

Professional Science Master's Scholar

Jason Occidental

Ateneo de Davao University

**PSM Degree**

Master of Business and Science in Biomedical Engineering

US University

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Date of Completion

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GPA

3.90

Master of Business and Science in Biomedical Engineering

My program is focused on shaping graduate students in the sciences and engineering to engage in innovation that leads to economic development. This is because while these disciplines are doing a lot of interesting work, its true worth is often not realized because researchers are not able to communicate their discoveries and inventions to businessmen who could turn these concepts into something useful for the society. The program aims to have scientists and engineers think like a business professional and lead the industry in order to drive growth and progress.

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

The highlight of my study was working on a technology from concept level to business plan level. This was interesting because it really takes more than just having an idea to build a business especially in dealing with intellectual property concerns as well as finances.

In what way has the USAID scholarship changed you?

USAID has changed me in numerous ways, even beyond my participation in the PSM scholarship program. It made me more aware of the world, allowing me to think local and global at the same time. My experience in the US allowed me to see a different culture and technology infrastructure that inspires me to bring the best practices to the Philippines. USAID has fulfilled my goal of being a modern Rizal. I used Jose Rizal as a reference because he was a scientist who has travelled the world and brought innovation to the Philippines.

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

Finishing a degree that is very uncommon in the Philippines, I want to use it to build the industry. I want to be involved with the small community of biomedical engineers and innovators in building healthcare technologies for the Philippines. It is high time for the health sector to undergo a technological overhaul especially since countries such as Singapore and the US have also been investing in technology that will improve their services to improve their people's well-being.

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

I see a country that is able to stand on its own two feet when it comes to technology and innovation. That it doesn't create wealth through OFW's and BPO's but through local enterprises providing jobs and producing goods and services for both the domestic and international market. This is made possible through the establishment of incubators and funding agencies that help these technologies grow into an empire. In addition, I would like to see the improvement of intellectual property policies in the country so that inventors and innovators have their work protected and valued. There is definitely much more to do to make this vision possible, but it is doable and achievable.

Jason is currently the Director of the Innovation and Technology Support Office (ITSO) at Ateneo de Davao University.

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