

Kamehameha Schools Hawai'i

Ciana-Lei Bence

- What does this Po'o Kula Scholarship mean to you and your 'ohana, and what are you looking forward to at Yale?

For a while both my parents and I were worried about our financial situation going into college since the past year has harbored many hardships for our family. Receiving the Po'o Kula Scholarship is something that we couldn't be more grateful for, for us it not only alleviates much of the financial burden that would have been put onto us but allows me to make the most out of the extensive opportunities Yale has to offer without worrying as much about what my financial situation is.

Something I am most excited about is exploring the new environment of college and being able to meet new people from around the world. Without the help of this scholarship, the ability to do so would become limited along with many other exciting opportunities that I look forward to, so once again I'd like to express my utmost gratitude for this award.

- Why did you choose to attend Yale?

One of the biggest factors in choosing to attend Yale was its liberal arts curriculum. While I am very interested in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), I am also drawn to the arts and humanities. Before discovering a passion for astronomy and physics, I wanted to study anthropology and the cultures of the world. Thanks to Yale's interdisciplinary studies, I don't have to give up my interest in these fields to pursue a career in astrophysics or STEM in general. On top of the wonderful resources, professors, and research opportunities, this stood out to me the most and in the end was why I chose Yale.

- Do you know what you're planning to study?

As I mentioned previously, I plan on studying astrophysics and more specifically cosmology.

- What's your 'ohana's experience been with college?

While both of my parents have attended college, neither finished their degrees and only stayed for a short time. My brother is currently attending the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for engineering, but I will be the first in my family to attend college outside of Hawai'i.

- As you leave Kamehameha Schools to further your education, what advice would give to haumāna?

My biggest piece of advice for other students would be to find what you're passionate about. Finding a passion for me made the biggest difference in my high school career. Once I found it, my curiosity began to grow and every class that I took began to become more interesting as I saw its applications and its importance. So I encourage everyone, not even just students but haumāna of all ages to explore their interests and find something that makes them want to do more.

- Is there a kumu you would like to mahalo and why?

Every kumu that has taught and mentored me over the past 13 years of my education has been incredibly influential in my life and I'd like to thank each and every one of them for helping me to become the person I am today. I will forever be grateful for each of them fostering an environment where I was able to not only feel safe but where I was able to thrive. Without the support and guidance from the incredible individuals I have gotten to know here, I would never have been able to even see myself in the position I am today.

Napualani Ho

- What does this Po'ō Kula Scholarship mean to you and your 'ohana, and what are you looking forward to at the College you selected?

This Po'ō Kula Scholarship allows me to expand my horizons and pursue my goals without having to deal with the financial barriers that would otherwise keep me from being able to do so. As I am the youngest of four kids, this scholarship allows my 'ohana to not have to stress about finding the funding to go to school. I don't have to worry about taking out loans that would restrict me in the future, and I can focus on furthering my education rather than stressing about whether I would be able to afford schooling at a school away from home.

- Why did you choose to attend that college?

I am currently planning on attending Temple University Japan Campus. I chose to attend this school because I have strong cultural connections to my Japanese side. For one year, I moved to Japan where I attended a public school and learned more about my Japanese side allowing me to gain a new worldly perspective. By attending this school, I hope to expand on that perspective as well as bring my own perspectives gained from going to Kamehameha Schools and living in Hawaii in general in order to exchange cultural knowledge with others.

- Do you know what you're planning to study?

Currently, I'm on track to major in International Affairs.

- Are you the first in your family to attend college? Or what's your 'ohana's experience been with college?

Both of my parents attended college, I have one sister who gained a bachelor's degree, and one more on track to graduate a semester early.

- As you leave Kamehameha Schools to further your education, what advice would give to haumāna?

Go out and try everything. Involve yourself in the activities the school has and interact with different groups. You never know whether that's your last chance to try something. We went through a pandemic that took a lot away, and something like that could happen again. Overall,

it can be scary to put yourself out there, but in the end, you'll never get the chance to experience these school events or try new sports/clubs. Try your best and ask for help if you need it. You'll never understand where your true potential stands unless you try your best. There's no harm in trying and when things get difficult, understand that there's someone willing to help whether it's a teacher, friend, or someone you trust, don't feel ashamed when you don't know something.

- Is there a kumu you would like to mahalo and why?

There are several Kumu that have had an impact on me throughout the years each supporting different facets of my academic career allowing me to further myself with a firm foundation of trusted individuals and key resources. I am extremely grateful for each and every one of them for being there for me through my different projects and journeys while at KS.

Kamehameha Schools Maui

Jayna Kanoholani

- How has the Po’o Kula Scholarship impacted you and your ‘ohana, and what are you looking forward to at Columbia University?

Being selected as a recipient of the Po’o Kula Scholarship has been such an incredible honor and blessing for myself and my ‘ohana. I have always aspired to pursue higher education, and this gift will help me attain this goal. At Columbia University, I look forward to meeting new classmates and exploring the grand academic facilities.

- Why did you choose to attend Columbia?

I chose to attend Columbia because of the unparalleled opportunity to utilize the utopia of the campus within the city combined with the school's incredibly unique core curriculum.

