

*Atty. Susan Carriaga*  
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**Privilege Speech  
18<sup>th</sup> City Council  
August 29, 2017**

## **Education Behind Bars**

By: Councilor Pilar C. Braga

Mr. President, allow me to congratulate Mr. Aland Mizell, President of the Social Entrepreneurship Institute (SEI), together with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and the University of Southeastern Philippines (USEP), for this innovative education called the "Education Behind Bars,"

The future may not be as bleak even behind bars if education becomes accessible. It's the first of its kind in the Philippines and a project worth replicating in all jails across the country. Being incarcerated while waiting years and years for a case to be heard in court, or even for an arraignment, could leach away all hope for an offender. Add the ever increasing number of inmates in a prison facility as the drug war continues, and one can understand the real meaning of hopelessness and despair.

The College Education Behind Bars, is therefore a breath of fresh air in the lives of those who long for a second chance and those who wait to lead productive lives while in detention.

It will soon provide an opportunity for inmates who have passed their stringent screening process to get a four-year college education. Dr. Mizell said there were 300 assessed by USEP and SEI, and 70 of it passed the entrance exam, 45 of them males and 25 females. The college offers two courses for the first batch, the Bachelor of Information Technology and the Bachelor of Agri

Bachelor of Agri Business. It will however expand its course offering depending on the outcome of this pioneering effort.

Acquiring a college education goes a long way in rehabilitation and in preparing for reintegration in society. It also opens opportunities for them to find work even while they are incarcerated. The programs offered, according to Dr. Mitzell, are designed to equip students to become entrepreneurs.

This is another breakthrough in rehabilitation of offenders.

Thank you, Mr. President.

  
**PILAR C. BRAGA**  
City Councilor