Lawe i ka maʻalea a kūʻonoʻono.

Take wisdom and make it deep.

ʻŌlelo Noʻeau #1957

Culinary arts are often perceived as simply cooking, but in truth, they represent something far greater. The Culinary Arts program at Kauai Community College has taught us the value of collaboration, working side by side with individuals from different backgrounds, perspectives, and personalities. It has shown us the importance of discipline and commitment, from early mornings in the kitchen to long, demanding days that often continued well beyond the classroom. Most importantly, it has required sacrificing time away from loved ones to build a meaningful and sustainable future.

Over the past two years, I have gained more than technical skills; I have gained lessons that will stay with me for a lifetime. This year's commencement theme is to “take wisdom and make it deep.” With wisdom, each dedicated instructor has shaped not only my abilities but also my character. Chef Steve has consistently challenged us to push beyond our limits and strive for excellence. Chef George has taught us to lead with confidence, even in moments of self-doubt. Ms. Beth has shown us how to carry ourselves with professionalism, even when facing adversity. And Chef Nalani showed us we have the strength to see things through, no matter how difficult it may seem. I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Chef Steve, Mr. Marty, Sue Sue, Ms. Beth, Chef George, and Chef Nalani. Your guidance, patience, and belief in us have made a lasting impact that will continue far beyond this moment.

Even on the hardest days, through frustration, exhaustion, and the occasional clash of attitudes, I would not trade this experience for anything. I am thankful for my classmates, my family, my friends, and my mentors, who have all played a role in shaping who I am today. And to the class of 2026, we made it.