives enrich research by fostering creativity, innovation, and critical thinking. Accordingly, interdisciplinary collaboration and the inclusion of underrepresented voices in research programs and initiatives shall be encouraged and supported.

Section 3. Mindanao State University-Buug shall ensure that research funding opportunities are made accessible to researchers from diverse backgrounds, with mechanisms in place to support equitable participation and fair resource allocation.

Section 4. The University shall actively pursue external funding sources for research projects and programs that advance the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that research outputs address not only academic excellence but also social relevance and inclusivity.

ARTICLE VIII – STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSION

Section 1. Mindanao State University-Buug strictly prohibits discrimination in the admission process on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, or any other protected characteristic as defined by pertinent Philippine laws and regulations.

Section 2. Admission decisions at Mindanao State University-Buug shall be based solely on applicants' qualifications, potential, and alignment with the University's mission and core values, without regard to personal characteristics unrelated to academic merit.

Section 3. The University commits to actively recruiting and welcoming applicants from underrepresented groups, including but not limited to low-income students, minorities, first-generation college students, students with disabilities and special needs, children of solo parents, solo parents themselves, children raised by LGBTQ+ families, and children whose parents are deprived of liberty. Mindanao State University-Buug shall strive to remove barriers that hinder their access to higher education.

Section 4. The University shall actively reach out to diverse communities within Zamboanga Peninsula and beyond, encouraging their participation in the admission process and ensuring that opportunities for quality education are equitably extended.

Section 5. Mindanao State University-Buug shall establish transparent and reasonable guidelines, standards, and criteria for the evaluation and screening of applicants for admission. These

mechanisms shall ensure that individuals with protected characteristics are accorded fair opportunities to pursue an education at the University.

ARTICLE IX – STUDENT SUPPORT

Section 1. Mindanao State University-Buug shall establish comprehensive support services and resources that respond to the specific needs of underrepresented and marginalized students. These shall include, but not be limited to, counseling and psychosocial support, mentorship and tutorial programs, participation in cultural and student organizations, opportunities to engage in sports and wellness programs, and access to health and medical services.

Section 2. The University shall endeavor to provide a wide range of financial aid options, scholarships, and grants to ensure that students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds are afforded equitable access to quality higher education. These mechanisms shall be continually reviewed and improved to address emerging student needs and promote inclusive student success.

ARTICLE X – STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Section 1. Mindanao State University-Buug shall regularly organize equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) awareness programs, workshops, and events that promote cross-cultural understanding, intercultural dialogue, and mutual respect among students, faculty, staff, and the wider community.

Section 2. The University shall encourage and support student organizations and initiatives that celebrate diversity, advance equity, and foster inclusivity. Such organizations shall be recognized as vital partners in cultivating a welcoming and respectful campus environment where all students can thrive.

ARTICLE XI – HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Section 1. Mindanao State University-Buug advocates for equal opportunity employment and strictly prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, veteran status, or any other legally protected characteristic under Philippine laws and University policies.

Section 2. All employment decisions—including recruitment, hiring, promotions, compensation, benefits, and termination—shall be made based on merit and qualifications, without regard to any protected characteristic.

Section 3. Mindanao State University-Buug is committed to attracting a diverse pool of candidates for all job openings. To this end, the University shall adopt inclusive language in job postings, application forms, contracts, and other official documents.

Section 4. Recruitment and hiring processes shall be structured to eliminate bias and ensure fair consideration of all applicants. Interviewers, selection panels, and concerned heads of offices shall undergo training on unconscious bias and inclusive hiring practices.

Section 5. The University shall maintain a safe and respectful workplace environment that values diversity and inclusivity. Any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against employees or applicants shall not be tolerated.

Section 6. Mindanao State University-Buug shall provide reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities, ensuring that facilities, workspaces, and communication systems are fully accessible and inclusive.

Section 7. All faculty and staff shall have access to continuing diversity and inclusion training to enhance cultural competence, deepen awareness of equity issues, and strengthen their ability to support students and colleagues from diverse backgrounds.

Section 8. The performance evaluation of faculty and staff shall be conducted fairly, objectively, and without discrimination on the basis of any protected characteristic.

Section 9. Mindanao State University-Buug shall promote career development and mentoring programs that provide equitable opportunities for employees from underrepresented groups to grow professionally and advance within the University.

ARTICLE XII – INCLUSIVE FACILITIES

Section 1. Mindanao State University-Buug is committed to providing accessible and inclusive facilities that accommodate the needs of all individuals, including persons with disabilities, individuals with impairments, and learners with special needs. The University shall promote a welcoming and equitable environment that enables full participation in academic and community life.

Section 2. The University shall comply with all applicable accessibility laws and regulations, including the Accessibility Law (Batas Pambansa Blg. 344) and relevant national guidelines, to ensure that campus facilities are designed, constructed, and maintained to provide equal access to all.

Section 3. Mindanao State University-Buug shall conduct regular audits and assessments of existing facilities to identify barriers to accessibility. Addressing such barriers through facility improvements, retrofitting, or redesign shall be prioritized to promote inclusivity.

Section 4. All informational and directional signage within the University shall be clear, concise, and designed to be easily understood by all, including persons with visual, hearing, or cognitive impairments. Where applicable, signage shall include accessible features such as tactile markings, braille, or visual contrast.

