**Intro:**

Ladies and gentlemen boys and girls welcome to the class act at Kauai community college the show that highlights campus happenings and goes deeper with its professors and students so you can hear why this is where you want to be it's that time let's get it on

**Teak:**

Here we are on another incredible day at Kauai community college the sun is out shining it is a beautiful day outside and today I have the very incredible pleasure of sitting down with one of what I call Kauai community college's finest Mr eric san George he is an English professor correct that's correct thank you all right English professor at Kauai community college I am going to address you as probably professor san George I assume?

**Eric:**

Sure that's fine yeah that's okay too

**Teak:**

All right and tell me uh what is it that you do here I mean I know you're an English professor but tell me more about that and what a great day in your classroom looks like

**Eric:**

Sure so I am an English instructor here and I’ve been here now at KCC for a

little over four years wow okay so things have been great and I teach primarily composition one English 100 which is everyone's favorite class because it's everyone’s required to take

so it's a fun class though and I try to make it enjoyable for the students primarily by allowing them to write about basically anything they want so in most sections of my courses

the the topics are completely open so the idea behind that is that students are hopefully writing about something that is relevant to their career interests their other courses what they just enjoy doing in general so i let students have a lot of options for their assignments for what they want to write about because they're going to have to practice the same skills no matter what right so college level writing composition is is usually i like to think of it as being source-based writing meaning you're working with the ideas and opinions and values claims whatever of what other people have said but you get to have your own voice in that conversation between um other other fields and disciplines and other other people talking about whatever you're interested in so the idea is you're kind of entering a conversation and that's a metaphor that's been used uh before for for a composition so i also get to teach literature classes okay which are always really fun and i've taught here american literature which is a survey course of just american writers since the the founding basically and even before of america and that's i like that class because you get to have a really wide range and even here we get to include authors from hawaii etc so it's very fun and then i've got a course called landscapes in literature which is a basically an environmental literature class so people are reading stuff on like nature writing and fiction about the environment and that kind of thing interesting new class so i get to just teach people how to kind of not only write in these courses but also how to to practice critical thinking because really writing is just it's your thoughts on paper to some extent but it's organized in a certainway.

**Teak:**

Very cool now I want to know a little bit more about you tell me about your journey uh

getting to Kauai community college because I assume i i'm not sure but I assume that there was a journey getting here so to speak

**Eric:**

Yeah, there was… I just came out down from the north shore! That's all!

No... I’m from new jersey okay so i i grew up in new jersey I went to college in Connecticut so I was from the northeast, okay and then i i finished a master's in new jersey and

then proceeded to move you know five-six thousand miles away to Hawaii so I moved to um

Oahu and I was working on a Ph.D. at the University of Hawaii Manoa wow and then that's what got me here because I got to a stage where I was done with my coursework there and I just had to complete these things called area exams and then I had to write my dissertation so I saw the job opening on Kauai and I got excited by that and so I applied and fortunately, I was offered the position and nice yes so I came over here and I was still a student so the first basically what three and a half years being here something like that I was a student too wow so I kind of

empathize with the students here who are working and have other things going on in their lives they have more than I ever had and have now but the point is that's how I got here so I was

on Oahu for a little bit for about three and a half years and now I’ve been on Kauai for just over four now and so I’ve been teaching here since January of 2016. nice so is it safe to say that you went straight from college teaching at Kauai community college so you haven't taught anywhere else or had you I have not any so the only other teaching I have done was part-time at Manoa when I was a graduate student, okay so I was a graduate assistant so I was helping and assisting with some courses but then they also let you teach certain sections so I got to teach I think a couple of classes a handful I think maybe there's five sections or something like that a couple of literature courses a couple of composition classes and so the only full-time teaching position I’ve had has been here at KCC.

**Teak:**

that's awesome that's incredible i really love the fact that this is kind of where it's all began for you so to speak because i mean not only um have you created you know an impact among the students here but i mean just to have you as part of the ohana here at Kauai community college is really an incredible thing to me i mean i think that's really really cool uh when you talk about english 100 and teaching that particular subject now i've been through in english 100 i wasn't fortunate enough to have you as my professor but i will likely have you at some point i'm sure um what can you tell me about the course i mean a little bit diving maybe a little bit deeper into the course because from what i can remember from my english 100 course it really was foundational for writing in a i don't know if a collegiate level is the best way to put it but it just seemed like my writing skills went from zero to a hundred because it really gave me the foundation of being able to write on a proper level so to speak is that really what it is about

**Eric:**

that is kind of what it's about I mean I think other faculty will have different answers to that other English faculty but I think that captures it well that zero to 100 kind of mentality because the expectations for college-level writing are often pretty rigorous

and you're supposed to be able to kind of carry on an argument or express yourself in a really clear and cohesive manner and sometimes we think that's very easy to do but often there's a lot of work that has to go into being able to put forward your message and your purpose and to reach that audience so it's a class that every college in North America

requires students to take so there's a reason why we do it it's not to punish you and torture you

it's usually because you're going to have to write a lot when you're a college student and often there are sets of expectations and yeah sometimes the kind of writings and

analytical assignments you might be doing for English 100 you might think well how's this going to help me in my job today or whatever but the whole point is just the organization of your thoughts and seeking clarity right is really what drives college-level writing so if

