

# Scholar Update

Featuring our current and past scholars



## Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship Foundation

Winter 2020 Edition

### Board Meeting and Final Scholarship Interviews



interviews and four that made it to the final-round of interviews. There was a wide range of interest from applicants in Anthropology, Literature, Religion, Theatre, Music and Business.

In the end, **Christopher Molina** was selected as our 2021-2022 American scholar.

The CPASF held its annual December Board of Trustees Meeting and Final Scholarship Interviews on December 18, 2020 via Zoom.

We were fortunate to have six outstanding applicants competing in the first-round of

**Christopher** joins our 2020-2021 American scholar **Leah Wasil** as she waits out the COVID-19 pandemic. Both plan to depart for Japan in Fall 2021 when hopefully, COVID-19 restrictions regarding foreigners entering the country are lifted in Japan.

### New American Scholar Named



Please welcome **Christopher Molina** as our new CPASF American scholar for 2021-2022.

**Christopher** received his Masters of Music in composition from the University of Michigan, and is currently a doctoral composer and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Hawaii.

His music combines world music instruments with classical, celebrating acoustic music, jazz

and folk influences, as well as soundscapes in the natural world.

He performs internationally with the Japanese shakuhachi flute, and his residency at UH Manoa has allowed him to collaborate both locally and with musicians in Tokyo, Seoul, and Shanghai.

**Christopher** will complete his dissertation on the late concertos of Tōru Takemitsu, as well as an original work for orchestra with shakuhachi soloist, in Tokyo in conjunction with Senzoku Gakuen College of Music and Meiji University.

### A Fruitful Time Despite Some Difficulties

**Hiroko Saito** (2019-2021) writes: My third semester at UH was such a fruitful time despite some difficulties due to COVID-19.

For Fall 2020, I took three courses: Research Methods; Asian America; and American Sexualities. Since my research topic is Japanese Anglophone writers, the Asian America course gave me new perspectives and helped me to contextualize my research.

Also, while American Sexualities was a relatively new and unfamiliar topic to me, all the books assigned for the class were interesting and exciting. American Studies, both as a discipline and the department, is really interdisciplinary. To be able to study in that environment has broadened my view as a scholar.

Because of the pandemic, all of my classes

were online. Though it caused some difficulty in class discussions, especially for someone like me whose English is still not really fluent, it actually gave me more time to spend on studying. Even in that challenging situation, I enjoyed writing papers thanks to the UH library which has an abundance of online sources. In the Research Method class, I've revised a paper that I wrote for another class. The revised paper is not perfect yet, but the proposal on that paper was accepted by a major conference in Japan which will be held next summer.

In December, I wrote Christmas cards to my family and friends in the U.S. and Japan. Some of them sent me a card too and it reminded me that I am supported by many people even if the pandemic keeps me alone physically. Also, some friends in Japan

### Chair's Message

Their Royal Majesties Emeriti are known for the encouragement they provided people during challenging times. They are undoubtedly proud of the way the CPASF scholars have reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic as reflected in their stories in this issue. It is rewarding to see these young, talented people display the resiliency and determination needed to achieve their goals.

Please welcome Peter Dames, CPASF's newest Trustee, who we hope you will get to know better when we are able to safely meet in person. Peter is Executive Vice President at Servco Pacific, Inc. Earlier in his career, he served as *Chief Dreamer* for Toyota Motor North America and led the e-commerce team that united Toyota and Lexus brands worldwide by conceptualizing and executing global digital projects.

As with all organizations, CPASF must continually re-envision the future it wants to create and make changes to reach those goals - in our case, helping scholars achieve their goals.

One change we made a few years ago is the Travel Fund which has grown to \$52,000. Many thanks to Ed Hawkins who initiated this program to support the scholars by helping with travel expenses to conferences as they start their careers, all those who have contributed and Christine Yano and Glenn Miyataki for overseeing the program.

A dream I have is to build CPASF's finances to a level so that we can resume supporting two scholars from UH for two years as we have done in the past.

*Allen B Uyeda*

gathered online instead of in-person as they usually do around New Year's time, so I could join them from Hawaii and we had a great time together.



## Cultural Diversity in Language Education

**Katsuhiko Kitada** (2020-2022) writes: The Fall 2020 semester was the most inspiring period in my life.

I have been staying in Japan due to the COVID-19 pandemic and attending UH Manoa online classes in my room. Even though I was so nervous and anxious at the beginning of the semester, I had some amazing experiences that I have never had before.

I took three online courses which all related to research and practices of second-language acquisition. What I was most impressed with during the semester was that there is always cultural-diversity in language education.

I had a lot of discussions with other international classmates who had a variety of social backgrounds. They all had quite unique experiences in terms of learning and teaching languages in both their local



Katsuhiko pictured first column, fourth row with his Second-Language Studies classmates

World Languages Program. She provided me with insightful knowledge, ideas, and thoughts about language education in Hawaii. I could, therefore, understand how some people in Hawaii learn a variety of languages and how they appreciate diversity in languages.

I am pleased to say that I could get through a very challenging period during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic because of the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship

Foundation. This experience made me realize how valuable it is to maintain physical and mental health as both are made possible by reliance on each other.

Although I am still staying in Japan and attending courses remotely while writing this update, I have high hopes that I will have exciting and meaningful experiences in the Spring 2021 semester.

Mahalo!

## A CPASF Alumna Making a Difference in the World

By **Sakiko Yasuda** (2013-2015)

**Note to Editor:** We came back to Japan in the Summer of 2019 upon completing my contract with UNICEF. So we were luckily not involved in the chaos caused by the pandemic of COVID-19.

I am hoping to go back to work soon but most of the international recruitments have been pending due to COVID-19. And it is also not so safe to travel internationally in this situation. I will need to see what opportunities appear and where our destiny takes us next.

**Sakiko** writes: Through the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship Foundation, I earned a Doctor of Public Health degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 2016.

For the last three years, I worked as a WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) Officer at UNICEF's field office in the Solomon Islands and at the Regional Office (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office) in Thailand.

In the Solomon Islands, I managed a nationwide health program to prevent infectious diseases funded with four million U.S. dollars from the New Zealand government. The



main purpose of the program was educating people about the importance of washing hands with soap and either using or building toilets and wash stations to reduce disease and other illnesses. It might seem simple and common sense to do so, but the majority of people in the country have been conducting open defecation and access to clean water remains extremely limited.

With various partners such as the Ministry of Health and WHO (World Health Organization), I led program-preparation such as logistics and vendor management as well as arrangement of promotional materials. I also supported policy dialogue between ministries and the implementation of health activities including national events,

conferences, and workshops.

While at the Regional Office in Thailand, I oversaw the Knowledge Management effort to help build staff capacity at 14 UNICEF country offices. The effort also contributed to construct and maintain the communication network between those offices in the region. I helped create meeting agendas and shared them with other international partners to conceptualize programs. For the Regional Director, I frequently developed concept notes to summarize the status and bottleneck of programs in respective countries in the region.

Since many public health issues including COVID-19 require multilateralism to solve or control, I believe that Public Health is a key driver for sustainable development in the world. Instead of just hoping somebody will find a solution for this pandemic, I am hoping to continue to contribute as a Public Health Specialist in an ever changing world.

The CPASF *Scholar Update* is published on a quarterly basis. Please email updates and photos to: [myokomichi@jashawaii.org](mailto:myokomichi@jashawaii.org).