

Good day!

I am Jhoan De Jesus, a beneficiary of the SCMA scholarship program. I am a graduating student of a double degree program, Bachelor of Science in Physics and Bachelor of Science in Materials Science and Engineering.

A lot of things have happened since I became a SCMA scholar. It helped me to go through my semesters. It gave me different opportunities I never thought I would get. It prepared me for everything I would have chosen to ignore, otherwise.

One such experience I am very proud of was the acceptance of my paper on the 21st International Vacuum Congress, held in Malmö, Sweden on the first week of July. I had the chance to present my paper about a novel biomaterial called polyaniline-chitosan, which can be used for drug delivery applications, sealing wounds, and other pressing issues on biomedicine. I was able to meet people from different fields of research. I have been looking at it as me being a part of a group of people attempting to make the world a better place through extensive data gathering and experiment, the part most people skip.

But let's get ahead of the academic stuff. What kept me going was my amazement of Europe. There were things that are just impossible to forget. The breakfast, the places and various landmarks, the people, and most importantly, the hope that this chance and optimism may happen again in the near future. None of this would have happened if I was unable to prepare myself mentally, physically, emotionally, and financially; which the scholarship enabled me to do.

Another experience I had the chance to work with people was at a convention of "Samahang Pisika ng Visayas at Mindanao." A bunch of great-minded people in the field of Physics, a discipline which I believe to be highly undervalued and disregarded. The work was slightly similar to the paper presented on Sweden, but this time we focused more on the properties of the same material. It felt like I was able to prepare myself to serve other people upon graduating, and chances like this also 'improve my appetite', for the lack of a better phrase, for doing so.

All of this, combined with the fact that I was able to maintain an academic scholar standing, just blows my mind. It gives me an indicator that I am growing as a student and as a person. I never ignored my studies, rather, my academic activities provided me ways to look at the most mundane of things as interesting and something you can tinker with. It's actually fulfilling, and I never felt this satisfied and robust in my life.

Outside the school, I think I am living well. I have a good relationship with my friends and family, and I am able to celebrate even the smallest of achievements with them. I cannot believe how far I have come, from taking baby steps to taking leaps of faith which propel me further in life.

As another year dawns, I hope to be able to do something like this in the future -- help struggling students like me to spend their lives to the fullest, because I know and respect the effort these students have to exert. Our academics and life in general are already difficult enough, and these noble attempts give students the extra push they so desperately need to live another day, another term, and with a purpose.

