

***Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani* College of Hawaiian Language, University of Hawai'i at Hilo**

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This report is based on a visit to *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani* College of Hawaiian Language on October 14-16, 2013. Since the College and all its associated programs are internationally famous, playing a well-deserved leadership role in the global movement to revive indigenous languages and cultures and in related academic spheres, it was a privilege to visit the College and an inspiration to meet so many dedicated, talented teachers and students of all ages.

I. Introduction

We were invited to review *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani* College of Hawaiian Language in the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. The College is complex in nature, including academic programs¹, the *Hale Kuamo'o* Center for Hawaiian Language and Culture Through the Medium of Hawaiian, and laboratory schools. It is in essence a full preschool-to-PhD educational system.

During our visit, we spent the first morning at the P-12 *Nāwahīokalani' pu'u* laboratory school, with a presentation by the students and discussions with a number of teachers and students. The first afternoon and second day we met with instructors and graduate students, visited a number of classes, spent some time at the *Hale Kuamo'o* Hawaiian Language Center, and visited the new building and the museum. We thank all who were involved for taking the time to talk with us.

Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani College of Hawaiian Language is central to the mission of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo as laid out in its Strategic Plan 2011-2015. The Strategic Plan sets out six major goals for this time period:

- Provide learning experiences and support to prepare student scholars to thrive, compete, innovate and lead in their professional and personal lives
- Inspire excellent in teaching, research and collaboration
- Foster a vibrant and sustainable environment within which to study, work and live
- Cultivate, sustain and reflect a diverse, multicultural university that is rooted in the indigenous history of Hawaii
- Strengthen UH Hilo's impact on the community, island and state of Hawaii through responsive higher education, community partnerships and knowledge and technology transfer
- Facilitate organizational excellence through continuous innovation, responsible resource development and effective communication

¹ These award BA, MA, and PhD degrees, as well as several certificates, including a graduate certificate in teacher certification.

In addition, the document *Hawai'i Papa O Ke Ao* sets out goals for the University of Hawaii system as a whole: to prepare students, faculty, and staff of Hawaiian ancestry to assume leadership roles within UH and in the community; to ensure that Native Hawaiian values are practiced at all levels of institutional decision-making; to build communities within and between campuses as well as with the broader community; and to create vibrant Hawaiian language and culture programs, with innovative programming and Hawaiian at parity with English.

Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani College of Hawaiian Language well represents the University of Hawai'i at Hilo in meeting its mission and offers a model for the University of Hawaii system as a whole in its goals. The *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani* College of Hawaiian Language strives to provide rich learning experiences with excellent teachers, to create a holistic learning environment, to be a major source of knowledge about the indigenous culture, language, and history of Hawaii, to have strong ties with the community, island, and state, to be innovative in many ways. It is a leader in the statewide goals, and is deserving of support from the state for all it has done to create an environment in which such goals can be articulated.

2. The larger setting

Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani College of Hawaiian Language is a very unusual unit that is held in the highest regard in the global context. In many places around the world, transmission of indigenous languages from one generation to the next markedly slowed down during the 20th century, with much accompanying loss of traditional knowledge. Programs in language maintenance and language revitalization have begun around the world.² Such programs are difficult to develop — they face a wide range of barriers — and the Hawaii program is looked to as a model of what is possible with a vision, persistence, hard work, and support. The program that has developed in Hilo is active from preschool through the PhD (a genuine strength), and for many language maintenance and revitalization programs, it represents a dream that they wish for.

We focus this report on academic programs offered by *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani* and the *Hale Kuamo'o* Center for Hawaiian Language and Culture Through the Medium of Hawaiian.

3. Strengths

We identified numerous strengths of the College during our visit.

