



Friday, March 22, 2024 - Sunday, March 24, 2024
Portland Community College - Sylvania

Welcome

The campuses and centers of Portland Community College rest on the traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Kathlamet, and Clackamas bands of the Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla and many other Tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River. Multnomah is a band of Chinooks that lived in this area. We thank the descendants of these tribes for being the original stewards and protectors of these lands since time immemorial. We also acknowledge that Portland, OR has one of the largest Urban Native American populations in the U.S. with over 380 federally recognized tribes represented in the Urban Portland Metropolitan area. We also acknowledge the systemic policies of genocide, relocation, and assimilation that still impact many Indigenous/Native American families today. We are honored by the collective work of many Native Nations, leaders and families who are demonstrating resilience, resistance, revitalization, healing and creativity. We are honored to be guests upon these lands. Thank you to all of our Indigenous siblings, past and present, for allowing us to gather this weekend for our conference.

Welcome to PISACON24! This year, we are celebrating the 17th year of PISA and the 12th annual PISA Conference! The 2024 Pacific Islander Student Alliance Conference (PISACON24) will foster a space for Pacific Islander college students to explore culture, identity, and diversity within the Pacific Islander community. Our conference will include conversations about mental health, culture and climate shock, and inclusivity and solidarity in the PI community. Our conference is rooted in providing relevant topics and community for our Pacific Islander students in the PNW. Building a thriving community is at the heart of our work. To learn more about PISA and PISACON, please visit our website: <https://www.pisanw.org/>.

Location/Parking

PCC Sylvania - College Center (CC) Building (12000 SW 49th Ave, Portland, OR 97219)

Parking at PCC is free on the weekends only. When parking on Friday, please make sure to get a permit. Parking is \$1/hr and you can purchase your parking permit at the parking terminals indicated on the map with "\$P". We recommend parking in the indicated lots as we will be gathering in the College Center Building (CC) for the majority of the weekend. **You can find a map of the campus, where to park, and where we are gathering [HERE](#).**

WiFi Information

If you are affiliated with a college campus, you can log on to the “**eduroam**” wifi with your school email and password. The **guest wifi network**: PCCGuest (you do not need a password to connect).

AgendaWorkshops

Workshops will be held in our main gathering area (CC Dining Area) and in the Social Science Building (SS). **You can find a map of the two buildings [HERE](#).** There will be large signs across the two buildings and volunteers/staff around to help with navigation. Workshops held in the CC Dining Area do not have a capacity limit, but all other workshop rooms have a max of 35 people per room (not including presenters). Make sure to plan ahead and have a back-up just in case we reach capacity in workshops.

Overview:

Friday, March 22nd, 2024		LOCATION
3:00 PM - 5:30 PM	Check-in and On-Site Registration *We will be starting the opening dinner promptly at 5:30pm so make sure you come early enough to check in and find a seat.	CC Lower Mall
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM	Opening Dinner, Keynote, and group picture	CC Dining Area
7:30 PM - 9:30 PM	Community Building:	CC Dining Area
Saturday, March 23rd, 2024		LOCATION
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Breakfast	CC Dining Area
9:30 AM - 10:45 AM	WORKSHOP SESSION 1	Various locations (see below)
10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Transition Time by to CC Dining Area	N/A
11:00 AM - 11:30 AM	Networking/Team Building Activity	CC Dining Area
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	WORKSHOP SESSION 2	Various locations (see below)
12:45 PM - 2:00 PM	Lunch & Keynote	CC Dining Area
2:00 PM - 2:15 PM	Transition Time	N/A
2:15 PM - 3:45 PM	WORKSHOP SESSION 3	Various locations (see below)
3:45 PM - 4:00 PM	Transition Time	N/A
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Community Networking - Food Distribution, Community Tabling, Free Time, Evening Set Up	Upper CC Mall, Lower CC Mall & Dinner Area
5:00 PM - 5:30 PM	Networking/Team Building Activity 2	Dining Area
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM	Dinner, shaved ice and Keynote	CC Dining Area
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	PISA Showcase & Continued Shaved Ice	CC Dining Area

Sunday, March 24, 2024		LOCATION
9:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Brunch & Community Circles	CC Dining Area

Workshops

Workshops will be held in our main gathering area (CC Dining Area) and in the Social Science Building (SS). **You can find a map of the two buildings [HERE](#).** There will be large signs across the two buildings and volunteers/staff around to help with navigation. Workshops held in the CC Dining Area do not have a capacity limit, but all other workshop rooms have a max of 35 people per room (not including presenters). Make sure to plan ahead and have a back-up just in case we reach capacity in workshops.

WORKSHOP SESSION 1

9.30am — 10.45am

PASIFIKA UNITY: TAPESTRY OF BELONGING

Location: CC Dining Area

Presented by: Kame'o Kahawai

In a rapidly changing world, it's essential for Pacific Islander college students to come together to explore and celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures, identities, and experiences within their community. This workshop aims to provide a safe and inclusive space for dialogue, reflection, and action, focusing on building solidarity and fostering a sense of belonging among Pacific Islander students in the Pacific Northwest (PNW), with priority of QTPIs and intersections. Through interactive discussions, activities, and personal storytelling, participants will deepen their understanding of inclusivity and solidarity while equipping themselves with tools to create a more supportive and united community.



Kame'o Kahawai (Native Hawaiian)

Kāme'o, an indigenous Māhu from the Kingdom of Hawai'i, has deep roots in the ahupua'a of Makiki and Mānoa in the Kona district of O'ahu, where Hawai'i Nei will forever hold their heart. Having relocated to the Pacific Northwest in the summer of 2018 to serve the community in Cowlitz County, Kāme'o now resides in Multnomah County.

Throughout their extensive professional journey, Kāme'o has been a steadfast advocate for equity, infusing it into the fabric of organizational policies, programs, and practices. Their leadership roles span across a diverse spectrum, from Executive Director, Regional Director, to Chief People & Diversity Officer, Equity Consultant, and beyond. With experience ranging from overseeing small teams to managing larger organizations with up to 320 employees, Kāme'o brings a wealth of expertise to their endeavors.

