



# Aloha mai kākou!

When I began my teaching career, as a pre-k/kindergarten teacher, I vividly recall my first open house watching one of my kindergarten students, Sam, and his grandma sitting in our reading nook. Sam was “reading” a picture book to his grandma and both were laughing and hugging. Sam’s brilliance, the warmth of their togetherness, and the delight of learning shown brightly. It was this moment (and many similar moments to follow) that reaffirmed my career choice—I am a teacher. I am so very proud of our UH West O’ahu teacher graduates! Their satchels are filled with both theories and practical skills, ideals and enthusiasm, passion and aloha!

In this quarter’s Kūkulu Kaiāulu Hō’ike Hapahā Makahiki (Quarterly Impact Report) Spring 2023, we meet graduate and secondary education teacher Lydia Saffery, who is giving back to her Mākaha community by recognizing the importance of volition and empowerment ensuring that students have “choice and voice in the classroom.” Tyson Arasato was a substitute custodian at Leihōkū Elementary School in Wai’anae, but he was called to the classroom. He said about his UH West O’ahu teacher preparation experience, “It helped me to build confidence as a teacher and also made me feel validated as every school I visited showed interest in hiring me.” Today he is a biology teacher at Wai’anae High School. A hallmark of our teacher preparation program is the opportunity students have to learn and practice in classrooms, in schools, in different districts. This diversity of experiences was praised by current student Trisha Mae Guillermo. She is an elementary education candidate living her passion to make a difference in her students’ lives.

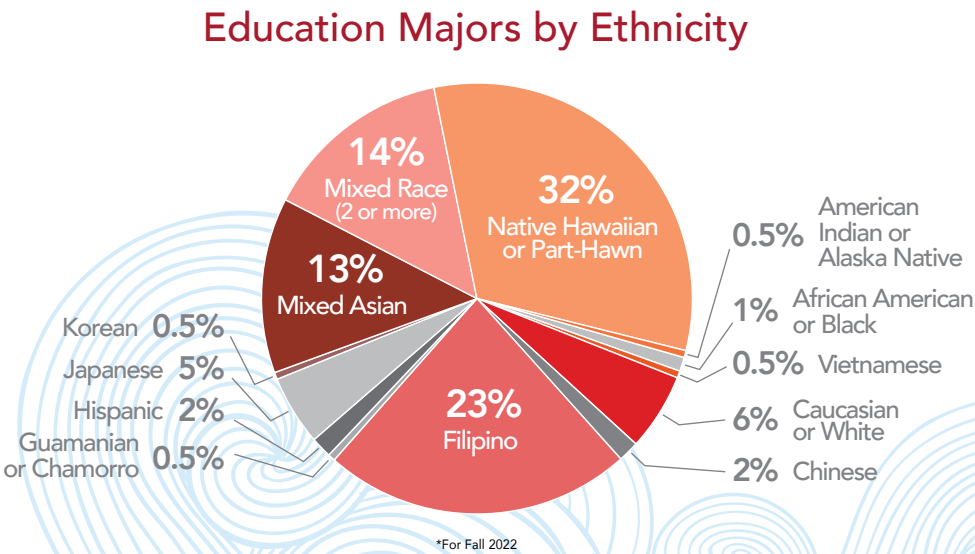
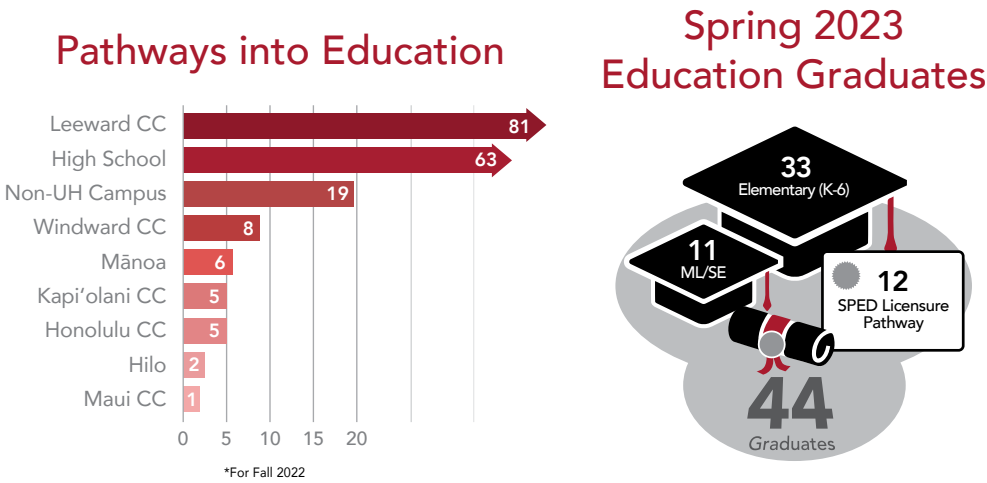
Being a teacher is the noblest of all life callings. I am most proud of our professors and staff who work with great intention, enthusiasm, and knowledge. I see much “learning through, and with, delight!”

There are many ways that you can support our teacher preparation program and our future teachers to overcome financial barriers and become educational leaders in our 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!

