More than 1,200 families and friends gathered at the Hawaii Convention Center Ballrooms on May 12, 2016, to celebrate 87 Spring 2016 graduates from UHM Nursing. Graduates from the Bachelor of Science, RN to BS, Master of Science, Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) nursing programs participated in this Spring’s Recognition Ceremony.

The students selected Ms. Laura Reichhardt, MS, APRN, RN, NP-C, Director of the Hawaii State Center for Nursing and UH Manoa Nursing alumnae, to deliver their keynote address. Ms. Reichhardt opened by acknowledging the incredible feat accomplished by the recent graduates. While emphasizing their achievement, she also recognized their individual support structures and encouraged them to keep them in place as they continue to move forward in their careers: “I also am urging
you to reflect on your support systems … As you continue into
your nursing profession, keep these connections. Standing on a
pillar by yourself is difficult, wobbly, and lonesome.” Ms.
Reichhardt continued by highlighting the varied field of
practice that awaits the graduates: “Opportunities to enter
nursing across the diverse specialties continue to open up …
Every role is continuing to grow and needs bright and talented
nurses to answer their call for service.” She touched upon
APHNs (Advanced Public Health Nurses) and the role they play
in health reform and community health. She further discussed
APRNs (Advanced Practice Registered Nurses) as the fastest
growing population of nurses and the strong support they have
received from the Hawaii State Legislature to make Hawaii “one
of the first states in the nation to achieve full scope of
practice authority for APRNs”. She also spoke about DNP and
PhD nurses and their roles in developing “new models and
innovations in patient care, care delivery systems, and
quality outcomes.” At the conclusion of her address, Ms.
Reichhardt impressed upon the graduates their potential to
impact society and shared her personal gratitude for her place
in the nursing field: “It is an exciting time to be a nurse in
Hawaii … More and more opportunities in the community exist,
and in ways that are ever changing … I’m thankful, daily, to
be part of this community and I welcome you in your newest
role.”
Student speakers were BS graduate Sherrie Waiʻaleʻale and MS graduate Elizabeth Blasiak. In keeping with the tradition, students invited family members to participate on stage during the pinning ceremony. Each student received a ribbon lei from the School with a UHM Nursing alumni pin affixed to it. UH Manoa Nursing Alumni Association (UHMNAA) President Lori Kaneshige MSN, RN, continued a more recent tradition of giving a $250 cash gift to accompany the baccalaureate student-selected Professional Nurse Award presented to Amber Williams. Additional baccalaureate award recipients were: Jenna Savusa, Kahiau Award; Sherrie Waiʻaleʻale, Leadership Award; Crystal Yaple, DAISY in Training Award; Christen Young, Community Service Award; Krystle Barroga, Erinn Baysa, Althea Bongolan, Rachel Cabel, Emerson Constantino, Eloy Espino, Briana Franco, June Mohr, Sara Naidl, Aristina Ora-a, and Cassie Soares, Academic Achievement Award.

The Dean’s Research Award was awarded to DNP student Luzviminda Miguel in recognition of her study project titled “Kaʻu Community Asthma Management Program” and BS student
Alissa Harada in recognition of her study project titled “Factors Associated with Leadership Behaviors in Nursing Students.”

The undergraduate students presented UHM Nursing faculty, Dr. Carolyn Constantin, PhD, RNC, with the Nurse Educator Award in recognition of her respect and dedication to her students’ success. Mr. Bill Siegman, MS, RN was the recipient of the faculty-selected DAISY Faculty Award, in honor of his exceptional impact on students and inspirational influence on their future.

UHM Nursing will celebrate the Fall 2016 graduates at Recognition Ceremony in December 2016. For questions about Recognition Ceremony, please contact Carlyn Okatomi at carlynli@hawaii.edu.