Currently serving as the Executive Director for UTOPIA PDX (United Territories of Pacific Islander Alliance of Portland) and the Founder/Lead Consultant for He Māla Hou Consulting, Kāme'o continues to be at the forefront of initiatives driving positive change and empowerment within their communities.

In their leisure time, Kāme'o enjoys moments with their spouse, two children, and three four-legged companions. Together, they explore the wonders of the Pacific Northwest, reveling in its breathtaking scenery, meandering rivers, and the innate beauty reflected in its people and businesses. Always on the lookout for new experiences, whether it's discovering a hidden gem of a restaurant, hiking a new trail, or connecting with vibrant communities, Kāme'o embraces each adventure!

ELECT HER

Location: SS103

Presented by: Madeleine Tofaeono-Galo

Running Start (runningstart.org) is a nonpartisan nonprofit that trains young women to run for political office. Elect Her is Running Start's half-day nonpartisan training on how to run for student government and political office. Since 2009, we've held 450+ Elect Her trainings, with 165+ partners, in 43 states and 8 countries, for 17,500+ participants. In 2023, we held 42 trainings across the United States; so far in 2024, we've held 14 trainings. Just one in four elected leaders are women. But when they run, they win at the same rates as men — the problem is that not enough enter the arena. Engaging women early is key to increasing the number of women leading at schools, in communities, and in politics. An Elect Her workshop is an excellent investment into the next generation of leaders. 80% of Elect Her alums left their training feeling like they could run for office. 25%+ of Elect Her alums run for office

(compared to just .5% of women generally) and 90%+ win. Running for student government is a great start for a future in politics: more than 50% of Congresswomen and women state legislators got their start in student government.

In an Elect Her workshop, participants learn campaign strategy and public leadership skills, like public speaking and networking, from a Running Start alum who is trained to facilitate.



Madeleine Tofaeono-Galo (Samoan)

Madeleine Tofaeono-Galo is a Fellowship Coordinator at Oregon Health & Science University, working in the Obstetrics and Gynecology subspecialties (Urogynecology, MIGS, and Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility fellowship), managing physician medical education, program logistics, and recruitment. She graduated from Portland State University with a bachelor's degree in 2018 majoring in Political Science with a focus on public policy and community health. During undergrad, she completed a summer fellowship training for PPIA (Public Policy & International Affairs) Program at Goldman School of Public Policy, UC Berkeley. Shortly after, Madeleine ventured to Washington, D.C. to complete a Congressional fellowship in Congresswoman Radewagen's office - the Representative of American Samoa. Currently, Madeleine serves as the Region 5 Alternative Representative for APMOG (Association of Program Managers in Obstetrics and Gynecology), a Search Advocate for OHSU hiring committees, a Community Health Worker, and Philanthropy committee member at REACH CDC. She is also a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and an Alum of Running Start. Outside of work, Madeleine is a mother, loves books (mystery), enjoys nature, travel, art museums, exploring outdoors, and live concerts.

STUDENT VOICE MATTERS IN STUDENT SUCCESS

Location: SS104

Presented by: Carol Matsuzaki

The Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Student Success Plan (HB3144) in Oregon is history in the making for our people. The current iteration of the NHPI Interim Student Success Plan and temporary Oregon Administrative Rules is in need of your mana'o (thoughts) and leo (voice). If you are interested in advancing the learning experiences and educational opportunities for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth, this workshop is for you.



Carol Matsuzaki (Native Hawaiian)

As a Native Hawaiian woman in the field of education, Carol has a strong passion for helping students of all backgrounds toward meeting their full potential and goals. She has over three decades of experience working with Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students, families and communities, and has operated several native serving grants focused on education. Born and raised in Hawai'i, she earned a Bachelor's in Geology from the University of Hawai'i, a Master's in Business Administration from Chaminade University, and a Master's in Higher Education Administration from Georgetown University. Carol is the Coordinator for the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Student Success Plan with the Oregon Department of Education, and she and her 'ohana now call Hillsboro home.

VĀSĀ: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORK FOR CRITICAL PACIFIC ISLANDS AND OCEANIA STUDIES

Location: SS107

Presented by: Dr David Ga'oupu Matthew Palaita

This workshop explores the power of indigenous frameworks and language as a transformative site for re-imagining conceptions of space and identity in higher education. Using etymological deconstructions of words in our Pacific languages, Pacific Islander students can create space in their respective institutions that are both de-centering and re-centering. A collective understanding of our ocean languages promotes values that provide a basic structure to building programs that are meaningful, intentional and sustainable.



Dr David Ga'oupu Matthew Palaita (Samoan)

Dr. David Ga'oupu Matthew Palaita, Ph.D., is professor of Critical Pacific Islands & Oceania Studies and Ethnic Studies at the City College of San Francisco. He is adjunct faculty at De Anza College and Foothill College where he is leading

the development of new academic programs in Critical Pacific Islands & Oceania Studies. He is also adjunct professor in the department of American Ethnic Studies at the University of Washington and the department chair of the department of Interdisciplinary Studies where he oversees programs in Diversity and Social Justice, Ethnic Studies, Critical Middle East Studies, and Trauma, Prevention, and Recovery. He is currently editing his dissertation for publication entitled, "The Space that is Sacred (VASA/Ocean): Pacific Islanders in Higher Education."

BUILDING YOUR PASIFIKA CLUB GLOBAL PRESENCE & FUNDING CAMPAIGNS

Location: SS111

Presented by: Dr Vidalino Raatior

Does your Pacific Islander student club have a website to build your brand and message to the world and inspire other Pasifika students? Join Dr. Vid Raatior, the faculty advisor for the Pacific Islander Student Association (PISA) at San Jose State University to learn how they created their club website (pasifikaspartans.org) using free Google platforms and raised funds through existing fundraising platforms including fun engagements at the 49ers Stadium.



