

KAI ULU

HPU Alumni Currents

A Message from Adam Burke: Kuleana in Action: How One Professor Connects Students to Service

As an associate professor of anthropology and sustainability at HPU, I've learned that some of life's most meaningful lessons happen far beyond the lecture hall, out in the rhythm of the ocean and within the spirit of our community. My work is rooted in a deep belief in kuleana, not just as a core HPU value, but as a way of living. I try to weave that sense of responsibility into my teaching, creating opportunities for my students to discover their own purpose by making a real difference in the lives of others.

My dedication to service began with a personal connection. My brother has Down syndrome, and he was the reason I first started volunteering with [Special Olympics Hawai'i](#) back in 1998. Nearly three decades later, I'm still there—coaching, volunteering as a lifeguard, and showing up for the athletes who have become such an important part of my life.

Over the years, I've come to understand something essential: for many of these athletes, weekend practices and competitions are their primary time to socialize with friends. Volunteerism continually reminds me of the value of community, positive self-esteem, and working together toward shared goals.



Adam Burke Ph.D.
Assistant HPU Associate Professor of
Anthropology/Sustainability in the College of
Liberal Arts



Dr. Burke with M.A. in Sustainability alumni Caden Salois ('24, second from left) and Nicole Ferris ('24, back middle)



Spring 2024 class ANTH 3100 course



Spring 2025 ANTH 3100 course

[Full Message](#)

See How Students An and Sophie Turned Their HPU Experience Into Real Community Impact

THE CURRENTS

[HPU Faculty Deliver Simulation Debriefing Workshop to Global Asia-Pacific Learners](#)

[Thomas C.H. Lum's Legacy Supports Future Engineers](#)

[HPU Announces Inaugural Scarpa Faculty Change Makers Fellows](#)

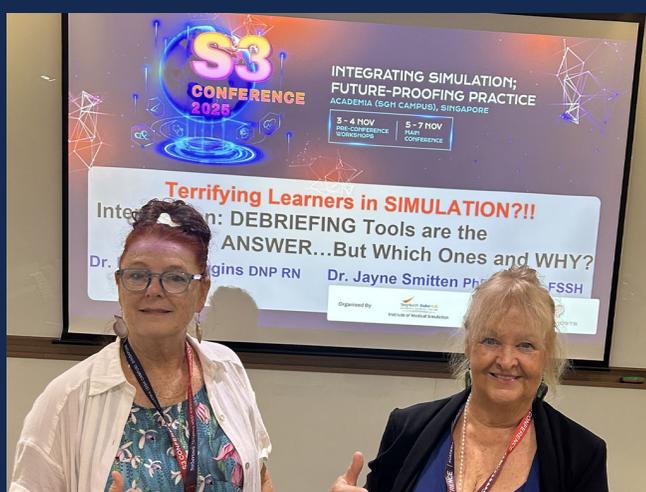


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THE CURRENTS



HPU Faculty Deliver Simulation Debriefing Workshop to Global Asia-Pacific Learners

School of Nursing faculty Michelle Higgins, DNP, RN, and Jayne Smitten, Ph.D., M.Ed., CHSE-A, FSSH, delivered an innovative evidence-based debriefing workshop to healthcare delegates at the Asia Pacific S3 Conference in Singapore. Their session was titled “Terrifying Your Learners... Intervention: Debriefing Tools, But Which Ones and Why?”

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Thomas C.H. Lum’s Legacy Supports Future Engineers

Assistant Professor and Engineering Program Chair Michael Lum, Ph.D., has established an endowed fund in honor of his late uncle, renowned structural engineer Thomas C.H. Lum, to create meaningful learning experiences for HPU engineering students that augment and enhance classroom instruction. Thomas Lum’s influential career—which included work on the USS Arizona Memorial—continues to inspire future engineers.

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HPU Announces Inaugural Scarpa Faculty Change Makers Fellows

HPU has selected eight faculty members for the first Scarpa Change Makers Fellowship, an initiative advancing entrepreneurial thinking across disciplines. Each fellow receives funding and professional support to pilot their project in spring or summer 2026.

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Cleaning the Waters: The Science Behind Genki Balls

In this episode of Hangin' at the Reef, College of Natural and Computational Sciences faculty Carmella Vizza, Ph.D., and Olivia Nigro, Ph.D., discuss their research on water quality and the ecological implications of Genki balls. They emphasize the importance of community-based science and evidence-informed decision-making in preserving Hawai'i's natural resources.

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

HPU Alumna Ursula Hulqvist at the Center of the Silicon Valley Philanthropy



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

For Ursula Hultqvist, Hawai'i Pacific University was more than a place to earn her degrees. It was an early proving ground for the kind of leadership she practices today in Silicon Valley.

A native of Sweden, Hultqvist earned both her undergraduate degree in marketing and her MBA from HPU, experiences she credits with preparing her to lead across cultures, sectors, and continents.

“One of the things I found so amazing about HPU was the diversity,” Hultqvist said. “Being in class with students from the U.S., Europe, and Asia was an amazing learning experience. It shaped how I lead and collaborate across cultures today.”

That daily exposure to global perspectives made her eventual transition to Silicon Valley feel natural, “as it is one of the most diverse regions in the U.S.,” she explained.

Gaining Confidence Through HPU's Business Programs

Hultqvist initially came to HPU as an undergraduate student, and as she progressed through her marketing degree, the decision to stay for her MBA became increasingly clear.

“I loved the university, the people, and my life in Hawai'i,” she said. “HPU felt like home.” HPU's structure allowed her to overlap coursework and begin graduate classes before completing her undergraduate degree, an option that made sense both academically and personally.

Hultqvist served as an HPU representative in Sweden as an undergraduate, helping to recruit Swedish students through a university-sponsored program. As a result, she was awarded a scholarship which enabled her to pursue her MBA.

“It sped up my process slightly. But honestly, I also wasn't in a rush to leave O'ahu,” she shared. “I felt really grateful to stay on and complete my MBA there.”

Hultqvist describes her graduate experience as transformative, particularly in how it shaped her demeanor in professional settings.

“Education gives you confidence,” she shared. “I walk into meetings today knowing my self-worth. I am less affected by office politics or power dynamics because I know my value.”

She also emphasized the importance of learning from faculty with real-world experience. “There are things you simply can't teach from a textbook,” she said. “Understanding organizational dynamics and leadership styles are critical skills. HPU prepared me for the realities of professional life, not just the theory, and that has made a lasting difference.”

The diversity of perspectives in HPU classrooms reinforced another lasting lesson. “Being outspoken can be a strength, but HPU taught me that effective leaders also know when to listen,” Hultqvist explained. “Great ideas can come from anywhere.”

[Full Article](#)

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Planned Giving

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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.

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Upcoming Events:

FLY! How to Reclaim Your Financial Future

Wednesday, March 11th
9:00 a.m. PDT

[More Info Here](#)

How to Manage the Business of Being Sick: Advocacy and Support Strategies for Women

Thursday, March 26th
9:00 a.m. PDT

[More Info Here](#)

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