Academic programs

The academic programs stand out both in the quality of teaching and in the dedication and enthusiasm of all participants, students and instructors alike. It can be a challenge to carve out a program like those offered through the College of Hawaiian Language. Many of the

² Other programs we have had personal experience with that can be compared with those in Hilo are at Diné College (the Navajo Nation's college in Tsaile, Arizona); First Nations University of Canada; Nunavut Arctic College; and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (in Skye, Scotland). Few of these other programs are as successful as *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani* and most of them would look to Hilo for inspiration.

courses are taught in Hawaiian, and many take perspectives that are often considered to be outside the norm for usual university courses. Students must meet high standards in both Hawaiian and English, and what is considered excellent is not always the same in both of these areas. The faculty in this program have persevered over the years to promote excellence while at the same time meeting the high standards of the University of Hawaii system. They are to be congratulated for their commitment and success.

Undergraduate programs

The College offers a Hawaiian Studies major (with two options, Continuing the Culture and Monitoring the Culture) and a minor as well as two certificates, one in Hawaiian language and one in Hawaiian culture. For both options of the major, students are required to study the Hawaiian language at a fourth level, and many of the courses are offered in Hawaiian. We attended a course on Hawaiian Morphology and Syntax (HAW 454), taught in Hawaiian. This course has an introductory linguistics course as its prerequisite. The instructor aimed this course at an appropriate level for this prerequisite. The instructor was excellent, and the students were deeply engaged in the material.

Other upper-division undergraduate courses that we attended (Third Year Hawaiian KHAW 302; *Hula 'Auana* HWST 472) were also taught in Hawaiian. We also visited an introductory course (Hawaiian Ethnzoology HWST 213) that was taught through English with extensive Hawaiian terminology. In the Hawaiian-medium classes we were especially impressed with the communicative ability of the students; we left with ideas for our own teaching. And in all of the classes, again, the instructors were excellent and the students were engaged.

Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke 'elik Iani College of Hawaiian Language also supports Linguistics, housing an English-medium BA program in that field and an innovative undergraduate Certificate in Contemporary Indigenous Multilingualism. This benefits the overall academic program of the College as well as enabling non-speakers of Hawaiian to enroll in the College. We regard the Linguistics program and the Certificate as important contributions on an international level, especially for indigenous students of non-Hawaiian backgrounds (for example, Native North American students) who can benefit from synergies in the College's programs without needing to become fluent Hawaiian speakers.

Graduate programs

There are two Masters programs, a Master of Arts in Hawaiian Language and Literature and a Master of Arts in Indigenous Language and Culture Education; there is also a doctorate in Hawaiian and Indigenous Language and Culture Revitalization and an Indigenous Teacher Education Program.³ We visited three graduate courses, Indigenous Culture-based Education (KED 660), Research Methods in Hawaiian Language (HAW 630), and Semantics/Pragmatics of an Indigenous Language (KLAN 703). Again, we were impressed with both courses: the level of material being taught was appropriate and the students were enthusiastic and engaged. The Culture-based Education course stood out in that it involves people from Diné

³ The PhD program is one of only a couple of doctoral programs at UH Hilo. Given the circumstances of Hawaiian language revitalization and use (especially around Hilo), a PhD is entirely appropriate.

College, the University of Alaska, and the University of British Columbia, and takes place electronically, offering an excellent opportunity to interact with and learn from people around the world without having to leave home. Overall, the graduate programs are innovative in design, with an integration of historical and current resources. Students are fluent in both Hawaiian and English, and are exposed to appropriate research methods.

For readers outside linguistics and language revitalization, we want to emphasize the unique needs of *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani* College of Hawaiian Language graduate programs. For the immediate future, it is inevitable and essential that the faculty are “home-grown” in the sense that they have come out of the College’s own programs and may still be students until finishing their PhDs. We think appropriate policies have been set up to check any possible conflict of interest (see below), and we urge readers to think of the College’s structure as a strength rather than a weakness. It helps give the faculty their astonishing commitment to College programs and the mission of Hawaiian language revitalization, and it will serve as a model for other university-level programs elsewhere.

Hale Kuamo’o Hawaiian Language Center

Beyond its academic mission, *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani* has an additional mission, serving as a resource center for the college, local schools, and the state, as well as an international audience. The *Hale Kuamo’o* is the primary office in the state to provide educational support for the development of curriculum materials for Hawaiian medium programs. This resource center does outstanding work, under challenging conditions (see below).