Vidalino Raatior (Chuukese, Micronesian)

Dr. Vid is a Chuukese Micronesian international educator, social entrepreneur, community organizer, and an advocate for Pacific Islander empowerment in the United States. Currently, he works at the College of Professional & Global Education at San Jose State University (SJSU) as coordinator for study abroad & bilateral student exchange programs for Asia and Oceania. He is also the founding advisor for the SJSU Pacific Islander Student Association (PISA). Previously, he served as the Director of the Pacific Islander Student Center (PISC) and the AANAPISI Projects at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. He also worked for 10 years at Santa Clara University in California as the Assistant Director of International Programs Office and as Associate Director of the Center for Multicultural Learning. Vid has also served as Assistant Director and classroom teacher at Xavier High School in Chuuk, FSM.

WORKSHOP SESSION 2

11.30am — 12.45pm

CULTURAL BEAD MAKING: EXPLORING ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND TRADITION

Location: CC Dining Area

Presented by: Sammy Romolor, Taliilagi Aumavae, Kinna Je Palacios, Isabel Palacios, Maya Ngirarois, Ke'ala Ching, Meletulu Tatafu

Micronesian cultures boast rich traditions in craftsmanship, with beading being a significant aspect that reflects the unique identity and heritage of the region. Preserving and promoting traditional Yapese and Chuukese beading not only honors the legacy of our ancestors but also serves as a means to foster cultural pride and connectivity within our communities. This workshop aims to provide participants with hands-on experience and knowledge about traditional Yapese and Chuukese beading techniques, materials, and motifs, ensuring the continuation of this cherished art form for generations to come



Sammy Romolor (Thai, Refaluwasch): Sammy (she/her) is a third year student at Portland State University majoring in Biology on the pre-medicine track and minoring in Psychology. She was born and raised on the island of Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, with roots in the outer islands of Yap and Chuuk as well as roots in Thailand. She is currently a part of the EMPOWER program at Portland State and has also done a research pilot that focused on sex education and Pacific Islander women in higher education.



Isabel Jossie Palacios (Filipino, Chamoru): Isabel Jossie Palacios (she/her) is from the island of Saipan, a part of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and she is Filipino/Chamorro. She moved to Portland to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Public Health Studies: Pre-Clinical Health Science and is currently on a Pre-Medicine track at Portland State University. She holds the position of Co-Cultural Chair in the Pacific Islanders Club at PSU. After graduation, she plans to pursue an advanced degree in the field of medicine or public health.



Ke'ala Ching (Native Hawaiian, Chinese): Ke'ala is a third year student at Portland State University double majoring in Accounting and Finance. Ke'ala was born and raised in Maui, Hawai'i. They are Native Hawaiian and Chinese. Upon graduation, Ke'ala hopes to become a CPA or work for the accounting aspect of a nonprofit of either a Pacific Islander organization or for other underprivileged demographics.



Meletulu Tatafau (Tongan): Mele is a Tongan second year who is majoring in general science going into pharmaceuticals. She is the Co-Cultural for the Pacific Islanders Club at PSU. She was raised in Tonga and came to the USA in hopes to become a pharmacist.

PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Location: SS104

Presented by: Irene Niedo-Campbell, Tomasina Porotesano, Siniva Bennett, Rosanne Foster, Agnes Laban, Dr. Jacinta Galea'i

This workshop aims to spotlight and celebrate the diverse perspectives of Leadership emphasizing the experience of Professional, Pasifika Women. Join the women of the Samoa Pacific Development Corporation Board on a panel around their experience navigating their various careers while incorporating both their own values into the workplace and the pillars of SPDC into the community. They have a combined 30+ years of experience with careers ranging from Community Justice, Education, Finance, Law, and Medicine. They will also talk stories around their own personal accomplishments of how they continue to break barriers and challenge the system. Learn more about how they have become leaders in their own respect, and how they continue to balance family obligations, community service, and their commitment to social justice.



Irene Niedo-Campbell (Samoan)

Irene was born and raised in American Samoa. She grew up in the village of Ili'ili. She graduated with her Bachelors in Business Administration in Accounting from the University of Portland. She started the early years of her career working for the Department of Treasury in American Samoa. This experience helped build her passion for civil service with a particular emphasis on government agencies that cater to a high volume of Pacific Islander communities. She is currently the Finance Director of Accounting Services for the Finance and Business Management Division of the Multnomah County Health Department. Here, she has been able to broaden her lens to see the correlation of accounting and social justice. In her free time, she enjoys exploring new cities, indulging in delicious foods, and hanging out with her family.



Tomasina Porotesano (Samoan)

Born and raised in American Samoa, Tomasina Tavai-Porotesano left the island to pursue a higher education and landed in the Pacific Northwest where she's made her home for almost 30 years. She earned a Master's degree in Public Administration from Portland State University and holds a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Northwest Missouri University. She has had a career in community justice for over 20 years. Tomasina helped pioneer SPDC and served as a board member at its infancy. Following a hiatus, she resumed involvement due to her passion for service and her beloved Pacific Island community. She believes in the proverb, "E le sua se lolo i se popo e tasi." You cannot get coconut oil from one coconut. Coconut oil is made from copra though drying coconut meat (in their shells) in the sun. However, it takes many coconuts to produce enough copra to make even a small bit of oil. Tomasina believes that collaboration and growth are the cornerstones of a thriving community. She desires to use her experience for advocacy and empowering individuals to become the best versions of themselves.



Siniva Bennett (Samoan)

Siniva Bennett was raised in American Samoa, California and Oregon. Her family are from Vaiusu, Upolu and Fatumafuti, Tutuila. She received a Master's degree from the University of Hawaii in Pacific Islands Studies for her thesis "Warriors, at What Cost?" a political analysis of U.S. militarization and American Samoa. She holds a law degree from the University of Oregon. She is currently the Equity Engagement Coordinator at the Joint Office of Homeless Services, Multnomah County. She is passionate about education, financial literacy and homeownership in our community.



Rosanne Foster (Samoan)

Dr. Roseanne Mikaele Foster recently received her Doctor of Pharmacy from Pacific University School of Pharmacy. She holds a BS in Molecular, Cellular, Developmental Biology and a BA in Biochemistry from the University of Washington, Seattle. She is passionate about connecting to the PI community with culturally competent healthcare. For fun, she spends time hosting friends as well as listening to podcasts and books. She lives in Vancouver, WA with her husband and children.



