

# Xandria Akau

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador  
Paris, 2019



***“I gained a wider perspective by meeting and working with students from all over the world.”***

Xandria studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in summer 2019 at ESSCA School of Management in Paris. During her time there, she studied luxury brand marketing and international business. Prior to arriving at ESSCA, Xandria didn't like to rely on others. In Paris, she was alone in a country far from home. It was nerve-racking. While she was learning to be independent, she also learned to be a shoulder to lean on, as well as to lean on others. It reminded her to have a collective rather than individualistic mindset.

The experience provided Xandria a wider perspective by meeting and working with students from all over the world. Hawai'i, where she lives, has many different cultures, so having a widened perspective has allowed her to have more productive and meaningful relationships with colleagues, consumers, and everyone in between.

When she returned from studying abroad, she was promoted to Office Manager at the optometry office where she worked. The skills and experiences she gained abroad allowed her to lead and empower her team well. She had to make hard decisions each and every day. She has become more confident in who she is and set an example for her young female employees. In 2022 Xandria made the difficult decision to leave the optometry office after 5 incredible years and now works as a Property Services Coordinator at Mauna Kea Residences.

- Earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo
- Native Hawaiian
- Received Office Manager Certification from the Professional Eye Care Association of America in 2021

