

KAI ULU

HPU Alumni Currents

A Message from Maureen Silva: HPU's Scarpa Entrepreneurial Pathway Honors Its First-Ever Alumni Entrepreneur

When C.K. Park '99 founded Nationwide IT Services in 2006, he had no guarantee of success — only the discipline of two decades in the U.S. Army and the conviction that he was ready to build something of his own.

What set C.K. apart in the eyes of our selection committee was never just the bottom line. As President John Gotanda noted at the award ceremony, a true entrepreneur “is not just someone who builds a business, but someone who builds people, builds community, and builds impact.” At Nationwide, that’s exactly what C.K. has done — fostering a culture grounded in trust, shared purpose, and a genuine commitment to the growth of the people around him.

The results speak for themselves. Nationwide IT Services now delivers mission-critical cybersecurity and cloud solutions to government and commercial clients nationwide — with hundreds of employees, tens of millions in revenue, and a landmark \$149 million U.S. Air Force contract to its name.

It’s exactly the kind of story the Scarpa Entrepreneurial Pathway was built to celebrate — which is why we are proud to name C.K. as the inaugural recipient of the Alumni Entrepreneur Award. The award’s symbol, an engraved koa wood paddle, draws on the Hawaiian tradition of the wa‘a, where progress requires collective effort, shared rhythm, and leadership everyone can follow.

C.K. Park is that kind of leader. We are honored to celebrate him, and grateful to be building a community where stories like his inspire the next generation of HPU entrepreneurs.

Congratulations, C.K. — and mahalo.



Maureen Silva, Ph.D.,
Vice President of University Advancement



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HPU Students Deliver at the Second Annual John F. Scarpa Entrepreneurial Pathway Makerspace

THE

Competition

For the past few weeks, HPU students have been designing, building, and collaborating on products of the future. The HPU Makerspace at Aloha Tower Marketplace became their laboratory, a place where innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship don't just coexist; they collide.

Fifteen students across eleven teams, drawn from a wide cross section of colleges and disciplines, signed up for the Second Annual John F. Scarpa Entrepreneurial Pathway Makerspace Competition, where the stakes are significant: up to \$1,500 in prizes and, perhaps more importantly, the chance to prove that a great idea, given the right tools and time, can become something tangible. Plus, there are some major bragging rights at stake.



The format is straightforward. Each team selected a challenge category at random, then, in just under a month, conceived and built a working prototype with the Makerspace as their homebase. Teams were organized into four categories: Community Impact, Cultural Creativity, Smart Living/Student Life, and Other. Each produced something distinct, but all eleven projects shared a

common thread; they were built to solve a real problem.

What followed was a stretch of late nights and early mornings, of online Zoom and FaceTime sessions and in-person hours spent at the Makerspace, of teammates pushing each other to think out of the box. By competition day, members of the HPU 'ohana could walk the room, speak directly with the student creators, and hear firsthand the thinking behind each product, what problem it solves, who it's for, and where the idea first took root.

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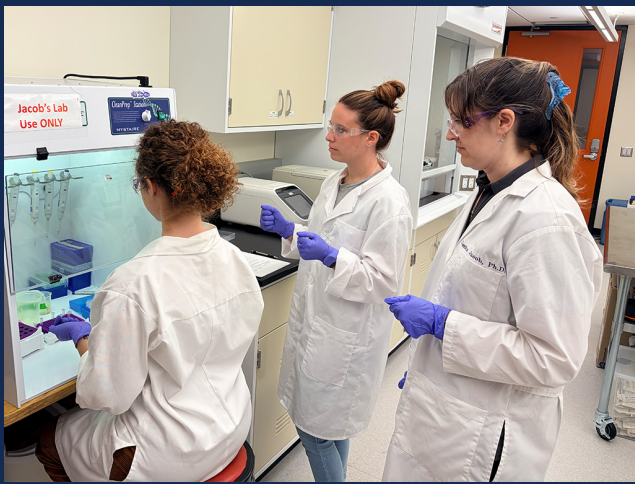


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THE CURRENTS



Is Your Wild Pig Safe to Eat? HPU Scientists Investigate

HPU Assistant Professor Jessica Jacob, Ph.D., supported by a grant from the IDeA Network for Biomedical Research Excellence and in collaboration with student researchers, is developing a rapid, field-ready test to detect *Brucella suis*, a serious bacterium that can infect humans during butchering or through the consumption of undercooked meat, in feral pigs. The test would function like an at-home COVID kit.

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HPU Hosts Hawai'i State Economics Challenge for Fourth Consecutive Year

At this year's Hawai'i State Economics Challenge, a record number of Hawai'i high school students competed for the chance to advance to the National Economics Challenge. A total of 91 students from 13 high schools competed at HPU's Aloha Tower Marketplace, marking the fourth consecutive year HPU has hosted the event.

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HPU College of Business Students Tour the Ritz-Carlton O'ahu, Turtle Bay

Students in HPU Professor Michelle Alarcon's, J.D., MBA, human resource management course toured The Ritz-Carlton O'ahu, Turtle Bay as guests of alumnus Joey Woofert ('03), the resort's manager.



A Look Inside HPU's Construction Management Program

HPU's Master of Science in Construction Management is Hawai'i's only construction management program, delivered online with

The visit provided behind-the-scenes insight into luxury hospitality operations and real-world leadership lessons that reinforced classroom learning.

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optional hybrid course sections. The program features accelerated eight-week semesters and can be completed in as few as 12 months.

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

HPU Alumnus Ben Eger '11: Built at the Crossing



When HPU alumnus Ben Eger '11 decided to join the armed forces, it was not a straightforward decision. Having just become a U.S. citizen in his early 40s, he set out to do what many believed was not possible. He met with several recruiters who admired his drive and enthusiasm, but they could not move forward with his application due to program guidelines and age cutoff requirements. Eger does not give up easily. With persistence, he found a National Guard recruiter who welcomed him with support and open arms.

Alumni Involvement

The HPU alumni 'ohana is worldwide, all opportunities are available in-person or virtually. We encourage you to consider how you can contribute your time and talents to support our students. Your involvement can have a lasting impact on student personal and professional growth.

HPU Connect

HPU Connect makes it easy to get in touch with fellow alumni and support current students. Every HPU member adds value and prestige to our community.

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Career Connections

Whether you're exploring options for the future or simply curious, our online tools will help you reflect on what matters most, explore giving possibilities, and take the next step, with aloha.

“I am very patriotic, and America means a great deal to me,” Eger shared. “Joining the National Guard and completing basic combat training was a challenge—one that I am proud to have accomplished. I was one of the oldest in basic combat training and met some outstanding people and new friends. It’s been nothing but positive.”

Eger is the kind of person who makes you want to pull up a chair and have a meaningful conversation. He is a real estate broker, brokerage owner, and founder of a real estate education platform where he trains and develops future agents. He is also the driving force behind the European Chamber of Commerce Hawai‘i. He is preparing in his spare time, with the long-term intention, to pursue a J.D., aiming to complement his work as a real estate broker with legal expertise. But the story of how he got here—and why he continues moving forward at remarkable speed—begins far from Hawai‘i, in a city and neighborhood whose very name foreshadowed everything he would become.

Eger was born and raised in Kassel, Germany, a city of about 200,000 people known for its sweeping parks and the celebrated documenta, one of the world’s most prestigious contemporary art exhibitions. It is also a city with bridges in its foundation. Kassel was founded more than a thousand years ago as a fortification at a crossing over the Fulda River. The bridge was not incidental. It was the reason the city existed at all.

Eger grew up in a neighborhood called Brückenhof. In German, it means “bridge estate,” a homestead built at the crossing. He did not just grow up near a bridge; he grew up on ground that has always been one.

“Growing up in Kassel, my dream was always America, since I was very little,” Eger said. “No one brought me to America, so I had to do it myself.”

Eger studied economics at university in Kassel, participated in a European exchange program that took him to France, Denmark, and beyond, and traveled widely as a student assistant. But Hawai‘i was always the destination pulling at him. When he finally made the trip as part of a 15-credit exchange semester, he loved it so much he could not bring himself to leave. He applied to HPU’s Master of Arts in Strategic Communication program, later transferred into the MBA program, and began building a life from there.

“HPU has given me a lot and has altered the course of my life for the better,” Eger said. “I get emotional when I think about HPU and the gratitude I have for this university. My experiences there were—and still are—monumental.”

[Full Article](#)

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Planned Giving

Whether you're exploring options for the future or simply curious, our online tools will help you reflect on what matters most, explore giving possibilities, and take the next step, with aloha.

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HPU Athletics

Learn more about our teams, game schedules, standout student-athletes, and how you can support HPU Athletics all season long.

[Learn More Here!](#)

Upcoming Events:

Good Money: Building a Financial Life with Purpose with John Coleman

Wednesday, May 13th

9:00 a.m. PDT

[More Info Here](#)

How to Thrive in Times of Uncertainty with Liz Tran

Thursday, May 21st

9:00 a.m. PDT

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