

CSDFEA 2015 PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD
ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY ALYSSA GONZAGA

Good morning.

It is with a humble heart that I express my gratitude to the CSDFEA for this wonderful opportunity. I want to extend my thanks to my unfaltering family: my sister, for motivating me to always set the example; my mother, for sacrificing everything to help me achieve my goals; and my father, for always being present in my life, even if distance tried to tear us apart.

When I visited UC Berkeley for an event called Senior Weekend, I spent my time with a Filipino organization that made me feel welcome and loved. It is this environment that led me to the realization that I had a sense belonging at Berkeley. That is one of the beautiful things about being Filipino - belonging. Being such a small demographic in such a large and prestigious school, I aim to push the boundaries further, opening opportunities for other aspiring Filipino students such as myself. I believe that our people - headstrong and unwavering - can transcend racial and socioeconomic barriers. The Larry Itliong Scholarship Award is the first of many steps to this goal.

I wish all the awardees here the best in their endeavors, it is well deserved. If there is one thing that I retained from Senior Weekend, it is the term "isang bagsak" - if one falls, we all fall. If one rises, we all rise. Today, let us rise together and celebrate the accomplishments of the Filipino community! Thank you, God bless.