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A HAWAIIAN PLACE OF LEARNING UNDER U.S. OCCUPATION

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A Hawaiian Place of Learning Under U.S. Occupation

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Prior to the United States' (U.S.) illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom government in 1893 and illegal annexation in 1898, literacy rates and educational attainment in the Hawaiian Kingdom were amongst the highest in the world. In contrast to the educational history of the 19th century, the usurpation of the Hawaiian educational system following the occupation of the U.S. gave way to a century of miseducation and marginalization. Today, more than 130 years after the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government, the consequences of this event are omnipresent across all sectors of education, including higher education. The downward educational trend correlates with the evolution of the University of Hawai'i. This article examines the paradox and the dilemma of the University of Hawai'i to become a "Hawaiian Place of Learning" while also fortifying the U.S. occupation of the Hawaiian Islands. This article also highlights possibilities, programming, and philosophies from Native Hawaiian Student Services (NHSS), a co-curricular unit at the University of Hawai'i that both responds to the University's refusals and limitations by contextualizing Hawaiian student success in the 21st century and by looking back to the Hawaiian educational system of the 19th century as a blueprint for educational interventions today.

Prior to the United States' illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom government in 1893 and illegal annexation in 1898, literacy rates and educational attainment in the Hawaiian Kingdom were amongst the highest in the world. Between 1820 and 1835, the Hawaiian population achieved near universal literacy, with approximately 1,100 schools in operation serving 52,000 scholars (Laimana, 2011). A commitment to education was reflected in laws passed and policies implemented that supported a half dozen higher education institutions throughout the 19th century Hawaiian Kingdom, including Lahainaluna, the Chiefs' Children's School, Punahou, Ahuimanu College, 'Iolani, and others (Balutski, n.d.).

In contrast to this educational history of the 19th century, the usurpation of the Hawaiian educational system following the United States (U.S.) occupation gave way to a century of miseducation and marginalization. When the University of Hawai'i (UH) opened its doors in 1907, less than a decade after the Hawaiian Islands were illegally annexed, the downward trend of Hawaiian educational attainment was unfolding. In the following century, and throughout the evolution of the University of Hawai'i, literacy rates and educational attainment plummeted. From one of the most literate and educated

populations in the 19th century, the Hawaiian population would become one of the most disenfranchised educationally, but also politically, and economically throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Today, more than 130 years after the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government, the consequences of this event are omnipresent across all sectors of education, including higher education.

The downward educational trend correlates with the evolution of the University of Hawai'i and the expansion and build-up of military installations.¹ Historically, the UH served as an educational arm for the U.S. occupation, starting in World War I with the offering of Military Science courses. During World War II "officers trained in the UH ROTC program were called to active duty and became part of the officer corps."² In 2008, the University of Hawai'i established itself as a classified research institute for the U.S. Navy, and today is 1 of 12 University Affiliated Research Centers (UARC), managed by the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense. UH's classification as a Navy UARC was described as serving "as centers for excellence for critical Navy and national defense science, technology and engineering needs" (The Warrior Battalion Army ROTC Alumni Association, n.d.³). The University of Hawai'i currently offers two Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs that offer two pathways in Aerospace Studies (Airforce ROTC) and Military Science (Army ROTC). The University's historic and current commitment to the U.S. military, which has fortified an illegal occupation, is in stark contrast with its public-facing imperatives to "Fulfill kuleana to Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i" and its long-held aspiration to transform the University into a "Hawaiian place of learning," (University of Hawaii, 2012).

This article examines the paradox and the dilemma of the University of Hawai'i to become a "Hawaiian Place of Learning" while also fortifying the U.S. occupation of the Hawaiian Islands. This article also highlights possibilities, programming, and philosophies from Native Hawaiian Student Services (NHSS), a co-curricular unit at the University of Hawai'i that both responds to the University's refusals and limitations by contextualizing Hawaiian student success in the 21st century and by looking back to the Hawaiian educational system of the 19th century as a blueprint for educational interventions today. In such a blueprint, the role of educational interventions is to uphold democratic principles and engage with the international community for support and perspective, setting a path forward for program design and philosophy.

Revisiting The University of Hawai'i's Origin Story

The prevalent origin story of the University of Hawai'i is often attributed to the imposed legislative assembly seated following the illegal annexation of the islands. The landing page of the University's website reads: "The Hawai'i Territorial Legislature established the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in Honolulu under terms of the U.S. land grant legislation" (University of Hawai'i, 2022). Absent from this prevailing narrative, however, is that the origin of the University of Hawai'i predates the illegal

¹ These military installations include, but are not limited to Pearl Harbor, Fort Shafter, Fort Ruger, Fort Armstrong, Fort DeRussy, Fort Kamehameha, Fort Weaver, and Schofield Barracks (Kajihiro, 2008, p. 172).

