CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL SPRING & SUMMER 2020 GRADUATES!

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Dear Graduates,

I suspect that "mixed feelings" is the order of the day. Of course, hearty congratulations on completing your course of study with us, whether BA, MA, AGC, or PhD. And you deserve extra congratulations and appreciation for managing to do so under what we all know are uniquely challenging conditions. You have summoned up exceptional powers of concentration, perseverance, and focus, to keep your mind on your final courses, papers, and dissertations, despite the world falling apart around us. Some of you are finishing off in absentia. Closer to home, with loved ones... and with the distractions and challenges of family. Others have stuck it out here, even though not necessarily from Hawai‘i. Some of you have told me it is safer to stay here than go home. But now the time has come... I will not think further with you about the immediate future. I want to stay with you, in this moment of success. You are entitled to bask in it (if there is enough glow there to bask in). You are entirely entitled to raise a glass (if you imbibe), to call your friends, to email your relatives, and if social distancing will allow, provide air kisses and wave, and shaka, to everyone six feet away from you, that you have DONE IT! As highly qualified professionals, take a break, pat yourself on the back, and wait a little now: smell the roses, watch the sunset, and put your feet up.

And of course, as you eventually move forward to the next phase of your life, don’t forget us! As alumni, you are part of our ‘ohana, which is more visible than ever before on Facebook, and through the lists of past alumni increasingly visible on the homepage. Use those resources to network. And eventually, pay back -- whether to the Department, or just by sharing your mana‘o with all the second language learning, teaching, analyzing, and using world.

Aloha,

Dr. Crookes

Dr. Crowther

Congratulations to all our SLS graduates: BA, MA, and PhDs. Be proud of your accomplishments, as we all know the time and energy you have dedicated to your success! Continue to push forward, continue to grow, and continue to be a beacon of light in our global world!

Dr. Day

Congratulations and my sincere best wishes for the future! It has been a real pleasure learning and working with everyone. Let’s keep in touch. I hope our paths cross. If there is anything that I can do for you, please don’t hesitate to contact me. Aloha!!

Dr. Gilliland

Congratulations to the graduates of Spring 2020! BA graduates, you have achieved an impressive accomplishment, and done so under challenging circumstances. Your professional portfolios illustrate the breadth and depth of your learning, and you go forward with the knowledge and confidence that you are well prepared for whatever you choose to do next. MA and PhD graduates, I have observed your development over the years into confident, careful researchers whose work stands alongside that of seasoned scholars in our field. Every one of you makes me proud to be part of the Department of Second Language Studies. Please come back to tell us how you are doing as you move ahead in your careers.

Dr. Grüter

Dear Spring 2020 SLS graduates, this is not exactly HOW you expected to graduate, but the important and impressive point is that you ARE graduating! Congratulations!! We are incredibly proud of each and every one of you. The Class of 2020 will always be special. And one day you WILL receive all the flower lei that you deserve. Aloha & a hui hou.
Congratulations to all of our graduates this year! You’ve done impressive work at a difficult time, and you should be proud of yourselves. In the future, I think you will remember these days as a time when everything was very different for a while, and you will be among the few who will be able to tell stories of virtual graduation celebrations and more. I wish you all the best of luck in your future paths!

“I was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us…”

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens.

In this post COVID-19, you will be a part of the new education era. For those either tech-savvy or tech-averse, we will be forced to learn new things about online education. Even those late adapters have already learned it is not that difficult to get the basics running. For those who are tech-savvy will lead the rethinking of education for sharing public and open resources. It will be for you the best of the times if you continually prepare yourselves in all aspects of well-being, including resilience training, habit forming, learning about yourselves, strengthening your expertise, and harnessing the prosocial skills for compassion.

Warmest congratulations for this special milestone in your lives! Since we can’t watch as they call out your names in the Stan Sheriff Center, let me call out the names of our graduates in the BA program in SLS, with enthusiasm for your achievements as SLS majors (imagine applause during the three dots between each name): Michelle Akamine, . . . Abby Davis, . . . Savannah Endo, . . . Kana Matsu, . . . Daniel Mikami, . . . Justin Powell, . . . Josiah Torres, . . . Tiffany Wang, . . . Hiromi Yasunaga. . . . I’m also imagining meeting each of you out on the field after graduation, with your cap and gown and a hefty stack of leis around your necks! Very well done, all! And keep in touch.

Congratulations, SLS Graduates! While these may be uncertain times, your degrees are certainly an achievement—keep safe, keep sane while you #StayHome, and keep a “white belt mentality” as you continue to learn and grow in adulthood.

