Miguel Ricardo R. Leung (GWA: 1.0375)
BS Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, College of Science

Mao, as he is also called, describes his degree as trying “to understand how living things work in terms of the molecules they are composed of. Understanding the roles of molecules like DNA and proteins in our cells can help us better understand what exactly happens when things go wrong, such as in cases of disease. In some cases, we can try to manipulate organisms at the level of their DNA to help solve problems in agriculture and aquaculture. With the pressures of a growing population and climate change, these efforts will be very important in years to come.”

As a young scientist, he “does science because it’s both interesting and exciting,” and not really like the “all work, no play” many may think it is. He says most of the time, it feels more like play, “you get to ask questions, try many different things, and learn along the way.” He says he likes talking to people about science “because it means I get to share something I’m passionate about. When it comes to science education and science communication, I think that sharing the enthusiasm for science is just as important as sharing the knowledge itself.” He says he wants to pursue a career in scientific research, with the ultimate goal of helping advance Philippine basic science. In the process, he “hopes to get the chance to inspire and empower young scientists in the same way our mentors in UP did for us.”

Mao’s interests outside science include sci-fi and fantasy literature, comic books and graphic novels. He also likes animated films, Pokémon, and Taylor Swift’s music, among others, and cute animals.