- Do you know what you’re planning to study?

I plan to study biology with the long-term goal of one day attending medical school.

- Are you the first in your family to attend college?

I am a first-generation college student alongside my older sister, who graduated from the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa.

- As you leave Kamehameha Schools to further your education, what advice would you give to haumāna?

My advice to haumāna is to cherish the time you have been gifted at Kamehameha Schools and always remain appreciative of Ke Ali’i Pauahi's legacy's impact on your life.

- Is there a kumu you would like to mahalo and why?

I would like to send a profound mahalo to my kindergarten teacher, Mr. Otani, for setting the tone for my experience here at Kamehameha Schools Maui. Despite being in his class almost thirteen years ago, his kindness and dedication to his students are attributes I have never forgotten. I couldn't be more grateful for the opportunity to have started my journey as a pua a Pauahi in his class.

Faith “Aloha” Paredes

- What does this Po’o Kula Scholarship mean to you and your ‘ohana, and what are you looking forward to at Dartmouth College?

This Po’o Kula Scholarship means so much to me and my ‘ohana. With the Po’o Kula Scholarship, I can achieve my dreams of attending an ivy league college without worrying about being in student loan debt in my first year at Dartmouth College. I look forward to furthering my education at Dartmouth College and learning more about other indigenous people and cultures thriving in New Hampshire.

- Why did you choose to attend Dartmouth College?

I chose Dartmouth College because I have been attracted to Dartmouth's strong sense of 'ohana. Students, faculty, and alumni support and elevate one another; alumni return "home" and give back to the Dartmouth family. As a Native Hawaiian who aspires to be an ophthalmologist serving my community, I look forward to creating a custom major to combine biological sciences with my interest in biological and cultural anthropology and environmental studies. I am eager to explore New England in the Dartmouth Outing Club, establish connections with my peers in the Dartmouth Coffee Club, and share my aloha and hula in Hōkūpa'a.

- Do you know what you're planning to study?

Yes, I plan to study biological sciences and cultural anthropology.

- Are you the first in your family to attend college?

No, my dad graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in 1996.

- As you leave Kamehameha Schools to further your education, what advice would you give to haumāna?

The advice I would give to other haumāna is to always believe in yourself. Having a positive mindset and confidence in yourself to achieve your goals will take you far in life.

- Is there a kumu you would like to mahalo and why?

I would like to mahalo Kumu Henohea Kane for supporting me throughout all 4 years of my high school career here at Kamehameha Schools Maui. She has helped me become more confident as a hula practitioner and as a Native Hawaiian.

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama

Matthew Liu

- What does this Po’o Kula Scholarship mean to you and your ‘ohana, and what are you looking forward to at Johns Hopkins University?

I would like to sincerely mahalo Kamehameha Schools and the forward-thinking leaders who have created the Po’o Kula Scholarship. I am truly honored to have been one of the fortunate beneficiaries of this award. To my family and me, this scholarship means the absolute world because, without it, I would have been forced to either give up my dream college or bear a life-burdening amount of student debt. During the college process, much like other students who will be attending highly esteemed universities, my main focus was just getting into my number one institution, and I didn’t put much thought into how I would be able to afford it. So when I was given my COA, or cost of attendance, my parents and I had a serious talk about having to decline my acceptance because I unfortunately fall into the category of “making too much, but not enough,” which in other words means that I don’t qualify for financial aid, but I also can’t afford the hefty cost. However, after the announcement of the Po’o Kula Scholarship, everything changed - and I realized that this was my ‘get out of jail free card’. This scholarship gives me the chance to give my all in college, and I hope to make Kamehameha Schools and the benefactors proud of their decision in me. At my dream school, Johns Hopkins University, I am looking forward to creating my own path, as I am (to the fullest extent of my knowledge) the first student, since at least 2009, of Kamehameha Schools to attend this university. While it is a bit nerve-racking to be completely on my own, I am excited to have the chance to share my Hawaiian culture and learn of other peoples’ cultures, with my new ‘ohana.

- Why did you choose to attend Johns Hopkins University?

Johns Hopkins University stood out to me because I believe that it is one of, if not, the best college for pre-med. Whenever I share where I will be attending college, the majority of people automatically assume I want to pursue medicine, which I believe will be beneficial in the future, as people will be able to see that my passion has always been health care since the beginning. When I attended an admitted student’s day at Hopkins, I got to interact with current and future students and realized that the majority of them were pre-med or STEM-based, which gave me a sense of relief since I will be surrounded with like-minded peers. Since Johns Hopkins is so foundationally strong in medicine, it has a plethora of clubs, volunteer opportunities, internships, and research, that are specifically geared toward the medical field. It has always been my belief that if I want to truly be a great physician who will be able to serve my lāhui, or community, I must attain the best education, which I will receive at Johns Hopkins University.

- Do you know what you’re planning to study?

