

The two most important things for people are their children and their taxes. Public School is the place where both meet. Today, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, the caring Peoples' University will unleash its new breeds of investments from the people's taxes – the scholars!

For five decades, the university continues to offer quality education to poor yet deserving students, to the marginalized who are challenged in vital needs in life. In my four years of stay in PLM, I experienced how the university served the marginalized. Let me tell you three various angles of marginalization which I experienced.

First is marginalization with respect to financial position. The way a family earns, spends, saves and lives affects the capacity of a person to pursue education. According to the Philippine Statistical Authority, in 2012, 27.9% of the country's population has income below the poverty line that is P16, 841 annually per person. This is alarming in a sense that it increased by 1% from the last survey on 2009 and many of us in this hall belongs to that group.

Personally, my family prioritizes our food and shelter. As a result, we cannot afford to pay any tuition. However, PLM opened its doors for me and I was given the opportunity to reach for my dreams. After four years, by God's grace and by my parents' and my family's hard work and support, I am here, a graduate. Gone are the days when I will study in candlelight. Gone are the days when my father sacrifices dinner just so I can have something for breakfast. Gone are the days that my mother will borrow money for my expenses.

Ladies and gentlemen, education need not be expensive, as long as you have faith in God, passion, determination, humility, supportive parents, dedicated teachers and true friends, you can go a long way, we all are living proofs to this fact.

I hope that PLM continues to support and help poor yet deserving students to reach the stars destined for them through providing less expensive and high quality education. During our recognition day, our beloved President mentioned to us that the students are her inspiration to continue serving the university. Today I shall say, PLM is our hope and the hope of every poor student to a brighter future.

The next face of marginalization I am going to tell you is on gender and equality. Way back in history, women were not given a chance to study and pursue a specialization

on a certain field. Now, as our country evolves through time, we discover the talents and capacity of women in all aspects.

In 2005, 55.4% or 45,225 of the 81,578 workers who were engaged in business process outsourcing activities were women. Also, Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) 2008 results revealed that the ratio of literate male adolescents to female ones is 1.0 –meeting the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal target.

Indeed I can say that women are now making their own legacy in our society. I can say that there are many women who had been part of my life and significantly contributed to my success. First is my mother, the first woman who believed in my capacity and who supported my dreams. My sister, whom I know is very proud of my achievements and who look up to me as a source of inspiration. I must not forget my teachers and professors who honed my talents, skills, and character as to what am I now. My friends and classmates who are there in good times and in bad times and every female who inspired me that gender is not a hindrance to learn, to lead and to inspire.

Another angle of marginalization with regard to gender that is addressed by PLM is the Lesbian, Gays, Bisexual and Transgender or LGBT. They are the people who are mostly discriminated and underestimated as far as academics is concerned. For the past years, no organization was accredited to give a voice for them, for us not until 2013 when the university opened its doors to PLM Propaganda. This organization does not only envision gender equality but also promotes zero violation in the university.

Let me just brag to you our achievements. Last academic year, the organization was awarded Most Outstanding Non-Academic Organization in its debut accreditation. Also for the past two academic years, the Presidential Awardees are members of the organization and I am proud that I was one of the members given the award.

This shows that even though we are different from others, we can still excel and we must be given a chance to perform. It is because gender is not correlated to a person's excellence and I, together with PLM Propaganda have proven of this. In line with this, I would like to thank the school's administration for giving us the chance to take part in upholding the school's prestige and reputation. I promise, on behalf of PPG founders, officers and members to continue advocating the things we are fighting from the very first day PPG was founded.

Lastly, I would like to mention marginalization in leadership. For me a leader is someone who molds future leaders. Being the president of PLM Mathematical Society, I followed this mantra and I bestowed all officers who are potential replacements for me in the future with the right attitude and skills. Now, I can leave the university with the comfort and assurance that PLM-MathSoc is in good hands.

Moreover, I really believe that leadership starts with self-discipline which PLMayers do have. This is the reason why the school always gives ways for PLM student leaders to improve their leadership potentials and skills. Thanks to OSDS for conducting SALT annually. With that, we, student leaders are proud to say that we are ready to face the challenges of leadership and service in the country, especially that we already know the basics.

Aside from the school administration I would also like to thank everyone who developed my leadership skills: Our Almighty God who is always the center of my life and leadership; my parents, especially my father who taught me utmost discipline; my brother who always believes that a good leader is a good follower; my teachers who made me realized that education is leadership of sharing knowledge; my friends who believed in my potentials as a good leader and to all organizations who gave me the opportunity to develop my leadership skills namely Children International-Quezon City, PLM Mathematical Society and Young Men's Christian Association.

I also believe that one day PLMayers will not only take part on leadership trainings but will also be part of policy-making in the university. I am personally supporting the initiatives of a student-leader to appeal to our president to institutionalize a student in the Board of Regents. It is because a student can truly voice out the need for innovative and positive changes in our university. I know, one day, I can have the chance to meet the first student-regent and his/her successors to see the changes they will bring in the university.

Three faces of marginalization. Three ways PLM achieved its mission and I know there are a lot more. I know the university will continue to serve the marginalized through education and I promise, time will come I'll be part of that mission and I will give the best I can. I am encouraging you to join me and our beloved university in this mission. Let me end by saying my favorite quote from Saint Francis of Assisi, "Until today we have done nothing, let us start now!" Thank you very much and God Bless you all!