² As further context, in 1947, the United States Indo-Pacific Command (n.d.) established its headquarters in Hawai'i and today is "the oldest and largest of the United States' unified commands."

³ Altogether, the 12 UARCs include 5 Navy UARCs, 5 Army UARCs, 1 missile Defense Agency, and 1 National Security Agency. UH is classified as a Navy UARC alongside John Hopkins University, Penn State University, University of Texas at Austin and the University of Washington.

annexation in 1898 as well as the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government in 1893. The legislation establishing the University of Hawai'i can be traced to the law passed by the 1892 Hawaiian legislative assembly and signed by Queen Lili'uokalani. On January 4, 1893, 12 days before the government was overthrown, Lili'uokalani signed into law "Mokuna LXXXI: He Kanawai: E Hookumu Ai i ka Buro Mahiai a me Ululaau," establishing the Bureau of Forestry and Agriculture that sought:

1. To provide for the instruction of the public, by free lectures and printed matter, such information as has been proved by practical experience to be useful to agriculture, stock-raising, and kindred industries.
2. To obtain from other countries such information, and procure such seeds and plants as may be of practical benefit to the agricultural and commercial interests of this Kingdom.
3. To collect information concerning tropical and semi-tropical textile fibres; the utility of island woods or other products; the planting of trees for forest conservation; the promotion of an arbor-day observance throughout the Kingdom; the preservation of forests, and all kindred subjects; and the compilation of statistics concerning the agricultural and live stock interests of the country.
4. To guard against the introduction of plant diseases or insect pests, and render aid in the suppression of blights and diseases affecting agricultural products and live stock.

(Punawaiola Legal Archives Collections, 2018a and 2018b)

Twelve days after passing this legislation, an armed insurrection overthrew the Hawaiian constitutional government (a neutral sovereign state) on January 17, 1893. The incident breached customary international law and violated long-standing treaty relations between the Hawaiian Kingdom and the United States. Although overwhelming protest from the Hawaiian Government and its citizenry condemned U.S. intervention, the Bureau of Agriculture and Forestry, like all other Hawaiian institutions, was coopted to fortify U.S. occupation and further the Americanization of the islands. The Bureau of Agriculture and Forestry would later become the University of Hawai'i's first academic college, the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts and what is now the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR).

Despite this history of UH that predates the United States in Hawai'i, contemporary narratives evade offering a robust description of the armed invasion of a neutral and sovereign state that altered the trajectory of higher education in the islands. Instead, the origins of the University are often tied to the overarching narrative that equates the U.S. takeover with the arrival of modernity and its supposed qualities of civility, including higher education. In *Mālamalama: A History of the University of Hawai'i* (Kamins & Potter, 1998), the opening of the University of Hawai'i in 1907 is positioned as if the islands were void of any semblance of higher learning prior to the U.S. illegal takeover:

Hawaii at the beginning of the twentieth century needed an institution of higher learning. The further integration into the United States desired by those who had sided against the Hawaiian monarchy, if it was to work politically, required the further development of American culture here.

Across the nation, every state and incorporated territory except Hawaii and Alaska had a college. Without one of its own, the far offshore Territory of Hawaii would present itself as not only remote and exotic but also as backwater and cultured, territorial indeed. (Kamins & Potter, 1998, p. 3)

In this statement, the University situates itself as an imposition of “American culture” and an “integration into the United States” and siding “against the Hawaiian monarchy.” The sentiment assumes a void in higher education before the opening of the University of Hawai‘i and is echoed by one of the first deans of the College of Education at UH Mānoa, Benjamin Wist. Although Wist (1940) acknowledged in his title *A Century of Public Education in Hawaii*, when the text was written in 1940, commemorating 100 years since the 1840 Hawaiian constitution that formalized universal and compulsory education, Wist positions education in Hawai‘i and the University of Hawai‘i as inherently American:

The history of education in Hawaii of the present century has been one of steady growth and usefulness to this American outpost in the Pacific. The junior high school and, more recently, the senior high school have come into their own; vocational education has been developed; and higher education--as represented by the University of Hawaii...For, it is public education in the American democratic pattern that does most to justify Hawaii's claim to equal status with other commonwealths of the American nation. (Wist, 1940, p. 4)

