



KULANUI O  
HAWAII MA HILO

Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani  
College of Hawaiian Language

<http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu/khuok/>

MOKUNA  
PAPAHANA KĀLAI'IKE  
Academic Studies Division

Muapuka  
Undergraduate Programs

Mulipuka  
Graduate Programs

Kula Maui Ola  
Laboratory Schools

Kahuawaiola  
Indigenous Teacher Education Program

MOKUNA  
HALE KUAMO'O  
Hawaiian Language Center

Ho'oikaika Kumu  
Hawaiian Medium Teacher Development

Ho'omohala Ha'awina  
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Testimony of Dr. Keiki Kawai'ae'a, Director  
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University of Hawai'i at Hilo

SENATE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Field Hearing, Hale'ōlelo, UH Hilo

June 2, 2022, 10:30 am

“Upholding the Federal Trust Responsibility: Funding & Program Access for  
Innovation in the Native Hawaiian Community”

Aloha Senator Schatz, my name is Keiki Kawai'ae'a. Welcome to Hale'ōlelo, the main building of Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani, the state Hawaiian language college. You may have seen our other building, the portable on the other side of the stream with adjoining Matson shipping containers. That is the site of our Hale Kuamo'o Hawaiian Language Center and some of our faculty and staff offices. We are humbled by the privilege to have you here on campus today for the field hearing on Funding & Program Access for Innovation in the Native Hawaiian Community. I'd like to echo the earlier mahalo from Nāmaka Rawlins for holding this hearing here at Hale'ōlelo.

As a bit of background history to provide context for my testimony, I am one of the parents of the first students in the Pūnana Leo and Kaiapuni Hawai'i (Hawaiian immersion programs). My eldest child graduated in the first class of Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u in 1999. She now works here in the College as a faculty member in teacher education. My other children also graduated from Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u, and my grandchildren are enrolled there today.

My professional background is in elementary education, curriculum and instruction, and Indigenous education. I began my career teaching the Hawaiian language and culture through English at the Kamehameha Schools on the Kapālama campus. When Pūnana Leo families on Maui sought to have a public elementary Hawaiian immersion program begin there, I moved with my family as the founding teacher of the Hawaiian immersion site at Pā'ia School. Later, when

the Hale Kuamo‘o Hawaiian Language Center was opened, I was recruited to lead that effort in providing curriculum materials for Hawaiian medium/immersion education statewide. The much needed work continued in developing our graduate level Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education program and then its follow-up M.A. degree in Indigenous Language and Culture Education. I am also one of the faculty members delivering our Ph.D. in Hawaiian and Indigenous Language and Culture Revitalization.

In my present position, I serve as the Director of Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language. I am also engaged with other critical work, such as the Native Educator Education Committee of the National Indian Education Association and the accreditation board of WINHEC, the World’s Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium.

Today I will be testifying before the Committee on the work of our Hawaiian Language College as a primary resourcing entity for Hawaiian language revitalization and education as mandated by our state legislature. Included is a P-25 (preschool to doctorate) Hawaiian language medium/immersion pathway that focuses on Hawaiian speaking families and other forms of education toward producing a high proficiency in Hawaiian. These include various courses taught through Hawaiian at the college level and some high school and community language learning. I will also include information on parallel work of our College in resourcing Native American language medium education on a national level and a Native American Teacher Education Pathway bill.

Like Nāmaka Rawlins, I will list barriers to the human and other resource development work of the College before going into details of that work.

1. We are seen as a standard foreign language and foreign area studies program by most university faculty and administrators outside our College and external funders. However, we lack the resources that such foreign language and area studies programs receive, including any of the fifteen federally funded National Foreign Language Resource Centers. The lack of such support, not to mention the support of foreign governments, severely hampers our ability to reach the full potential of our various Native Hawaiian and other Native American programs. We, therefore, very much appreciate the work that you, Senator Schatz, and the Senate Indian Affairs Committee have put into the bill to establish Native American Language Resource Centers.

