



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
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Fil-Am Graduates from US Northeast Recognized at 7th PGrad in New York



PGrad Class of 2019 with Consul General Claro Cristobal (8th from left, first row) and distinguished guests (front row, 6th to 11th from left) Angela Callisaya from the Office of NY Assemblyman Brian Barnwell, Aries Dela Cruz from Office of NY Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Keynote Speaker Engr. Gil Quiniones, PGrad 2019 Mentor Atty. Connie Montoya and Consul Arman Talbo. (Photo by PCNGY)

New York, 10 June 2019 –Thirty-oneFilipino and Filipino-American graduates of associate, bachelor, master and doctorate degrees from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island marched down the Philippine Center's Kalayaan Hall during the 7th Philippine Graduation Ceremony (PGrad v2.0) held on

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Saturday, 8 June 2019. Thirteen other graduates from Harvard were earlier given their PGrad diplomas in another ceremony.

Philippine Consul General Claro S. Cristobal welcomed the PGrad Class of 2019 and honored their scholastic achievements in various fields ranging from business, finance, economics to medical, law, social sciences, education and technology. He expressed how proud he was of the accomplishments of these 44 graduates in raising the image of Filipinos in the US northeast.

This year's batch is composed of many academic achievers, led by two *summa cum laude* economics graduates Jonathan Coronel from Fordham University and Gabrielle Magallanes from St. John's University; *magna cum laude* graduates Jason Louie Singson (BA in Education, City College of New York) and Iris Dumauual (BA in English, St. John's University); and *cum laude* graduate Blizelle Marie Tormis (BSBA in Health Services Management, Berkeley College).

Engr. Gil Quiniones, President and CEO of New York Power Authority, delivered his keynote address. He related his journey as a mechanical engineering graduate from De La Salle University in Manila starting out at a small energy consultant firm in New York, working at Con Edison for 16 years, and later on serving in several capacities in the public sector, telecommunications and energy industry in New York. Speaking to the graduates about the pathway to success, he urged them that in whatever path they take, they need to stick to their principles and integrity, continue to innovate, and remember that "the ultimate measure of success is not the titles that you have, but what you do with those positions to make a difference in your community."

The graduates were awarded with PGrad diplomas and medals by Consul General Cristobal and Engr. Quiniones and certificates of merit from the Office of New York State Assemblyman Brian Barnwell by Ms. Angela Callisaya.

Mr. Aries dela Cruz, Manhattan Regional Representative for Governor Andrew Cuomo, spoke on behalf of Governor Cuomo and recognized the Filipino community's significant contributions in shaping the rich and diverse cultures of New York. He bestowed the Northern Star Award to Mr. Jonathan Coronel, who graduated Summa Cum Laude from Fordham University Gabelli School of Business with a bachelor's degree in Global Finance and Business Economics.

Sharing his struggles as a transfer student from Ateneo de Manila University coming to Fordham University, Mr. Coronel recognized that his fellow graduates have their own versions of survival. He encouraged them by saying that "for all the times when you feel like you don't belong here, remind yourself of this day when you emerged victorious. It's only going to get tougher from here but I look forward to seeing all of you again and share new chapters of our stories of survival."

This year's PGrad, the Philippine Consulate General has introduced the voluntary mentoring program to connect the graduates with prospective mentors who are experts in the graduates' chosen fields. Consul General Cristobal expressed hope that the one-year mentoring partnership would not just help the graduates enhance their skills and boost their careers but also strengthen their community engagement and collaboration

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among themselves and with the members of the Fil-Am community. Engr. Quiniones lauded the initiative, citing the important part his many great mentors had influenced his personal life and career.

The mentor-graduate partnership was presented to the audience, with Atty. Concepcion Montoya, partner, employment defense litigator, and counselor at Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, mentoring Mr. Philjay Solar, a law graduate from New England Law Boston; Prof. Emilia Zarco who is the Chair of the Department of Exercise Science and Associate Professor at Ruth and Ammon School of Education at Adelphi University, mentoring Ms. Felicity Duran, a graduate of Master of Public Health from New York University; Prof. Angela Reyes, a faculty in the program of Anthropology at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, mentoring Ms. Kristen Gayagoy, a graduate of International Studies with concentration on development, Asian and legal studies from City University of New York; multi-award winning theater producer Jhett Tolentino mentoring Ms. Iris Dumauual; and Mr. Raphael Ignacio, who is a business development consultant for government affairs consultancy Albright Stonebridge Group, mentoring Ms. Laura Vega, a political science graduate from Stony Brook University.

During the intermission, PGrad Susanna Labangan-Sabangan, who is also the female vocalist of the band Sounds of Manila, rendered "Once It's In Your Heart," a song from the band's album which was composed by legendary composer Cecile Azarcon.

A reception and networking event hosted by the Consul General followed after the program.