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Congratulations to all the graduates!! It has been a challenging semester with the abrupt transition to online classes, but I really appreciated seeing your hard work and resilience in finishing strong. I hope everyone stays healthy and safe over the summer.

Aloha SLS grads! Congratulations on completing your studies during the most bizarre and challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 epidemic! Your tenacity and perseverance during this unprecedented time testify to your ability to surmount any obstacle you may face in the future. Go forth and make positive impacts on the world as proud graduates of the DSLS at UH Manoa!

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Congratulations to all the Spring 2020 graduates! Your hard work and perseverance despite all odds is appreciated and commended.
CONGRATS TO:

SPRING 2020

PhD graduates:
Haerim Hwang
Anna Mendoza
Lin Zhou

MA graduates:
Jarrid Baldwin
Kiyoko Newsham
Leeseul Park
Moe Steinmueller
Mie Tobias
Tian Wang
Shiori Yamauchi

BA graduates:
Michelle Akamine
Abby Davis
Savanah Endo
Kana Matsui
Daniel Mikami
Justin Powell
Josiah Torres
Tiffany Wang
Hiromi Yasunaga

AGC graduates:
Fátima Magdalena Gatón Gabriel
Hoa Nguyen

SUMMER 2020

Expected PhD graduate:
Angela Haeusler

Expected MA graduates:
Precious Arao
Kathleen Griffin
RL Hughes
Marcy Konno
Shuai Tang
Chau Truong
Jue Wang

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Thank you to all my professors and friends. I enjoyed SLS life because of you! I will miss all of you, class lectures, the many assignments and research papers!

MIE TOBIAS

I just can’t say enough how grateful I am to be part of the SLS Ohana. To our magnificent professors, to the ELI, to SLSSA, and my beloved friends and colleagues - MAHALO for all of the memories we made and the time well spent. A hui hou - till we meet again!

JUE WANG

Step outside of your comfort zone and explore what’s available to you! We have a wonderful group of students and professors who help you grow. I wish you the best and send all SLSers aloha!

CHAU TRUONG

GRADUATE WORDS OF WISDOM

“For current PhDs: Read lots and strategically so that you know where the research gaps are in the field as early on as possible. Collect well-triangulated data to address those. Try to publish as early as you can. Be ambitious as to where you send your work--it is also in those journals where you will get the best feedback.”
Anna Mendoza

“Take advantage of all the amazing opportunities and resources the Department provides, take time to get to know your professors and classmates, get off campus and explore the island, go to all the Friday night coolers, and don’t forget to join SLSSA!”
Kat Griffin

“Go to the beach more than you already do.”
Jarrid Baldwin
Meet Justin Kanda and Sunhee Kim Fujii, our newest additions to the department this academic year!

Justin's Position: Educational Specialist
“I am in a newly created position made to support both the SLS BA program and the English Language Institute (ELI) program. This includes both administrative (i.e. paper) work and programming (e.g., ELI Placement Test & advising, marketing and promotion, etc.). While there are adjustments still being made, students and faculty alike can come to ask both general campus questions and program-specific questions.”

About Him:
Born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii, Justin completed his master’s in Japanese at UH Manoa, focusing on humor construction in scripted media.

Outside of work, Justin enjoys baking, novel editing, reading, and playing board games and card games. Justin also enjoys bowling and currently coaches for club and high school bowling. On a personal level, he would like to continue growing and learning in order to continue having a positive impact on the world around him no matter the environment.

During this COVID-19 situation...
“I’ve slowly been rearranging my room/house and cleaning--something I’ve been putting off because of being at work and out on the weekends coaching. It’s been a nice change of pace, but I’ve started to realize that even as an introvert, human relations are very important!”

Words to the department:
“Awesome job on rolling with the punches during these unprecedented times, but be sure to keep time to yourself and practice self-care more than you normally would! Congratulations to the Spring 2020 graduates!”

Sunhee’s Position: Program Specialist
“Throughout the semester, I check in with students regarding graduation, website bio updates, course offerings/registration, and other reminders. I help send out information for the Brown Bag presentations and other departmental announcements. Behind the scenes, I help with graduate admissions, updating departmental and routing institutional forms, tracking student progress, course scheduling, alumni outreach/engagement, job announcements, scholarship and grant management, and updating the department website and listservs.”

About Her:
Born in Seoul, South Korea, but raised in Hawai’i, Sunhee got her master’s in SLS at UH Manoa, looking at the role of phonological working memory in Korean vocabulary acquisition.

In addition to her work, Sunhee is pursuing her doctoral studies at the University of Maryland in Second Language Acquisition, currently at ABD (all but dissertation) status. She’s mainly interested in bilingual language processing and how bilinguals activate their two languages simultaneously. She is also interested in the role of individual differences (especially working memory) in language learning and proficiency.

