1. What did receiving the APCDA scholarship and attending the 2026 Conference mean to you personally or professionally?

Being named an APCDA Scholar is an honor that is deeply meaningful to me because I share APCDA’s commitment to advancing career development and empowering people to navigate their paths with greater clarity, confidence, and purpose. I believe that so much good can be accomplished when people are given the guidance and opportunities they need to make informed decisions about their careers, education, and futures.

As a college educator in the Philippines, I see every day how career guidance and development can shape not only an individual's professional trajectory but also their sense of purpose and their capacity to contribute to society. My experience with APCDA has reinforced my belief that helping people discover and pursue meaningful paths is both a professional responsibility and a deeply rewarding form of service.

Being part of the APCDA community has opened doors that I might not otherwise have had access to. It has broadened my perspective beyond my immediate academic environment, connected me with an international community of professionals, and exposed me to opportunities that continue to shape my growth as an educator. Attending the 2026 Conference was a meaningful reminder that, while our contexts may differ, we share a common commitment to helping people build better futures. I return to my work with

renewed inspiration to bring these perspectives and opportunities to the students and communities I serve.

2. What was one valuable insight, skill, or connection you gained, and how do you hope to apply it to your work or studies?

One of the most valuable things I gained was a broader understanding of career development as a collaborative, lifelong process that extends beyond finding employment. It involves helping people recognize their strengths, navigate transitions, make intentional choices, and see possibilities that may not have been apparent to them before.

The conference also reminded me of the value of learning from professionals across countries, disciplines, and institutional settings. These international perspectives are especially meaningful in my work as a college educator and Program Chair for the Bachelor in Human Services program, where I strive to prepare students not only for professional opportunities but also for lives of meaningful contribution and service.

I hope to translate what I have learned into more responsive career development initiatives, stronger student support, and opportunities for international collaboration within my academic community. I am particularly interested in strengthening the connection between education, human services, and career development so that students can better understand their potential and make informed decisions about their futures. Ultimately, I hope that the opportunities APCDA has given me will create opportunities for others as well.

3. What would you say to someone considering applying for the APCDA 2027 Scholarship Program?

Apply with an open mind and a clear sense of purpose. You do not have to have everything figured out before taking this step. Sometimes, the opportunities that make the greatest difference in our careers begin with the willingness to learn, connect, and step beyond the boundaries of our familiar environments.

For me, APCDA has been more than a professional association. It has been a gateway to new perspectives, international connections, and possibilities that have enriched both my professional journey and the work I do as an educator. The scholarship is an opportunity not only to invest in your own development but also to discover how much more you can contribute to the people and communities you serve.

If you believe in helping people navigate their academic, career, and life journeys, I encourage you to apply. Come ready to learn, share your experiences, and build

relationships that extend beyond the conference itself. You may find that the greatest value of this opportunity lies not only in what you gain, but in what you will be able to give back.

I am grateful to APCDA for making this experience possible, and I hope to carry its spirit of collaboration, learning, and service into my work and into the lives of the students I have the privilege of guiding.

Joelle Dianne Venegas
Program Chair - Human Services
City College of San Jose del Monte

The APCDA 2026 Scholarship gave me an opportunity to learn, connect, and see career development from a broader perspective. In my role with CAREERsense@HELP, where I work closely with students and industry partners, the experience reminded me how meaningful our work can be in helping students navigate their future.
My advice to future applicants is simple: apply and give yourself the opportunity to grow. The people you meet, ideas you discover, and perspectives you gain can continue to influence your professional journey long after the conference.
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1. What did receiving the APCDA scholarship and attending the 2026 Conference mean to you personally or professionally?
Receiving the APCDA 2026 Scholarship was a meaningful milestone in my professional journey. In my role at CAREERsense@HELP, it gave me the opportunity to broaden my perspective on career development and reflect on how I can create greater impact for students through career support and industry engagement.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Tong Li Fern, who introduced me to APCDA, encouraged me to apply for the scholarship, and guided me throughout the application process. Her encouragement and support played an important part in giving me the confidence to pursue this opportunity.

2. What was one valuable insight, skill, or connection you gained, and how has it influenced, or how do you hope to apply it to your work?
One of my biggest takeaways was the value of connection and shared learning within the career development community. Meeting and learning from professionals with different experiences and perspectives inspired me to explore new approaches to student engagement, employer partnerships, and career development initiatives in my work.

3. What would you say to someone considering applying for the APCDA 2027 Scholarship Program?
Take the opportunity and apply. The scholarship is more than an opportunity to attend a conference. It gives you the chance to learn, connect with a wider professional community, exchange ideas, and return to your work with fresh perspectives. Sometimes one opportunity can open the door to many more.

1) Careers and Pathways Officer, Arethusa College, Brisbane, Australia
2) VET Pathway Engagement Officer, RD-VET , Australia
3) Vice President QLD division- Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA)

1. What did receiving the APCDA scholarship and attending the 2026 Conference mean to you personally or professionally?

Receiving the APCDA scholarship and attending the 2026 Conference was a valuable opportunity both for my personal growth and professional connection. The theme of inclusion resonated strongly with my work supporting young people at Arethusa College and my leadership role as Vice President of CDAA. It reinforced my commitment to advocating for equitable career opportunities and ensuring every individual feels valued and empowered to pursue their future.

2. What was one valuable insight, skill, or connection you gained, and how has it influenced, or how do you hope to apply it to your work or studies?

One valuable insight was the importance of making inclusion practical in career development by recognising individual strengths rather than focusing on limitations. For example in my role, helping a young person explore work experience or employment

opportunities based on their interests, abilities, and support needs can build confidence and open doors to meaningful career pathways. I hope to continue to apply this perspective in my practice and through my role by encouraging greater awareness, collaboration and inclusive approaches across the career development profession.

3. What would you say to someone considering applying for the APCDA 2027 Scholarship Program?

I would encourage anyone considering applying to take the opportunity. The scholarship offers more than conference attendance.It provides valuable connections, fresh perspectives and inspiration that can make a lasting difference to your professional practice and the people you support. Come with an open mind and a willingness to learn, connect and grow.