2. Our College focuses highly on teacher training for Hawaiian language medium/immersion P-12 teachers. There is a critical state shortage of teachers fully proficient in Hawaiian, well prepared in a wide range of content areas, and trained in delivering education from a Native language and culture-based foundation. Because of the unique language and cultural pieces, our teachers require more preparation than any standard English medium education shortage. The nationwide need for such teachers for Native American communities is also very severe and blocks the implementation of highly successful Native American language medium education. Our state DOE projects a shortage of 75 teachers for the upcoming school year. This data does not include Hawaiian immersion charter school numbers. Again, this is an area where your staff, Senator Schatz, has helped develop legislation in cooperation with the National Indian Education Association. I am part of the Committee working on developing this bill called the *Native American Teacher Education Pathway*. The bill has had national feedback in its development from all three Native American groups, and we would like to request your consideration in introducing the bill.
  
3. Our College provides curriculum materials and resource materials to schools. We and other Native American language programs lack access to direct funding to create such materials and resources. Grants are highly competitive and require much work to develop grants and fit them into competitive preferences while still focusing on the priorities we know to exist in the schools we are serving. What little competitive grants are available are generally written with requirements based on the needs of English medium schools rather than the Native American language medium/immersion schools that we serve. In addition, as a state system with no tribal schools or boards, we also do not meet the criteria for some grants that fit well with the needs of the schools and students we serve. Improving the grant definitions and sometimes where the grants are managed may provide increased access for Hawaiian medium/immersion education and other areas such as the development of language dictionaries.
  
4. Fourth, there is a need for direct funding for Native students and services of students enrolled in our Native Hawaiian and Native American streams. Native American language and culture study is largely under the radar in terms of federal and private foundation support. Available funding that focuses on individual Native Americans is most commonly directed to areas where Native students are highly underrepresented, e.g., engineering, computer science, and medicine. Although programs in higher education teaching Indigenous languages and cultures are uncommon, where they exist, such as here in our College, it is always the area of higher education where Indigenous students are

the majority. Because our area of study has a majority of Native students, our students can be designated as a lower priority in funding focused on increasing the percentage representation of Indigenous students. However, because so many of our students become involved in education, they have a much more significant impact on Native youth as a whole than areas for which funding for Native students is more readily available. A further barrier for students in our area is that they often take longer to finish their undergraduate studies. This is because we are training individuals who are not only becoming proficient in the Indigenous language and culture but also in an academic content area that they intend to teach to Native students. Thus, here at Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani, many of our Native Hawaiian Studies students are pursuing a double major in another area. The time to accomplish this typically extends beyond the standard four or five years of scholarship support provided to Native students

Although we face many barriers, our College has made steady progress in developing our P-25 preschool to the doctorate (P-25) programs.

The Hawai‘i State Legislature mandated Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani College. The establishment of the College brought together the Hawaiian Studies Department, the Hale Kuamo‘o Hawaiian Language Center, and the Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u K-12 School site (then operated with special support from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the non-profit ‘Aha Pūnana Leo and the Hawai‘i Department of Education. The mandate is reflected in Act 315 and resulting HRS 304A 1301-1302 and other statutes that refer to distinctive responsibilities of the College.

Since the passage of that mandate in 1997, we have added to our basic Hawaiian language medium B.A. in Hawaiian Studies, a Hawaiian language medium graduate level teacher education certificate in Indigenous language medium education, a Hawaiian medium M.A. in Indigenous Language and Culture Education, a Hawaiian medium Ph.D. in Hawaiian and Indigenous Language and Culture Revitalization and a Hawaiian language medium lower-division certificate in Indigenous language medium early childhood education. We also provide dual college enrollment for Hawaiian speaking high school students in a selected range of general education courses taught in Hawaiian, including World History, Statistics, and Sociology. We hope to expand those courses to fulfill our legislative mandate to provide liberal education through Hawaiian.

Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani is administered and operated through Hawaiian, the only College administered and managed through a Native American language. All our faculty and staff are bilingual in Hawaiian and

English, and several are proficient in other languages. Our exceptionally high credit load for our majors and our cultivation of Hawaiian as our working language is necessary to reach the high level of proficiency essential to resource Hawaiian language medium schools. However, we also serve the general student body of UH Hilo, who simply want to fulfill the standard second language study in other universities. For those non-majors, we offer introductory Hawaiian language and culture courses in English.

On a more extensive level, we have an outreach program to other Native Americans and Indigenous peoples that runs parallel to our Hawaiian language medium undergraduate and graduate program. Such outreach is also part of our legislative mandate.

Linguistics is the scientific base from which we approach language revitalization. At the undergraduate level, we provide an English medium B.A. in Linguistics. Students may also simultaneously pursue the study of their traditional Native American languages while enrolled in our Linguistics program and apply that study to our undergraduate Certificate in Indigenous Multilingualism. Another alternative is to develop their traditional Native American language knowledge before transferring to our Linguistics program, perhaps by attending a Tribal College.

Our most developed program in serving other Native American peoples is at the doctoral level. Beginning over a decade ago, we initiated an English medium strand in our Ph.D. program that enrolls Native American students. That program is an important resource for the United States and Canada as there are no programs like it at present elsewhere. The languages represented in that strand are Lakota, Mohawk, Arapaho, Tlingit, Dakota, Inupiaq, Ojibwe, and Samoan. Our non-Hawaiian students in the Ph.D. program typically work in Native American language medium schools or higher education while studying in our program. Our first graduate from this English strand is Dr. Lance X'unei Twitchell, who heads the Native Alaskan program in Juneau at the University of Alaska Southeast. He was recently recognized as the Young Alaska Native of the Year. Several others are employed in higher education or are administrators in Native Schools.

We have been working on expanding our support to Native America beyond our Ph.D. and Linguistics B.A. Our graduate-level teaching certificate has been approved to be delivered in languages other than Hawaiian. We have discussed offering it through Ojibwe and/or Towa. For our Towa program, we have been working closely with the Education Department of Jemez Pueblo in New Mexico. We have also begun a pilot offering an English stream for non-Hawaiian-speaking Indigenous peoples of our Master's in Indigenous Language and Culture Education.

Another feature of our work with other Native Americans is a shared course at the Master's level where we work with Indigenous teacher training universities in Arizona and Alaska as well as those in British Columbia and New Zealand. We see our work in cooperation with other U.S. universities and tribes as a model for what could be done cooperatively should the Native American Language Resource Center bill pass. Mahalo again to you, Senator Schatz, for introducing that bill with strong support from Senator Murkowski. Work with Alaska Natives has strengthened our programs here. In particular, I'd like to mention the late Dr. Bill Demmert, Tlingit, a founder of the National Indian Education Association. Dr. Demmert provided key advice to us in our beginning efforts in the assessment of our Hawaiian medium program and sponsored Native Hawaiian inclusion in the National Indian Education Association, with Nāmaka and myself among the pioneering members that he brought into the NIEA.

I mentioned earlier that Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani also maintains the Hale Kuamo'o Hawaiian Language. That work is crucial for Hawaiian Language Medium Schools, university students at UH Hilo and elsewhere, and adult learning.

#### HALE KUAMO'O HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE CENTER

The Hale Kuamo'o Hawaiian Language Center was established in association with the UH Hilo Hawaiian Studies Department in 1989. The 'Aha Pūnana Leo worked in partnership to provide materials to the Center for distribution to the growing number of Pūnana Leo preschools and follow-up Hawaiian immersion elementary school programs. The Hale Kuamo'o is operated through awards of competitive grant funds and student workers from the College.