you can practice that it carries over I think to believe it or not into some of your other professions and jobs etc but certainly when you're in the college environment we're supposed to be writing at a certain level with certain kinds of expectations so that's why we have English 100 which has five student learning outcomes which are kind of a lot, wow and those outcomes um they're all

meant they're across the system in the uh system which also shows just parity how we were all

in the system striving for the same kinds of writing techniques and skills to be able to exhibit so it's a tough class for sure and I know I know people struggle with writing it's hard they get self-conscious about it but I hope that after taking an English 100 class people feel more confident about their ability to at least read material closely and to be able to

at least understand why there are certain methods of writing and different audiences and

kind of genres etc and I think one of the things that you touched on earlier that sounds like it really could make your class specifically pretty incredible is the fact that you allow students to

write about things that they want as opposed to assigning particular subjects

**Teak:**

I know from in writing in my English class in my English 100 class there was a lot of structure but there was a lot of you know free will to choose your subject so to speak and that made it so much more fun for me because I got to write about something that I could choose which meant I was going to choose something that I knew a little bit about or that I thought I knew about right so I think that that must be something that your students I would assume admire about your teaching and your style and um I think that that's just an incredible part of what your class must be like I mean it's got to be a fun place I’m sure you guys laugh and have good times and get to hear great stories

**Eric:**

you'd have to ask the students who know they might say different things

but I like to I get to laugh a lot in class I don't know but um I think they do too I think it's uh just coming from a local kid perspective

**Teak:**

 I think it's safe to say that local kids will keep you on your toes so to speak and have some fun with you absolutely uh we will leave those stories for another episode for sure but I mean you know Kauai community college I think the foundation of of of everything that we are here at the college is just incredible and I think that you come from you know obviously a major university do you feel like Kauai community college is an incredible place to start giving your experience I mean did you go to any community college prior to a major university or did you go straight into university

**Eric:**

so I did go straight into university I did not attend a community college but um to answer your question it's a great place to start and that's part of our kind of messaging and marketing because it's true I think that this is our we're the only game in town to some extent right right and I think that that is one of the benefits of KCC is that it's very much a community

college because we're the only island um in the state and in the system that only has one institution no other island has just one community college some of them have uh four-year institutions like Maui right now even you know they have uh the Maui college right um so that's what's kind of special and one of the things I love about KCC is that that we're the communities college and I hope people think of the college in that way because it is a fantastic place to start

and there are so many avenues for students these days when it comes to higher education and thinks that with distance courses etcetera it's a great place to be able to um build a foundation to create a springboard for whatever you're thinking of doing next and um you know it's the part right the messaging we have and I think it's true I that's the beauty of a

community college it's that you get to begin at a community college you're getting to start often and then um and you're building all of those foundational skills so no I did not

start at a community college but I see so much value in them and especially at our institution

**Teak:**

certainly and I want to touch on uh this particular point with you because I know that not only are you within the English department here at koi community college but what other things are you involved in because I know there's at least one other thing that you're involved right so tell me about other things that you're involved in sure so...

**Eric:**

I'll just start what teak was mentioning there is uh phi theta kappa so I’m the co-advisor and teak is a member of PTK so uh he was just inducted just a few days ago from the time it's recording so congratulations again thank you that's the honor society here and I just came on as a co-advisor in fall of 2019 so it's really exciting because it's another way of getting to engage with students because otherwise, I’m often on committees that um you know their their

faculty and staff committees that kind of thing primarily there's some student representation too depending on the committee i'm on the faculty senate here i'm the language arts and humanities

representative, I’m also the secretary for uh for the faculty senate which means I have to take all the minutes and notes which of course they give it to the English person and then um what else I used to be the chair of the ohana committee which was about cool um getting faculty together that sort of thing and kind of building fellowship and camaraderie I also am what else the it

representative which has to do with technology on campus and I’ve done a bunch of things I was the um uh 2019 leadership Kauai class I watched I was privileged to have gone

through that experience and I met so many people from across the island and different

fields and disciplines and lines of work so that was I loved that that was a great experience and networking experience and kind of being able to tell people about what

what's available at the college and learning more about what they do and what else is going on on the island right so um there's a couple of other hats I wear in terms of committees and other uh opportunities here but um it's fine I like to be able to be a part of the campus community as much as I can because we're a small school and it's it means a lot to me to be able to reach and work with as many people on campuses as possible and the more committees and things you do the more you get to do that right.

**Teak:**

With everything that you do to say you're busy as a total understatement I mean

I didn't even realize I just learned so much about you in that in just the last minute of all the things that you're involved in I mean and that's incredible it goes just to show

how much Kauai community college is you know doing their best to be the best

for the students and I think that that's one of the things that makes us so unique and so

incredibly uh awesome at everything that we do here at coin community college Eric I want to take the opportunity to say thank you so much for sitting down with me and having a conversation it has been an absolute blast thank you thanks for having me this was

fun I appreciate it I can't wait to do it again we'll do it soon

**Eric:**

Sounds good all right

**Outro:**

Thank you for listening to the class act at Kauai community college the views and opinions shared by the host and any guests are solely theirs and do not reflect the feelings or opinions of Kauai community college as an institution if you enjoyed listening to this podcast with our professor check out the other episodes with different professors. Aloha!