Section 5. Parking facilities within the campus shall include accessible parking spaces, loading zones, and clear pathways to building entrances. These spaces shall be appropriately marked, reserved for persons with disabilities, and compliant with applicable laws and standards.

Section 6. The University shall ensure that all routine maintenance, repairs, and renovations consider accessibility needs. Identified accessibility concerns shall be addressed promptly to maintain a safe, inclusive, and barrier-free environment.

Section 7. Mindanao State University-Buug encourages employees, students, visitors, and the public to report facility-related accessibility concerns or provide feedback. Such reports shall be acted upon promptly, and the feedback shall serve as a basis for continuous improvement of campus accessibility.

ARTICLE XIII – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Section 1. Mindanao State University-Buug shall actively engage with local communities and establish partnerships with organizations that advance equity, diversity, and inclusivity. Collaborative efforts shall strengthen the University's role as a people's institution responsive to the needs of Zamboanga Peninsula and beyond.

Section 2. The University shall host cultural, educational, and extension events that promote cross-cultural understanding, intercultural dialogue, and mutual respect. These events shall highlight the diverse traditions and perspectives of the communities served by the University.

Section 3. Mindanao State University-Buug shall endeavor to build the capacity of partner communities by equipping them with knowledge, skills, and competencies that enable them to design and implement initiatives on equity, diversity, and inclusivity.

Section 4. The University shall preserve, protect, and promote indigenous knowledge, practices, and cultural heritage, recognizing their vital role in sustaining community identity, wisdom, and resilience.

ARTICLE XIV – IMPLEMENTATION

Section 1. The Chancellor of Mindanao State University-Buug shall issue the pertinent Special Order or Administrative Order constituting the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Oversight Committee and the Secretariat, which shall be responsible for implementing this policy and monitoring progress on its execution.

Section 2. Functions. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Oversight Committee shall report regularly on EDI initiatives, progress, and outcomes to stakeholders and the public. Specifically, it shall perform the following functions:

a. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Oversight Committee

a.1 Oversee the overall implementation of this policy.

a.2 Recommend to the Chancellor programs, activities, and projects that will enable the University to achieve its equity, diversity, and inclusivity goals and targets.

a.3 Recommend implementing rules and guidelines for provisions in this policy that do not explicitly outline corresponding implementation mechanisms; provided that such rules and guidelines shall be issued through a memorandum.

a.4 Ensure that equity, diversity, and inclusivity indicators are established to promote accountability, communicate measurable goals, and enable monitoring and reporting of progress.

a.5 Establish systems to monitor and measure performance vis-à-vis identified performance indicators.

a.6 Ensure that the University submits an annual report to its stakeholders on its progress toward achieving equity, diversity, and inclusivity goals.

b. Secretariat

b.1 In coordination with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Oversight Committee, facilitate the crafting and periodic updating of this policy.

b.2 Ensure the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in University-wide equity, diversity, and inclusivity-related planning activities.

b.3 Ensure periodic monitoring and reporting of the implementation indicators of this policy.

b.4 Gather and submit data necessary for the University's participation in sustainability-related university ranking bodies (e.g., Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, QS Sustainability Rankings).

b.5 Develop and endorse guidelines and mechanisms for the efficient and effective compilation of data needed to measure achievement of relevant performance indicators.

b.6 In coordination with the Office of Public Information, maintain and update the official Mindanao State University-Buug Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) webpage or information portal.

Section 3. Mindanao State University-Buug shall establish a recognition and rewards program that honors individuals, offices, and units who make exemplary contributions toward advancing equity, diversity, and inclusivity within the University community.

ARTICLE XV – MONITORING AND REPORTING

Section 1. Mindanao State University-Buug shall establish clear mechanisms for reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment, or any form of exclusion. Such reports shall be handled promptly, confidentially, and with sensitivity. Adequate measures shall be taken to address reported cases and to implement preventive actions to avoid recurrence.

Section 2. The University shall conduct an annual monitoring and assessment of the achievement of its equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) targets as stipulated in the MSU-Buug Strategic

Roadmap. This shall follow the principle of continuous improvement, ensuring that EDI policies and practices remain responsive and adaptive to emerging needs.

Section 3. Mindanao State University-Buug shall maintain and regularly update an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) information portal or website to provide the University community and the public with accessible information on its equity, diversity, and inclusivity initiatives, programs, and progress reports.

ARTICLE XVI – DISSEMINATION, REVIEW, AND UPDATES

Section 1. Mindanao State University-Buug shall ensure that this Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy is widely disseminated across the University. It shall be made available through the official University website, shared with all academic and administrative units, and included in orientation materials for new students, faculty, and staff.

Section 2. The University shall continually evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of this Policy. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Oversight Committee shall conduct a formal review every five (5) years, or sooner when initiated by the Committee or by the Office of the Chancellor, to ensure legislative or statutory compliance, continued relevance, and effectiveness. Feedback from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other stakeholders shall be considered as an integral part of these reviews.

ARTICLE XVII – FINAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Interpretation. Any doubt in the interpretation of any provision of this Policy shall be liberally construed in favor of upholding the rights and interests of the constituents of Mindanao State University-Buug and members of its community.

Section 2. Separability Clause. If any provision or part of this Policy is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not otherwise affected shall continue to be valid and enforceable.

Section 3. Repealing Clause. All previous policies, issuances, or Board of Regents (BOR) Resolutions that are inconsistent with this Policy are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 4. Effectivity Clause. This Policy shall take effect immediately upon approval by the Mindanao State University Board of Regents.