

Fairfield University Valedictory Address – Undergraduate Ceremony

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Sunday, May 20, 2012

Aloha pumehana k!kou. In the Native Hawaiian tongue, I warmly welcome Father President, Members of the Board of Trustees, Honored Guests, Members of the Faculty and Administration, Family, Friends, and the Class of 2012. Humbled, I stand *with* you today, as a member of this *exceptional* graduating class.

It was *four* years ago we entered Fairfield, *uncertain* of where this journey would take us. Some of us asked, “In college, is attendance mandatory?” “What’s a turbo?” “What do you mean I’m at the wrong Dolan?”

unknown horizon. Fairfield's academics and extracurriculars, guided us on *voyages* igniting our *'Ike Pono*.

With a core curriculum that could make even a square look well-rounded, we were exposed to **diverse courses** ranging from the [philosophy of evolution] to the [archery in

Whether it was working with *underprivileged* children in Dr. Primavera's psychology course or listening to the elderly at the Home-for-the-Dying-in-Jamaica with campus ministry, *M!lama* was all around us.

There were *professors*, who led us into that online battle called registration, providing us with the sacred *Pin Number*; the code granting us access to dodge 8 a.m. courses and capture once-a-week turbos. These professors we thank not *only* for their mentorship, but their friendship.

M!lama is also present in our-*many* service opportunities. During a service trip to Belize in 2011, I was shocked to see the realities of the Belizean life.

What we witnessed as a *team* were impoverished

exchange for a blood or money donation. Jail N' Bail, Relay for Life, Hunger Cleanup, the list goes on and on.

Students at Fairfield easily discover passions *leading* to social activism *with* an understanding of what-it-means to enact the Jesuit value of *Men and Women for Others*.

*'Ohana, 'Ike Pono, and M!lama. Three virtues of the ancient Native Hawaiian people, my ancestors who sailed the Pacific *seventeen hundred* years ago. For a language with the *shortest* alphabet in the world, these words carry *so much**