Agnes Laban (Samoan)

Agnes was born and raised in American Samoa from the village of Fagatogo and then moved to Amaluia. She was raised in the Samoan culture. Her mother's family "Mailo" is from Fagatogo where she lived and practiced the Samoan culture everyday. Agnes moved to Portland in 1986 to pursue her career as a registered nurse. She has been a nurse for over 30 years and is very proud due to her mother's strong influence. She is currently a board member for SPDC and looks forward to working with the youth, leaders and community in sharing and preserving our culture. Agnes has three adult children with two grand fur babies. She loves to read, travel, hike, and kayak.



Dr. Jacinta Galea'i (Samoan)

Jacinta S. Galea'i was born in American Samoa and raised in Seattle and American Samoa. She transitioned from the Board to serve as the first Executive Director of SPDC. As a life-long educator, she has taught composition, creative writing, Pacific Literature, and Samoan culture and language in higher education and high school. She is committed to building community power, social justice, and the preservation of Samoan, and other indigenous Pacific languages and cultures. She is a member of the Oregon Pacific Islander Coalition, and the Pacific Islander Coalition of Multnomah County. She received her PhD in English from the University of Hawai'i - Manoa and undergraduate degree from the University of Washington. She has worked with Pacific Islander students in Kalihi Valley, as part of the University of Hawai'i-Manoa GEAR UP Project. She has served as the Communications Director for former Governor

Togiola T.A. Tulafono of American Samoa and the Interim Director Designee of the American Samoa Department of Education. She now lives on Cowlitz and Chinook lands in Washington and works on Multnomah lands in Portland, Oregon. She is an active member of Ekalesia Samoa CCCAS in Portland, OR. Services for the Finance and Business Management Division of the Multnomah County Health Department. Here, she has been able to broaden her lens to see the correlation of accounting and social justice. In her free time, she enjoys exploring new cities, indulging in delicious foods, and hanging out with her family.

LEAVING OR STAYING? NAVIGATING WHAT COMES NEXT

Location: SS103

Presented by: Bree Kalima

As a young(ish) Hawaiian who left Hawai'i to move to Oregon, I found a "home away from home" through PISA and am now back to share stories, lessons, and tips to Pacific Islanders who are contemplating what comes next. By learning our histories, engaging with Pacific Islander communities, and leaning into the resources available to us, I have completed my formal education (for now) and have now returned home. Join me for a storytelling session where we will explore planning, processing, and rebuilding as it relates to deciding what comes next after undergrad. All are welcome, especially those who have anxiety, pressure, and/or confusion about life post undergrad.



Bree Kalima (Native Hawaiian)

Bree Kalima (she/they) is a Kānaka 'Ōiwi from the Hawaiian Kingdom. She was raised in the ahupua'a of Honouliuli and Mānana on the beautiful island of O'ahu. In 2012 she graduated from Kamehameha Kapālama and moved to Hilo, Hawai'i to start her journey in higher education. In 2016, Bree graduated with honors from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo with a BA in Psychology, a BA in Administration of Justice, and a minor in Hawaiian Studies. After learning that her father was diagnosed with cancer, she moved to San Diego, California to be closer to him and pursue her graduate degree. In 2019, she graduated with honors from San Diego State University with a MA in Postsecondary Educational Leadership, Specialization in Student Affairs. A month before graduation, Bree moved to Portland, Oregon where she started her first full-time job at Portland State University as the Program Coordinator for the Pacific Islander, Asian & Asian American Student Center. While at PSU, Bree obtained a Graduate Certificate in Gender, Race, and Nations at Portland State University where her classes focused on Indigenous Studies. During her time in Oregon, Bree has been integral in Pacific Islander work at Portland State University and in the surrounding communities. Some noteworthy contributions were: Board Member of the Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander Employee Resource Group (API ERG), Presidential Fellow for Pacific Islander Success, Founding Member of the Pacific Islander & Asian American Studies Initiative, Co-Facilitator of the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity's (NCORE) Pacific Islander Pre-Conference, Coordinator of the Pacific Islander Student Alliance (PISA), and Member of the Oregon Pacific Islander Coalition (OPIC). She is committed and passionate about a life of service to Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. Currently, Bree serves as the Kapa'akea Grant Program Coordinator with Native Hawaiian Student Services at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. In her free time, Bree enjoys traveling, being in the water, laughing, eating, and spending time with loved ones.

USING A DECOLONIZED APPROACH TO SUPPORT PACIFIC ISLANDER STUDENTS IN SCIENCE EDUCATION AND BEYOND

Location: SS111

Presented by: Elizabeth Rodrigues

This session centers the nuanced experiences of Pacific Islander (PI) students in diaspora with intersecting identities. We discuss how colonization continues to impact higher education today, especially in the fields of science and medicine. We provide space to name some of the existing challenges to PI student success, such as colonized pedagogy, the model minority myth, and intergenerational trauma. We share with each other strategies to uplift PI students to reshape their higher education journeys. With a specific focus on science, health, and medicine, we strive to increase representation and achieve more equitable outcomes in health and medicine.



Elizabeth Rodrigues (CHamoru)

Elizabeth Rodrigues, PhD is an educator, neuroscientist, and advocate for equity. She is 1st generation born in the US and part CHamoru Pacific Islander and Malayalee South Indian. She synergizes her passion for neuroscience and social justice by working towards more equitable health outcomes. She teaches Anatomy & Physiology at Portland Community College through the lens of social justice, prioritizing anti-racist, culturally-affirming, and decolonized pedagogy. Her work strives to uplift the experiences of students with complex identities, increase representation in healthcare, and improve equitable health outcomes in our diasporic and marginalized communities.

KA 'IKENA HAWAI'I: STUDENT ORGANIZING OUT OF ADVERSITY

Location: SS107

Presented by: Kris Haina Galago

In the face of adversity and with the desire to find community, a group of Native Hawaiian students discovered a way to create the 'ohana and a sense of belonging while pursuing higher education in the diaspora. These students are developing a coalition model for student-led organizing with a vision for it to be replicated at college campuses nationwide.