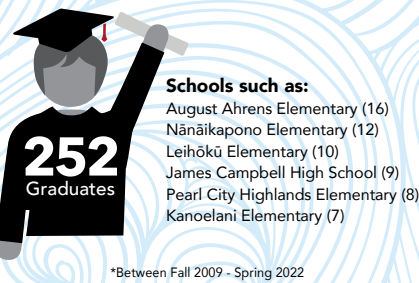
E mālama pono!

Maenette K.P. Ah Nee-Benham  
Chancellor, UH West O’ahu

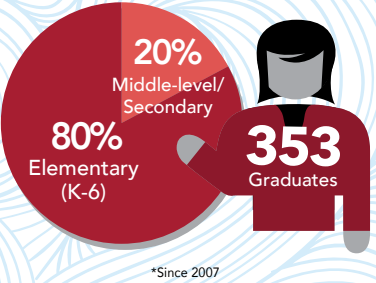
## Education by the Numbers



### Confirmed Teaching in Hawai’i DOE Schools



### Education Alumni



Spring 2023

# Kūkulu Kaiāulu *Building Community* Hō’ike Hapahā Makahiki Quarterly Impact Report



UNIVERSITY of HAWAI’I  
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## A positive change in students' lives

When Trisha Mae Guillermo was growing up, she didn't have the best consistency in her personal life.

"It was not until I met one teacher who became that consistent variable for me," recalled Guillermo, who at age 2 moved to Kalihi from Ilocos Norte, Philippines, with her mother and older sister. "I did not know how much one person can make a change in a person's life."

Today Guillermo, 21, is pursuing a career in education — wanting to become that same kind of teacher who could make that same kind of positive change in her students' lives. She graduates this semester from UH West O'ahu with a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education.

"I have had star professors who have touched my heart in all learning areas that inspired me to be the teacher that I currently am now," Guillermo said. "Given the opportunity to teach at different placements around the island, I was able to grasp the different school cultures around me."

Different field placements equaled different mentors, said Guillermo, who added she believes she "took a trait from each mentor," which helped her develop as a teacher.

"Being in UH West O'ahu's Education Program opened my eyes to different things about my career that I have never considered before I started college," she said. "My mindset has definitely opened up because of the support and push that I received from my professors."

While Guillermo hopes to teach at Shafter Elementary School in Honolulu, where she has grown to love the school culture and appreciate the vision of the school, she is also open to working in schools in Kalihi, she said.

"I whole-heartedly understand many of the circumstances of need where I come from," Guillermo said. "I would love to help my community in every way possible."



## A community-based learning approach

Years ago while cleaning a classroom as a sub custodian at Leihōkū Elementary School in Wai'anae, Tyson Arasato helped a group of teachers who were trying to play a song on the 'ukulele for a May Day performance.

"I was asked to help the 'Ukulele Club and that's when I had my first experience working with students," Arasato recalled. "I fell in love with it and eventually the former principal of that school, Randall Miura, convinced me to enroll in classes to get my degree."

In 2020, Arasato received a Bachelor of Education, with a focus in Biology, from UH West O'ahu. Today he is a biology teacher at Wai'anae High School, where he graduated in 2007.

Arasato, 34, said UH West O'ahu "was the perfect school," strongly influencing him with its community-based learning approach. Its teaching program was also the only program that allowed Arasato to have control over where he wanted to complete his student teaching hours, he said.

"I was fortunate to student teach with my former teacher and mentor (at Wai'anae High), Dana Hoppe," he said. "This was pivotal in my development as a teacher due to the fact that a few months after I graduated, I took over her teaching lines as she moved on to another position at our school."

Arasato continued, "Beyond that, Kumu Cathy Ikeda (assistant professor of Middle Level and Secondary English) had a candidate program that focused on understanding how to teach local students and cared about the development of all the teacher candidates."

Arasato said he has fond memories of his time student teaching while at UH West O'ahu.

"It helped me to build confidence as a teacher and also made me feel validated as every school I visited showed interest in hiring me," he said.

## Student Empowerment through choice and voice

UH West O'ahu alum Lydia Saffery, a Wai'anae High School teacher, was one of 12 literacy educators from across the United States to receive the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) 2021 Early Career Educator of Color Leadership Award.

Honorees benefit from professional learning opportunities, mentorship, and access to a network of peers from across the country, according to the NCTE website.

"I was excited to use the resources and mentorship that was afforded to us through this award to benefit the students at Wai'anae High School," Saffery said.

Being able to provide for her students in such a way is meaningful for Saffery, who is from Mākaha. Saffery said she wanted to become a teacher "because I wanted a career that would allow me to give back to the community that raised me."

Saffery graduated in 2018 from UH West O'ahu with a Bachelor of Education in Secondary Education and a Bachelor of Arts in English.

"My main goal as a teacher is to empower students through the instruction in my classroom and my interactions with my professional community," Saffery said.

Saffery said UH West O'ahu's program instilled the instructional values of student empowerment through "choice and voice in the classroom" — something she carried with her into her teaching practice.

"As a student at UH West O'ahu, I was trained to curate materials and create classroom experiences that put students' experiences — as children of Hawai'i — at the center of instruction," she said, allowing students to be active, empowered participants.

Saffery continued, "As a graduate of UH West O'ahu, I know how to use my community and professional resources to obtain materials for the students and training for myself and other teachers. ... Students benefit when all teachers at my school are given opportunities to expand our practice."