The Hale Kuamo'o focuses on material originally written in Hawaiian or developed from a Hawaiian perspective for over two decades now. It has produced over 700 of these kinds of publications. It also produces the curriculum materials used by the College itself and those used from preschool through grade 12 in the larger Hawaiian language medium education effort. Entities and individuals also use its materials for studying Hawaiian as a second language. Print materials include posters and charts as well as actual books. Some of the early publications of the Hale Kuamo'o were translations of standard required textbooks in math and science for the state public schools.

The Hale Kuamo‘o has allowed some of its materials to be translated into the Ni‘ihau dialect to serve the needs of that small community and others to be translated into English for use in English medium Hawaiian culture-based education when appropriate. It has also participated in projects to produce bilingual Hawaiian-English materials, such as the ‘Āina Lupalupa Science materials, in partnership with the Kamehameha Schools. However, the bulk of the materials produced by the Hale Kuamo‘o is solely in Hawaiian. The Hale Kuamo‘o does not only create and disseminate resources for schools; it also holds in-service training for teachers and parents on how to use materials.

#### THE ULUKAU ELECTRONIC HAWAIIAN LIBRARY

In addition to its print publications, the Hale Kuamo‘o has led the electronic dissemination of Hawaiian language materials. This began with the first Hawaiian computer fonts and Hawaiian email services. Electronic versions of its print books allow Hawaiian medium/immersion schools to print out copies of books when students lose them or they are somehow destroyed.

The Hale Kuamo‘o pioneered the electronic dissemination of archival written materials in Hawaiian. Those include land deeds and other government materials; however, the most significant for Hawaiian language medium schools are Hawaiian language newspapers, which span from 1834 through 1948, consisting of some 125,000 pages in the Hawaiian language. These newspapers, available through the Hale Kuamo‘o’s Ulukau Electronic Hawaiian Library in various formats and in cooperation with partners such as the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, are extremely important in providing materials for the study of Hawaiian history, literature, and culture for the Hawaiian language medium schools and college students.

A parallel collection of materials, the Kani‘āina Hawaiian language tape archives available through Ulukau include audio and videotaped collections of the last traditional Hawaiian language-speaking elders. College faculty member Dr. Larry Kimura collected the majority of these tapes from the early 1970s to the end of the 1990s. These materials are widely accessed by students of Hawaiian and teachers in Hawaiian language medium schools.

While there are several thousand hits to the Ulukau electronic library collections of Hawaiian newspapers and the Kani‘āina tapes, the most widely used collection of Ulukau is its Hawaiian dictionaries collections. Those collections include most of the dictionaries and lexicons of Hawaiian since the establishment of the Hawaiian writing system in the 1820s. It includes the words collected and created by the Kōmike Lekikona Hawai‘i established with elders at the beginning of the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo and continuing through to the

present. Over 35,000 Hawaiian words are available through these dictionaries. The dictionaries' sites receive over 1.7 million hits per month.

The Hale Kuamo‘o has a process for approving what materials can be posted. The main criteria are in or about the Hawaiian language and culture and are useful for a segment of the population seeking to learn and spread the Hawaiian language. Many other documents are useful for Hawaiian language and culture study and schooling on the Ulukau site, including materials created by teachers for their students and the Hawaiian Bible.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES

Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani is the venue for conferences, meetings, and ceremonies for the Hawaiian speaking public, the Native Hawaiians involved in the more extensive education of Hawai‘i, other professionals and community members, Native American educators, and Indigenous educators.

In closing then, Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani is the primary resource provider for the larger Native Hawaiian language and culture-based education movement in the state of Hawai‘i. Those resources are the first human, highly trained teachers and researchers, and second material. We are the primary source of such human resources in the state.

The material resources that we provide are publications, primary resource materials, and reference materials. The volume of material support that we provide is very substantial. However, the development and even distribution and maintenance of those materials are highly dependent on winning competitive grants.

Mahalo a nui loa for the invitation to provide testimony on this very important hearing topic.