Outreach

In addition to outreach on the part of *Hale Kuamo’o*, instructors at *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani* are involved in outreach as well. As part of their responsibilities, they take on teaching at *Nāwahīōkalanī' pu'u* laboratory school, and with other schools as well. This program is a valuable one, and it likely plays an important role in leading more Native Hawaiians to attend university. We also would like to mention in particular the Hawaiian Electronic Library, *Ulu Kau* (ulukau.org). This open source/open access library provides a wealth of searchable material in Hawaiian electronically — a dictionary, newspapers, the Bible, books, and so on. It is one of the great international archives of indigenous language materials, all the more impressive for being run (as we understand it) on a virtual shoestring.

Summary

We were extremely impressed with the academic programs, the *Hale Kuamo’o*, and the outreach more generally. *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elik lani* College of Hawaiian Language offers a holistic vision of education, bringing together people from various backgrounds and a range of ages, united in viewing language and culture together. While the program rightly focuses on Hawaiian, our experience is that such programs tend to lead to a broader appreciation of diverse peoples and cultures.

4. Challenges

In this section we address a series of challenges that the College will inevitably confront in

the coming years. But we should stress a point that we found quite striking. Having been on many North American program reviews, our experience is that many academic departments have at least some people with at least minor resentments, or small inequities or grievances that they will bring up when they're comfortable — aspects of their professional or academic environment that bother them. This did not happen in Hilo: repeatedly, even from the most overworked teachers, we heard about commitment and concern; we did not hear complaints. We take this as a very strong tribute to the leadership and shared vision in the College. What follows, then, are challenges we infer rather than any complaints we heard on our visit.

Undergraduate time to degree

We did hear some concern about the length of time the undergraduate program can take. In many universities there is increasing pressure for undergraduates to complete programs in four years, and this is often possible. To those who may be concerned about this, we would emphasize that the Hawaiian program is somewhat different. There are students who wish to become good speakers of Hawaiian, but, at the same time, want to major in another field. They often must meet the requirements for two majors, where there is no overlap in courses between the two. This situation, almost by necessity, will force a student to spend more time as an undergraduate. Someday, we hope, students can do their second majors in Hawaiian! But until that is possible, it will be necessary for some to take longer.

It's important to stress that this is *not* because students in the College are slower or any less talented than students elsewhere in UH. It's because the Hawaiian language degree is not the same as other language degrees. If a student is a Chinese major, her primary focus is Chinese, not engineering or psychology. Some of the students doing Hawaiian have the Hawaiian language as their only academic focus, but mostly their goal is to learn another field as well. Such students are just doing a more rigorous degree, and may need more time. We strongly encourage the administration and outside evaluators to bear in mind the distinctive needs of Hawaiian language revitalization in this context.

Satisfying accountability demands

Increasingly standardized measures of accountability may create potential problems for the College. For instance, what is the standard for good writing in Hawaiian? How are speaking and listening balanced with reading and writing? While we do not have specific suggestions, our experience in various programs coupled with our conversations with instructors suggests that the group will find creative and innovative solutions to this kind of issue, and that they will then be leaders in this as they have been in so many areas over the past decades. We also encourage the College and the University to take a broad approach to assessing "literacy". In many cultures, verbal art and literary style are primarily features of oral genres — traditional narrative, oratory, chanting, song, genealogy and history, and so on. It may be for Hawaiian that the assessment of "literacy" skills should rely primarily on knowledge and skills in such traditional oral styles at least as much as written styles introduced from outside. Devising standards by which such knowledge and skills are assessed remains complex, but it is very important to be open-minded about the skills involved in language knowledge and use.

Graduate students

Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke 'elik Iani College of Hawaiian Language has attracted a group of strong and dedicated graduate students. They are learning how to do research while also teaching, and are enthusiastic and dedicated in both roles.