During this COVID-19 situation...
“I have been working mostly from home, but I try to exercise every day. Before COVID-19, I used to love trying new restaurants, bakeries, and cafes.”

Words to the department:
“It is a very stressful time, but I know everyone can push forward and get through this semester. I hope students stay healthy and safe, and hope they can relax/enjoy the break over the summer.”
OPINIONS ABOUT ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected our department in numerous ways. Besides affecting our daily lives and our future plans, it has also changed our academic experience, and we have had to navigate the abrupt switch to online classes together. We surveyed students and faculty in our department to find out their thoughts on our “new normal.”

FACULTY PERSPECTIVES

The positive aspects of online teaching have been: “having some nice 1-1 video chats with students who wouldn’t otherwise have talked to me at length;” “learn[ing] a great deal about online teaching;” and “seeing the dedication and resolve in both students and faculty to make the best of a difficult situation!”

The negative aspects have been: “trying to balance keeping up instructional goals with making class accessible for students with limited internet access, other stresses at home, and limited motivation to do academic work on their own time;” “making sure that the students were able to interact with each other;” “trying to transition a course designed around face-to-face interaction to an online medium without losing the objectives that were set oh so many months ago;” and “finding alternatives to teaching so I don’t become overly reliant on only one or two available features.”

To improve online instruction, we should “help connect students with laptops (so they have a camera) and internet access” and “promot[e] continued dialogue between students, TAs, and faculty to ensure strong academic practices.”

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

For students, the positive aspects of online classes have been learning new technological skills, the convenience of taking classes from anywhere in the world, more inclusivity and understanding for students in different situations, and more free time (although many commented that this has not necessarily led to more productivity).

Undergraduate and graduate students have faced the following challenges: lack of motivation, difficulty keeping up with assignments, lack of personal interaction (with classmates and professors), internet and other technological problems, limited activities and interaction on Zoom, and difficulty sitting for prolonged periods during long classes.

To improve online classes, students have suggested providing more training for Zoom (for both students and teachers), using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities, revising course syllabi and creating a clear list of deadlines, recording lectures and uploading them to Laulima, shortening lecture times (especially in seminars), and providing more opportunities for social interaction.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT PERSPECTIVES

According to graduate assistants, the positive aspects of the online teaching have been being able to contact students, classmates, and professors via technology, learning more about digital teaching tools, and building a set of reusable online materials.

Graduate assistants have mentioned the lost sense of classroom community, difficulties monitoring students’ experiences, finding the right tools for online instruction, and transitioning face-to-face content to an online format as challenges that they’ve faced this semester.

To improve online instruction, graduate assistants should identify their students’ wants and needs, encourage online group discussion and collaboration, and share their tools and best practices with one another. One GA pointed out that offering more online classes for both undergraduate and graduate students could benefit the department by attracting students who cannot attend in-person.
The spring semester was still abundant with conferences, from students presenting their research to students organizing conferences. Although conferences were canceled due to the COVID-19 situation, some conferences were moved to online platforms. For example, organizing student chairs of the 24th LLL Graduate Student conference decided to move the conference completely online to Zoom. Here are some of the conferences that happened this semester:

**January**

**Chuo-UHM-UTokyo Student Conference**

Presenters:
- Faculty: Dr. Bonnie Schwartz
- PhD: Haerim Hwang, Yanxin Zhu, Yu-Tzu Chang, Fred Zenker, Mayuko Yusa
- MA: Tian Wang, Jue Wang

**February**

**Hawai‘i TESOL Conference**

Presenters:
- Faculty: Dr. Graham Crookes & Dr. Richard Day
- PhD: Anna Mendoza, Huy Phung, Michelle Kunkel
- AGC: Fatima Gaton
- MA: Zoe Tang

**March**

**Hawai‘i International Conference on English Language and Literature Studies**

Presenters:
- PhD: Yu-han Lin, Michelle Kunkel
- MA: R.L. Hughes

**April**

**24th LLL Graduate Student Online Conference**

Organizing Student Chairs:
- Victoria Lee, Denis Melik Tangiyev, Thu Ha Nguyen, Chau Truong, Kristen Urada

Award Recipients:
- Faculty: Dr. Theres Grüter
- PhD: Haerim Hwang

Presenters:
- PhD: Michaela Nuesser, Thu Ha Nguyen
- MA: Jeffrey Otto, Mie Tobias, Kevin Rickman, Jue Wang, Chau Truong

**May**

**HALT Conference**

Presenters:
- PhD: Parvaneh Rezaee
- AGC: Sumi Chang
WHAT’S WUGS? DON’T YOU MEAN “WUGS?”

