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Q&A: Retiring Chancellor Reflects on Time at KCC

By **Shawna Takaki** | Staff Writer

Originally published May 19, 2022

Kapi'olani Community College Chancellor Louise Pagotto announced on Apr. 21 that she will be retiring from her position after a more than 30-year career at KCC at the end of next semester on Dec. 30. The chancellor found time to speak with staff writer Shawna Takaki about her retirement, KCC and more. [Note: This interview has been edited for content and style. To read the full interview, go to kaptionews.com.]

Takaki: You've spent almost 33 years working at KCC. What do you think is special about KCC?

Pagotto: Well, I say the dedication of the faculty and staff is really important. We have folks who really care about the students, providing quality instruction, and providing excellent service to the students. That's been important to me. Also, folks are always looking for new ways, innovations to better deliver their programs. And that makes it interesting. It's challenging, too, because people are changing all the time. But it's interesting because things move and things happen. And finally, because the students are so smart. I listen to student presentations and I watch how the organizations work, and I am so impressed by the all of what they do. It's amazing to me. Like you.

Takaki: Thank you. So how has KCC changed since you've started here back then?

Pagotto: It's gotten much more technological. [It] didn't have all this kind of online stuff, and that's true for everybody. We have programs that we offer today that weren't here when I first started. So there are many more options for students. More grants are available, and more grants have allowed us to do more for students, like stipends. Title III grants have given us tremendous opportunities for renovation. So the buildings are different and the functions are different. There's been huge changes in 33 years.

Takaki: So what are your favorite memories from your time at KCC?

Pagotto: Oh, boy. Favorite memories. Some of the meetings that I was at, where we laughed about things. Not necessarily what was going on in the meeting. Some commencements have brought me



Chancellor Louise Pagotto will be stepping down from her position at the end of the Fall 2022 semester. (Photo by Shawna Takaki)

to tears. Those are very memorable to me. I think some of the activities that we've done, working together, doing barbecues with the other administrators, serving ice cream to the students ... so the fun times. Not the hard times, but the fun times.

Takaki: And how and why did you decide to retire?

Pagotto: I make the decision with mixed feelings, Shawna. I'm excited, because I've been in this job for this long, and on campus for this long. So it's kind of exciting to think that I might have a different life in the next few years, because this has been my life for 33 years. So I'll be leaving some very important relationships, so that's going to be a challenge. I think, given my longevity here, I think it's time for someone new to pick it up. Someone who has energy and is eager to take on some challenges. And I am sort of at the tail end of things. I think the college is in

exactly the right place for that transition to happen. Couldn't do it in the middle of a pandemic, couldn't do it in the middle of a really bad budget situation, couldn't do it after the prior chancellor left the college. So, I think things are in a good place now, and I can let someone else take over the campus when it's in a good place.

Takaki: And what would be the final message you'd like to impart on the students, faculty, and staff of KCC?

Pagotto: I think it's that this campus is a very special place. I think the dedication of the faculty and staff who work here is very clear, and I think that if we are true to Queen Kapi'olani's message, "Kūlia i ka nu'u," it cannot go wrong if you always strive for excellence. And that's the message all of us should carry, all of us should aim to complete. Because if you strive for excellence, you will achieve it.

Voices & Views



(Photo by Shawna Takaki)

Kaya Olsen is a 20-year-old Liberal Arts major attending Kapi'olani Community College who was raised in Honolulu. Her aunt also attended the college in the past and had glowing remarks about the college to Olsen.

She is currently readjusting to schoolwork after taking last semester off and is on the dash to finish up her prerequisites to transfer to nursing. Her long-term goal is to become a nurse.

"Nurses were always the ones hand-on with the patient and making sure the patient and the family felt comfortable in the situation," Olsen said. "I always liked how compassionate nurses were, and I want to be able to be that for somebody else."

Most recently, Olsen was in the hospital due to breaking her left arm, where nurses were a comfort to her.

Olsen wants to specialize in pediatric nursing. She grew up around a lot of younger children, including her siblings and little cousins. She helped raise them since she was a child. Their presence in her life motivates Olsen to want to help kids through her nursing.

"I tend to put others before myself a lot," Olsen said. "It's one thing I wouldn't change about myself. I like that I'm able to help people."