Kris Haina Galago (Native Hawaiian)

Kris Galago is a community leader and advocate for Pacific Islanders and other marginalized community members in Oregon. She holds a bachelor's degree in Ethnic Studies and a master's degree in educational leadership, both from the University of Oregon. She works as a full-time Human Resources professional at Oregon State University and a part-time Adjunct Professor at Southern Oregon University teaching courses in Pacific Islander studies. She is proud to serve on the 2024-2025 Executive Board of Ka 'Aha Lahui o 'Olekona (KALO) Hawaiian Civic Club and is the newly elected Vice President.

Recognized in 2018 as the Outstanding Staff/Faculty Leader by the University of Oregon Asian Desi Pacific Islander Strategies Interest Group (ADPI SIG), 'Aunty Kris', as students affectionately refer to her, has mentored many Pacific Islander students at several different colleges and universities in Oregon. In January 2023, Aunty Kris was recognized by Mayor Lucy Vinnis and the City of Eugene, as an Outstanding Community Volunteer for her tireless work in organizing COVID-19 vaccination events and healthcare awareness targeting the Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander community in Lane County.

A self-identified Native Hawaiian, Aunty Kris is a fierce advocate for the Pacific Islander community in Oregon and throughout the Pacific Northwest. Selected to serve as a current member of the State of Oregon, Department of Education, Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Student Success Plan Advisory Group, she works tirelessly to remove institutional barriers that inhibit students from academic progression in grade school and degree attainment in higher education.

PŪ 'ĀINA: EMBRACING THE WISDOM OF PACIFIC FOOD SYSTEMS

Location: SS204

Presented by: Kawika Maui Hā Kalama

Prior to western contact, sustainable food systems were prolific across the Pacific. Our ancestors' deep connection to the land and sea resulted in rich agricultural forests, fisheries, and aquacultures whose efficacy was envied by settlers. To disenfranchise and displace our peoples, monoculture, plantations, and overfishing was thrust upon the Pacific — severely damaging our islands and limiting transmission of land-based wisdom. Thankfully, our ancestors stood steadfast and today we are witnessing a growing renaissance of traditional, regenerative agricultural systems and their teachings.

This workshop will equip attendees with an overview of the current revitalization of regenerative food systems across the Pacific Islands, lessons that these practices promote, and encourage attendees to further explore their relationships to food systems in the Pacific and beyond.



Kawika Maui Hā Kalama (Native Hawaiian)

Kawika Maui Hā Kalama is a teaching artist, storyteller, and farmer born and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska. Growing up away from their island of Kaua'i, Hawai'i, they cherish the countless cab drivers, Alaska Native elders, and teachers who have pushed them to live authentically as a Kanaka Maoli artist and educator. Kalama is a graduate of Arts for Learning Northwest's Teaching Artist Studio, and received their BA in Civic Communication and Media and Religious Studies from Willamette University. Their work centers Indigeneity, Queerness, and Critical Theory, encouraging students to live life as their authentic selves and develop reciprocal relationships with all living things.

WORKSHOP SESSION 3

2.15pm — 3.45pm

BUILDING A MOVEMENT FOR PACIFIC ISLANDER SELF DETERMINATION IN OREGON

Location: CC Dining Area

Presented by: Alyshia Alohalani Macaysa-Feracota, Bianca Kabua Blanco, Destiny Miteg, Kevin Lujan Lee, Ku'ulei Faavavau Wong

This workshop shares the history, challenges, and lessons learned from building the Oregon Pacific Islander Coalition (OPIC) - a collective of Micronesian and Polynesian organizations (currently) -working to advance Pacific Islander self determination in Oregon. We invite student organizers, working to mobilize PI students across their campus, to sit in an exchange with OPIC and other workshop participants to identify best practices and co-develop a vision towards a united movement of Oceania's indigenous peoples.



Alyshia Alohalani Macaysa-Feracota (Native Hawaiian): Alyshia is a Queer Kanaka Maoli community organizer and the founding Executive Director of the Oregon Pacific Islander Coalition. Alyshia's body of work includes systems-shifting initiatives that have placed the wisdom and experiences of front line communities at the center of decision-making. Her specific interests include research and data justice, upstream technology & health equity policy making, and community-led strategic initiatives. She has led historic initiatives including the City of Portland's Smart City PDX Community Leads program, Oregon Public Health Division's Pacific Islander Data Modernization project, and the Oregon Resource Allocation Advisory Committee. Alyshia currently holds two governor-appointed positions through the Governor's Racial Justice Council and the Pacific Islander Student Success Advisory Committee. Alyshia has been named a Culture of Health Leader by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and holds the honor as a Distinguished Alumni of UC Berkeley's School of Social Welfare.



Bianca Kabua Blanco (CHamoru, Marshallese): Bianca is a proud Micronesian daughter hailing from the island of Saipan in the Marianas. Prior to joining OPIC, Bianca held roles in the technology sector and at UTOPIA PDX, an OPIC member organization that advances healing for Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders. In her current role Bianca leads community building with the coalition's 7 organizational members and individual leaders, and the Shared Waters Program, a leadership development and capacity building hub for Pacific Islanders.



Destiny Miteg (Yapese): Destiny is from the mighty island of Yap. As a Pacific Islander born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, she continuously finds ways to stay rooted while living in the diaspora. Her work as the Operations Coordinator at OPIC keeps her grounded, and she is further motivated by the desire to support her fellow PI community members living abroad. Previously, Destiny served in nonprofit spaces and university settings, focusing on doing work that empowered specific groups. She is thankful to be one of the first college graduates in her family. When not in the office, Destiny can be found happily eating pho and watching movies.