Truthful Refusals

Despite several contemporary policy initiatives that aim to make the University a “Hawaiian Place of Learning,” including numerous iterations of guiding documents, the University and its operation has never situated itself, either historically or currently, in the context of an illegal occupation. Paradoxically, however, the University has several times situated itself in global conversations of illegal, inhumane and unjust international conflicts, both condemning such actions and even personifying the institution as being “horrified,” “dismayed” and, at other times, an “enthusiastic supporter.” In 2022, the office of the UH President condemned the occupation of Ukraine:

We are incredibly saddened and dismayed at Russia's brutal military invasion of Ukraine, a blatant assault on life, liberty and democracy. Many of us are struggling to understand how this base disregard for human values and international law can take place in 2022. Our hearts and minds are with all who have been harmed, have lost family and friends and/or remain at risk.

As a university, we oppose violence and aggression. We stand for peace. In Hawai‘i, we are well aware of the long-lasting consequences and trauma that occur when an independent nation and people are overwhelmed and overthrown by force. So it is particularly important that we proudly stand with the brave people of Ukraine as they endure this unprovoked attack by Russia.

We have a small number of students from Ukraine and Russia on our UH campuses. We stand ready to support them during these tragic events and through the aftermath. We urge everyone to show understanding and support to them and anyone connected by family and friends to this international tragedy.

The stories and images from Ukraine are disturbing to all of us. If you are feeling anxious or depressed, please do not hesitate to reach out for help to your campus or other resources that can provide comfort and assistance. (University of Hawai'i News, 2022)

Similarly, in October 2023, the University of Hawai'i released another announcement that exclaimed "horror" and "disbelief" regarding the most recent Israeli—Palestinian conflict, while simultaneously applauding the exceptionalism of the University of Hawai'i in its commitment to diversity, tolerance, and the necessity for aloha,

Aloha kakou,

Many of us are watching events of this past week in Israel and Gaza with horror and disbelief. I am proud that our community has not engaged in the hateful behaviors seen in other places and universities and that, sadly, we have previously seen here in our beloved Hawai'i.

We know from experience that issues in the Middle East and wars across the world have a direct and devastating impact on our 'ohana. We have students with home addresses in the conflict areas. Many of us may have relatives living in impacted areas. And numerous members of our UH community have visited places that are now in the news daily.

Regardless of anyone's stance on the longstanding issues in the Middle East, this is a time when we need to not only keep hate and intolerance from our campuses and our classrooms, but also show compassion for one another. We need aloha.

UH campuses have already reached out directly with offers of assistance and support to students we could identify as being from Israel or Palestine. But we know others are hurting. There are many resources available to help those in need during these difficult times. Students and employees may find fellowship with campus or community groups (Hillel, Muslim student groups, mosques, synagogues). And UH counseling resources can be located through student affairs/success units on our campuses. Christian, Jewish and Muslim students and employees may find comfort and fellowship with campus or community groups such as Hillel, Muslim student associations, synagogues, mosques and a variety of Christian and church-based organizations.

UH has a firm commitment to non-discrimination and working together to overcome intolerance. We prohibit harassment based on religion, immigration status, national origin, race, gender, LGBTQ+ status or disability. This commitment has been and remains clear and firm, including with reaffirmation of these core values by our Board of Regents. There is support on every campus, so if you encounter intimidation or discrimination please reach out to campus leadership for help.

We take great pride in the fact that our UH campuses are among the most diverse higher education institutions in the nation, and we all benefit when each of us is safe and secure. Colleges and universities are the very place where we educate our future leaders to understand and appreciate the perspectives of those who are unlike us and may disagree with us. Let this be a time when we embrace that mission and listen to one another.

So as we mourn the tragic casualties across the world, let us also celebrate and support our UH commitment to diversity, tolerance and safety for all. Our commitment to aloha. (University of Hawai'i News, 2023)

Such position statements taken by the University regarding military occupations and genocides across the globe without first having expressed horror, disbelief, and condemnation of the ongoing military occupation of the Hawaiian islands look like the pot calling the kettle black. These types of announcements also signal popular talking points that mirror U.S. Democratic party lines and foreign relation policy and politics. A general disregard for certain occupations, such as Hawai'i or in other regions such as West Papua or the West Bank, highlights the University's selective condemnation of gross acts of injustice, violence, and conflict.

