When Saturnino Fernandez travels to the Spanish village of his 100-year-old grandmother this summer it will be the culmination of several months of celebration. Family and friends will travel to Tabuyo del Monte, where Satur’s mother and grandparents were born and raised. There, they will revel in three days worth of events, topped off in grand style by his wedding to his fiancée, Kara Matarrese, in a beautiful church built in the 1700s. The wedding comes on the heels of his graduation from the University at Albany Weekend MBA Program.

Satur, as he is called by those who know him well, first heard about the Weekend MBA Program on WNPR, his favorite radio station. Satur thought the program was an amazing opportunity, and the weekend-focused nature of the schedule really appealed to him. The idea of working in a cohort of his peers was also intriguing to him because of the practical application that it has to the business world. “In business you have to work with other people, so working as a team in the program made sense,” he said. That attitude led him to apply for the Graduate Academic Achievement Award-Weekend MBA, which he won.

The award recognizes a Weekend MBA student who excels academically and demonstrates leadership and involvement in the School of Business, the University community, and the professional community. Community building is second nature to Satur, who has spent a significant amount of time volunteering and fundraising. He uses his love of running to raise money for causes he cares about, including breast cancer, ovarian cancer and literacy. He has also done hands-on volunteering both in this country and in Peru, including a stint at Haley House in Boston, which he calls one of the most rewarding experiences of his life. “I will have that house in my heart forever. We were 10 people living there from all around the world. We were involved in so many things in the community and we helped other people so much that I feel my life is so rewarded, like preparing breakfast and lunch for homeless people and giving clothes to very poor people so they could go to interviews and have something nice to wear for special occasions with their family,” he said. “We also met every week to discuss our problems and find solutions as a family. I felt like everybody heard me and empowered me. It helped me to find myself in the world, and also the importance and impact of helping other people.”

One of the Spaniard’s other greatest sources of pride is his extensive history of travel to 18 different countries, including Estonia, Guatemala, the Czech Republic, Hungary, France, and the Dominican Republic. He also spent four months studying in Lappeenranta, Finland. “I am very proud that I have visited so many countries, met so many people, and experienced their cultures,” he said. Because of this, last year’s Weekend MBA international trip to Munich, Germany and Salzburg, Austria really appealed to Satur and helped him add to his country count. He observed, “It was an amazing experience to go with everyone together and visit other companies in other places.”

Satur, a 2012 cohort member, says his work as a Purchasing and Industrial Development Engineer for SEPSA-ALBATROS North America has really benefited from his work in the Weekend MBA Program by boosting his
management skills and giving him a much better view of the “whole” of running a business, not just his part. It has also helped him to be understood. Since English is not his primary language, the opportunity to present to his cohort members every two weeks let him practice his language and his presentation skills to give them a boost.

SEPSA-ALBATROS is growing, Satur says, which will open up new opportunities and new positions. Satur plans to grow with them. “There are two people in my department now,” he said.” We’re hoping to have between five and eight in the future.”

Speaking of the future, Satur thinks the program will also help him reach another of his dreams – opening his own consulting company.

Satur says the two years he spent in the Weekend MBA Program have been very tough, but totally worthwhile. He comments, “There are many projects and lots to study, but I enjoyed every second of it and I am going to miss it so much!” For right now though, he doesn’t have the time to miss it. He’s too busy living in the moment, counting down the days until he says “I do” to the girl with “the cute face and charming smile” that made him fall in love.

For additional information on the program, please contact Program Director Don Purdy at dpurdy@albany.edu, at 518.442.4964, or at @UAlbanyMBA.