More than 1,400 families and friends gathered at the Hawaii Convention Center on December 19, 2013, to celebrate the fall 2013 graduates from UHM Nursing. Graduates from the Bachelor of Science, RN to BS, Master of Science, Master’s Entry, and PhD nursing programs participated in this year’s Recognition Ceremony. Students selected Dr. Lorrie Wong, UHM Nursing Associate Professor and Translational Health Science Simulation Center Director, to deliver to the keynote address. She delivered an inspiring and motivating speech encouraging graduates to find success through their passion for nursing, embracing opportunities and challenges, and being a part of a team. Wong emphasized the importance of working in groups, and shared a quote from Mother Teresa emphasizing teamwork. She concluded by telling the graduates to “never doubt that when you work in a group, your collective expertise will be so phenomenal … you can change the world.”
Student speakers included undergraduate class president Elizabeth Kim and vice-president Taylor Fink, master’s graduate Betty McMullin, and PhD graduate Charlene Ono. While the student addresses highlighted varying program experiences, all student speakers expressed their appreciation towards the UHM Nursing faculty for their support. Master’s graduate Betty McMullin said, “Our instructors believed in each and every one of us. They believed that we would all become excellent nurses and they worked hard to ensure our success.” McMullin added that faculty “nurtured, supported and encouraged us” and that “each graduate sitting here today is living proof of their belief in every one of us.” PhD graduate Charlene Ono offered this advice to bachelor’s and master’s students, “just remember to continue learning as it will serve our patients and communities well.”
In keeping with the time-honored tradition of pinning, students invited family members to participate on stage to pin each graduate. Each student received a ribbon lei from the school with a nursing alumni pin affixed to it. UH Manoa Nursing Alumni Association (UHMNAA) president Sally Ishikawa continued a more recent tradition of giving a $250 cash gift to accompany the student-selected Professional Nurse Award. Additionally, UHMNAA awarded one-year of complementary membership to the alumni chapter to each of the four student-selected awardees.

UHM Nursing will celebrate the spring 2014 graduates at Recognition Ceremony in May 2014. For questions about Recognition Ceremony, please contact Desiree Yamamoto at dlyamamo@hawaii.edu.