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## Editor's Foreword: A Hawaiian Place of Learning?

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# Editors' Foreword



## A Hawaiian Place of Learning?

We begin this issue of *Mānoa Horizons* with a question: what does it mean that the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa strives to be Hawaiian place of learning? This is a subject of deep and complex discussion by many people within and outside our campus community, and we have no intention of offering "the" answer in this brief essay. Instead, we offer a different perspective on how our university's commitment to be (or become) a premiere indigenous-serving institution may be manifested in one small way: the collaboration represented in this third volume of the journal.

*Manoa Horizons'* mission is to highlight and support excellent scholarship by our undergraduate students, and so for this volume, we set out to explore how a partnership between the journal and the Lāhui Hawai'i Research Center (LHRC) might enhance our joint focus on supporting and celebrating undergraduate student success. LHRC is a comprehensive program designed to enhance and support Native Hawaiian students' critical research skills and opportunities, housed within Native Hawaiian Student Services. Its activities include structured support for student research, both by Kanaka Maoli students and by non-Hawaiian students, in a wide diversity of disciplines. LHRC students were encouraged to submit their work to the journal, and underwent the same peer-review process, by the same Editorial Board, as non-LHRC affiliated students. LHRC students whose work is published in this volume are identified by the Native Hawaiian Student Services "basket" logo on the first page of each selection. Ten of this volume's thirty-one student works are by LHRC students, a testament to the success of LHRC's work in supporting students' efforts to produce high quality research and creative work worthy of celebration, and indeed of publication.

How does this collaboration represent one small but concrete step toward becoming a Hawaiian place of learning? Let us hearken back to the origins of our university for a moment. Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani laid a strong foundation for research in the Hawaiian Kingdom, by supporting the pursuit of knowledge in all forms. Their efforts were rooted in international diplomacy and their friendship with the British Queen Victoria.

However, the particular form of our university as a land grant institution began when Queen Lili'uokalani signed into law legislation establishing the Hawaiian Bureau of Agriculture and Forestry (later the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture), on January 4, 1893. It was the Kingdom of Hawai'i, and not those who illegally overthrew the monarchy, who laid the foundations for what would later make Hawai'i College eligible for a land grant. Acknowledging the university's colonial origins, our institution has encouraged the formation and work of several committees and groups that seek to infuse a sense of Hawaiian culture and values into all aspects of this complex system of higher learning. We reference the work of two of those groups below, and recognize the work of the Kūali'i Council, the Hawai'ianuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, Native Hawaiian Student Services, and the Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Advancement Office in particular. There are many reports available online for the university community by these groups and others who have struggled to identify how we fulfill this kuleana handed down to us by Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani.

In 2016, the Hawaiian Place of Learning Implementation Task Force employed the term Ho'okō to explain the group's mission: "Ho'okō comes from the word kō, which means to fulfill, complete, and succeed. It is a verb. To ho'okō, then, refers to the act of causing something to be fulfilled." Ka Ho'okō Kuleana, the title of the task force's report, thus "emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the kuleana we have as agents of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to Hawai'i's land, her first people, and to the communities who will mālama our beloved home for generations."<sup>1</sup> The goal of fulfillment of our students' promise is fundamental to both the university's mission as the only state institution of higher learning, as well as its stated goal of becoming an indigenous-serving university. According to the Hawai'i Papa O Ke Ao report (2012) (and the University website), the primary mission of UH is "to provide an environment in which faculty, staff and students can discover, examine critically, preserve and transmit the knowledge, wisdom, and values that will help ensure the survival of present and future generations and improve their quality of life...[Moreover,] the

University embraces its unique responsibilities to the indigenous people of Hawai‘i and to Hawai‘i’s indigenous language and culture. To fulfill this responsibility, the University ensures active support for the participation of Native Hawaiians at the University and supports vigorous programs of study and support for the Hawaiian language, history, and culture.”<sup>2</sup>

More than simply having classes in ‘Olelo language and Kanaka Maoli history and culture, then, the UH community’s commitment to being/becoming a Hawaiian place of learning must involve rigorous, critical academic exploration of our island home, its peoples, and scholarly pursuits. The students’ work published in volume 3 of *Mānoa Horizons* includes research and creative work by LHRC and non-LHRC affiliated students, side by side. It includes work that critically explores multiple Hawaiian worldviews, alongside work that employs Western (non-indigenous) disciplinary frameworks. This volume employed the same submission procedures, the same blind peer-review system, and the same scholarly standards for all student submissions. These editorial decisions—to treat LHRC and non-LHRC submissions equally, and to publish them in an integrated, rather than a segregated volume—are, we believe, one way to illustrate a larger point. As a Research-I institution, we can be simultaneously a state university that serves the community and an institution that supports vigorous programs of higher education and research that pay special attention to the indigenous culture, language, worldviews, and values of our first peoples. We do not believe that these goals are at odds with one another, although efforts in each area can at times compete for resources.

Integrating Hawaiian learning and research in a more visible way into the corpus of knowledge produced by our university community is one way to serve both Hawai‘i and our university’s indigenous heritage. This can mean many different things. First, it can mean efforts to produce a more comprehensive and accurate history of this place, which includes and acknowledges the perspectives of indigenous communities, and to actively see Native Hawaiians engaging in that work. Secondly, it may mean different teaching pedagogies: from the language of instruction (with embedded differences in cultural frameworks) to grappling with differences in the production of knowledge. For example, academic scholarship practices,

common academic language (e.g., hypothesis testing), and measurement of knowledge production (e.g., equation with peer-review publication) are not Hawaiian modes of learning.

*Mānoa Horizons* supports Hawaiians as researchers, and UH as a place of knowledge and research about Hawai‘i and research taking place in Hawai‘i (about anything). These values in no way detract from or contradict the journal’s mission of celebrating high-quality research, creative work and innovation by *all* of our undergraduate students. We assert that the body of scholarship published in this volume by Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students, about Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian topics, is one small way to ho‘okō our kuleana to our university community, Hawai‘i, and indigenous people.

We return to our central question: What does it mean to be a Hawaiian place of learning? Is it something that is reflected in our university’s demographic makeup, in the areas of academic knowledge we pursue, in what “counts” as academic work practices and products, in the geographic and cultural foci of our faculty, or in something less tangible or measurable? Like research itself, these questions are complex and hard, but that is also what makes them worthwhile. We hope that the body of work celebrated in *Mānoa Horizons* expands your own intellectual horizons, and that this particular sample of their work manifests UHM as an excellent institution of higher education *and* as a Hawaiian place of learning.

## Notes

1. Ka Ho‘okō Kuleana report by Hawaiian Place of Learning Implementation Task Force (2016), available at [https://manoa.hawaii.edu/strategicplan/pdf/ka\\_hooko\\_kuleana\\_implementation\\_report.pdf](https://manoa.hawaii.edu/strategicplan/pdf/ka_hooko_kuleana_implementation_report.pdf)
2. Hawai‘i Papa O Ke Ao report by Model Indigenous-Serving University Task Force (2012), available at <https://www.hawaii.edu/offices/op/hpokeao.pdf>

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