Despite the University administrations' selective recognition of military occupations over others, paradoxically, the Mānoa campus is also the primary academic home to a robust breadth of multidisciplinary research and scholarship that has analyzed and articulated the historical and contemporary implications of a prolonged U.S. military occupation here in Hawai'i. The Hawaiian Society of Law and Politics (HSLP), composed of Hawaiian graduate students, produced doctoral dissertations across a wide spectrum of topics, including sovereignty, international law, constitutionalism, citizenship, religion, and theory over the span of two decades. The HSLP website explains that given the international attention that the prolonged U.S. occupation has garnered, the University still lacks "a comprehensive research program and curriculum development for Public International Law and International Relations regarding Hawai'i" (Hawaiian Society of Law and Politics, 2021). In 2022, members of HSLP organized a conference at UH Mānoa that featured leading scholars on the topic of occupation, international law, humanitarian law, and war crimes. Presenters included internationally-renowned professors William Schabas of Middlesex University London, Federico Lenzerini of the University of Siena, Italy, and Keanu Sai of the University of Hawai'i.

Similar to the announcements pertaining to other occupations across the globe, the absence of a historical context regarding the prolonged occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom is also evidenced in the University's July 2019 announcement resuming construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on Maunakea. The "Manoa Ohana" was urged to be "respectful of different perspectives" while recanting the Universities commitment to "free speech and expression guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S."

Aloha UH Manoa Ohana:

This week it was announced that construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope

on Maunakea will commence next week. See <https://www.hawaii.edu/news/2019/07/10/tmt-construction-set-to-begin/>

Members of our campus community and the general public have had different reactions and responses to this announcement. Here at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, we are steadfast in our mission of challenging students to reach their highest level of achievement by inspiring learning, discovery and creativity inside and outside the classroom. This means we must all embrace opportunities to have empathetic discussions about our disparate opinions, including those that oppose decisions made by the university and state.

We stand committed to the free and open exchange of ideas and affirm the rights of members of our community to engage in free speech and expression guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Hawaii. UH Manoa has a clear and impressive history of diverse ideas, opinions and worldviews being expressed in different ways by members of our on-campus and extended community. We recognize that the issue of Maunakea and the construction of the TMT has and will continue to draw many into an open exchange of ideas and we encourage such dialogue in ways that are safe and respectful of different Perspectives.

The safety of our faculty, staff and students is paramount. This includes emotional, intellectual and physical safety. UH Manoa provides support services for these situations, and those who experience emotional trauma or stress regarding this issue or any other issue should reach out to campus support services. Even over the summer you may reach out to the Counseling and Student Development Center... Those who experience intimidation or harassment should report it to UH Manoa Department of Public Safety.

We commend those who have engaged in peaceful and non-disruptive protection of the things they hold dear and demonstration against things they oppose. In particular, we have been inspired by the Kapu Aloha that has been called for on the mauna. In anticipation of further peaceful demonstrations, the university has developed guidelines for UH faculty and staff, including student employees, with information in the event they encounter forms of expression that may alarm them or prevent them from accessing or leaving their place of employment. See <http://go.hawaii.edu/BQG>

As the flagship of our state's only public higher education system, UH Manoa has a deep responsibility to provide high-quality affordable education to advance our people, our communities and our islands. That mission requires that we support and celebrate peaceful dialogue, diverse

perspectives and critical analysis, as we continue our work in teaching, learning, scholarship and service. Mahalo for all you do to contribute to this vibrant campus!

Aloha,
UH Manoa Leadership (University of Hawai'i News, 2019)

The impacts associated with a 131-year military occupation, especially as it relates to the educational attrition of society across the islands, are rarely acknowledged in governing documents and absent in the majority of institutional and systemwide discussions. The diagnosis related to persistent socio-economic inequities, including Hawaiian representation in higher education, has for generations prescribed solutions that fail to address the University's greater inability to balance its unwavering support for the extractive industries it bolsters and its stated imperative in the 2023-2029 Strategic Plan—"Fulfill kuleana to Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i," (University of Hawai'i, 2023). For University officials to acknowledge a history of occupation also brings into question the legal base from which the University and the greater State of Hawaii operate. Even entertaining the question of occupation requires pushing established political boundaries that most administrations are not willing to entertain. The threat of possibly agitating the University's established relationship with the U.S. military or compromising the office of the UH President and its close political proximity to the Governor's Office weighs heavily on leadership formulating any official University narrative.

