

Professional Science Master's Scholar

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PSM Degree

Professional Science Master's in Solar Energy Engineering and Commercialization

US University

Arizona State University

Date of Completion

December 2017

GPA

4.00

Professional Science Master's in Solar Energy Engineering and Commercialization

The Solar Energy Engineering & Commercialization graduate program offers advanced, interdisciplinary education in solar energy to students with backgrounds in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM). It aims to enable graduates to pursue careers in industry, government, or the nonprofit sector that involve solar energy and its utilization.

As a PSM student, what was the highlight of your study?

Being able to work with the largest solar non-profit in the US, GRID Alternatives, is the main highlight of my study as a PSM student. I interned with them for two summers to get hands-on experience in the solar industry and to conduct research for my applied project. Learning about how GRID uses solar energy to provide free job training and free systems to help low-income communities save on electricity bills was truly fascinating. I saw how a nonprofit could utilize policies and financial structures in the industry to fund their operations without needing to sell any products or services.

In what way has the USAID scholarship changed you?

The USAID Scholarship gave me the opportunity to live in a foreign country; made me more independent, resourceful, and outgoing; and widened my perspectives on issues in STEM. I now see the bigger pictures of issues we have in the scientific community and I can make the connection between these and the issues in politics, economics and the international society. Overall, it has strengthened my global outlook in life.

How would you use your degree to contribute or influence economic growth in the country?

By analyzing industry trends and policies, I would like to make solar energy available to lower-income households, who could benefit from savings on electric utility bills. This would allow these households to invest their savings in things that would raise their standard of living. Knowing about project management in the solar industry will allow me to help utility-scale and commercial-scale solar projects to be developed more efficiently, which would provide utilities with cheaper energy sources, and consumers with lower electricity bills. Savings on energy expenditures from both industry and consumers would fuel economic growth as funds could be redirected to investments on education, projects and businesses to grow the economy.

As a young scientist, what do you envision for the Philippine science, technology and innovation ecosystem in the next 10 years?

I envision the solar industry to become much more sophisticated in terms of technology, human capacity, businesses, usage and policies. Throughout the coming years, policies supporting the development of the industry should be continued. This way, in 10 years, more than 25% of the country's energy generation and consumption could come from renewable energy sources. Hopefully, by that time, energy storage solutions would become more affordable to make increased alternative energy usage more feasible.

Now back in the Philippines, Brigitte joined a Manila-based Japanese solar company. Simultaneously, she is also involved in the implementation of Solar Network for Energy Education and Employment (Solar N3E), a non-profit that would help marginalized community members gain education, training and employment in the growing Philippine solar industry.

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