

**JUSTINA P. TAVANA**

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**EDUCATION**

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, Provo, UT **2023**  
**PhD Degree (BIOLOGY)**  
Advisor: Dr. John S.K. Kauwe

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX, USA **2009**  
**MBA Degree**

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, HAWAII **2003**  
**BS Degree (BIOLOGY)**

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, Provo, Utah **Jan 2024-current**  
**Postdoctoral Fellow**, Lab of Dr. John Kauwe

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, Provo, Utah **Sep 2018-Jan 2024**  
**Graduate Research Assistant**, Lab of Dr. John Kauwe

- Supervised and trained a team of 12 research assistants for Alzheimer’s disease research.
- Certified Phlebotomist, collect blood samples.
- Translated and validated cognitive assessment tools adapted for Samoan and Tongan populations.
- President of Pacific Islander Life Science Student Association (PILI).

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY, Logan, Utah **Mar 2020-Jan 2022**  
**Neuropsychological Technician**, Lab of Dr. JoAnn Tschanz

- Administered and scored Neuropsychological assessments for Cache County Family study participants.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, Provo, Utah **Aug 2015-Sep 2018**  
**Biology Department Office Manager**

- Provided administrative support to 30 faculty and staff members.
- Supervised part-time student secretaries.
- Managed departmental assignments.

- Chaired Life Sciences TEAM Life (July 2016-17).

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, Provo, Utah.

**Sep 2016-Jun 2023**

**Associate Director, Rheumatic Relief**

- Assisted in teaching and managing logistics for a study abroad program in Samoa.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, Provo, Utah

**Feb 2015-Aug 2015**

**Bioinformatics Program Administrator**

- Supported the Program Head with administrative tasks.
- Managed program websites and announcements.
- Maintained undergraduate Bioinformatics major files and advised students.
- Coordinated grant proposals for underrepresented minority undergraduate students.
- Monsanto grant (\$20,000)
- Coordinated LDSLSRS

UTAH VALLEY IMAGING, Orem, Utah

**Feb 2015-Aug 2015**

**Pre-Authorization Specialist**

PEDIATRIC CARE, INC., Provo, Utah

**Aug 2005 – Nov 2014**

**Office Manager**, Apr 2012 – Nov 2014

**Front Office Manager/ Billing Specialist**, Aug 2005- Apr 2012

DR. ANCHETA'S OPTOMETRY, Hanapepe, Hawaii

**Feb 2005 – Jun 2005**

**Office Manager**

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY-HAWAII, Laie, Hawaii

**Nov 1999 – Jun 2003**

**Administrative Assistant-Pacific Island Studies**

**English Tutor, TESOL Department**

**Residents Assistant, Hale 2**

POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER, Laie, Hawaii

**Aug 1999 – Aug 2002**

- **Various Roles including Reservation Agent, Demonstrations Guid, and waitress**

**AWARDS**

2023-2025 Human Genetics Scholar, American Society of Human Genetics

2021 3 Minute Thesis College Winner

2020 Diversity Supplement to R01

2019 Brigham Service Award

**PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES**

2024 IIRC- Auckland, NZ

2024 IIDRN-Honolulu, HI

2024 ASHG- Denver, CO

2024 AAIC- Philadelphia, PA

2023 IIDRN-Honolulu, HI

2023 ASHG- Washington, DC

2023 AAIC-Amsterdam, Netherlands

2021,2020 AAIC-Virtual Meeting  
2019 AAIC-Los Angeles, CA  
2018 AAIC-Chicago, IL  
2018 WCC-Dubai, UAE

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

- International Indigenous Research Conference
- American Society of Human Genetics
- International Indigenous Dementia Research Network
- ISTAART (International Society to Advance Alzheimer's Research and Treatment)
- World Congress of Cardiology & Cardiovascular Health

## **INTERNSHIP**

**NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN, Kalaheo, Hawaii Jun 2001-Aug 2001**

- Student Intern in ecological and restoration projects.

