



# Alumni Spotlight

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Founder, Unified Neutral Individuals Thriving for Equality and Diversity (UNITED)

Former President of the following organizations in PWU: Debate Society, Student Diplomatic Corps, Zonta Club, and University Student Council.

First female and Muslim elected President of the South Manila Educational Consortium Student Council

### Why did you decide to study in PWU?

My mother decided to enroll me and my sisters in PWU was inspired by having family and relatives who have studied or are alumni of the university. This reason gave my family confidence in the institution's brand of education and culture. Moreover, I pursued an undergraduate in PWU because of the university's rich history and background in welcoming our Muslim sisters from

Mindanao and in championing education for young Filipina women for a life of productive and participative citizenship.

### Share your most memorable moment in PWU .

It's truly difficult to choose just one memorable part over the years of my stay in PWU. Every moment in PWU--good or bad--was worth living and cherishing. To highlight some of the few: in high school, I found the best teachers who made a great impact in a period in my life where I was adjusting to my new school and environment, joining the sports teams, art classes, and Kulintang group as part of my extracurricular was among my fondest times of learning and growing, and meeting different people from those engagements enabled me to create friendships that I still maintain today. Finally, in college, I was grateful to have inspiring mentors who also became my source of strength during challenging times in my college student life, serving my fellow students and the PWU community was both an enriching and humbling experience, and once again, along the journey, I made more friends and connected with more people.

### What is the most important Lesson you've learned while you were at PWU?

Many valuable lessons and training have been imparted to me throughout my time at PWU. To share a few: in high school, a lesson I found most precious is the importance of finding the courage to know your worth and believe in yourself. This was a significant realization because during that time it was a point in my life where I was still adjusting and I was still carrying the pain and weight from my experience of being bullied in my



previous school. PWU became a safe space for me then as a high school student. It also became an encouraging and nurturing avenue, all thanks to my caring teachers and guidance counselors, friends, and classmates--who all reminded me that I am important, I am loved, and that I should always believe in myself and my potentials. I must admit, I wouldn't be the person I am today if it weren't for that transformational point or breakthrough in my life. Through the support of my PWU high school teachers and classmates, I was able to learn that lesson that eventually became instrumental for me to thrive in high school and even after graduating high school. Lastly, in college, I was able to realize my purpose to serve the people by bringing about just and positive development and I was able to find my passion and advocacy for gender equality and women's rights and for unity in diversity in leadership and governance. I must acknowledge and thank all of my college mentors for their pure dedication to educate and prepare us into professionals with meaningful passion and purpose for their nation.

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### **How did your education at PWU prepare you for where you are today?**

I studied Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Service from the PWU Helena Z. Benitez School of International Relations and Diplomacy, and I graduated in July of 2019. The HZB SIRD was inspired by the late Helena Z. Benitez whose lifelong career and enduring legacy in the field has been

a great source of pride for the University. After graduating, I pursued a career in my dream sector which is the advocacy, leadership, humanitarian, and development sectors. Unlike proceeding to the common or traditional route for FS graduates which is government service, I sought to enter the pathway of development and advocacy work, mainly because this is what I actually learned from my subjects or classes. My education has always inspired me to find humanity. ABFS was not just a program/course that I had to graduate from, but it was a meaningful avenue that opened my mind to the political, social, economic, and environmental realities of our world and it touched my heart--and that inspired me to own my identity as a Muslim, Filipina, and youth and take my space in society to disrupt any faulty system, remold, and bring about positive changes. During my time, the faculty members of the SIRD were sincerely committed to educating and encouraging us students to live our lives with the principles of love for God, of country, and heritage, respect for diversity, professional ethics, and technical competence – which are all valuable traits for global citizenship, all eminently personified by late Ambassador Helena Z. Benitez.

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### **What is your greatest accomplishment?**

As an advocate and a development worker, it has always been a humbling opportunity and a rewarding feeling to serve communities and the Filipino people.

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### **What advice would you give current students interested in pursuing a career in your professional field?**

My humble advice is to pray, have hope and patience, stay committed to your passion and purpose, and find your inspirations and role models that will help guide you. I was able to survive and flourish when I was a college student because I surrendered my worries and trusted in God, I believed in myself and chose courage over fear in the face of adversities, dedicated my efforts and energy to the things I care for, and I asked for guidance from my parents, mentors, and those who are more experienced and knowledgeable than me.