Ku'ulei Faavavau Wong (Native Hawaiian, Samoan): Ku'ulei is a Kanaka Maoli and Samoan project management professional. Prior to joining OPIC as the Strategic Initiatives Manager, Ku'ulei provided administrative and project management support for philanthropic strategic planning and grantmaking processes. This includes her time at Meyer Memorial Trust, where she stewarded efforts to convene Pacific Islander leaders across Oregon to steer the direction of Meyer's future grantmaking priorities. Additionally, Ku'ulei served on the Ocean Speaks campaign, a narrative change campaign championing Pacific Islander self-determination and the dismantling of "Asian Pacific Islander" as an aggregate data and community engagement category. Through her leadership on the campaign Ocean Speaks hosted the first Pacific Islander focused funders convening. The convening brought together Pacific Islander community-based organizations and Oregon funders through conversations on how understanding colonial history, indigenous values, data justice, and funding justice were critical to the Pacific Islander movement for self determination in Oregon.



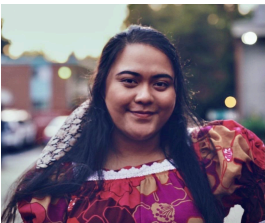
Kevin Lujan Lee (CHamoru): Kevin is an Indigenous Chamoru researcher with more than a decade of experience working with community organizations as an organizer, policy advocate and researcher, and whose scholarship synthesizes social science methods with Indigenous methodologies to analyze pertinent challenges facing Indigenous peoples. Currently, he is a Killam Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia (awarded to seven recipients across the university); in Fall 2024, he is starting as Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies at the University of Buffalo. His publications include “Towards a Decolonial Quantitative Political Science” (awarded the 2022 Asian Pacific Americans and Politics Best Paper Award by the Western Political Science Association), which incorporates kanaka (Native Hawaiian) epistemologies into quantitative research on the politics of Indigenous identity; and “Indigenous Futurisms as Empirical Methodology” (forthcoming) which operationalizes a particular Indigenous methodology as social scientific research protocols in the 2021 Guåhan Survey (guamstudy.org)—his decolonial participatory action research project in his homeland of Guåhan, which currently stands as the largest-scale survey of Indigenous Chamoru political attitudes in the island. He holds a PhD in Urban Planning and Politics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and his research has received awards from the US Fulbright Foundation and the Labor and Research Action Network.

CULTURAL JOURNEYS: NAVIGATING THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD AS A PACIFIC ISLANDER WOMEN/WOMEN OF COLOR

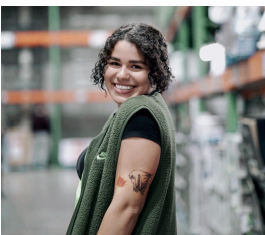
Location: SS103

Presented by: Riamyrie Walter, Azaria Michelle Coakley, Kaylee Kaanelaapuuwai Sales

Join us for an empowering workshop experience titled "Cultural Journeys: Navigating the Professional World as Pacific Islander Women/Women of Color" where we confront the realities of a predominantly white, male, and American professional landscape. Delve into strategies tailored to the unique experiences of Pacific Islander women and women of color, as we navigate the intersectionality of culture, identity, and career advancement. Welcoming an inclusive discussion aimed at overcoming systemic barriers, celebrating diverse perspectives, and forging pathways to success in a world that often fails to reflect our own. Together, we'll embark on a journey of self-discovery, empowerment, and community building to thrive in the diverse and dynamic landscape of the professional world.



Riamyrie Walter (Chuukese): Ria is a proud Chuukese woman, who's lived in Portland for over 10 years, blending her upbringing from Oahu with the spirit of the Pacific Northwest. Ria proudly serves as both Program Manager and Community Engagement Specialist for the Office of Violence Prevention. With nearly two years of dedicated service, she's been at the forefront of organizing numerous impactful events and representing her office at community gatherings and events. With a heart fueled by her heritage and drive for meaningful impact, she's committed to fostering connections and driving positive change, embodying authenticity in her endeavors.



Azaria Coakley: Born and raised in North Portland and immediately developed a passion for the local arts scene. She is multifaceted and has experience in both the nonprofit and corporate sectors. She is passionate about maintaining her own identity - in relation to her community as well as herself - in any workplace/setting that she encounters. Azaria believes that the unique individual being - fostered in community - is incredibly vital to a growing business and/or organization.



Kaylee Sales (Native Hawaiian): A native Hawaiian, Kaylee has experienced early on the clashing of her Hawaiian community with western culture and norms. She has had experience navigating both corporate and nonprofit workplaces, and is passionate about integrating her understanding of her community with that of the communities she works with. Kaylee currently works with the East Portland community and loves it.

WE ARE NOT DROWNING, WE ARE FIGHTING! JOIN THE FIGHT TO SAVE THE PACIFIC

Location: SS104

Presented by: Alisi Rabukawaqa-Nacewa and Makerusa Porotesano

The Pacific Islands are calling! Join the Pacific Climate Warriors and the Fossil Fuel Treaty movement to see how your heritage fuels the fight for climate justice.

Embrace traditional knowledge, hear powerful stories from Keynote Speaker and Fossil Fuel Treaty Champion Alisi Rabukawaqa-Nacewa from Fiji and Founder of PISA Makerusa Porotesano, and become part of a network taking on the climate crisis. Together, we safeguard our oceanic homes and build the future we deserve.



Alisi Rabukawaqa-Nacewa (Fijian)

Alisi Rabukawaqa-Nacewa has spent the past decade working in environment conservation, climate activism and indigenous peoples' traditional rights and knowledge advocacy. In her personal capacity, she coordinates a youth group called Bua Urban Youth that is composed of young professionals from her province in Bua, Fiji that now work and live in the diaspora - using their skills, knowledge and network to contribute back to their provinces development. Alisi is a member of the Council of Elder for the Pacific Climate Warriors (PCW) and was named a Treaty Champion for the Fossil Fuel Free Treaty.



Makerusa Porotesano (Samoan)

Makerusa Porotesano is also a member of the Pacific Climate Warriors Council of Elders and was recently invited (along with Alisi) to the Fossil Fuel Treaty gathering with Civil Societies to draft the Naiuli Declaration for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty in Fiji. Makerusa is best known as the founder of PISA and the Pacific Climate Warrior - Portland Chapter. You can also find Mak around our host campus as he serves as the Director for Multicultural Services at Portland Community College.