## **MANUSCRIPT REVIEWER**

- Aug 2022 Reviewed manuscript titled "Cell-free single-stranded DNA from cerebrospinal fluid as a biomarker to determine Alzheimer's disease status" for the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease
- Nov 2024 Reviewed manuscript titled "Validating the Kimberly Indigenous Cognitive Assessment Tool using Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Samoan adults" for the Journal of SSM-Mental Health

## **GRANT REVIEWER**

- Aug 2023 Participated as a reviewer for the grant proposal titled "A culturally grounded approach to understanding and improving Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD) knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors for American Samoan family caregivers."

## **PUBLICATIONS**

CC Teerlink, JB Miller, EL Vance, LA Staley, J Stevens, **JP Tavana**, et al. (2022).

"Analysis of high-risk pedigrees identifies 11 candidate variants for Alzheimer's disease." *Alzheimer's & Dementia* 18 (2), 307-317.

Miller JB, Ward E, Staley LA, Stevens J, Teerlink CC, **Tavana JP**, Cloward M, Page M, Dayton L, Alzheimer's Disease Genetics Consortium, Cannon-Albright LA, Kauwe JSK (2020). "Identification and genomic analysis of pedigrees with exceptional longevity identifies candidate rare variants" [published online ahead of print, 2020 Jun 21]. *Neurobiol Dis.* 2020;143:104972.  
doi:10.1016/j.nbd.2020.104972

**Tavana JP**, Jensen NO, Rosene M, Ridge PG, Kauwe JS, Karch CM. (2018).

“RAB10:an Alzheimer’s disease resilience locus and potential drug target.”  
Clinical Interventions in Aging. 2019(14):73-79.

## **INVITED SEMINARS AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS**

- Continuing Medical Education Talk, Ministry of Health, Moto’otua Hospital, Samoa, 2019
- American Samoa Community College, Pago Pago, 2023
- Papa Ola Lokahi, Honolulu, 2023
- International Indigenous Dementia Research Network Conference, Honolulu, 2023
- University of Utah, Department of Human Genetics, Salt Lake City, 2023
- Continuing Medical Education Talk, Ministry of Health, Vaiola Hospital, Tonga, 2024
- Kahanui Summit Keynote speaker, Provo, 2024
- International Indigenous Dementia Research Network Conference, Honolulu, 2024

## **MENTORING ACTIVITIES** (thru November 2024)

Graduate Student:

Falahola Kanongataa      MS      2023 (Hawaii Pacific University)

Post Baccalaureate Students (Academic Training-Advisor):

Siosilina Polaapau

Sela Funaki

Undergraduate Student Mentoring:

Tahina Alailima	Christopher Pakalani
Ivy Cuthbert	Ariana Perez
Riley Hansen	William Tenney
Logan Lutui	Brook Vaitohi
Tristan Packard	Helaman Sosi
Michael Kennerly	Josephina Lealaitafea
Kaho Mateaki	Taelor Holdcraft

Falatapuitta Matthes	Jesse Crank
Tui Lavaki	Sione Vaioleti

## **LANGUAGES**

English      Fluent, native speaker

Samoaan      Fluent, native speaker

Tongan      Competent speaker, basic level of reading and writing

## **MEDIA**

USA Today- [Indigenous researchers work to close gaps in Alzheimer's data](#)

The Honolulu Star-Advertiser- [Alzheimer's study aims to reach Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders](#)

KUER 90.1- [Utah's Pacific Islanders play a crucial role in BYU Alzheimer's research](#)

Fierce Biotech- [A 'novel way of doing it': Research effort addresses Alzheimer's knowledge gap in AAPI communities](#)

KSL- [BYU researcher developing Alzheimer's tests for Pacific Islanders](#)

BYU News- [BYU research team find rates of Alzheimer's gene is four times higher in Pacific Islanders](#)

## **POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

- World Congress of Cardiology and Cardiovascular Health, Dubai, 2018
  - ASM Intermountain Branch Conference, Online, 2020
  - Alzheimer's Association International Conference, Amsterdam, 2023
  - American Society of Human Genetics, Washington, D.C., 2023
  - Alzheimer's Association International Conference, Philadelphia, 2024
  - American Society of Human Genetics, Denver, Colorado, 2024
  - International Indigenous Dementia Research Network, Honolulu, HI 2024
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