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**STATEMENT OF CONCERN OF THE U.P. DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
ON THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION FOR DEAF EDUCATION**

It has come to our attention that the Department of Education (DepEd) has publicly announced that Signing Exact English (SEE) will be the official sign language to be used for Deaf Education and for training instructors in Special Education. We are alarmed with this development because SEE is not the native language of deaf persons in the Philippines. SEE is an artificial language that has been developed by hearing persons to help the Deaf learn spoken and written English. The Filipino Deaf have their own natural language, namely Filipino Sign Language (FSL). This unique language is the basis of Filipino Deaf culture and identity. It is a basic right of all citizens, including the Deaf community, to be taught and educated in their native language.

The new DepEd move violates the provisions of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, Policy and Organization (1994) that:

“Educational policies should take full account of individual differences and situations. The importance of sign language as the medium of communication among the deaf, for example, should be recognized and provision made to ensure that all deaf persons have access to *education in their national sign language* (italics added).”

Moreover, this recent DepEd pronouncement runs counter to the Department’s own efforts to encourage education based on one’s mother tongue, as contained in DepEd Order No. 74, series of 2009. FSL is the mother tongue of Deaf Filipinos and should thus be used as the official medium of instruction for the country’s schools for the Deaf.

Approved during the Regular Faculty Meeting  
of the Department of Anthropology  
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Signed:

Nestor T. Castro, PhD  
Chair