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**ANA Commissioner Patrice Kunesh Visits the Pacific Innovation and Technology Academy (PITA) and Commends the Success of The Foeoletini Foundation.**

The Pacific Innovation and Technology Academy (PITA), an initiative under the Christopher James Foeoletini Ledoux Foundation (The Foeoletini Foundation) and funded by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), recently welcomed the Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans, the Honorable Patrice Kunesh, along with ANA Pacific Region Director, Mr. Kaulana Ing to the PITA headquarters, in Fagatogo on Thursday, April 18, 2024. This visit underscored the Foeoletini Foundation's rapid success and remarkable growth since its inception in 2020. Hosting the commissioner and her team during their visit to the territory was a collaboration between past and current nonprofit ANA grantees and community partners, starting with a welcoming ava ceremony at ASCC.

Through the support of ANA, the Foeoletini Foundation established a new opportunity to give back to American Samoa while reinvesting in its people. PITA is a unique educational resource program focusing on practical skills, innovation, and community engagement. Its comprehensive curriculum includes lectures and hands-on lab sessions designed to prepare students for the evolving demands of the technology sector.

Commissioner Kunesh and Director Ing were received by the Foeoletini Foundation's Executive Director, Trude Ledoux-Sunia. Kunesh had the opportunity to witness the groundbreaking work at PITA and to see firsthand the program's goal of empowering American Samoans by upskilling and certifying individuals in information technology and innovation. As part of the tour, Commissioner Kunesh visited the Foeoletini Foundation offices and PITA facilities and discussed the PITA's positive impact on the

social and economic development of the Territory. Kunesh shared how this project aligns with ANA's mission to continue the "empowerment of tribal governments, to be a catalyst for economic growth and healing of Native communities, and revitalizing Native languages."

"I am incredibly proud of how far The Foeoletini Foundation has come in such a short time," stated Commissioner Kunesh. She continued, "The dedication to providing these educational services in promoting technology and fostering creativity is an exceptional challenge, and the Foeoletini Foundation has risen to meet the needs to make it a reality for the Territory of American Samoa. PITA's impact on the Territory's economic development will help produce a workforce with technical skills and expertise that can contribute immediately to emerging IT industries. PITA's program will provide individuals with training, certifications, and an experience to prepare them for entry-level IT positions."

Director Ing echoed Commissioner Kunesh's sentiments, emphasizing the importance of supporting grassroots initiatives that promote cultural resilience and economic opportunity. "Programs like PITA are a testament to what can be achieved here in American Samoa and the region when we find intuitive ways to invest back into our communities," said Director Ing. "The Foeoletini Foundation's work and ANA's mission are similar: to promote self-sufficiency and build programs that will continue to grow within the community. We are eager to see the progress of the Foeoletini Foundation, and we offer any support they need to continue investing in the future of the Territory."

Commissioner Kunesh has personally invited the Foeoletini Foundation to take part in the ANA 50-year celebration "Our Nations Our Journey" that will take part in Washington D.C. later this summer, where Executive Director Sunia will be allowed to share the successes of the Foeoletini Foundation.

For more information about The Pacific Innovation and Technology Academy (PITA), please visit [www.foeoletini.org](http://www.foeoletini.org), [foeoletinifoundation@gmail.com](mailto:foeoletinifoundation@gmail.com), or contact 684-633-9669.

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