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON FILIPINO IDENTITY: INSIGHTS ON RACE, DATA DISAGGREGATION, AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Location: SS107

Presented by: Dr Daniel Elison

This workshop explores the complexity of positioning "Filipino" within the dominant constructions of racial and ethnic categories. By exploring stories about what it means to be Filipino we highlight the difficulty in (a) drawing symbolic boundaries around the category of Filipino, (b) fitting Filipino into the dominant racial categories of Asian or Pacific Islander, and (c) developing a Filipino identity. In doing so we begin to understand the importance of critically interrogating racial and ethnic categories to account for lived experience and to ensure that experiences are not erased. Through these discussions we also highlight the importance of ethnic identity development for supporting leadership and coalition building.

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Daniel B. Eisen (Filipino)

Daniel B. Eisen is a Filipino-American facilitator, educator, and leader from Hawaii with over 15 years of experience researching, creating and implementing EDI content and initiatives. He earned his BA from Pacific University and his PhD in Sociology from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He is currently a Professor of Sociology at Pacific University, where he also serves as the Department Chair of the Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice, Law & Society department and Program Chair of the Gender and Sexuality Studies program.

His research is centered in critical race theory and examines how individuals negotiate their identity within the context of systemic oppression. In doing so, his work highlights the liberatory possibilities that exist within the meaning making process of crafting an identity, as well as how systems of power often co-opt and impede our abilities to craft truly liberatory identities. Within these frameworks, his research has examined the negotiation of Filipino identity in Hawaii, race relations on college campuses, men's attempts to craft a "progressive masculinity," and how justice-involved youth make sense of their identities beyond the justice system. His current work focused on how reflective practices—primarily tarot—can be used to facilitate antiracist reflection, provide accountability for antiracist development, build nourishing communities, and reignite our imaginations to creatively imagine and work towards an antiracist world.

UNDERSTANDING MICROAGGRESSIONS: NAVIGATING IMPACT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Location: SS111

Presented by: Bennie Moses-Mesubed

In this training, we'll explore what microaggressions are and how they can affect individuals' success in academic and social environments. We'll delve into the subtle forms of discrimination and bias that can occur in everyday interactions, as well as their cumulative impact on mental health, confidence, and overall well-being. By raising awareness and providing strategies for recognizing and addressing microaggressions, participants will be better equipped to create inclusive and supportive environments for themselves and their peers, ultimately enhancing their chances for success in college and beyond.



Bennie Moses-Mesubed (Palauan)

Bennie Moses-Mesubed is a first-generation immigrant originally from Palau, an island in the north pacific in the Micronesian region and has lived in Eastern Oregon for 29 years. As a first-generation immigrant college student, she often experienced imposter syndrome and was often code-switching. Even as an honor student in high school she was not prepared for the many different experiences she would encounter as a college student. Even with the support services available in college, she struggled to feel a sense of belonging and did not encounter faculty/staff who shared her similar cultural background and identity. Additionally, Bennie shares that in college, her history, culture, lived experiences and realities had no place in her educational experience. They were not reflected in the textbooks, classroom discussions, practices, and even opportunities for me to bring that into my educational experience.

As an educational practitioner, this experience informs her practice and how she navigates US higher education, especially in her current role as an Associate Vice President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging at Eastern Oregon University. In this role, she leads campus-wide efforts in developing sustainable diversity-centered initiatives, strategic and programmatic efforts on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, as well as cultural competence on campus. The work also includes developing relationships and engaging with key stakeholders to implement and operationalize the University diversity strategic plan (including obligations under Oregon House Bill 2864); leadership with the DEI Response Advisory Team and Diversity Advisory Committee; and oversees the Center of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

Bennie has over 20 years' experience working in higher education from Academic Support to University Advancement Alumni Relations, Student Affairs and in the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. She has also served in several Oregon boards including the Oregon Governor's Racial Justice Council, Oregon Commission on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, COFA Alliance National Network, Oregon Community Foundation Eastern Oregon Leadership Council as well as local Eastern Oregon boards such as Shelter from the Storm Domestic Violence program and Art East.

Bennie is passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion as a foundation to building an inclusive community/society where everyone matters, feels dignified, and thrives.

PISACON24 Keynote Speakers



Alisi Rabukawaqa-Nacewa (Saturday Lunch Keynote) **Climate Activist and Fossil Fuel Treaty Champion**

Alisi Rabukawaqa-Nacewa has spent the past decade working in environment conservation, climate activism and indigenous peoples' traditional rights and knowledge advocacy. In her personal capacity, she coordinates a youth group called Bua Urban Youth that is composed of young professionals from her province in Bua, Fiji that now work and live in the diaspora - using their skills, knowledge and network to contribute back to their provinces development. She is also a grants committee member to the Fiji Womens Fund Women's Fund Fiji - a resource mobilization arm of the feminist and women's movement in Fiji, striving to shift more power and resources into the hands of diverse women, girls and gender non-conforming people from rural, remote and marginalized communities in Fiji and the Pacific. She also sits on the youth-led grassroots network 350.org Pacific Climate Warriors Council of Elders as the Melanesian representative, providing traditional knowledge on working with Pacific communities and indigenous perspectives to their climate justice work.

Internationally she is a Pacific Representative to the Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network and the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group to the Global Environment Facility Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group. She graduated with a BSc in Marine Science from the University of the South Pacific and for the past 4.5 years worked as a marine projects officer with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature-Oceania Regional Office, providing technical support nationally to help Pacific Island countries achieve national and global commitments in protecting and conserving marine biodiversity. Alisi has a wealth of knowledge and experience in protecting marine biodiversity and is now taking on new challenges as a Consultant, continuing to make a difference in the world.



