



The Empowered Foundation

SCHOLAR HANDBOOK

Education • Empowerment • Accountability • Service

**I show you → We do it together → You do it → You teach
someone else.**

Updated Master Edition • 2026

Rodolfo Edora & Benjamin Sangalang Scholarship Program

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1. Welcome & Purpose

The Empowered Foundation exists to do more than help students pay for college. Our goal is to help young students grow into capable, responsible, compassionate adults who live the example of empowerment and reflect the culture of the Foundation throughout their lives.

Education is the vehicle. Empowerment is the destination.

An Empowered Scholar learns to communicate, think, ask questions, solve problems, accept responsibility, recover from mistakes, help others, and use opportunity wisely. The Foundation's success is not measured only by graduation. It is measured by the kind of person the scholar becomes and the good that person later creates for others.

The Foundation is faith-friendly and non-sectarian. Scholars are expected to treat people with dignity and respect regardless of background.

2. The Empowered Culture

Our culture is built around a simple belief: opportunity creates responsibility.

Integrity — tell the truth and do the right thing even when it is difficult.

Communication — speak up, ask questions, acknowledge messages, and do not hide problems.

Accountability — own your choices, mistakes, deadlines, and recovery.

Initiative — attempt solutions instead of waiting for someone else to act.

Teachability — accept guidance, feedback, correction, and new ways of thinking.

Resilience — difficulty is a reason to adjust and grow, not disappear.

Family & Community — empowerment begins at home and expands outward.

Service — knowledge and opportunity become more meaningful when shared.

Gratitude & Stewardship — treat Foundation resources and opportunities with care.

Pay It Forward — help the next person when you are able, in ways that are meaningful and sustainable.

3. What It Means to Be an Empowered Scholar

An Empowered Scholar is not expected to be perfect. An Empowered Scholar is expected to participate in their own growth.

The Foundation distinguishes between struggling and refusing to engage. A scholar who says, “I am struggling; I tried this; I need help,” is practicing empowerment. Silence, avoidance, dishonesty, and repeated refusal to participate are inconsistent with the program.

The Empowered Growth Model

I show you. The Foundation teaches and models the skill.

We do it together. The scholar practices with guidance.

You do it. The scholar increasingly takes responsibility and acts independently.

You teach someone else. The scholar shares knowledge, leadership, opportunity, or support with another person.

Help should progressively decrease as capability increases. The purpose of support is independence—not permanent dependence.

4. Scholarship Program & Eligibility

The Rodolfo Edora & Benjamin Sangalang Scholarship Program may award up to five new scholarships per academic year, subject to available resources and the number of applicants who satisfy all requirements.

The regular new-scholar intake is intended for students entering their first year of college in the applicable academic year.

Applicants must satisfy the Foundation's published academic, financial, documentation, interview, character, and program requirements.

The Foundation is not obligated to fill every available scholarship position.

Other scholarships may be accepted, but scholars must disclose them so Foundation support can be coordinated responsibly.

Continuing support is subject to ongoing eligibility, academic progress, participation, communication, and responsible stewardship.

Selection and continuation decisions are made under Foundation governance and oversight. *The Foundation seeks scholars who demonstrate both need and potential. Grades and income matter, but so do responsiveness, honesty, initiative, communication, follow-through, service mindset, and willingness to grow.*

5. Scholar–Family Partnership

A scholar's first community is the family. The Foundation therefore views parents or guardians as important partners in the scholar's development while also helping the scholar become an independent young adult.

Scholar responsibilities at home

Contribute to the household in age-appropriate ways, even when contribution is not financial. Respect family sacrifices and communicate honestly about school and Foundation responsibilities.

Share useful knowledge and skills with siblings and family members.

Grow toward responsible independence rather than expecting others to solve every problem.

Parent/guardian partnership

Encourage attendance, communication, academic effort, and follow-through.

Support the scholar without speaking for the scholar when the scholar is capable of speaking for themselves.

Help the scholar think through problems rather than automatically solving them.

Communicate legitimate family circumstances that materially affect the scholar's ability to participate.

Support the long-term goal of independence, responsibility, service, and graduation.

The Foundation, scholar, and family are partners. The Foundation cannot want the scholar's success more than the scholar and family do.

6. Communication & Meeting Standards

Communication is a core scholarship responsibility because it is also a life skill.

Important Foundation messages should ordinarily be acknowledged within 48 hours, even if the complete answer will take longer.

If a scholar does not understand a request, the expected response is to ask a question—not remain silent.

If more time is needed, the scholar should communicate the reason and a realistic completion date.

Required meetings are mandatory unless excused in advance or an emergency makes advance notice impossible.

