



From the world to Kumamoto University

I Hope to Gain a Broad Perspective through the HIGO Program, and Contribute to Medicine in the Philippines with Pharmaceutical Chemistry

1st Year, Master's Program, Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences
Alim Nathan Ray, 1st year, HIGO Program Basic Course

Alim Nathan Ray, who came from the Philippines to Kumamoto in September 2013 to study in the HIGO Program, is engaged in various research projects to synthesize organic compounds of use in new drug development.

I performed wide-ranging research in chemistry at Ateneo de Davao University in the Philippines. My mentor at that time was the brother of Kumamoto University School of Pharmacy Assistant Professor Mary Ann Suico. Hearing much about the advanced research that is taking place at Kumamoto University, I gained a strong desire to learn there. After receiving my Bachelor's degree in Chemistry, I underwent the selection examination for the HIGO Program and came to Kumamoto University, where I am now engaged in research that includes the development of synthesis methods for compounds with potential in medicine. The laboratory to which I belong has about 20 members, of which I am the only foreign student. Our communication is nearly entirely in Japanese. The research is difficult, but the days I spend with fellow students pursuing the potentials of chemistry, hoping to create medicines of use to the world, are very exciting.

Kumamoto is an attractive city that beautifully harmonizes the urban and the natural, amid a mixture of past and present. With its many faculties, Kumamoto University has campuses all over the city, all with unique atmospheres that lend an air of history. My home city of Davao is a metropolis of about 1.45 million people in the south of the Philippines, and bears some resemblance to Kumamoto. An active volcano to the west of the city, Mount Apo, resembles Mount Aso in both name and atmosphere. Also, daily life water is supplied by groundwater as well.



To prepare for experiments, Nathan injects argon gas into a flask containing organic compounds after removing oxygen and steam.

In the HIGO Program, I'm able to not only study pharmaceuticals but can also gain broad knowledge about business, politics, economics, and other fields. At the Leading Forum 2013 sponsored by Osaka University in January of this year, three other HIGO students and I gave a presentation on the food-related rules of Islam known as halal, for which we received an award for excellence. From here on out, I hope to maintain a broad perspective as I pursue the possibilities of pharmaceutical chemistry and work to improve health and medicine in my home country.



At Leading Forum 2013, Japanese and foreign students conducted a presentation as a tag team, admirably winning an award.