Get to Know Your Professor: Anna Sachs

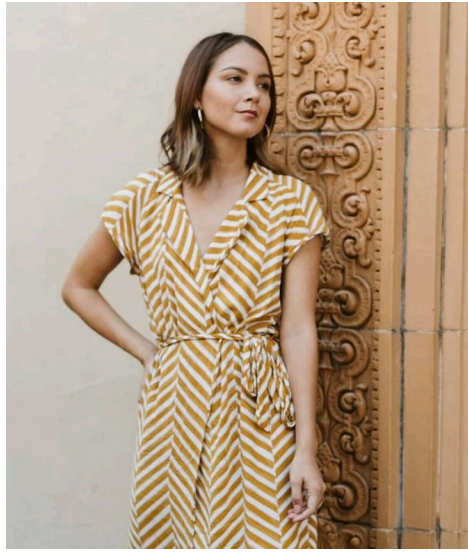
By Maria Pou | Staff Writer
Originally published May 13, 2022

Professor Anna Sachs has been teaching Spanish at Kapi'olani Community College for almost a decade. Even before she became a full-time professor, she was lecturing as a grad student. Sachs completed a Master of Arts in Spanish Language and Literature from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in 2014 and currently teaches synchronous online classes for both Elementary Spanish 101 and 102.

Sachs did not always aspire to become a professor. In fact, the idea never really crossed her mind until her freshman year of college. Her best friend from high school was attending UH with her and needed to take a foreign language. Sachs, who had taken Spanish all four years of high school, told her that it was an easy A. Her friend decided to take the class but really struggled. Sachs stepped in to help.

"She was in over her head, and I helped tutor her," Sachs said. "She said, 'Hey Anna, you're really good at this. In fact, you're better than my Spanish teacher. Maybe you should be a Spanish professor.' I didn't count it out, and it sort of interested me. ... That's what inspired me to go straight into it."

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Sachs has been teaching all of her classes in an online format and has discovered that most of her students prefer this form of instruction. For this



Professor Anna Sachs has a passion for teaching her students about the Spanish-speaking world. (Photo courtesy of Anna Sachs)

reason, she will continue to teach online for the fall semester. Sachs believes that teaching online has allowed her more time to pursue other enjoyable activities.

"There's no commute time, so we have a lot more flexibility with what we're able to do and how much we are able to do," she said. "[Teaching online] has sort of allowed me to pursue passions that inspire me to be a more well-rounded individual, which allows me to then show up as my best self for my students."

Among other activities, 31-year-old Sachs enjoys roller skating, doing yoga, making ceramics, and working on her zouk skills (Zouk is a Brazilian partner dance).

"Mixed media has always been an important factor in my self-care and mental health journey," she said, "and there's only so many pieces of my life that I can do online before I start to feel like a cyborg."

Sachs was born and raised on McCully Street, the same street that she lives on now. Upon graduating high school, Sachs had wanted to travel to the mainland to attend college. When financial circumstances made this impossible, she decided to stay on the island and attend UH Mānoa.

"A lot of really great things that exist in my life are very much due to and thanks to me having stayed home and attended UH," she said.

Though she loves her hometown, Sachs travels often. In the past few years, she has been to a number of places including the Yucatan and Oaxaca in Mexico, Australia, and the outer Hawaiian islands. These trips are not without purpose. Sachs sees traveling as professional development and a source of inspiration for her classes.

"I am not a native Spanish speaker; I'm a native English speaker who learned Spanish," she said. "The pro of that is that I can identify and empathize with the process of learning a language, but the downside is that, yes, I am book-learned and I've been speaking Spanish for a very long time now, but there are constantly things that maybe I instinctively don't know how to say ...colloquialisms, slang, and ... regional variations. That's what I get by traveling and hearing how Spanish is spoken on the street."

Meet The Kapi'o News!



The Kapi'o News' Spring 2022 staff (left to right: Shawna Takaki, Cameron Enomoto and Kaithlyn Villanueva) shows off their Kapi'o News pride prior to the May Commencement ceremony.

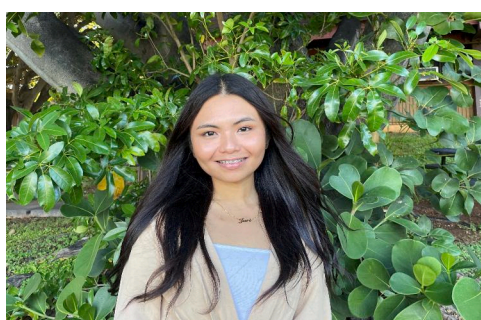


Kapi'o News, the student newspaper of Kapi'olani Community College, is looking for students interested in:

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*GRAPHIC DESIGN *SOCIAL MEDIA**

We have **paid** positions available.