Scholars should participate personally rather than relying on one scholar or a parent to speak for everyone.

Legitimate connectivity, school, work, transportation, health, family, or emergency barriers will be considered reasonably.

Foundation principle: You are not in trouble for communicating a problem. You may face consequences for repeatedly ignoring the problem.

7. Academic Standards & Support

Scholars are expected to maintain an overall academic average of at least 80%, remain in good standing, and submit required report cards or academic records.

A grade below 80% does not automatically mean scholarship termination. It triggers support and accountability.

Academic Support Status

The scholar meets privately with the Foundation to identify the cause of the decline.

The scholar develops an Academic Improvement Plan with specific actions, resources, deadlines, and check-ins.

The scholar is expected to use available school resources, communicate with instructors when appropriate, study consistently, and ask for help before problems become crises.

Continuation is evaluated based on grades together with effort, honesty, communication, participation in interventions, and measurable progress.

Late or unavailable grades may result in conditional renewal or a reasonable grace period rather than automatic loss of support.

The Foundation cares about the recovery process. A scholar's response to difficulty is part of becoming empowered.

8. Empowered Accountability & Consequences

Consequences are corrective before they are punitive. The goal is to teach scholars how to recover from mistakes, communicate, take responsibility, and become increasingly independent.

Level	Typical Concern	Foundation Response
1 — Coaching	First missed meeting, unanswered important message, late requirement, or academic concern	Private conversation; identify what happened; scholar states what they will do differently.
2 — Improvement Plan	Repeated behavior or unresolved academic/participation concern	Written 30–60 day Scholar Improvement Plan with actions, deadlines and check-ins; family involved when appropriate.
3 — Probation	Continued nonresponsiveness, repeated missed requirements, or failure to follow the plan	Formal probation for a defined period; increased check-ins and documented expectations.
4 — Discretionary Benefit Review	Continued refusal despite coaching/probation	Nonessential or discretionary benefits/opportunities may be paused while core educational support is reviewed carefully.
5 — Scholarship Review	Persistent pattern despite substantial intervention	Formal scholar/family meeting; Foundation reviews whether continued participation remains appropriate.
6 — Separation	Repeated refusal to communicate, participate, or fulfill responsibilities after reasonable intervention	Scholarship may be discontinued following documented review and consistent application of policy.

Serious misconduct involving dishonesty, misuse of Foundation funds or property, falsified documents, threats, or other substantial violations may move directly to a higher level of review depending on severity.

The Foundation will consider context and legitimate barriers. Accountability should be consistent, documented, proportionate, and focused on growth.

9. Financial Support & Stewardship

Foundation funds must be used solely for approved charitable and educational purposes. The Foundation maintains oversight over scholarship resources.

Tuition and approved school expenses should be paid directly to the educational institution or authorized vendor whenever practicable.

Unrestricted direct cash or cash-equivalent distributions to scholars are prohibited under Foundation policy.

The program may provide an approved PHP 5,000 per-term educational stipend/support arrangement for supplies, uniforms, or other approved needs, administered under Foundation controls and documentation requirements.

Scholars must provide requested enrollment records, assessments, receipts, acknowledgments, or other documentation.

Foundation support is not a personal entitlement and may not be transferred, sold, pledged, or used for unauthorized purposes.

Scholars must disclose other scholarship support to avoid duplication and permit responsible coordination of resources.

10. Foundation Assets & Gadgets

Devices or equipment purchased by the Foundation remain Foundation property unless formally transferred in writing.

Assets are provided for approved educational purposes and must be cared for responsibly.

Scholars may be required to sign an asset acknowledgment, follow security/device rules, and return equipment when requested.

Loss, damage, misuse, sale, transfer, or unauthorized use must be reported immediately. The Foundation generally does not reimburse prior personal purchases unless specifically approved under a written exception consistent with Foundation policy.

11. Scholar Development & Livelihood Learning

Empowerment extends beyond the classroom. The Foundation may offer development activities involving communication, leadership, budgeting, entrepreneurship, problem-solving, teamwork, livelihood learning, and practical adult responsibilities.

Participation is intended to teach scholars how to create opportunity rather than depend indefinitely on assistance. Activities are educational and service-based; they are not a requirement to perform uncompensated labor for the Foundation.

- Come prepared and participate personally.
- Research before asking others to solve the problem.
- Present findings and explain your reasoning.
- Learn basic budgeting, recordkeeping, organization and decision-making.
- Rotate responsibilities so every scholar develops capability.
- Reflect on what worked, what failed, and what should change.

