



VISIONAR SCHOLARSHIPS – DECEMBER 2018 UPDATE

We end 2018 with a major milestone: **four VISIONAR students are graduating** and we couldn't be more proud! They are: Maria Jose (Psychopedagogy), Jesica (Electronic Engineering), Sofia (Chemical Engineering) and Micaela (Chemical Engineering). For this newsletter, VISIONAR manager Ana Maria Aimasso interviewed our four graduates about their experiences and plans for the future.

TRANSCRIPT of the INTERVIEW:

Ana Maria: **Hello girls. Today we bring you together as you are our 2018 VISIONAR graduates. I want to let you know that we are very proud of you reaching your goal. Please introduce yourselves.**

- I am Maria José and in December I will have my Psychopedagogy degree. I studied at FASTA University (San Francisco, Argentina).

- I am Jesica and I am taking my last steps as a student of Electronic Engineering at the Facultad Regional San Francisco de la Universidad Tecnológica Nacional.



Chemistry and horses, SOFIA's two passions

- I am Sofía and soon I will be a Chemical Engineer. I attended the same university as Jesica.

- I am Micaela and, just like Sofía, soon I will be a Chemical Engineer.

What are your thoughts regarding your college/university experience?

Sofía: I was fortunate to join a great research team three years ago. I gained experience not just as a researcher but also as an assistant profesor, which I consider a great accomplishment. Another important milestone for me was to be selected to participate in internships, which I have been doing for the last

two years.

Jesica: I will use a metaphor to define myself as a college student. I am like a hermit crab that, as it grows, it changes its Shell for a bigger one. Why do I use that metaphor? One day I decided to change my reality and I took on the challenge to pursue a degree in a field usually considered “for men”. I want to recognize VISIONAR and Atrapasuenos for supporting me in pursuing this goal. My accomplishments in these past few years include becoming a tutor (assistant professor) at the university. I was selected as a tutor in Mathematical Analysis, an experience



JESICA receiving diploma

that allowed me to grow as a professional. Later I changed shells and was elected to join the university’s Student Council. Later on I changed shells again and was offered a position in the Student Affairs Bureau. This role allowed me to gain experience in the planning and execution of interdisciplinary projects in collaboration with external partners including educational, cultural and social institutions at the local and state level. YET ANOTHER GREAT EXPERIENCE! And again, my motivation to grow prompted me to change into another, bigger shell. I presented an application and was selected as Field Project Assistant. Finally, in 2017 I was selected by the university dean to teach Mathematics and Physics to freshman students.

María José: My school work and my volunteer activities allowed me to grow, open my mind, and broaden my perspective. My academic activities helped me to develop my analytical and observational skills. The volunteering I did as part of the VISIONAR program led to my first paid employment. Now I am fully employed in the field that I love, I continue to study, I take care of my two kids, and the engine for all that is the VISIONAR scholarship that allowed me to discover and realize my potential.



MICAELA

Micaela: My overall assessment of my past few years is very good. I met great people and learned a lot. I also learned to get to know my own potential and how to manage stressful times.

Can you share some of your best memories from your years in university?

María José: My first moment of joy was when I received the VISIONAR scholarship, which helped me to continue with school. The other big joy was doing field work and applying what I had learned in real life cases.

Micaela: An unforgettable moment was the trip Sofia and I took to Mendoza, where we attended university for one semester. Another beautiful memory is when I had the opportunity to do research.

Jesica: every time I “changed into a bigger shell” (i.e. took on bigger challenges, as explained in the previous question) was a significant moment for me.

Sofía: The opportunity to spend a semester in Mendoza’s Universidad Tecnológica Nacional was a very enriching experience for me.

What advice would you offer to someone who is finishing high school and wants to go on to college in your field?

Micaela: I would suggest that they do their due diligence, look for information about the field, visit the university, talk to college students, and analyze the career possibilities offered in this field.

Sofía: I would tell them that Chemical Engineering is a beautiful field of study, that they should not quit, and that all they need is dedication and motivation. They don’t need to worry about being able to afford school, because there are scholarships like VISIONAR, based on merit and academic performance, that can help.

Jesica: I would tell them to go for it, that anything is possible. They should take advantage of opportunities to grow, to improve, and they should not procrastinate because time is precious and if you procrastinate, you will not get that time back. To girls who might want to pursue a career in Electronic Engineering, I would tell them to be confident, that this is not a career only for men, as it may be thought of by some.



MARIA JOSE, successful new graduate and mother of two

María José: I would tell them that Psychopedagogy is a field that allows one to discover one’s potential and that, whatever major they choose, they should aim for full realization of their own potential.

What are your plans for next year? And where do you see yourselves in 4-5 years?

Jesica: In the near future I see myself teaching in university as an assistant professor in Field Projects as well as teaching freshman courses. But that is not my limit so I will always be open to new opportunities and new ideas. I know that in the long term I will become an entrepreneur.

Sofía: In the short term I will continue doing research and I will look for a job in my field. In four to five years I see myself as a full time university professor.

María José: For now, I will continue studying and will pursue a higher degree. I would like to specialize in forensic and judicial psychopedagogy. In the longer term I see myself as a director of a psychopedagogy institute.

Micaela: My plans are to find a job where I can apply what I have learned, grow my career, and take care of myself financially.

What was your experience like as a VISIONAR scholarship recipient? What message would you like to pass along to donors who continue to support VISIONAR scholarships?

Micaela: The scholarship allowed me to cover expenses that my parents could not afford. I was able to focus on school without worrying about those expenses. To VISIONAR donors, I say thank you very much! You are helping train future professionals like myself.

María José: my VISIONAR scholarship was of great help. I am very thankful not only for the financial assistance but also because VISIONAR introduced me to volunteering and getting involved in my community. When I received the scholarship, I thought to myself: if people who don't know me (i.e. donors that are sending money for my scholarship) are helping me out, how can I not give a hand to others in need? I have not met VISIONAR donors, but I want to thank them from my heart because they helped me become who I am today. May God bless you.

Sofía: My VISIONAR scholarship allowed me to focus on school and not get distracted by having to get a job to support myself while studying. I dedicated my time to studying and doing research, which is my passion. To those who generously donate to VISIONAR, I will ask them to keep betting on young people with potential, because they are the future. And thank you because your support has allowed me to become a chemical engineer!

Jesica: I can't thank enough all the people that contribute to VISIONAR in terms of donations and beyond. Through this program, and through the Atrapasuenos association running VISIONAR, I have found friendship, support, and constant motivation.

Please consider supporting one VISIONAR student through the school year, which represents USD \$1,000 in today's exchange rate. This amount helps to 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/>

Thank you for your support!

Gabriela