In recent years, many college campuses in the United States have, to varying degrees, attempted to reconcile past injustices and marginalization in the establishment of higher education institutions. Ivy league universities like Harvard have recently committed their institutions to reconcile a history of institutional racism. Harvard University's Presidential Committee on Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery, established in 2019, sought to advance a "quest for truth through scholarship about the University's historic ties to slavery--direct, financial, and intellectual" (President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2022). The committee positioned their work in a broader movement of higher education institutions that were also engaged in exposing the immoral origins of these Universities,

In recent years, scholars have documented extensive relationships between American institutions of higher education and slavery. Indeed, a consortium of more than 80 institutions of higher education, called Universities Studying Slavery and based at the University of Virginia, is engaged in this work. We now officially and publicly--and with a steadfast commitment to truth, and to repair--add Harvard University to the long and growing list of American institutions of higher education, located in both the North and in the South, that are entangled with the history of slavery and its legacies. (President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2022, p. 5)

The project included a robust examination of the Harvard University archive to reveal significant facts about the institution's historic complicity in maintaining structures of racial domination. In 2019, Harvard President Lawrence Bacow tasked the committee to "provide opportunities to convene academic events, activities, and conversations that

will encourage our broader University community to think seriously and rigorously about the continuing impact and legacy of slavery in 2019 and beyond” (President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2022, p. 1.1). The 2022 report by the committee summarized its findings by noting that Harvard University today has extensive racially progressive actions “yet legacies of slavery persist, and our community, working together, has the opportunity to shape a better future” (President and Fellows of Harvard College, p. 5).

Following this trend, can we imagine the University of Hawai‘i President convening a committee to investigate the historic ties—direct, financial and intellectual—of the University of Hawai‘i to the illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Islands? What would such an investigation reveal? Furthermore, what would the University of Hawai‘i be confronted with in the wake of such an investigation? Finally, how would students, faculty and community stakeholders be engaged in a prospective reconciliation process and the consequences of an occupation that recently eclipsed 130 years?

Any attempt for reconciliation requires acknowledgement and accountability for past and present actions. Although minimal in scope and volume, there have been a number of policy reports where the University attempts to engage in a deeper conversation about Hawai‘i’s past in relation to inequity today. In 2019, the University of Hawai‘i President’s Emerging Leaders Program, a selected group of faculty and staff from across the System, developed a land acknowledgement that read, in part:

I recognize that her majesty Queen Lili‘uokalani yielded the Hawaiian Kingdom and these territories under duress and protest to the United States to avoid the bloodshed of her people. I further recognize that Hawai‘i remains an illegally occupied state of America. (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Office, 2019)

Other acknowledgements include the 2012 Hawai‘i Papa o Ke Ao Native Hawaiian Advancement task force report with regard to “ceded” or seized lands:

There are powerful motivations for the University of Hawai‘i to be supportive of its indigenous population: some of its campuses sit on ceded lands; negative Native Hawaiian social and economic statistics exist; and inequity of success amongst its native and non-native students are factors that demand attention. (University of Hawai‘i, 2012).

In the introduction to the 2021 Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation report included the following acknowledgement:

‘Āina is the central, philosophical, ethical, and cultural locus of the Native Hawaiian worldview and therefore fundamental to the context and history of the Mānoa campus, whose 320 acres occupy Hawaiian crown lands, among the 1.8 million acres owned and managed by the Hawaiian government and monarchy and later seized by the United States in 1898. The majority of acreage occupied by UH Mānoa therefore embody not only cultural and cosmological significance, but like many lands in Hawai‘i, are significant elements of substantive disputes over rights, responsibilities and unmet obligations to the Native Hawaiian people. (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, 2021, p. 4)

These examples offer a glimpse into the spectrum of narratives generated about institutional reconciliation and how the University navigates the implications of telling the truth.

