



BALITAAN

Newsletter 79

Fall 2024



Celebrating Our Largest Graduating Class

by Ricardo Espitia, PCAFPD
Scholar Affairs

We are thrilled to share that this year, PCAFPD has achieved a remarkable milestone by graduating our largest class in history. In 2024, we proudly celebrated the accomplishments of 32 undergraduate students who earned their Bachelor's Degrees, along with two outstanding individuals who completed their Master's degrees. This achievement, totaling 34 graduates, stands out not only for its scale but also for the resilience demonstrated during such a challenging period in global history.

Many of these graduates embarked on their educational journeys amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, with a significant portion of their college experience spent learning from home. Some students didn't step into a physical classroom until 2022 due to necessary health measures. Throughout this time, they adapted quickly, becoming proficient in online learning platforms and virtual collaboration tools. Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic, our scholars excelled academically, actively engaged with their communities, and maintained unwavering spirits as they transitioned back to in-person and hybrid learning environments.

The 2024 graduating class is a testament to diversity and talent, representing 24 provinces and a wide array of academic



"I and my family would like to extend my warmest appreciation towards the PCAFPD. I am proud to be part of... PCAFPD Scholars." Vanessa Sabilao Bantilo, Graduated Class of 2024

disciplines. Eight students earned degrees in social sciences, seven in physical sciences, another seven in business, six in education, four in information technology, and the two Master's graduates also completed degrees in education.

As our graduates prepare for their next steps, many are taking board licensure exams, showcasing their readiness for professional challenges ahead. Notably, one of our scholars, Stella Marie Jalipa, received a full scholarship from her review center after graduating Cum Laude and achieving the highest exam score among her peers. Many graduates are also returning to their communities to contribute through local Pag-Asa Youth Association of the Philippines (PYAP) councils, dedicated to youth development in the country. A select few are even gearing up to apply for graduate school, furthering their educational journeys.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our donor community, whose generous support made this achievement possible. Your contributions have facilitated these graduates' journeys. This milestone is a tribute to the incredible efforts of our Philippine-based Ituloy team. Their unwavering dedication in guiding our scholars through virtual schooling, providing laptops, disbursing allowances, organizing seminars, and offering mentorship was crucial to our success.

Together, we are shaping the future, and this historic graduating class is a testament to the impact of your support. Thank you for being a vital part of this transformative journey!



A Special Request



*By Justin Tabor and Maureen Carroll,
PCAFPD Board Members*

We hope you enjoy this newsletter about the progress of our program and our scholars. Beyond sharing the inspiring stories of our scholars, The Balitaan also serves as PCAFPD's key fundraising tool.

Throughout our history we have valued non-intrusive fundraising. We come to you only four times a year with two mailed newsletters and two appeals. When you make a contribution, we thank you, and, unlike many other charities, we do not immediately send another appeal.

However, as we approach the end of 2024, we find it necessary to ask you to consider making a larger gift than in the past.

Due to a confluence of factors, PCAFPD faces a shortfall in our 2024 anticipated income. We face increased costs largely stemming from the computer and internet support we now provide to scholars to meet their course requirements.

The board is actively exploring ways to contain this shortcoming to 2024, while also ensuring that PCAFPD scholars have access to the tools and support necessary to reach their full academic potential.

We would be immensely grateful for even a small increase to your yearly gift to help achieve PCAFPD's mission.

Happy Holidays and Maraming salamat, po!

Ituloy Team Spotlight: Jody Cestina

By Ricardo Espitia, PCAFPD
Scholar Affairs

From the heart of Negros Oriental, a dedicated former scholar is making waves not only in her professional career but also in the realm of PCAFPD. Supported by PCAFPD, Jody Cestina graduated from Foundation University Dumaguete, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Management Accounting in March 2013. She has since leveraged her extensive experience in administration, finance, and formation to contribute significantly to various organizations. Currently, she serves as a Project Admin and Finance Assistant at the Ateneo School of Government.

Her journey of giving back to PCAFPD began in 2015 when she was invited to attend a meeting hosted by Sir Roland along with fellow alumni. It was at this meeting that the Ituloy team was born as an avenue to continue the Philippine operations of the PCAFPD.

Jody was driven by a profound sense of gratitude and a desire to give back to the foundation that contributed to her success. As an inaugural member of the group her roles on the team have been varied, but her commitment remains unwavering. She reflects fondly on the pivotal decision-making moments that have kept the Philippine operations alive.

Looking to the future, she aims to further her education by pursuing a master's degree in Organizational Psychology. Her story is not

just one of professional success but also one of heartfelt giving back. By volunteering her time and expertise with the Ituloy Team, she ensures that other scholars can have the same opportunities she once had. Her dedication and passion serve as an inspiration to all, demonstrating the profound impact of giving back to the community. She answered the call to serve much like many of our supporters did when they decided to serve as PCVs.