Most of the College's graduate students come out of its program and many already have positions in it. This is not surprising, given the College's language focus and the nature of Hawaiian language revitalization. At the same time, we know that there are good reasons why students in other universities are sometimes discouraged from doing all their degrees at a single institution. At UH Hilo, we observed that concerns about programmatic narrowness and potential conflicts have been addressed through specific relevant policies.⁴

We suggest that the university explore ways of supporting graduate students to broaden and extend their horizons. This could take several forms. For example, the university could find funds to support students who travel to conferences in North America or internationally, to summer programs and summer schools in their fields⁵, and for short-term visits or semesters at other universities. This could also involve targeted financial support for the arrangements mentioned above, where faculty members from other universities serve on PhD dissertation committees or as external reviewers. It may also be worthwhile to bring in outside experts to teach mini-courses on topics that would support student interests and introduce them to new ideas, or colleagues in other language restoration settings (elsewhere in Polynesia, for example, or in North America, Australia or Europe) to share ideas and practices. We know that any such efforts will require money in a time of cutbacks and scarcity, but we think it is important for UH Hilo to foster the intellectual growth of its young Hawaiian-language scholars while simultaneously nurturing the unique character of the College.

Finally, we were uncertain about the funding regularly available to graduate students in the form of RA-ships or TA-ships. Universities differ in their practices, and again money is a big issue in an era of fiscal challenges, but if it is possible to guarantee some funding to students, it is bound to make a big difference in their ability to support their commitment with action.

Research support for faculty

Teaching and research are both at the heart of the university. Lecturers and faculty in the College are dedicated teachers, and have made strong research contributions. But given their teaching commitments and their absolute dedication to the success of the program, it is hard for them to make time for the research. Many or perhaps even most of the faculty have not taken sabbaticals, and so do not get the dedicated time to think that is required at certain stages of research. This problem could be alleviated if additional faculty were hired.⁶ While

⁴ As we understand it, these include requirements that dissertation committees include faculty from outside the College or discipline and involve an external faculty reviewer from outside UH Hilo, and opportunities for dissertation committees to include faculty from other universities.

⁵ For example, some students might benefit from participation in the biennial CoLang summer school (see <http://www.uta.edu/faculty/cmfitz/swnal/projects/CoLang/> for information about CoLang 2014) or the biennial Linguistic Institute sponsored by the Linguistic Society of America in 2015, 2017, etc.

⁶ We were struck by a statistic, from 2007 and perhaps out of date, that the Hawaiian and Chinese

the program has added some new faculty in recent years, there are still not enough people to cover the teaching in a reasonable way, allowing for research leaves. More faculty are needed to sustain the program, and to take into account that some of the faculty may well retire in the next few years.

Language research

We were impressed by how closely the College is involved with the immersion school, with instructors teaching at the immersion school and students from the school taking courses at the College. This is excellent for everybody. At the same time, we were also surprised that there does not seem to be linguistic work going on in the area of language documentation in the College. There are still people in the islands who spoke Hawaiian as their first language, and language documentation with these people would not only be of great value in itself and for what it could contribute to Hawaiian language teaching, but it would also be a valuable educational experience for both undergraduates and graduate students. In addition, there are also now families where one generation learned Hawaiian as a second language and passed the language on to their children, who are now speaking it with the next generation. Looking at how the language has changed as it is being re-learned would make for wonderful research (of a type that increasingly interests linguists world-wide). Research like this could involve faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, and high school students, and would also likely provide another way of building community.

Other research in Hawaiian language

One of the very distinctive aspects of Hawaiian among endangered indigenous languages is that it was the national language of an independent country for an extended period, and the government documents, newspapers, private records, etc. for that period include extensive materials in the Hawaiian language. Historians, anthropologists, cultural studies specialists and many other scholars are increasingly interested in interactions between colonial and colonized societies, the history of Pacific societies, and other topics for which the extensive documentation available for Hawai'i is inevitably important. And just as a historian who is interested in the relations between 19th century France and Germany must read German well, so a historian interested in 19th century Hawai'i will in the future have to deal with primary material in the Hawaiian language. In other words, a time is coming when scholars will have a great interest in learning Hawaiian and understanding how the language and its cultural contexts are related — even if those scholars are not themselves engaged with the revitalization of Hawaiian language. We think the College will have to decide whether it wants to serve and engage with that academic community. If it doesn't, then UH Manoa may want to jump in, but we think *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke 'elik lani* College of Hawaiian Language is uniquely positioned to be the leader not only in Hawaiian language and cultural restoration but generally in Hawaiian language scholarship. We encourage the College, if given concrete support from UH Hilo, to think about ways to expand its scholarly mission along these lines. This might mean organizing bilingual conferences on topics relating to Hawaiian culture and

programs at UH Hilo and Manoa, respectively, had similar faculty sizes but that Hawaiian had 122 BA and 4 PhD students, while Chinese had 36 BA and 13 PhD students.

history, setting up (separately funded!) language-learning programs for visiting scholars, or other activities that seem appropriate. Of course it will be crucial not to lose the focus on the local community and the imperative to restore Hawaiian language, but we think the College is important enough that it can also assume an even broader leadership role.⁷

Ulukau and Hale Kuamo'o

Ulukau, the Hawaiian Electronic Library, has a remarkable range of offerings, and exists only because people have worked hard to find funds to take on particular pieces of it. This has so far been piecemeal and unsystematized, as we understand it. But a labor of love has yielded what is now a cultural treasure for the university and the state and people of Hawai'i, and it is time for the university to provide the long-term infrastructure support such a treasure needs; it shouldn't have to depend on temporary grants. In addition, we recommend that *Ulukau* be given a higher profile and that it be given the responsibility of maintaining an archive of the Hawaiian language material associated with the College. Individuals who have been crucial figures in Hawaiian language documentation and revitalization have extensive collections of recordings and other documents, which need to be preserved and made accessible to various communities (students, family members, outside scholars). *Ulukau* provides the nucleus for a physical-plus-digital archive, but for it to become *the* archive of Hawaiian language materials it will need to have continuing support and perhaps a digital storage arrangement with the UH library system.

Similarly, we think that the *Hale Kuamo'o* Hawaiian Language Center requires permanent funding to suit its mission. For this, UH Hilo should work with *Hale Kuamo'o* and the College to advocate with the state. *Hale Kuamo'o* is the main body to produce and regularly disseminate Hawaiian-language pedagogical materials that are extensively used throughout the state. In effect it thus operates a unique service to the educational system of the State of Hawai'i, and we believe that crucial service should be acknowledged with a sustaining budget so that, once again, short-term grants and other seat-of-the-pants funding arrangements are not necessary.

Long-term sustainability

The College was begun by a group of visionaries, many of whom are still crucial to its success. Yet like all of us, they are getting older, and some of them might decide to retire soon. So it is imperative that a "succession plan" be considered now, one that addresses replacement and future leadership as well as growth. Of course, even as the College founders grow older, they continue to dream — about more courses for high school students, AP and general education courses, a broader curriculum taught in Hawaiian, international work with other Polynesian

⁷ This would be an expansion beyond the area of language revitalization *per se*, where the College is already an international leader (as we have emphasized). In this area it regularly hosts sabbaticals for scholars (for example, from Alaska and Norway), as well as hosting major international conferences (such as a regular component of the International Conference on Language Documentation, and the 20th Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium in January 2014). Such activities are undertaken at present with no funding, as we understand it, and we recommend that expansion of College activities should be accompanied by suitable additional funds.

languages, and many other ambitions. We hope that UH and the College will be able to let these dreams too come to pass.

5. Summary

Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke 'elik lani College of Hawaiian Language and all its programs have become a model around the world of what can happen with commitment, dedication, and expertise. The College is a treasure that should be strongly supported by both the University of Hawai'i and by the state. This will strengthen its important role as a model for the local community, the state, the United States, and the world as it moves into its next phase.