State of Hawaiian Higher Education

The legacy of prolonged occupation has created inequities and underrepresentation of Hawaiians in higher education that correlate with the rise and evolution of the University of Hawai'i's. Educational underrepresentation of Hawaiian students translates into overrepresentation in prisons, poverty, health disparities, and other socio-economic indicators. Historic underrepresentation in higher education has also meant the overrepresentation of non-Hawaiian faculty at UH Mānoa. Only in the last decade have Hawaiian faculty composed more than 5 percent of the general faculty body. In contrast, non-Hawaiian faculty have comprised the vast majority of faculty and administrators at the University. Amidst this historical and current inequity, however, UH Mānoa is home to the largest collective of Hawaiian scholars in the world, constituting more than 140 faculty distributed across a wide array of academic disciplines. At the height of the worldwide pandemic, Hawaiian student enrollment at UH Mānoa peaked, reaching 15.5% of the overall student body in the Fall of 2021 (University of Hawai'i Institutional Research, Analysis & Planning Office, 2021a). In Fall 2023, there were a total of 2,891 total Hawaiian students at UH Mānoa, including 2,162 undergraduates, 719 Master's level students, 110 professional practice students, and 209 doctoral students (University of Hawai'i Institutional Research, Analysis & Planning Office, 2021b). The current breadth and volume of Hawaiian scholarship at UH Mānoa has never been so immense, offering the possibility for innovative program design, outcomes, and student-faculty engagement.

The increase in Hawaiian student enrollment and graduation at UH Mānoa is, in part, the result of a more than 35-year movement towards equity and expanded access to higher education. The 1986 *Ka'ū Task Force Report (Ka'ū Report)* is the seminal document to spur policy initiatives leading to the establishment of academic and non-academic support programs aimed at increasing the overall presence of Native Hawaiians across the UH system. The key findings of the task force stated that:

In Hawai'i, Hawaiian culture continues to be commercially exploited and degraded, the Hawaiian language ignored or abused, Hawaiian history neglected and distorted, and Native Hawaiian dispossessed in their native land. On the ten campuses of the University of Hawai'i system, this plight is reflected in the menial status of Hawaiian Studies and of Hawaiian persons in academic matters. The University of Hawai'i can, and has an obligation to, lead in reversing this adverse state for the benefit of all Hawai'i and all people. (Ka'ū Task Force, 1986, p. 1)

Demonstrating a "void of services," the report called on the university to commit to "services, programs, and strategies that positively affect the retention of Hawaiians in the State's higher education institutions" (Ka'ū Task Force, p. 5). Among other programs, the *Ka'ū Report* led to the creation of academic departments and co-curricular programs including Hawaiian Studies and Hawaiian Language departments, Kūali'i Council, Operation Kua'ana, Nā Pua No'eau, and the Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Advancement Office. Native Hawaiian Student Services (NHSS), along with many other Hawaiian serving programs at Mānoa and across the UH System, are a

product of these policy initiatives. In 2018 and 2021, Nā Pua No‘eau and Operation Kua‘ana, two of the longest-serving offices at UH Mānoa, merged with NHSS, resulting in a centralization of student programs at UH Mānoa and an expansion of services that now span Pre-K through graduate and professional school.

Native Hawaiian Student Services

Native Hawaiian Student Services (NHSS) is a co-curricular student services unit charged with strengthening the experience and overall success of the Hawaiian student population across all academic disciplines at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. The unit is situated in the Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge (HSHK) and was established in 2008 to account for the educational disparity that persists among the Hawaiian population at the State’s only research-intensive institution. The current mission and motto of NHSS is:

Native Hawaiian Student Services (NHSS) prepares Hawaiian students to build upon a legacy of excellence, with creativity and confidence, in order to fulfill the kuleana of their time, thereby leading Hawai‘i into a thriving, life affirming, de-occupied future. Our programs are designed to improve institutional access, student-faculty engagement, research, leadership, and success, by fostering Hawaiian identities and cultivating Hawaiian scholarship.

Growing Hawaiian leaders,
Strengthening Hawaiian research,
Empowering the Lāhui. (Native Hawaiian Student Services, 2023)

The unit’s mission is driven by the philosophy that the ancestors of Hawaiian students achieved educational success and demonstrated excellence both before and amid the onslaught of European imperialism in the Pacific. NHSS’ program design revolves around the history and research into these intellectual forebearers, serving as inspiration to empower student engagement in higher education today. This focus on history and research also shapes the unit’s student and institutional learning outcomes. In addition to the more traditional “student learning outcomes,” NHSS has developed institutional learning outcomes, all of which were developed in 2017:

1. Students recognize they are a part of and have kuleana to continue a legacy of Hawaiian intellectual and professional excellence.
2. Students are able to recognize social, economic & political contradictions and take action to provide informed solutions.
3. Students access institutional resources and support services and are able to navigate the University system and the degrees offered within--from “K” through Kuleana.
4. Students actualize the concept of aloha ‘āina as a methodology for their research for moving Hawai‘i toward a life-affirming de-occupied future.
5. University system acknowledges (and is materially committed to) its complicity in the occupation of Hawai‘i and the institutional barriers that have resulted in limited access to higher education for Hawaiian students.
(Native Hawaiian Student Services, 2023)