12. Service & Lifelong Pay-It-Forward Commitment

Paying it forward is a culture and a lifelong commitment—not a debt owed to the Foundation and not a requirement to repay scholarship dollars.

Scholars are encouraged to begin now. Service can happen through time, knowledge, mentorship, kindness, leadership, helping family members, tutoring another student, sharing opportunities, volunteering, or eventually providing financial support when personally able.

The Foundation may encourage graduates to remain involved in community service and scholar mentorship, including a post-graduation service period, but service should reflect reciprocal stewardship rather than forced labor.

The ultimate expression of the Empowered model is simple: someone helped you grow; you become capable; then you help someone else grow.

13. Renewal, Probation, Suspension & Separation

Scholarships are intended to support scholars through college subject to continuing eligibility. Current scholars do not reapply as new applicants each year; continuation is reviewed through the renewal process.

- Enrollment and good standing must be verified.
- Academic records and required documentation must be submitted.
- The 80% academic expectation applies together with the improvement pathway described in this handbook.
- Scholars must remain engaged in communication, meetings, and required development activities.
- Probation is an opportunity to correct a pattern, not a declaration that the scholar has failed.
- Separation should ordinarily occur only after documented intervention, unless serious misconduct warrants immediate review.

Where practical and appropriate, the Foundation will communicate the concern, expected correction, review period, available support, and consequence of continued noncompliance in writing.

14. First Cohort Developmental Transition

The Foundation's first scholar cohort entered while the Empowered program itself was still developing. Expectations, systems, and the meaning of empowerment became more defined through the Foundation's experience working with these scholars.

Accordingly, the first cohort will be treated developmentally. The Foundation's emphasis is on teaching, coaching, scaffolding, and helping these scholars build the skills now expected of future cohorts. The Foundation will not seek to punish scholars retroactively for standards that were not previously clear.

This does not eliminate accountability. As the scholars grow and expectations are taught clearly, they are expected to demonstrate increasing independence, responsiveness, participation, and ownership.

The standard for the first cohort is: If you struggle, tell us. If you do not understand, ask. If you make a mistake, own it. If your grades fall, participate in the plan. Silence, avoidance, dishonesty, and repeated refusal to grow are not acceptable.

15. Scholar & Parent Commitments

Scholar commitment

As an Empowered Scholar, I understand that this scholarship is both an opportunity and a responsibility. I commit to communicate, ask questions, meet requirements, work toward academic success, care for Foundation resources, participate in my own growth, contribute positively to my family and community, and carry the pay-it-forward culture with me beyond graduation.

Parent/guardian commitment

As the parent/guardian of an Empowered Scholar, I commit to support my student's education and growth, encourage communication and accountability, allow my student to develop independence, communicate significant barriers when necessary, and work in partnership with the student and Foundation toward graduation and responsible adulthood.

Foundation commitment

The Empowered Foundation commits to provide opportunity, guidance, reasonable support, clear expectations, fair accountability, and respect. We will not expect perfection. We will expect honesty, effort, communication, participation, and growth.

Appendix A. Empowered Growth Model

1. I SHOW YOU

Foundation models, explains, and teaches.

2. WE DO IT TOGETHER

Scholar practices with guidance and feedback.

3. YOU DO IT

Scholar demonstrates increasing independence and accountability.

4. YOU TEACH SOMEONE ELSE

Scholar turns personal growth into service and shared opportunity.

Appendix B. Academic Improvement Plan

Scholar: _____

Term / Academic Year:

Current Average:

Courses/Areas of Concern:

What contributed to the difficulty?

What have I already tried?

Actions I will take:

School resources I will use:

Foundation support requested:

Check-in dates:

Target / evidence of progress:

Appendix C. Scholar Improvement Plan

Concern requiring improvement:

What happened?

Scholar's explanation:

Expected behavior:

Specific actions:

Deadline(s):

Support/resources available:

Review date:

Evidence of improvement:

Outcome:

Appendix D. Meeting / Communication Recovery Plan

Acknowledge the missed message/meeting and take responsibility.

Explain the barrier honestly and briefly.

Obtain the information or action missed.

State what system you will use to prevent recurrence.

Complete the agreed follow-up by the new deadline.

Example principle: Do not disappear because you are embarrassed, confused, late, or struggling. Communicate and recover.

Appendix E. Annual Acknowledgment

We have reviewed the current Scholar Handbook and understand the expectations, support systems, accountability process, academic standards, communication requirements, family partnership, stewardship obligations, and pay-it-forward culture of The Empowered Foundation.

Scholar Name: _____

Scholar Signature:

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date: _____

Foundation Representative:

Signature: _____

Date: _____