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Aloha and congratulations to the classes of 2020 & 2021!

I wish I was standing on the stage congratulating you at the Vidinha Stadium. Unfortunately this is not the case as we are unable to offer an in person graduation, and will offer a drive thru celebration instead.

My congratulations to you come with even more meaning this year as you have faced more challenges than any other classes before you, and you have risen to new heights to meet them. You truly embody the theme of this year's commencement:

“Ka ipukukui pio ‘ole i ke Kaua‘ula”
The light that will not go out in spite of the blowing of the Kau wa'ula wind.

According to the “‘Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings by Mary Kavena Pukui, the Kaua‘ula wind is a powerful mountain wind, often destructive, that blows at Lahaina, Maui. This fierce wind can be compared to all we have endured and continue to experience due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite unforeseen and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, you, the ipu kukui pio‘ole(the light that will not go out), remained focused on accomplishing your goals and you have succeeded, even excelling. The faculty, staff and I are humbled by your accomplishments.

We look to you as our future leaders in an uncertain world. We do not know the challenges that our island community, our state, our nation, and all peoples will face in light of the pandemic. But, we do know that together, we can meet the future.

It is a privilege for me as your chancellor to offer these congratulatory words and to wish you well upon your future endeavors.

Stay safe, stay healthy and be well.

E mālama pono.