This is a unique moment in our history: what we do today matters. In the midst of our global health crises, we can make a difference to support our emerging leaders — our college-going students — as they address the challenges of COVID-19 while forging ahead in their journey to attain their baccalaureate degrees. In this quarter’s Kūkulu Kaiāulu Hō‘ike Hapahā Makahiki (Quarterly Impact Report) Winter 2022, you’ll meet three of our students whose lives you are changing.

Matthew Isami Schaefer, Mililani High School, 2021, UHWO Chancellor Scholar majoring in Business Administration. He is focusing on marketing.

Mikaela Briones, Wa’ianae High School, 2020, Roy and Hilda Takeyama Scholar majoring in Creative Media. Her dream is to give back to her community as a teacher-leader.

Skye Sachiko Yasuda, Waipahu High School, 2021, UH Presidential Scholar majoring in Education. Her dream is to be an elementary school teacher on the west side.

These students represent the voices of all our students who understand the opportunities they have to fuse disciplinary knowledge with their own cultural and familial stories, traditions and practices to build stronger communities, to protect and manage our island’s natural resources, to build sustainable food systems, and to forge climate resiliency policies and practices. Our students are committing to creating 21st century careers through which they will strengthen and uplift their families and communities.

There are many ways that you can support our students to overcome barriers and to become leaders in their communities. We hope that this issue of our quarterly report inspires you to think of how you might become more active in supporting UH West O‘ahu’s community of diverse learners!

Equity and Access Scholarship

Nearly one-third of all UH West O‘ahu students are Pell Recipients, and a quarter are first generation — or the first in their families — to attend college. The UH Equity and Access Fund is a bridge for students who are first in their families to attend college. It reaches into our island communities where college attendance is not a foregone conclusion. It lifts up our friends and neighbors who make UH campuses the most diverse in the nation. This fund supports students who:

- Demonstrate financial need;
- Are the first generation in their family to attend college; or
- Are one of UH’s under-represented student populations.

Preference will be given to Hawai‘i residents.

Visit: www.uhfoundation.org/scholarships/equity-access

First-Generation Students at UH

Note: First-generation students refer to those who self-reported being the first in their immediate family to attend college. Data source: UH Institutional Research & Analysis Office, Fall 2020.
Matthew Isami Schaefer could not contain his excitement when he found out he was a recipient of the UH West O‘ahu Chancellor’s Scholarship.

“I was so overwhelmed when I received the news … I jumped out of my chair with joy in the middle of one of my high school classes,” recalled Schaefer, who graduated in May 2021 from Mililani High School.

The scholarship is awarded to Hawai‘i high school resident graduates with a 3.5 cumulative GPA and evidence of academic achievement, leadership, and community service.

“The Chancellor’s Scholarship means a lot to me, as I don’t have to burden my family with having to assist a fourth child through college,” Schaefer said. “Especially with how tough the times have been due to COVID-19, this scholarship has really allowed me to put one step forward, towards learning to be more responsible and independent.”

Schaefer said he has a love for learning, in part stemming from an Advanced Placement Biology science project during his junior year of high school. The project earned him and his partner first-place honors in the Earth and Environmental Sciences division at the 2020 (Virtual) Hawai‘i State Science and Engineering Fair.

“Through this experience, it’s really helped shape me into the student I am today,” he said.

Schaefer looks forward to continuing his educational journey and pursuing his academic aspirations at UH West O‘ahu, where he is majoring in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing.

Hometown: Mililani
Degree: Business Administration/Marketing