The medical field has always been my goal since I was a child. My father is a pharmacist who calculates the medication dosages for patients, so I have spent a good amount of time in the

hospital interacting with doctors and nurses. A fun fact of mine is that I have had the same career aspiration ever since I was in kindergarten - which is becoming a radiologist. And while I probably didn't put much thought into radiology as a five-year-old, the more that I've researched it, the more I've felt that it is where I belong. As the ones who interpret images and scans, radiologists must be analytical, which is one of my strongest traits. Also, I admire them because they are similar to "unsung heroes", who mainly serve people from behind the scenes, since their operations are not as direct as surgeons or family doctors. Likewise, I don't have the most charismatic or charming personality, and I tend to be on the shyer side, which is why radiology is more fitting for me. In college, I will be following Johns Hopkins's pre-health advising track and will most likely look to receive a Bachelor of Science in biology, but I am not 100% committed to it yet.

- Are you the first in your family to attend college?

I am not the first to attend college in my family. My father received a Master of Business Administration at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and also received his Doctor of Pharmacy at the University of Southern California. My older sister, who is an alumna of Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, is currently following in his footsteps of becoming a pharmacist, as she is attending pharmacy school at Creighton University.

- As you leave Kamehameha Schools to further your education, what advice would you give to haumāna?

Looking back on my journey at Kamehameha Schools, there is so much advice that I wish I could have known as a freshman. First, this may not apply to everyone, but I wish that I pushed myself more. When I was signing up for my classes in freshman year, a lot of my middle school advisors and peers told me to not go completely overboard, so I held back on my course difficulty. Furthermore, I did not fully exert myself in my sophomore and junior year because of the pandemic and Covid-19, which shattered my confidence and overall well-being. For this senior year, I gained the determination to give it my all by taking harder classes and getting involved with new extracurriculars, and I believe that putting myself under the pressure has given me a new sense of confidence and pride. So, to the haumāna with high-achieving academic aspirations, but who are also apprehensive about overestimating themselves, know that you are much more capable than you think you are. Aside from the motivational advice, enjoy your time in high school! You have much more freedom over who you want to spend your time with, so surround yourself with people who enhance you. A quote I remember reading, and which I now live by is, "You are a summation of your friends", and it's completely true. My friends and I are always pushing each other to be better, which is why I believe (in the humblest way I can say) we have all excelled in high school and gotten into our desired colleges. Finally, try and build personal relationships with your kumu. Unsurprisingly, they are extremely wise and can teach you a lot more than just material for the classroom. Classes are also much more enjoyable if you can freely converse and joke around with your teachers instead of having

to be so serious and apprehensive. Lastly, if you give them your respect they will most likely give you their respect, which may come in handy when you need it most. So, to all of the haumāna of Kamehameha, know that whatever you put into school you will get out of it, and if you put in the hard work, you will get your desired results.

- Is there a kumu you would like to mahalo and why?

Although I am grateful for each and every kumu, there are a few teachers who I would like to give a special mahalo:

- Kumu Ashley Makahilahila for guiding me through this tumultuous post-secondary experience and for putting me in a position for success.
- Kumu Laua'e Gouveia for teaching me the importance of putting 100% into all that I do, and for being the kindest teacher ever.
- Kumu Justin Toyofuku for giving me reassurance in myself and genuinely caring about me and other students.
- Kumu Diana Fontaine for instilling within me confidence in my writing capabilities and teaching me to stand up and advocate for things that I believe in.
- Kumu Denise Kim for always being someone that I can talk to, bringing me out of my shell, and teaching me how to love and embrace who I am.

To all my teachers, thank you - I would not be the person I am today without all that you have done for me.

Emi Shigekane

- What does this Po'o Kula Scholarship mean to you and your 'ohana, and what are you looking forward to at Yale University?

The Po'o Kula Scholarship has opened doors for my 'ohana and me, as Yale University is a very expensive educational opportunity that this scholarship has largely contributed to lowering our family's out-of-pocket cost for. Not only has the scholarship made such post-secondary options attainable for me, but it also shows the immense support that Kamehameha Schools has for me and the other scholarship recipients. Their belief in our potential to do great things is very heartwarming, and it makes me proud to attend (soon to be an alumnus of) an institution that genuinely cares about the future of its students.

- Why did you choose to attend Yale University?

I chose Yale University for its world-class professors and educational opportunities and beyond beautiful campus. But also because the school values the diversity of background, thought, and perspective—not wanting its classes to be a sea of similar shades, but instead seeking to highlight every color combination, providing its students with opportunities to engage with myriad perspectives.

- Do you know what you're planning to study?

I plan to study Political Science, paving the way for me to better my communities by working in government, politics, or law.

- Are you the first in your family to attend college?

No, I am not the first in my family to attend college, but I am the first to attend an Ivy League Institution.

- As you leave Kamehameha Schools to further your education, what advice would you give to haumāna?

My advice to haumāna is to take advantage of all the opportunities at Kamehameha. The support system here is so expansive, providing us with dedicated Kumu and endless resources. I was given the opportunity to start the Women's Empowerment Club, and the school has provided my club with the platform to foster a lot of positive change over my 4 years in high school.

- Is there a kumu you would like to mahalo and why?

I would like to thank my AP U.S. History teacher, Mrs. Sarah Razee, and my AP English Language teacher, Ms. Diana Fontaine, for teaching me what it means to love learning and being the best conversation partners.