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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**UH West O'ahu commencement ceremony  
Saturday, Dec. 12, 9 a.m., UH West O'ahu Lower Courtyard  
Former UH President Albert Simone to deliver keynote address**

**KAPOLEI** --- Graduates, family, and friends will come together this holiday season to celebrate fall commencement exercises at the University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu on Saturday, Dec. 12. Two hundred sixty one graduates, the University's largest ever graduating class, will earn bachelor's degrees and certificates during a 9 a.m. ceremony at the UH West O'ahu Lower Courtyard. Former University of Hawai'i President and UH Mānoa Chancellor Albert Simone will give the keynote address.

"I look forward to commencement every semester," said UH West O'ahu Chancellor, Rockne Freitas. "The students and their families have so much to celebrate and their dedication makes me truly proud to represent this great university."

Chancellor Freitas will preside over the ceremony and confer degrees for the last time before retiring on Dec. 31. University of Hawai'i System President David Lassner and University of Hawai'i Board of Regents' Chair Randy Moore, Regent David Iha, Regent Michael McEnerney, Regent Lee Putnam, Regent Michelle Tagorda, Regent Ernest Wilson, Vice President Carrie Okinaga and Vice President Garret Yoshimi will congratulate the graduates. The UH West O'ahu band will perform at the commencement ceremony, and UHWO Associate Professor Leilani Basham and graduating students Loke Teurikan Chong Gum and Kahikina Taketa will give the UH West O'ahu Oli, He aloha no nā 'Ewa. UH West O'ahu junior Mahealani Kahala and junior Joyleanne Santos will be the student emcees.

Mililani resident Marissa Pagud, one of this year's outstanding UH West O'ahu graduates, will speak on behalf of the graduating class. Pagud is a 2005 graduate of Kamehameha Schools and will achieve a bachelor's degree with a concentration in English after she rediscovered her love of literature while attending UH West O'ahu. As a single parent, Pagud attributes her success to the support and love of her son Kama and family.

UH West O'ahu graduates will receive their baccalaureate in Applied Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Humanities, Public Administration and Social Sciences during the commencement ceremony. Graduates will also receive certificates in various programs including Applied Forensic Anthropology, Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management, Health Care



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Administration, Risk Management and Insurance, Substance Abuse and Addictions Studies, and Democratic Principles and Social Justice.

The commencement ceremony will be streamed live on the UH West O'ahu website at <http://www.uhwo.hawaii.edu>.

UH West O'ahu Fall 2015 Commencement details:

- Family and friends are welcome to attend commencement in the UH West O'ahu Lower Courtyard. No tickets will be issued. Guests may arrive at 8 a.m. The seating area will be closed off once it reaches maximum capacity.
- The parking lot is expected to fill to capacity. Carpooling is highly encouraged as there will be considerable congestion along the Farrington Highway entrance to the campus. The parking lot will close once it reaches maximum capacity.
- Lei vendors will sell lei on the grassy area at the campus entrance near the Dining Commons. Balloons and strollers are not allowed in the commencement seating area for safety reasons.
- A first-aid station will be available in the UHWO Library.
- A UH West O'ahu Bookstore tent will be on-site selling UH West O'ahu merchandise.
- Graduates may greet guests following the ceremony at approximately 10:30 a.m. at the UH West O'ahu Great Lawn near alphabetical signs.

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Established in 1976, **the University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu** offers quality education, small classes and personalized attention with academic programs that emphasize the exploration of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural studies. UH West O'ahu serves approximately 2,700 students at its brand new, state-of-the-art campus that opened in the City of Kapolei in 2012. For more information, visit [www.uhwo.hawaii.edu](http://www.uhwo.hawaii.edu), call (808) 689-2800 or toll-free (866) 299-8656. Find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).