The institutional learning outcomes above acknowledges that NHSS’ overall mission and vision is impacted by the degree to which the University commits itself to acknowledging its role and complicity in the occupation of Hawai‘i. In conveying

historical facts, NHSS attempts to tell a story of the University of Hawai'i that has, to this point, been untold. This story situates contemporary student services program design in a larger story of educational attainment for Hawaiians, historically, including the establishment of an institutional system that sought to educate all ages and sectors of society. Second, this narrative shifts the onus, or burden, to the university in acknowledging and taking responsibility for its actions, both historically and contemporarily, that impact Hawaiian student success and well-being.

For NHSS, the employment of history in its philosophy, mission, and overall program design is two-fold. First, engagement in history helps to elevate stories of Hawaiians in education that are not widely known, becoming a source of inspiration for current and prospective students. Second, the projection of history is also an attempt to envision an alternate future where new educational patterns diverge from prevailing trends. In this sense, a greater knowledge of the past provides a blueprint and inspiration to navigate the future. What appears to be a paradox is actually aligned with a traditional concept of time –*ka wa ma mua ka wa ma hope*– which suggests that the past informs the future or that the past and the future are one and the same thing.

The employment of such a philosophy is also positioned within the broader work of NHSS as a center committed to addressing the historical inequities and institutional barriers that have prevented access to higher education for Hawaiian students. In line with student affairs literature on identity development and matriculation for students of color, NHSS recognizes the value of positioning programs and services in a context that acknowledges and immerses students in a deeper understanding of history in Hawai'i and the politics of the past that has ordered the present.

The overall approach to NHSS program design and support services prioritizes the development of Hawaiian researchers and, in turn, Hawaiian research as a significant mode of retention and student success at UH Mānoa. The acquisition of student research skills and the development of student research interest and faculty engagement drives program design and strategic collaboration at NHSS. This pivot has led to the creation of successful research programs including the 'Ōiwi Undergraduate Research Mentorship Program, the Lāhui Hawai'i Research Center student conference, a Hawaiian-centered international research and study abroad program, paid community research internships, and student publications.

NHSS Program Highlights

This section highlights a few NHSS programs and the ways in which they actualize the NHSS mission and philosophy of engaging Hawaiian students in research.

Lāhui Hawai'i Research Center Student Conference. The NHSS Lāhui Hawai'i Research Center Student Conference is an annual student conference providing a venue for Hawaiian students from across the University of Hawai'i System to present their research, share their ideas, ideate, and create a culture of Hawaiian research engagement at UH Mānoa. Since its inception in 2017, about 75 students present at the conference, with over 300 students, faculty and community members attending the conference.

Hawaiian Youths Abroad. The NHSS Hawaiian Youths Abroad program was inspired by and named for a program implemented between 1880 and 1887, during the reign of King David Kalākaua. Hawaiian Youths Abroad sent 18 Hawaiians to study in six different countries around the world: Italy, Scotland, England, China, Japan, and the

United States. The 17 young men and one young woman were personally selected by King Kalākaua himself to become future leaders of an independent and progressive nation, the Hawaiian Kingdom. The scholars studied engineering, medicine, art, music, military science and foreign languages for the purpose of bringing skills back to the service of the Hawaiian Kingdom and its people.

NHSS restarted the “Hawaiian Youths Abroad” program in Summer 2018 (after a 126-year hiatus), retracing the path of our Hawaiian ancestors to create programs engaging students in different educational experiences and training around the world in service to our lāhui (country and people). In 2018, the NHSS program included three faculty and 13 students with an educational travel tour to Paris and London, followed by the 2019 program with three faculty and 14 students with an educational travel tour to London and Italy, studying in archives, libraries, museums and other sites of significance of the Hawaiian-European encounters and experiences of the 19th century.

Hale Pa‘i Student Publication Project. The NHSS Hale Pa‘i Student Publication Project is an initiative inspired by the student publication efforts at the Hawaiian Kingdom’s first college, Lahainaluna, established in 1831. Hawaiian ali‘i (chiefs) invested in a national project of literacy and universal, public, compulsory education, which included the establishment of this teacher training college. In 1834, Lahainaluna established the Hale Pa‘i, a student-engaged printing press that published the country’s first newspaper, followed by many textbooks, pamphlets, government documents, maps and curriculum to be disseminated across the country.

