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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Honolulu, Hawai'i**— PREL's Library Education for the US-Affiliated Pacific (LEAP) Program Graduates Earn Master's Degrees in Library and Information Sciences from the University of North Texas.

PREL congratulates the LEAP cohort on the successful completion of their challenging degree programs.

In August 2011, students from throughout the US-affiliated Pacific islands began their master's degree program in Library and Information Sciences. Funded by an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian grant, the Library Education for the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific (LEAP) project has prepared professional librarians and information managers who will contribute to the development and improvement of libraries, educational programs, and community activities throughout the region.

During the three-year project, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), in collaboration with the University of North Texas (UNT) College of Information – Department of Library and Information Sciences (DLIS) and the University of North Texas Libraries, administered twenty-three full scholarships, supported the cohort of twenty-eight students, and delivered a high quality educational experience to cohort members. The UNT/DLIS master's degree is an American Library Association (ALA) accredited degree program.

The goal of LEAP is to prepare professionally qualified librarians to manage libraries with the skills and knowledge to implement high quality, innovative, useful, and credible educational and informational programs, bringing twenty-first century skills to the Pacific region through their chosen library and information careers. The cohort is demographically representative of the region with students coming from five of the six USAPI entities, including American Sāmoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Guam, and the Republic of Palau.

A graduation celebration was held on Friday, July 19, 2013, in Saipan, at the conclusion of the Pacific Educational Conference (PEC), and the Pacific region has gained highly qualified librarians who are poised to support 21st century learning in their respective communities.

The 28 LEAPers who earned a master's degree in Library and Information Science from the University of North Texas include:

Faailoa Afalava (American Sāmoa, Library Science), Rosalyn Ajoste (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Library Science), Meena Benavente (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Library Science), Tanya Chambers (Japan, Library Science), Alicia Diego (Guam, Library Science), Debra Duenas (Guam, Information Science), Melissa Gentapangan (Guam, Library Science), Jennifer Hainrick (Pohnpei, Library Science), Natalie Hill (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Library Science), Jayleen Kokis (Chuuk, Library Science), Amy Kranz (Guam, Library Science), Jeffrey Libao (Guam, Library Science), Wai Yi Ma (Guam, Library Science), Imengel Mad (Palau, Library Science), Justin Maga (American Sāmoa, Library Science), Maria Ornes (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Library Science), Perry Pangelinan (Guam, Library Science), Ismael Perez (Guam, Library Science), Antonio Perry (Guam, Library Science), Eric San Nicolas (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana

Islands, Information Systems), Roland San Nicolas (Guam, Library Science), Carmen Santos (Guam, Library Science), Krishnan Seerengan (Guam, Information Science), Anita Tenorio (Guam, Library Science), Jean Thoulag (Pohnpei, Library Science), Rosalind Unpingco (Guam, Library Science), Angelina Yobech (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Library Science), Elvis Pau'u Zodiacal (American Sāmoa, Library Science).

For more information on the LEAP program or PREL in general, please contact Kaira Resch, manager of Communications [reschk@prel.org](mailto:reschk@prel.org). The LEAP project, with links to additional student profiles and other information, may be found at [http://www.unt.edu/features/2013\\_pacific-island-commencement/index.htm?homepage=1](http://www.unt.edu/features/2013_pacific-island-commencement/index.htm?homepage=1) or <http://lis.unt.edu/apps/leap/>

**About PREL:**

PREL envisions a world where all children and communities are literate and healthy, global participants grounded in and enriched by their cultures. Throughout the Pacific, a region of diverse languages and cultures, PREL collaborates with clients and partners using the proven results of research to improve schooling and promote community change. PREL is an independent, nonprofit corporation headquartered in Hawai'i, with service centers in American Sāmoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia: Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap.