



‘Ohana in Every Season: Gratitude that Grows at HPU

Gratitude runs through the veins of our student leadership at HPU, continuing the tradition of ‘Ohana Fall Feast with service to students.”
-Robyn Serge

At HPU gratitude is more than a sentiment; it’s a practice of aloha, service, and connection that strengthens the bonds of our campus community. Each year, our student leadership programs—the Campus Activities Board and Student Government Association—host the ‘Ohana Fall Feast, a Thanksgiving celebration for students who remain on campus during the holiday.

For many mainland students, it offers a comforting sense of home. For our international students, it’s a joyful introduction to a new tradition. There’s nothing like seeing their faces light up when the turkey is served! This event is always filled with delicious food, laughter, and appreciation. Our executive leadership and academic deans join in serving meals, modeling humility and the spirit of giving that define our HPU ‘ohana.

The ‘Ohana Fall Feast beautifully reflects HPU’s Strategic Plan, putting *People First*, strengthening our *Connected Campus*, and honoring our *Sense of Place*. It is a living expression of who we are: a community that values relationships, celebrates culture, and creates memories that last.



Robyn Serge,
Associate Dean of Students
at Hawai‘i Pacific University

Full Message



"I am thankful for all the support and encouragement I have received from my professors and my peers."

- Scarlett Baeza
Biology Major: Human and Health Sciences



"The connections I've made with my professors have allowed me to help shoot and edit an indie feature film for the last five years. Its really helped me improve my own work!"

-Ian Bressel,
Strategic Communications Major



"Thanks to God I have the opportunity to study at a prestigious university like HPU, where all the professors have a professional experience in their field, and offer many networking events."

-Melanie Pimienta
Business Analytics Major

Photos from HPU's 2024 Ohana Fall Feast



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NOTES FROM FACULTY & STAFF

HPU Alumni Entrepreneur Award



We are accepting nominations for the inaugural HPU Alumni Entrepreneur Award, celebrating the innovation, leadership, and impact of our alumni entrepreneurs. We're looking for alumni who have launched or led successful ventures that reflect HPU's spirit of creativity, leadership, and community.

Nominations are due by **December 5, 2025**. Submit your nomination [HERE](#), and help us honor those shaping industries and inspiring future entrepreneurs.



Sabrina Thomas
Director, Library and Learning Commons

HPU Digital

Hawai'i Pacific University is proud to introduce HPU Digital, a new online repository showcasing the scholarly and creative achievements of our community. In partnership with the Library and Learning Commons, the Alumni Relations Office invites graduates to share their capstone projects and help inspire current and future Sharks. Participation is optional, and contributors retain full ownership of their work.

Please email Dr. Sabrina Thomas, Director of HPU Library and Learning Commons for more information: snthomas@hpu.edu

THE CURRENTS



HPU Collaborates with Southwest Airlines' Employee Resource Group

HPU recently partnered with Southwest Airlines' R.A.P.I.D. (Resilient Asian & Pacific Islanders Descendants & Allies) Employee Resource Group for a student support project. Coordinated with the help of HPU Trustee and Southwest Senior Vice President & Chief People Officer Elizabeth Bryant, the event featured a networking lunch and a meaningful project assembling Campus Care Kits.

[Learn More](#)



Dean Catalino Elected President of APTA Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy

Graduate College of Health Sciences Dean Tricia Catalino, PT, DSc, has been elected president of the APTA Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy (APTA Pediatrics), effective February 2026 for a three-year term. Catalino joined HPU in 2019 as founding director of Hawai'i's first Doctor of Physical Therapy program and was named dean in 2023.

[Click Here](#)



Hangin' at the Reef: Navigating the Future of Entrepreneurship in Education

In this podcast episode, HPU Vice President Jeffrey Rich speaks with College of Business Dean Amy Nguyen-Chyung, Ph.D., about how entrepreneurial thinking is reshaping higher education. She shares insights on fostering innovation, navigating disruption, and preparing students for a rapidly changing job market.

[Click Here](#)



HPU's 5th Annual Sea Turtle Workshop Explores the 'Loggerheads of the North Pacific'

Held October 9-10, this year's workshop continued HPU's tradition of uniting researchers, students, and the community to advance sea turtle conservation. The event highlighted the "STRETCH" project (Sea Turtle Research Experiment on the Thermal Corridor Hypothesis), a multinational effort dedicated to tracking and understanding the migration of these endangered creatures

[Learn More](#)

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Asmita Burua '00

"An HPU Alumna's Journey to the World Stage"



Every day, HPU alumna Asmita Barua helps keep one of the world’s biggest institutions moving with precision. As a senior management program analyst in the United Nations (U.N.) Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, she works across systems and cultures, service in a position that she’s held for five-and-a-half years, nearly a quarter-century into an impressive U.N. career. The habits that steady Barua’s work: listening first, reading the room, and choosing the right step forward were set long before she started at the U.N. They began at home in Bangladesh, widened in Tokyo, and solidified at HPU.

Barua was born in Bangladesh, in a family that prized language, learning, and looking outward. When she was seven, her father accepted a position with a publishing company in Japan. She soon moved with her family to Tokyo, the first of many borders she would cross with curiosity and care.

As a child, Barua, the eldest of three, studied Japanese the fun and practical way. “I actually learned Japanese by watching cartoons,” she said, laughing. She attended the American School in Japan, her sister went to Seisen International School, and her brother enrolled in a local Japanese school. As adults, they are scattered across the globe. Barua’s sister has settled in the United Kingdom, and her brother still lives in Japan. Her parents live there as well, about 45 minutes from central Tokyo, and she visits them each year.

When asked what she misses most, she doesn’t hesitate: the fish! “There’s nothing like the fresh fish in Japan,” Barua said.

Hawai’i came into view the way it often does in Japan: on television, warm blue waters and trade winds. “It looked like paradise,” Barua says. “Close to home, but a new world.” She requested an HPU brochure, applied broadly (including California), and chose HPU, where the city would be part of her classroom.

At HPU, Barua studied for her Bachelor of Science in Business Analytics (BSBA) and found her lane in marketing when an internship at Nike Town turned into a role as a sales specialist and marketing assistant. She lived first in the dorms and later shared an apartment in Waikiki with friends, days immersed in downtown coursework, evenings in a neighborhood humming with energy and beaches.

“It was the best of both worlds,” Barua says. “In a way like NYU, the city as our classroom. Faculty knew students by name and pushed our thinking. All the professors were so supportive, and they always helped me in my studies. Ken Schoolland was great, and he encouraged me to join the Reason Club. I really enjoyed the discussions we had.”

[Full Article](#)

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.

[Sign Up Today!](#)

Career Connections

Networking, mentorship opportunity, and continued involvement with the HPU campus.

[Learn More Here!](#)

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.

[Learn More Here!](#)

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:

Academic-Industry Social
Friday, November 21st
5:30 p.m. HST
Sunset Ballroom
1 Aloha Tower, Honolulu, HI 96813
[RSVP Here](#)

AI and the Expansion of Human Potential
Thursday, December 4th
12:00 p.m. ET
[More Info Here](#)

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