Dr. Vidalino Raatior (Saturday Night Keynote) **Coordinator, Study Abroad & Exchange Programs, San Jose State University**

Dr. Vidalino Raatior is a Chuukese Micronesian international educator, social entrepreneur, community organizer, and an advocate for Pacific Islander empowerment in the United States. He founded the Pacific Leadership Assistance Network (PLAN), Pacific FocusEd, Raatior Consulting, and co-founded the We Are Oceania (WAO), the Dr. Joakim Peter Memorial Scholarship, the COFA – Community Leadership & Advocacy Network (COFA-CLAN), the Navigating Success and other initiatives aimed at advancing educational and social equity for the Pacific Islander diaspora in the United States particularly from the Micronesian region of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau (ROP).

Currently, he works at the College of Professional & Global Education at San Jose State University (SJSU) as coordinator for study abroad & bilateral student exchange programs for Asia and Oceania. He is also the advisor for the SJSU Pacific Islander Student Association (PISA). Previously, he served as the Director of the Pacific Islander Student Center (PISC) and the AANAPISI Project at the University of Hawaii at Hilo.

Things to Know

PISACON Leadership Team:

The PISACON Leadership team is the decision making body for all matters related to conference planning and direction. Our team is composed of a mixture of Pacific Islander higher education professionals, leaders from Pacific Islander community organizations, and other community members who are committed to doing this work. We are honored and thankful to have the following colleges represented on our PISA Council: Portland State University, Portland Community College, University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Southern Oregon University, University of Washington - Seattle, and Eastern Oregon.

This Year (2024) the PISA Council was formed in Eugene, Oregon and will continue to grow at PISACON24. PISA Council will be the student led body of PISACON. PISA Council will consist of 2-3 members per college/university. We are recruiting PISA Council members this year.

COVID-19

COVID-19 tests, disposable masks, and hand sanitizer will be available for all attendees. Please feel free to wear your mask indoors while we gather if that makes you feel comfortable. The following guidelines are from Portland Community College:

- Facemasks: PCC follows the guidelines of local public health departments. PCC does not require the use of facemasks while indoors at PCC locations. While not required, they are strongly encouraged.
- Social Distancing: While not required, employees, students, and other members of the PCC community are encouraged to maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19: Please consider your health and the safety of others before attending PISA. Stay home and isolate yourself from other people for at least 5 full days regardless of vaccination status. If on Day Six you have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms are improving you may leave your home. If on Day Six you continue to have a fever or your other symptoms have not improved you should remain in isolation until you are fever-free.
- If you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19: PCC follows the guidelines of local health departments which do not require close contacts to COVID cases to quarantine unless you have COVID-19 symptoms yourself. These same guidelines do recommend that all close contacts, regardless of vaccination status or prior infection with COVID-19 to: watch for symptoms, stay home and get tested, and avoid any unnecessary visits with high-risk individuals (e.g., residents of congregate-care facilities, persons with immunocompromising conditions, etc.).

Attire

Come as you are, there is no formal dress code. We will be taking group photos on Friday 3/22 and Saturday 3/23, so wear your best island attire!

Items to Bring

We will be providing drinks and there is a water station in the building; **please bring a reusable water bottle**. Keynotes and workshops will be a space for reflection and learning. If you like to take notes, we recommend bringing paper and pens. Lastly, bring an instrument (if you'd like to perform)!

Saturday Night Open Mic/Talent Show

Dinner on Saturday night will include a Student Showcase. If you are interested in sharing your talents with us, please [sign up for a spot](#)! If you don't know what you'd like to perform just yet, sign ups will be open all night. Don't be shame and please bring your own instruments :)

Costs

All of your main amenities during the retreat are covered by PISA. Parking is free on the weekends. Meals, snacks, and drinks will be provided. Meals included: Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, Saturday lunch, Saturday dinner, and Sunday brunch. Out of pocket expenses could include the following: Friday parking at PCC, transportation, lodging, and any additional meals/drinks.

Media

Please note that we will have professional photography and video services during the retreat. If you would not like to be photographed, please let a staff member know. Use our hashtag #PISACON24 in all your conference pictures and make sure to follow us on Instagram @pisa_nw or on Facebook.

Music

We have a playlist! Please add your favorite songs to the [spotify playlist](#) so we can keep the energy going all weekend long. You must sign in in order to add to our playlist which is a continuation from last year. Help us find music from your languages!

PISA Leadership Team Council (2024)



Makerusa Porotesano M.Ed (Portland Community College)

Director of Multicultural Services - District Wide

Founder and Acting Coordinator for PISA



Faith Kebekol, MS Ed (Portland Community College)

Multicultural Center Coordinator - Cascade Campus



Pamela Fredrick- Williams

Eastern Oregon University (La Grande, OR)

Office Assistant - Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging



Dr. Lana Lopesi Ph.D (University of Oregon)

Assistant Professor, Department Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies



Cass Nguyen M.A (University of Washington - Seattle)

Advisor for Student Leadership
Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center



Cicero Delfin, M.Ed. (University of Washington - Seattle)

Associate Director
Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center



Whitney Murphy (Portland State University)

Coordinator of Pacific Islander, Asian & Asian American Student Center



Jason Iosua Mendoza (Southern Oregon University)

University Housing, Area Coordinator
Student Apartments & Family Housing



Kris Haina Galago M.Ed (Oregon State University)

Human Resources Compliance Coordinator, Oregon State University
Adjunct Professor, Pacific Islander Studies, Southern Oregon University
Vice President, Ka 'Aha Lahui o 'Olekona (KALO) Hawaiian Civic Club



Soteria "Ria" Galo, MS MHC (Southern Oregon University)
Admissions Council for American Samoa



Phillip "Lipo" Sinapati, MA (Oregon State University)
Center Director - Asian & Pacific Cultural Center



Chris Young (University of Oregon)
Student Advisor - Athletics

PISACON24 Sponsorship:

The Pacific Islander Student Alliance would like to send our deepest appreciation to all the sponsors of this year's conference. Their dedication of resources make this conference possible, along with all the individuals who help support our conference year in and year out. Join us as we share our gratitude to this year's sponsors and vendors.

Major Sponsorship - Double Platinum:



This Years Platinum Sponsorship:



This Years Gold Sponsorship:



This Years Silver Sponsorship:



Thank you to our vendors:

