

Faculty/Staff Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives

DEI efforts on behalf of employees at UH Hilo are currently led by the Office of Equal Opportunity. UH Hilo employs a number of strategies in our efforts to eliminate inequality on the basis of identity, and create positive narratives about diversity, equity and inclusion on our campus and in our community. Some are routinely implemented to advance cultural awareness, build community and influence a positive narrative. Others have come about organically, in response to current events and student voices demanding these issues become part of our community discourse to advance social justice. Still other efforts have been formally created and implemented as part of the UH infrastructure, driving systemic efforts toward equity and inclusion.

Focusing on employees, a variety of initiatives have been undertaken under the DEI umbrella. These endeavors are designed intentionally to serve a number of purposes, including but not limited to the following:

- Diversifying the workforce
- Supporting campus initiatives: Engagement, Retention and Community Building
- Driving student success

Diversifying the Workforce

It is well known that a diverse workforce increases innovation by bringing a range of thoughts and perspectives to the institution. Productivity increases as a result, as does the reputation of the employer. To an institution of higher learning, this is incredibly important for us to consider, as UH Hilo's student body has been identified as among the most diverse in the United States, year after year.

UH Hilo conducts annual review of employment practices via qualitative and quantitative review of hiring, termination, promotion and compensation data. These analyses lead to identification of strengths and areas in need of improvement. Selection processes apply analytics to compare incumbency to availability in the requisite recruiting areas from which our applicants are identified. Where utilization does not reflect availability, goals are established and good faith efforts engaged in to ensure a diverse applicant pool, leading to an increased likelihood that selectees are diverse as well, and better reflect the broader population.

The analyses of UH Hilo data indicate that employees are, generally speaking, representative of the availability in the areas from which we recruit. Our faculty diversity is not proportionate to the diversity of our student body, however. While this is not a legal mandate, we recognize the importance of students being able to see and learn from people who look like and have similar backgrounds as them. Thus, we engage in strategic efforts to identify diverse candidates and support employees upon hire. Search committees are designed in such a way as to ensure diversity in the committee along all walks of life, but particularly in terms of race/ethnicity and gender. Advertising includes general and targeted venues, as well as participation in local and state-wide job fairs to raise awareness of our openings and encourage diverse, qualified candidates to apply.

UH Hilo has made progress in terms of hiring and retention, which is visible in the shift of representation amongst full Professors, who were predominantly white and male. This indicates that qualified, diverse faculty are being hired, retained, and promoted through the ranks.

Supporting Campus Initiatives: Engagement, Retention and Community Building

UH Hilo, located on one of the most remote places in the world, participates in celebratory months that serve to educate, inform, and provide a venue for students, the campus and the broader community to come together as one. We are motivated by the concept of breaking down siloes and increasing opportunities to learn about each other. As we learn more about people who are unlike us, we may be more willing and able to empathize, be less likely to perpetuate and act upon negative stereotypes. We will also be better able to engage with each other and our students. A few examples follow.

Annually during Black History Month, a series of events are held that bring Black and African-American culture to a campus and community where less than 3% of the population identifies as Black. Feedback from evaluations told us that campus and local community members desire to participate in more such events, expressing that the University is a known space where the Black community feels safe and welcome. We were encouraged to host more events year-round, with the added bonus of building bridges between campus and community. With the recognition that UH Hilo is viewed as a central meeting place, UH Hilo has continued to open events up to community members, as able, to continue building and strengthening relationships. All events include time for question and answer and ongoing dialogue about Black history, intersections of race and other characteristics, and current events relevant to the Black community.

The Office of Equal Opportunity oversees Title IX efforts, including sexual violence prevention, bystander intervention, and healthy relationships education and programming. Members of the OEO have created culturally relevant education materials they utilize as core curriculum. This curriculum has been presented at the Native Hawaiian Education Association's state conference by the Director and the Prevention Educator, the latter of whom is a Native Hawaiian culture practitioner and working to build a more robust and culturally appropriate curriculum for all of the office's programming. Such curriculum is greatly needed, and agencies across the state have reached out for more information or insight into how to indigenize their own programming. As a result of this community outreach, the OEO, in collaboration with Hawai'i Community College, hosted a Domestic Violence Prevention Summit, "Auamo Kuleana: It Is Our Responsibility." Spreading over three days during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, each day included at least five speakers who spoke about a range of topics from campus and community safety, DV and the queer community, engaging men as allies in the fight against DV, power and control, campus safety, supports and policies, and more. Attendance ranged from 100-150 individuals per session, the majority of whom were employees and students from UHH and HCC; due to the virtual platform, additional spaces were made available to attendees across the UH System and to local community based organizations. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and OEO staff made countless connections with community organizations as a result, strengthening relationships to increase supports for students living off campus.

Uluākea is another essential UH Hilo program, albeit not an OEO led program, that was created to inspire faculty to transform UH Hilo into a Hawaiian place of learning. This program is

another collaborative effort between UH Hilo and Hawai'i Community College. Employees and students who participate increase their understanding of indigenous culture, values and ways of knowing in order to take that understanding back to their own departments and apply it. Uluākea utilizes workshops, cultural exchanges, webinars, and field trips among some of its methods. Participants describe their experiences as life changing, instrumental to their success in the classroom, eye-opening, and thought provoking, causing deep reflection and yielding positive changes in their personal and professional lives. Uluākea has brought employees and students together, bringing people out of their siloes and encouraging all to connect with their own indigenous backgrounds, however far back that may go. Uluākea promotes a shared humanity, thus allowing people the space to learn and grow.

Lactation Room

The University has historically offered a private space to lactating students and employees, but the space was frequently multi-purpose. Campus Center, within Student Affairs, provided a space in their building, a central campus location, and in 2018 collaborated with the Office of Equal Opportunity to make it a more inviting space. The room is now stocked with items such as comfortable pillows, a changing table, lactation resources, accessible outlets, adjustable lighting and artwork donated by the UH Hilo Art Department, creating a clean, private, welcoming lactation room that does not serve double duty for any other purpose.

Student Success

Employee diversity paired with cultural competence/humility/awareness can be a driver of student success. As discussed in regards to student diversity and campus climate, some students have reported that they feel they are pre-judged by their faculty and put into stereotypical categories yielding negative outcomes in and out of the classroom. This has been reported more frequently by students who do not identify in the same racial/ethnic or gender category as their faculty. We have attempted to provide opportunities for professional development to increase faculty/staff understanding, eliminate stereotypes, and raise awareness of implicit bias, while integrating this knowledge into curriculum and programming.

The Chancellor's Office, through the Office of Equal Opportunity, has led multiple efforts in professional development. In 2019, for example, all members of the Chancellor's Executive Council were required to attend a two-day workshop, "Leading for Respect," with a focus on identifying and preventing a hostile work environment. The training was conducted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and was attended by approximately 40 campus leaders. In 2020 a four-hour workshop on Unconscious Bias in the workplace was offered to all employees and attended by more than 30, including faculty, staff and administrators. Evaluations indicated satisfaction with the trainings as well as a desire for more.

We have recently changed the focus of the Chancellor's Committee for Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. This group has historically met to review proposals and provide small grants to campus organizations advancing diversity. Over the years the Committee has contributed an average of \$10,000 per year to promote diversity, equity and inclusion research, education, professional development and campus-level programming. The Committee also hosted several "Celebrate UH Hilo's Diversity" in response to recognition as the most diverse

public four-year institution in the United States. Students entered artwork, poetry or other forms media to share with diversity at UH Hilo means to them. Scholarships in the amount of \$500 were given to three student winners. Employees and students alike participated in the event, in an opportunity to bond and get to know each other outside the classroom or other formal setting.

Currently, Chancellor Irwin has supported the development of a newly envisioned committee, whose purpose is to create a campus environment that cultivates, sustains and reflects a diverse, multicultural university that is rooted in the indigenous culture and history of Hawai'i. Members from the Committee attended the American Academy of Colleges and Universities' Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Institute in 2019 and again 2021. The University has submitted a proposal to become a TRHT campus and developed an action plan to map out the next three years specifically, with continuity into a fifth year. Regardless of whether we are accepted formally into the program, as only eight campuses across the country will be selected, we intend to implement elements of the plan by leveraging the Committee membership to take the lead on various initiatives in their respective units.

Two strategies from our action plan are considered keystones in advancing UH Hilo's DEI efforts. The first strategy is to create small groups, or "circles," that encourage attendees to engage in "difficult dialogues" or "courageous conversations." The goal is to bring different people together to listen deeply and connect with each other on the basis of our shared humanity. This allows us to engage with each other in different, more positive ways. The other strategy is to reinstate Huliau Series: Broadening Perspectives Through Courageous Conversations, which had been piloted as a response to the demand for the University community to formally address events such as the killing of George Floyd. Organized through a collaboration between Kīpuka Native Hawaiian Student Center from Student Affairs, and the Office of Equal Opportunity, employees and community members volunteered to share their mana'o, with the aim of providing a safe space for the UH Hilo community to engage in critical conversations around racial disparities and systemic injustices. Through discussion, shared experiences, and guidance from informed community panelists, students, faculty and staff came together and sought solutions, or just listened and learned. An average of 50 students and employees attended each of the six sessions in our series.

Attendees were asked to provide feedback following each session, and were specifically asked to share at least one thing they had learned. Some responses to our evaluation include the following:

- Understanding a worldwide topic and gaining further insight on the topic
- A sense of the role of art in activism both globally and locally.
- Knowledge
- A better understanding of racial disparities and system injustices.
- Knowledge of past wrongdoings and hopefully how to help others to be kind and understanding of others.
- Connections to indigenous space and the Mauna through 'Aha; Kapu Aloha as a way of being and foundation for the Mauna Movement. "Behaving as creators" and the reciprocity between us and the environmental beings around us. " We are awake and not going back to sleep". "To transform the world we must transform ourselves."
- Historical information on how art has been inspired by social justice issues.

- An insight into what I'm going to be learn about this semester.
- As a stem major, I advocate for STEAM education; I hope to learn how to incorporate Art into STEM while keeping conversations regarding activism and justice alive.
- Ideas of how we can create space(s) on campuses where students, faculty and staff can display their activism through their art.
- I think talking about and learning about specific issues is just as important as learning how to express how you feel about them.
- Discussion can change perspectives on issues and as an artist, I want to use this discussion to express my conviction in what I create.

We believe the feedback from attendees indicates a strong likelihood of participation and application of theory to practice, enlightening students and employees alike. With support from the Chancellor's Office and consistent with our draft Strategic Plan, we intend to institutionalize Huliau.

One last example connects DEI professional development to student success. The Chancellor's Office extended an invitation to all employees to attend the Gardner Institute's Teaching and Learning Academy, which, per the website, "is a course redesign community that helps participants develop and apply evidence-based and anti-racist teaching practices to improve student learning in gateway courses. The TLA is designed to be an inclusive experience, providing multiple points of entry and opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous engagement. The TLA includes a signature course focused on anti-racist and inclusive practices, a community of practice, self-paced modules, online resources, and webinars." Approximately ten faculty and staff registered for the Institute and attended the online classes, with access ongoing for a total of one year. Attendees reported gaining insights immediately, thinking differently about their syllabus and programming, learning not just why but how to adapt curriculum, and expressing that they were excited for the upcoming semester to implement some of what they had learned. We will follow up with attendees for feedback following this academic year.

The above examples show some of the efforts being undertaken at this time. Because no entity has formally focused on employee DEI until recent efforts undertaken by OEO, work has not been as strategic or far-reaching as it can be. Accordingly, limited data is available to establish a baseline. However, using industry best practices, and looking forward to the implementation of our upcoming Strategic Plan, we will continue to expand the work being done, collecting data at each step to establish a baseline and measure progress as we go.