Inspired by this Hawaiian educational history and template, the NHSS Hale Pa‘i is a branch of NHSS focused specifically on student publications, both providing Hawaiian college students with exposure, skill and confidence in publishing their research, while utilizing the outputs of that labor to share research endeavors with the larger Hawaiian community. Started in 2021, the NSS Hale Pa‘i Student Publication project is initially focused on a children’s book series, with research from our Hawaiian Youths Abroad student alumni and illustrated by Hawaiian students at UH Mānoa. In 2022, our first student-authored and illustrated publication *Ka Huaka‘i a Timoteo Ha‘alilio* (Keala & Sai-Dudoit) was published, with grant funds used to disseminate over 4,000 copies for free to our Hawaiian immersion and charter schools and partners across all islands. The second publication, *Ka Huaka‘i a Liholiho & Kamāmalu* (Franco, 2023), was similarly distributed with the NHSS team and students visiting schools for book readings and other engagement work. In 2024, two more publications will be released, followed by a student-led multidisciplinary journal in 2025.

Kekaulike Internship. The NHSS Kekaulike Internship provides paid internship placements of UH Mānoa Hawaiian students in different educational and archival research settings, such as Hamilton Library, Hawaiian Historical Society, Bishop Museum, Pūnana Leo o Mānoa, Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Ānuenuenu, and other partners. The internships expose students to educational and research careers while placing students in a position to help improve relations, dialogue, and partnership between NHSS, the larger university, and these organizations across Hawai‘i to support Hawaiian student success at UH Mānoa. These internship experiences also provide students with critical research skills and exposure.

In addition to tracking the academic progress of NHSS students, student learning outcomes are assessed in our high-engagement programs through summative student

hō'ike (demonstration) and research projects. In these programs, students complete research projects and present their research in the form of a community hō'ike, as we believe sharing their learning not only makes us accountable to our community but also helps with Hawaiian student recruitment. NHSS student work has also been intentionally loaned and shared out for display across the Hawaiian community, such as at 'Iolani Palace, the Ali'iolani Hale Judiciary Center, and Nānākuli Public Library.

A Legacy of Excellence

The NHSS learning outcomes envision student and institutional transformations to reach a de-occupied future for Hawai'i. The student learning outcomes focus on connecting Hawaiian students to their Hawaiian past through research and a legacy of excellence. The institutional learning outcome requires the University to acknowledge and materially commit to "its complicity in the occupation of Hawai'i and the institutional barriers that have resulted in limited access to higher education for Hawaiian students" (Native Hawaiian Student Services, 2023).

While there have never been more Hawaiians represented across all academic disciplines, faculty appointments, and student levels, including executive management, current statistics also reflect the consequence of more than a century of dispossession, miseducation, and the dismantling of educational innovation and investment from the 19th century Hawaiian Kingdom. Yet, despite this history of marginalization, a closer review of the historical past reveals hidden figures that have played exceptional roles and made significant contributions to the development of the University. Casting light on these previously ignored or unknown actors has paved the way for Hawaiians to step out of the margins and see their place at the center of the University. Recognizing this genealogy of Hawaiian excellence from within the University provides a celebratory and motivational lens that can inspire student success. This is reflected in the student learning outcomes at NHSS, which states that "Students recognize they are a part of and have kuleana to continue a legacy of Hawaiian intellectual and professional excellence" (Native Hawaiian Student Services, 2023).

Central to NHSS programming and services for Hawaiian students at UH Mānoa is the conviction that the Hawaiian Government, ali'i, and kānaka (people) left behind a rich and powerful blueprint of educational and social innovation, not only to help us thrive in these Islands, but to navigate our relationships with the world. Unfortunately, because of the conditions of a prolonged and belligerent occupation for more than 130 years, many Hawaiians today are disconnected from these stories and blueprints. By focusing our student programs and interventions on reconnecting students with these moments and innovations from history and exposing them to our rich archives, we help them connect to their past so they can better navigate their future.

It is almost universal for higher education institutions to articulate student learning outcomes at departmental, college, and overall campus levels. It is rare to have stated institutional learning outcomes that put the spotlight back on the overall institution and its required transformation in order to affect overall change. Nonetheless, such institutional acknowledgements and reckoning with the past and present may be a trend across universities in the coming years, and the University of Hawai'i is well poised to follow suit. Only when the University of Hawai'i fully commits itself to truth telling and reckoning with both its past and

present will it commit to becoming a Hawaiian place of learning and, more importantly, lead Hawai'i into a thriving, life affirming, de-occupied future.

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