The PGradv2.0 was organized in cooperation with the Pilipino American Unity for Progress, Inc. (UNIPRO). Consul Arman Talbo and UNIPRO's Kristina London co-hosted the program. – END



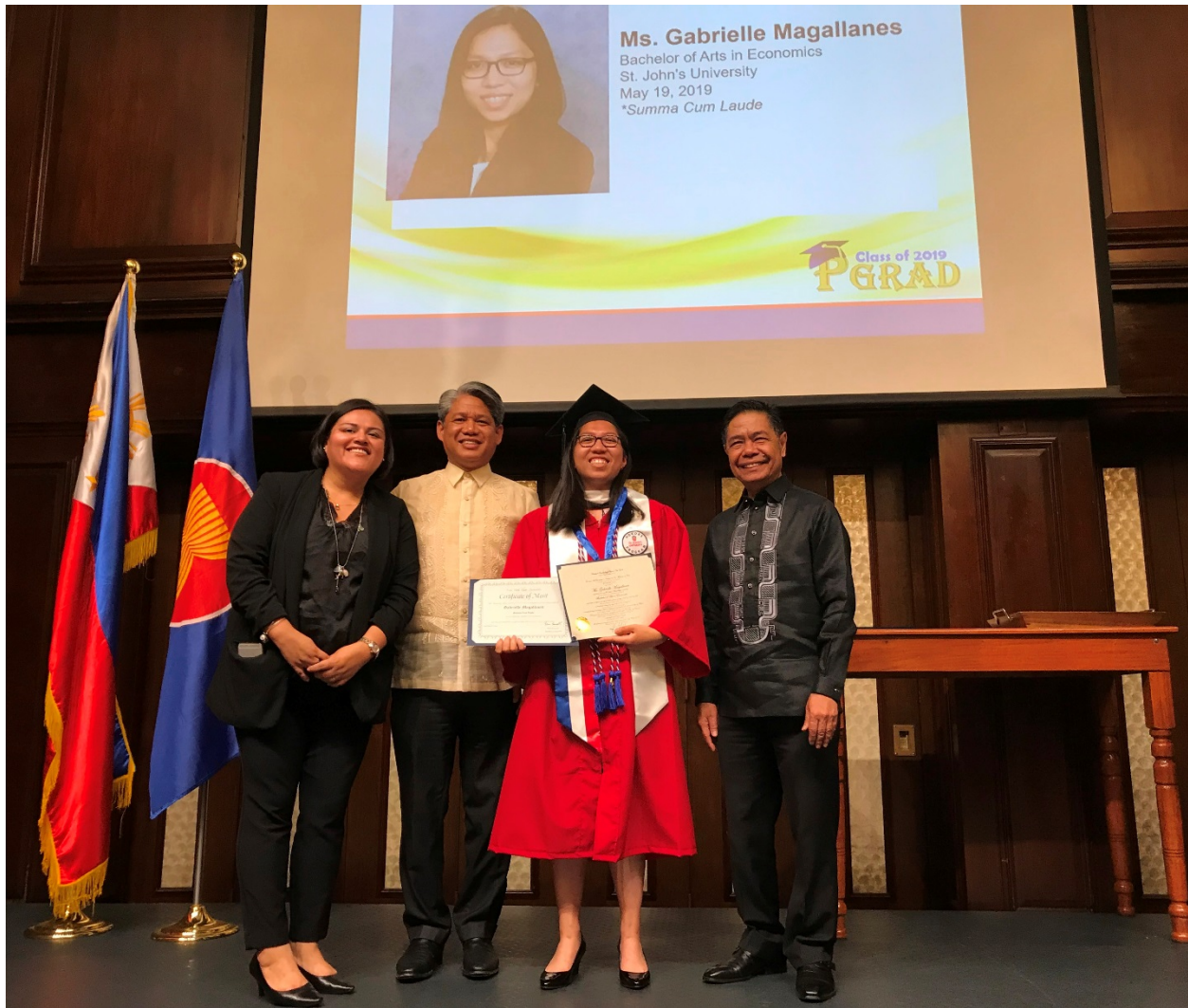
(Top left) Consul General Claro Cristobal welcomed the graduates and their family to the 7th PGrad. (Top right) Engr. Gil Quiniones delivers his keynote address. (Bottom) PGrad Class of 2019 in their academic regalia together with distinguished guests and family during the PGrad ceremony at the Philippine Center in New York. (Photos by PCGNY)

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Summa Cum Laude Jonathan Coronel receives Northern Star Award from Mr. Aries Dela Cruz of the Office of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. (Photo by PCGNY)

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Summa Cum Laude Gabrielle Magallanes (3rd from left) receives her PGrad diploma, medal and certificate of merit from (L-R) Angela Callisaya, Engr. Gil Quiniones, and Consul General Claro Cristobal. (Photo by PCGNY)



(3rd-6th from left) Felicity Duran, Kristen Gayagoy, Laura Vega, and Philjay Solar, who are participating in the PGrad's first mentoring program, are flanked by Engr. Quiniones (far left), Consul General Cristobal (2nd from left) and PGrad mentor Atty. Connie Montoya (far right). (Photo by NYPCG)