

Testimonial

“The scholarship I received from UPNAAI did more than help me continue my studies—it told me it was okay for me to dream.”

A few years ago, during the pandemic, I was newly admitted into UP's Nursing degree program. Like many students, I struggled with the online learning set-up, but for me, the challenges were compounded by my family's financial difficulties. Eventually, it took a toll on my mental health and I became an irregular student. As a result, when I reached my higher years, I was no longer covered by the Free Tuition Law. Despite these setbacks, I worked hard to recover academically, maintained my grades, and applied for scholarship opportunities whenever I could. Even so, tuition fees and daily living expenses remained a constant challenge.

To make ends meet, I applied for the university's tuition discount program and appealed multiple times, hoping to receive a full discount. Unfortunately, I was granted only a 60% discount because, under the university's asset-based assessment, my home had a washing machine and therefore, I cannot be given the full discount. At that time, and even up to the present, my father, who is a senior citizen, receives a pension of only Php 6,000.00 a month. It was impossible for me to pay the remaining 40% tuition fee on my own.

For many students, paying that remaining 40% of tuition might have been easy. But that wasn't the case for me. When I realized I couldn't pay for my tuition and risked stopping again, I felt like I had no one to turn to. I wondered if people like me, those born into families with very limited means, weren't allowed to dream big. I have felt exhausted, and unsure if I would be able to stay in the program.

To stay enrolled, I took a student loan, but that debt had always been on my mind. Then came the scholarship from UPNAAI. Because of the financial assistance, I was able to pay my student loan in full and enroll for the next semester. Just like that, one of the biggest hurdles in my life came crashing down. For the first time in a long while, I felt like I could be a normal student too—someone who could focus on learning rather than constantly worrying about how to access quality education.

The stipend also helped cover my daily expenses, including meals, dormitory costs, uniforms, and clinical supplies. It supported me during community duties, where nursing students often shoulder many of the expenses needed to implement health programs and activities.

Currently, I am about to begin my final year of nursing school. Reaching my fourth year is an opportunity I do not take for granted. Without the support of UPNAAI, my dream of becoming a nurse might have ended before it even had the chance to be realized. Nursing has always been more than a degree to me; it is a lifelong dream and a calling that I hope to fulfill through service to others. I am deeply grateful to UPNAAI for their trust and support.