Become a Sustaining Donor

As you consider your next contribution to PCAFPD, consider making a sustaining donation by visiting our donation page on the website and scheduling a regularly occurring gift. Sustaining donations make a big difference for the organization's financial planning. You can scan the QR code below with your mobile device, or visit our website directly at www.rpcvphilippines.org/contact-us/donate.



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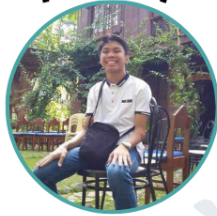


Icy



B.S. Education

Mizal



B.A. International Studies

Amrodin



B.S. Social Work

Jahra



B.S. Education

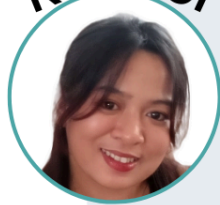


Dan Eric



B.S. Human Ecology

Rachel



M.A. Language Teaching

Anne



B.S. Accountancy

shaina



B.S. Biotechnology



MEET THE 2024 SCHOLAR CLASS

Sofia



B.S. Education

John



B.S. Education

shereen



B.S. Accountancy

Francis



B.S. Criminology



Mutya



B.S. Civil Engineering



Bai Mahan



B.S. Social Work

Chissalyn



B.S. Information Technology

Melanie



B.S. Mechanical Engineering

Myra Mae



B.S. Chemistry

Ylmaz



B.S. Information Technology



Scholar Essays

Small Things Matter

Janiel Enaje is pursuing a BS in Agriculture at University of Eastern Philippines.

Being a 2nd Year Agriculture student has been one of the most difficult phases from the beginning of the second semester, since each board subject matter involves many different laboratories and academic activities. This will help us to practice our mind for the preparation for the board examination.

Around all of these fields of study, only Animal Science cost me a lot of money through conducting Poultry Practices, but in exchange for that, I gained valuable knowledge and practices. I also want to thank the PCAFPD family for their assistance with our financial difficulties during our studies. This allows me to learn a lot and get more knowledge to make available. We've also gained knowledge about propagation, which allows us to grow more plants for the ecosystem and address economic scarcity. Being an Agriculture College Student doesn't just mean planting, we also study how our plants are to be cared for and managed, and how to market our products because our needs come from the hard work of our farmers.

This semester reminds me, as an agriculture student, it is not an easy program course. Aside to maintain our academics, we also need to maintain the health and marketability of our plants in order for us to pass the courses. Almost the whole day we are in the field conducting our laboratories under the 44°C to 46°C according to the PAG-ASA updates until now. Afterward, it is a big help for me to learn more and more practices to be a better Future Agriculturist.

For the sake of our economic breakdown, we, the future agriculturists, are trying to bring back the losses of our country in the field of Agriculture. Hoping that every Filipino has access for food and income made in Agribusinesses. Let us help our country to develop more as a developing country and help our farmers to promote business in agriculture and our better economy.

Lasty, I am thankful to our loving God for proving our lives, food, needs and protecting us. To the PCAFPD family, thank you for the opportunity of being one of your scholars. May God give us more blessings to share. THANK YOU AND GODBLESS US.



A Month of Growth

Rica May Simbulan is pursuing a BS in Computer Science at University of Danganupan

Our summer was only a month-long, but it was one of the rides I'll never forget. All our lessons were compressed, making it difficult for us to cope, but of course, as I always do, I managed and got to finish it with good grades.

During our summer, I was one of the students chosen to participate in the

Philippine Game Developers Expo 2024 with our instructors, Sir Jan Julliene S. Narvasa, Sir Jeric I. Prado, Sir Paul John Velasquez, and Sir Christopher James Dela Cruz, and my co-students and good friends Marlo Mendoza and Joan Alabastro.



During our stay in Manila, we met independent developers and witnessed how they built their game from scratch during the educational seminar. I look forward to creating my own game. It was so fun that we got to try many different games I never even heard of. I met professionals in the game industry and had an opportunity to talk to them and gain some insights after their talks. I got to see and take a video with Myrtle Sarosa, a celebrity known for cosplaying. It was so much fun and filled with excitement. The three-day event was definitely worthwhile.

After our Game Developer Expo 2024, we returned to school and finished summer school. Since I am also part of our department organization, I was so scared because my focus was not in the right place, and I couldn't get a lot in my head at the moment I was reviewing for our final exam, but everything turned out to be great, better instead. I am enrolled in the 1st semester of 3rd year. Time goes so fast, but I can't freeze it, so I will live happily and brightly.

Sophomore is More!

Angelica Calubaquib is pursuing a BS in Education, Major in Filipino, at Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Marikina College



“Self-discipline is the magic power that makes you virtually unstoppable.” A powerful quote by Dan Kennedy. Indeed, in college having self-discipline is one of the crucial factors of a successful semester. Now in my 2nd year in college I prove it right. As I reflect on my second semester during my second year, I am filled with a sense of accomplishment and growth. The challenges and successes I experienced have shaped me into a more resilient and determined student. I thought after the adjustment from freshman to sophomore will be the beginning of a more relaxed journey but that doesn't end there. There is still more to learn from this and I know I am ready.