Contact faculty advisor Kim Baxter (kbaxter@hawaii.edu) for more information.



Welcome our newest staff member:

Juri Dagio is an international student of Kapi'olani Community College completing her associate degree in Liberal Arts. She plans to transfer to University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to pursue a bachelor's degree in Journalism.

She enjoys reading online, writing, and skateboarding under the stress-free Hawaiian weather.

Looking back at the May 2022 Commencement

What are your post-graduation plans?

Originally published May 16, 2022



Chelia DeCoite-Sanchez

Age: 19

Hometown: Kaunakakai, Hawai'i

Major: Liberal Arts -- Family Resources

"Well, this is the last step before I can apply for jobs in children care. So this is my last step academically. ... I want to do a daycare."



Adonis Rei Fiesta

Age: 20

Hometown: Kalihi, Hawai'i

Major: Liberal Arts -- Secondary Education

"I am planning to transfer to UH Mānoa to get my bachelor's degree in Secondary Education, majoring in Mathematics. ... I want to be a math teacher. When I was still in high school ... I really hated math since I was young, but because of this teacher of mine, she teaches geometry, I loved how she made things easy for me to understand. So I wanted to be like her also. That's the reason I'm taking this pathway."



Danelyn Grace Hortizuela

Age: 20

Hometown: Kailua, Hawai'i

Major: Liberal Arts -- Psychology

"After KCC, I hope to get my bachelor's degree in Psychology and go into therapy. I mean, I really enjoy helping people, so it's a big deal to me. I want to help friends, family, and other people. ... I hope to be a Developmental Psychologist working with children."

Mother, Son Graduate Together

By Shawna Takaki | Staff Writer

Originally published May 17, 2022

Amongst the bustling crowds of graduates last Friday at Kapi'olani Community College's Commencement, Tomoko Kamiya and Tadashi Kamiya, a duo of mother and son, stood out.

"It's a very memorable experience for me to graduate with my son," said Tomoko as she brandished her graduation cap and gestured to her son.

They both graduated together from Kapi'olani Community College with associate's degrees in Liberal Arts. They stood in line to get their diplomas together with large smiles.

During their time at KCC, they took many classes together at the same time.

"It's very helpful to go through college with my mom," Tadashi said.

Tomoko was a museum tour guide at the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum and Shangri La as a Japanese language tour guide who was laid off at both in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time, her son had been in the process of entering Kapi'olani Community College. She realized that it would be a great opportunity to get a degree and further her education as she had never attended college before.

While the pandemic was detrimental in many ways for Tomoko, it also urged her into pursuing a further education, which she did with her son right next to her every step of the way.

"If there was no pandemic, I probably would have never become a student," Tomoko said.

As for how Tadashi had thought of it, initially, he admits he had found attending college with his mother weird. But reflecting on it on graduation day, Tadashi found it an interesting and overall positive effect on his college experience.



Tadashi Kamiya (left) and Tomoko Kamiya (right), a pair consisting of mother and son, graduate at the Commencement that took place on May 13. (Photo by Shawna Takaki)



Voices & Views: Andrew Yacoub is a 27-year-old student who graduated with an associate's degree in Business from Kapi'olani Community College last Friday at Commencement. He was accepted into the Shidler College of Business at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and plans to get a bachelor's degree in the future.

He has already opened his own small tea business, "Local Boiz: Hawaiian Mix Tea."

They sell many different types of tea such as loose leaf tea, guava lilikoi black tea and pineapple black tea.

He's at the International Marketplace during Thursdays and Mahiku Farmers Market during Mondays and Wednesdays. He is on social media (@localboiztea) where he posts about the products he sells.

He began his business in the fall semester of 2021, which was his last semester at Kapi'olani Community College. Yacoub originally started it when he was trying to sell some tea at the farmers market to make money for college a couple days of week.

He learned a lot about professionalism, working with a team, holding yourself accountable, and community through his stay at Kapi'olani Community College, which he uses everyday.

