Lawe i ka ma‘alea a kū‘ono‘ono.

Take wisdom and make it deep.
If you want to become really good at anything,
you've got to study hard and practice long
until it gets deep and becomes a part of you.
‘Ōlelo No‘eau #1957

A year before starting college, I entered motherhood. This changed how I experienced school, time, and life itself. I quickly learned that balancing both would not be easy. It required patience, sacrifice, and a level of perseverance I was still learning to build.

Many days, I felt overwhelmed trying to manage schoolwork while caring for a little one. Sleep became limited, schedules were unpredictable, and my focus was constantly being pulled in different directions. Through those challenges, I learned an important truth, *Lawe i ka ma‘alea a kū‘ono‘ono*. Take wisdom and make it deep. Growth does not come from everything being perfect. It comes from showing up consistently, even on the hardest days, and continuing to study, practice, and push forward until the lessons and experiences become a part of who you are.

As I moved through my college courses, studying became something much deeper than just completing assignments or preparing for tests. It became about discipline, determination, and learning how to use small moments wisely. Even when life felt chaotic, I had to find ways to keep moving forward. Sometimes that meant studying in short bursts or finishing work late at night after my child was asleep. Although it was not always ideal, those steady efforts added up over time and helped me build confidence in myself and my abilities.

During those four years, I was also watching my child grow and develop right alongside me. While I was learning how to be a student and pursue my education, I was also learning how to be a

mother. We were both going through stages of learning, growth, and discovery. That experience made my journey even more meaningful because my progress was not just for me. It was also for my family.

Now, as I reflect on how far I have come, I realize that these experiences have shaped me in ways I never expected. I have learned resilience through exhaustion, strength through responsibility, and patience through experience. I am not the same person I was when I first started college. These four years have become a part of who I am, and the wisdom I have gained has grown deep within me.

With all that being said, thank you to my husband for your love, patience, and constant support. I'm grateful for everything you do for our family and for always being by my side. To my child for being my inspiration and a trooper. To my mom and siblings, thank you for always being there for me, supporting me through everything, and loving me unconditionally. Lastly, to my in-laws, I'm so grateful for the encouragement, kindness, and love. Here's to the class of 2026 graduates. We made it. Be proud of yourselves.