This semester, I faced my fears like leading a group and being the one who managed all the things needed to be done on our group task. I thought I couldn't do it because I wasn't ready for it but with the help of my co-students, I accomplished it and the outcome is great. One of the highlights of this semester was delving deeper into my major courses. The advanced material pushed me to think critically and expand my knowledge base.

I found myself becoming more engaged in class discussions and taking on leadership roles within group projects. As an education student, I find myself being more confident and comfortable speaking in front of my colleagues.

This last semester I was always one of the speakers for the discussion, my professors acknowledged my skills in terms of speaking and it boosted my confidence.

Unfortunately, the rise of heat index forced the university to do an online class system for the safety of all students. At the moment, I feel like we came back from the pandemic era of education. I feel unmotivated and distracted while we're online class, I'm unable to accomplish my task on time even. Then I just realized that I have a laptop and it makes the online class easy. I remembered how lucky I am to have the chance to study comfortably and that hit me, self-discipline has a huge effect to accomplish this semester. I practice to be more disciplined and do what I need to do on time. Apparently, I am able to light up the burning passion inside me to be successful in this career. Additionally, I took advantage of various opportunities outside the classroom to enhance my skills and network with professionals in my field. Despite facing some setbacks and moments of doubt, I persevered through the challenges with the support of my peers and professors. This semester has taught me the importance of resilience, time management, and seeking help when needed.

In summary, the second semester of my sophomore year at college has been a life-changing experience that has equipped me for both my academic and professional futures.

As my college career progresses, I'm excited to keep developing and learning. Still, I am acknowledging the support of PCAFPD to my college journey and always have a gratitude to the organization for helping a student like me to achieve my dream. Without this program, I know this college life would be more difficult. Again, thank you very much PCAFPD for another semester and school year with me. I will cherish this opportunity and do everything to not put this all in waste, I will do my best to achieve my goals and help my country. I will not stop until I become a licensed professional teacher and make changes to my country.

The Tassle was Worth the Hassle

John Joseph D.

Zarate is pursuing a Masters in



Education, Major in Science, at Pangasinan State University School of Advanced Studies

Having earned one of my most coveted goals in life was never easy. Juggling my time and effort as a master's degree student and a faculty member of Pangasinan State University Bayambang Campus while fulfilling my designated roles and functions as a campus official and now a university official seemed far-fetched and forlorn back then. and the anxiety brought by the shift from online classes to face-to-face classes due to the distance from my workplace to my post-graduate university. I admit that there were so many times I wanted to give up because of the stress and pressure I have received from my work and post-graduate studies.

The demands and toil of balancing my job, my studies, my designations, and my family problems left me struggling consistently. However, with faith and strength coming from God, in two years, I finished all my academic requirements as scheduled with immense pride as I garnered very satisfactory remarks and grades. I immediately applied for the available date of comprehensive examination which I conquered in the first take.

Immediately, I applied for title defense and pre-final defense. After this, I devoted all my time and effort to finishing my thesis entitled, "Characterization and Establishment of Protocol for the Development of a Food-Grade Oven-Dried Ternate (*Clitoria ternatea* L.) Flower Powder. In January 2023, I was set to finish my thesis in six months, but unfortunately, since my thesis is experimental and requires laboratory methods, the processing of the results almost took three months to become available. Above all, the financial requirements for these laboratory tests are beyond my reach. This is the part where I am so grateful and blessed to be a scholar of the Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development. My father is a tricycle driver and my mother is a housewife.

Although I am an instructor at PSU Bayambang, I have to support my family and help them with our daily expenses plus my expenses going to work. If not because of PCAFPD and the scholarship, I will not be able to reach this point in my life and finish my master's degree with flying colors.

All graduating students of the PSU-School of Advanced studies were asked to participate in the Research Symposium intended for the graduating students. I bagged the most coveted Best Paper Presenter and Best Paper Award.

I have nothing but gratitude to PCAFPD for being God's instrument in making my dream a reality. Thank you very much for supporting and helping aspiring dreamers like me reach our goals in life. Someday, I hope I can be a blessing to others like what PCAFPD has done to me.

Join the Bayanihan Legacy Circle

Have you designated PCAFPD as a beneficiary of an IRA or stipulated a bequest to PCAFPD in a will or trust?

If so, we'd like to know.

The Bayanihan Legacy Circle recognizes those of you who plan to support the work of PCAFPD beyond your lifetime.

Send an email to us at pcafpd@gmail.com or snail mail us at P.O. Box 100114, Arlington Virginia 22210 to let us know of your plans or to seek more information. Maraming Salamat!

Thank you to our Legacy Circle Members:

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Rick Zemlin, Davao del Sur 1981-83

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