Word on the Street

What are you looking forward to this semester?

Originally published August 24, 2022



Shuko Nagai

Age: 18
Hometown: Hokkaido, Japan
Major: Undecided

"I would like to improve my English and learn more with my friends."



Livia Kuijpers

Age: 17
Hometown: Rotterdam, Netherlands
Major: Liberal Arts

"I am hoping to meet new people and make friends while completing my first semester at KCC."



Joy Oehlers

Years at KCC: 10
Hometown: Singapore
Position at KCC: Librarian

"More students in the library, no one really came because of Covid."

(Word on the Street is a regular feature that asks the same question to multiple people in the KCC community.)

Challenges of Being an International Student

By Estefania Magdalena | Staff Writer

Originally published Feb. 10, 2020

Leaving the comfort zone and embarking on adventures towards a new challenge will always make us grow. At the same time, it is also true that it is necessary to be prepared, so in this article we tell you the challenges that you will have to face once you decide to be an international student in Hawai'i or any other state.

Requirements to obtain a study visa: Processing a study visa requires months, money, and planning in advance. In my case, coming from Argentina, I thought it would be faster and easier to change my immigration status within the United States with the help of a lawyer, but the approximate cost was \$1,000. Plus, it took 5 months for my application to get approved, so I had to make sure to get my paperwork done early. I always recommend returning to the country of origin, taking an appointment at the U.S. embassy at least a month in advance, and paying the \$170 of the study visa.

Money: International students pay much more expensive fees than residents and citizens of the country, and it is mandatory to take 12 credits per semester as a minimum. To get the admission letter from the school you want to attend, it is also necessary to have sufficient financial support (an official bank statement or an affidavit of financial support) to provide basic expenses such as housing, food, books, transportation, health insurance, and your social activities. A student visa in the U.S. does not allow you to work, so you are responsible to show the U.S. government that you do not need to work while you are studying.

Language: Since the master formula to learn is to practice, it will be essential that you feel encouraged to interact in class, even when you are embarrassed to make mistakes. What helped me to improve my level of English in college was to always have a dictionary in my backpack and write down in a notebook at least 20 words a day that I did not know the meaning. Excellence is not a skill; it is an attitude.

The cultural shock: Being an international student exposes you to a diversity of people, situations, and places. It was difficult for me to adapt to being constantly surrounded by Asian food shops here on O'ahu because there are hardly any in my country. Thanks to college, I was able to learn different cultures such as Japanese, Korean and Chinese. Now I have many friends of different nationalities, and I enjoy trying the favorite dishes of their nations.

Flight hours: Depending on the proximity of your country of origin, to the country in which you have chosen to study will be more or less difficult to return to. The jet lag, the change of sleep rhythm, or having to take several planes with stops in different countries are just a few situations that international students experience.



Many KCC students are from other countries and have to learn to adjust to different time zones, being away from loved ones and other challenges. (Photo by Shawna Takaki)

Difficulty in having a love relationship: In the case of being in a relationship with someone, you will have to face the physical distance and the fact of living at different times. On the other hand, if you are single, there is a chance that you fall in love with someone in the country you are studying.

The time difference: When we are having breakfast, people in our home countries are having dinner or sleeping. This makes us have to be aware of the exact hours in which we can communicate with our loved ones so as not to lose daily contact.

Be away from your family and loved ones: Without a doubt, you will miss birthdays and important events in the lives of the people you love. Studying in another country requires dedication and time, so you have to accept that you will not be able to attend many of those special events.

Difficulties to work and study: Studying and attending class is our priority, so learn to organize. Many times, the time we should devote to study will be greater than what we can devote to having fun. If we add a part-time job (20 hours per week), we take on even greater the responsibilities.

Adaptation to another educational system: All countries have different evaluation systems and teaching techniques. In Argentina, my country of origin, evaluations are rated numerically from 1 to 10, and it is necessary to have at least a 60 percent on the exam correctly in order to pass. When I started studying in Hawaii, I had a hard time understanding what the credits were and even more, the value of the qualifications since they are alphabetical. It was very helpful to have access to the syllabus of each class to be able to guide myself about the meaning of the credits.

Whatever the challenge, being an international student is an experience that empowers you in all circumstances of life and enriches you as a person. The exposure of being an international student will make you gain a lot of confidence in yourself and tools to expand your future career opportunities worldwide.