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Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts
Graduating Class of 2021

Five Years,

To me, and probably everyone I know, family is everything—if the humongous family line I have doesn't give that away, the fact that I was a caretaker for the monarch of the clan does. Mama Ane Kanahale, no matter what it was that I pursued in life, she gave me her blessing and supported me in continuing my education. I learned about the importance of Christianity through her as well as my entire family. Whether I was in dire straits or just in need of a little help, prayer was my answer. My outfit of a lanyard and a jacket became my wardrobe staple because she worried I might freeze on the bus. I'd hate to tell you this Ma, but I'm still freezing.

In 2016, I really didn't think I would be able to get into college, but with help from the Wai'ale'ale Project's very own Lahea Salazar, I was able to have these amazing experiences here at KauaiCC. I owe Wai'ale'ale for the past 5 years of continuous learning and support during my academic career; they are my fifth or maybe tenth extended family now, and I love them for it. To every educator whose course I've passed or failed, I want to extend my warmest thanks for understanding my situation and allowing me opportunities to make up or finish assignments at later points so that I could assist my great grandmother, which was truly a blessing. Thanks to John Constantino, Crystal Cruz, Nelson Batallion and Dorean Duhaylogsod for my formative years in Student Government. They have taught me and many members of the organization what it means to be a leader, and what responsibilities you have to uphold in that position—to try your best, consider your options, and call others to action.

There are so many more people I have to thank for leading me here today, even people from my High School Days. (It seems like some people from high school should be mentioned here?) Some days and nights weren't easy, but I'll look back at my journey and smile. Whether it was gaming with friends in the Lounge, or being known as the “Ping-Pong King”, I'll treasure every memory dearly. Though I dread the day I'll leave—No matter what university or college I decide to transfer to, I will always be a Kauai Community College student.

Mamua ta ha'awi ana i to'u mana'o hope loa, matemate e ha'awi mahalo no outou ta po'e haumana no ta ho'omanawanui ana a hiti i teia la—he la hemokula no katou. He leo pule no tou Ohana, na Ke Atua no e ho'opomaita'i mai ia outou, malama ia outou. Kaitumu no teia manawa popilikia a matou, aloha mali matou ketahi i ketahi. He mea nui teia no to matou lahui/hanauna.

Before I give my last thoughts, I like to commend the students for their patience leading to today—our graduation day. A voice of prayers to your families, may God bless you all, take care of you. Because in these times of strife, we have to love one another. This is something very important for our community and generation.

Mahalo nui loa no teia manawa pokole e ho'olauna me outou, he la nui teia nou—ua loa'a ia oe i tou palapala, a hiti ia oe te holo mua me ta ite a'o ia oe mai na tumukula a KCC.

Thank you for giving me this time to talk to all of you; it's a big day for you—you've acquired your degrees/certificates, and you can move forward with the knowledge taught to you by the faculty of KCC.

Nui ta mea i a'o 'ia ia oe, a teia ta la e ho'omana'o nui ia oe i na po a pau, hana oe i tou ha'awina. Ho'omau 'oe, nui ta mea i a'o ia ma teia Honua—holo mua 'oe.

You learned a lot, and today you look back at all those late nights of doing your homework dearly (hopefully). Keep going, there is so much more to learn in this world—Move forward!

Mana'oi'o wau ia 'oe, a me tela mana'o—me te aloha pumehana... A hui hou!

I believe in you, and with that—with my warmest thanks... 'Til we meet again!