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Thank you from VISIONAR scholar and A-student Micaela

“My name is Micaela, I am studying Chemical Engineering at Universidad Tecnológica Nacional in San Francisco, Argentina. As I am getting close to my graduation, I would like to share some thoughts with VISIONAR supporters.

I am very proud to have maintained an A grade point average through my college years (in Argentina’s system, it is a 9/10 GPA), and VISIONAR has played a role in my academic achievement. VISIONAR provides not only financial assistance, but also mentoring and peer support. The relationship I developed with this group of fantastic people has been very motivating. In addition, VISIONAR introduced me to the idea of personal development by helping others, as one of the program’s requirements is to volunteer in our community. I learned to help others through my volunteering at Residence Alfonsina Storni (young women’s and girls’ shelter). I was faced with the challenging reality of girls and teenagers at the Residence and I learned the multiple aspects of giving, even if all I could give was a word of hope. This valuable experience I owe to VISIONAR.



MICAELA

On the academic front, I was fortunate to be selected to do research with Chemical Engineering doctoral fellows, and have been very passionate and happy about this collaboration that is now in its third year. I also had the opportunity to attend congresses, listen to

conferences and visit manufacturing sites, all experiences that have complemented my academic activity.

I can summarize my thoughts with two words: THANK YOU! Thanks to all VISIONAR donors and collaborators, to Gabriela, and to Atrapasuenos (local organization managing VISIONAR scholarships and mentoring), who have always been by my side.”



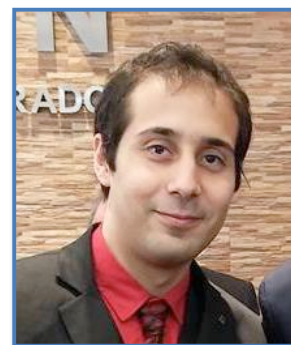
MICAELA and HER CLASS at UTN

Former VISIONAR scholar Maxi is now a doctoral candidate in Physics

Maxi shared with us an exciting update:

“Despite its ups and downs, 2017 was a positive year for me. It marked the end of one chapter and the beginning of another.

In 2017 I began a PhD program in Physics, an area I am truly passionate about. I was honored with a scholarship by the prestigious Comisión Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET) and I started my PhD work at Instituto de Física (IFIS) from Universidad Nacional del Litoral (UNL), in the city of Santa Fe (Argentina). My research focuses on an experimental and computational study of organometallic hybrid perovskites and their application to latest generation solar cells.



MAXI

It all started when the VISIONAR program made it possible for me to get a college degree and focus on getting high grades (GPA 8.79/10), without having to worry about financial issues. My academic performance, in turn, allowed me to apply and get accepted in the doctoral program.

Receiving a CONICET scholarship to go on to graduate school was at the same time a great honor and a challenge (CONICET is recognized as the best government institution of all Latinamerica according to SCImago). The scholarship allowed me to envision a bright future as a researcher, but it also meant going away from the people I love to continue to pursue my dream.

The weeks and months that followed were not always easy: I felt a great deal of pressure professionally and personally. Having to find an affordable place to live in Santa Fe, trying to keep up my studies (and falling behind at times), dealing with homesickness, all led me to question whether I had made the right decision. Fortunately, very good people gave me advice and slowly the situation improved. Sometimes those extreme situations make us shift our mindset, and that happened to me. I addressed one issue at a time. Once I passed the first two courses (Solids Physics and Electromagnetism), I was able to focus almost exclusively on my research. On the second half of the year, I was offered to take three other courses. Of note, by the end of the year, I had passed 5 of the required 8 courses to obtain the doctoral degree.



Maxi and his Mom – UTN award

Now I can say that my efforts have paid off. I have received the following recognition:

- An award by the Association of Students of Chemical Engineering
- An award by the Association of Engineers of the Province of Cordoba
- An award by the San Francisco City Council
- An award by the Universidad Tecnológica Nacional to the best students, presented by the National University Council in Buenos Aires

The greatest award, however, has been to see the pride and love of my family and my girlfriend.

Personally, I don't feel I own all this recognition. These accomplishments originated with my parents' support, the help from my grandparents, their effort in making sure we had food on the table and the opportunity to go to school, and the example set by my older sister. This recognition should also go to my teachers and professors who guided me, and to my life partner, a woman who has helped me become who I am today. These awards fall short of recognizing VISIONAR, Atrapasuenos, their members and the students helped by the

VISIONAR program who, just like me, were able to turn a dream or an idea into an opportunity to get an education, build a career and a future.

I would like to end by thanking the people that believed in me: Gabriela Mondino, who created the VISIONAR program, Flavia Lamberghini, my mentor and sponsor through all these years, Graciela Asis and Evelina Feraudo, who are no longer with us but gave us their time, their example and their caring guidance so that I could keep working hard for my goal, Ana Maria Aimasso, for her motivating spirit, her discernment, her character and her energy, and each and everyone who has become involved with VISIONAR, including the students, many of whom I am still in touch with. Thanks to all!"

The VISIONAR family is proud of Micaela and Maxi, and we wish them continued success. Their achievements were made possible by our generous donors, and for that, we are forever thankful!

To continue helping students like Micaela and Maxi, we need your help.

Please consider supporting one VISIONAR student through their school year, which represents USD \$1,525 in today's exchange rate. This amount helps pay for university fees, school supplies, books and transportation. As always, any amount is deeply appreciated and welcome.

You may make your donation at: <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/support-education-in-argentina/> and email me if you have questions: gmondino@gmail.com

Thank you for your support!

Gabriela