WUGs, short for “Working with Undergraduate and Graduate Students”, is a low-key, low-stress mentorship program between SLS students in the BA program and students in the MA program. The program was initiated this semester by SLSSA as a step towards connecting graduate students with BA students.

In the program, BA and MA students were paired up as mentees and mentors by SLSSA (Second Language Studies Student Association) according to their research interests, languages, desired discussion topics, etc.

Current students in the program have mentioned that being able to connect with junior and senior colleagues was a supportive tool in their studies and life. The program is still growing and hopes to become a starting ground for BA and MA students to connect. It is usually held in the spring semester, but if demand is high, it can be held in the fall semester as well. For any further inquiries or suggestions about this program, please email slssa@hawaii.edu.

WHAT IS A “BAM” OR “BAMA” STUDENT?

Answer: A student who is enrolled in the combined bachelor’s & master’s degree (BAM or BA+MA) pathway.

Effective as of Fall 2018, the BA+MA pathway program was created to help students complete their bachelor’s and master’s degrees in 5-5.5 years. For more information, please visit http://www.hawaii.edu/sls/graduate/ma/bama-pathway/. Students interested in pursuing a BA+MA pathway should contact Kenny Harsch at slsba@hawaii.edu to discuss the application process.

Back in November 2019, students from the first two BAM cohorts shared their experiences in the program with faculty and students during the department’s Brown Bag Lecture series. Led by Victoria Lee and Magdalena Petko, the informational presentation was formatted to explain the program’s process and to give feedback about the program based on the cohorts’ experience to both students and faculty. Presenters encouraged interested students to stay positive and grounded while being active participants in their classrooms. They also encouraged students to explore all options before deciding on pursuing the BA+MA pathway because in the end, the decision comes down to what works best for students themselves.

Wendy Pearson, a program officer from the Office of the Provost, was present at the Brown Bag and expressed her appreciation and praise for the students being the first to provide direct feedback after students have been admitted to the program.

Meet the BAMAs

Pictured from left to right: Kaoru Motomura, Arisa Shida, Victoria Lee, Marcy Konno, Magdalena Petko, Abigail Davis, Kaitlyn Zarazua, and Holly Ishiki.
SOOKMYUNG STUDENTS VISIT UH

This January, ten TESL undergraduate students from Sookmyung Women’s University (SMU) in Seoul, Korea graced a visit to Hawai‘i. During their six-day stay, the students observed classes in several K-12 private and public schools and in the SLS department. They presented about code-switching in Korea. Other events held during the SMU students’ visit included a Global Englishes workshop hosted by Kenny Harsch and a socializing event at Fort DeRussy with kebabs and fireworks. Several BA students, including Christopher Pendelton and Annika Jennings, helped organize a couple of the events, and they shared a bit about their experience with the SMU students. Pendelton was impressed by the code switching presentation and the students’ ability to answer tough questions, while Jennings enjoyed socializing with the students outside of the campus.

“The students’ presentation on code switching in Korea was very fascinating, informative, and professional. They gave the audience new information about the way that Korean and English are used in their home country while debunking some common misconceptions.”
– Christopher Pendelton

Aloha everyone,

We are pleased to present you with the SLS departmental newsletter for the Spring 2020 semester. Our goal for this newsletter was to celebrate and congratulate the spring and summer graduates, since we could not do so face-to-face. We’d also like to give a big mahalo to our faculty and staff for always keeping us students in check, and to our peers for persisting, amidst the workload, stress, fatigue, and other difficulties we have been facing.

You will also find other articles in this newsletter on recent events, such as the transition to an online environment due to the COVID-19 situation and the Sookmyung Women’s University visit to our campus.

As always, if you have any updates to share about your recent work, research, classroom experiences, or experiences at an SLS/Applied Linguistics related event, please let us know at slssa@hawaii.edu

We hope you enjoy this semester’s issue of the SLSSA newsletter! Please stay safe and healthy, and we look forward to seeing everyone next semester.

Best,
Spring 2020 SLS Newsletter Committee
(Jose Barza, Micah Mizukami, Michelle Kunkel, Victoria Lee)
SLSSA's April cooler moved online due to the COVID-19 situation.

Department picture at SLSSA's January 2020 cooler

Matching red outfits in celebration of Chinese New Year at the January SLSSA cooler

BAMA cohort panel sharing their experience at the Brown Bag

Alice Zhu sharing her poster at the Chuo-UHM-UTokyo Student Conference

Department picture at SLSSA's online graduation cooler.