Uluākea
Inspiring Faculty to Transform the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo into a Hawaiian Place of Learning
Gail Mililani Makuakāne-Lundin, *Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Services, UH-Hilo*

Through Uluākea, I have been able to interact and connect with faculty from a variety of academic disciplines who are sincerely interested in learning and understanding indigenous ways of knowing the world. All students and especially Native Hawaiians students at UH Hilo and Hawai‘i CC have benefitted in and out of the classroom from the transformative experiences faculty have learned and developed through Uluākea.
This semester, I enrolled in the Kūʻula course at the University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo, which integrated western science and indigenous Hawaiian knowledge. Kūʻula has taught me to look at science from a broader perspective, drawing from both indigenous and scientific knowledge systems. Kūʻula has also shown me the importance of cultural integration, which serves to perpetuate Hawaiian culture through active practice.
The most critical realization that the Uluākea experiences have taught me is that I can and should integrate my personal self into my professional self. By doing so, I can be authentic in everything I do. In my Uluākea-inspired class, called Kū‘ula, I try to create learning environments where students can be authentic to who they are in their academic journeys. As a non-Hawaiian person, it is not my place to teach anything Hawaiian. The Native Hawaiian educators with whom I co-instruct in Kū‘ula teach the contents of Hawai‘i epistemologies. My role is to expose students to hands-on and other applied learning spaces, often outside of the class, so that their relationships with their ancestral or home land will teach profound lessons. Awareness that they have inherent familial connections to the environment of Hawai‘i seems to open up other doors of self-awareness of responsibilities, aspirations, functions they can play in their families and communities in my Kū‘ula students. At that point, the students are ready to apply their academic experiences to something that is meaningful to them individually. Seeing the students at that stage gives me a deep sense of appreciation and reward. Strong foundation and continuous support that the Uluākea program provide me are key to my students' success.
Aloha. It has been a privilege to be part of a group of educators trained to participate in the indigenization of our university. Through workshops, symposia, opportunities for cultural/personal/professional development, plenty of interaction with Native Hawaiian students, faculty and staff, I, as a non-Native Hawaiian person, have been able to cultivate a very supportive and meaningful relationship with my students, the larger community, and the place where I now live. I have worked to integrate Hawai‘i perspectives into my geography courses and now teach a Hawai‘i-focused geography course at our university, one built upon a Hawaiian cultural foundation. With the support of Uluākea I have increased and enhanced ʻāina-based learning in my classes, taking my students frequently to visit and honor wahi pana – storied, sacred places – on the island, where vital connections of every sort are strengthened In the spirit of reciprocity we make direct contributions to our communities and lands through our actions, and continue to learn as we do so – ma ka hana ka ʻike. Uluākea has helped to create the conditions in which my students and I have a significant role in the enhancement and maintenance of well-being of Hawai‘i nei. At the same time, rates of student engagement and success are heightened through the meaningful nature of our experiences, and a feeling of joy prevails. Mahalo.
Joe Genz, Assistant Professor in Anthropology, UH-Hilo

My involvement with Uluākea activities have allowed me to develop closer relationships with my students (especially Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander), and hence teaching effectiveness, by becoming more familiar with an indigenous Hawaiian worldview of learning. Most of the concepts, such as the origins of Hawaiians as fluidly choreographed in the Makakini hei, related directly to the content of my Pacific-related classes. The Uluākea activities also embrace indigenous learning through multiple intelligences, which I have incorporated into my teaching. Perhaps the most inspirational moment in Uluākea has been the shaping of a water gourd, which can symbolically represent our quest as teachers to connect with students at a deep meaningful level; to help integrate a sense of spirituality with scholarship. Seeing this gourd every day is a constant reminder to me of this more profound potential of teaching.
Celia Bardwell-Jones, Assistant Professor in Philosophy, and Affiliate Faculty in Gender and Women's Studies and Filipino Studies Certificate Program, UH-Hilo

Uluākea has introduced me to new ways of engaging with my students and expanded my orientation to the culture of Hawai'i. As a new faculty, I found this faculty development program incredibly helpful and applicable to my teaching and research goals at UH-Hilo. In terms of teaching, I found out ways to integrate Hawaiian cultural values into my teaching, such as the hei chant. This faculty development program has taught me new ways to interact with my students. In terms of my research, Uluākea has inspired me to think about my own discipline in Philosophy through the integration of Hawaiian values. I regularly teach courses in the Philosophy of Nature and this program has widened my interest into thinking about the concept of nature in the Hawaiian context.
Currently, there are more than 130 schools of pharmacy in the US. All meet rigorous pharmacy education standards, each offers something unique. The Daniel K Inouye College of Pharmacy, at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, offers students the unique experience of pharmacy education tangibly and intangibly influenced by our physical location in Hilo, on the east side of Hawai‘i Island. Through deeply personal, inspiring activities, Uluakea supports my development as a member of the UH Hilo faculty serving students from Hawai‘i, the South Pacific, the US mainland and around the world. Uluakea provides me with tools, perspective and support with which to infuse the pharmacy program with Hilo area-based activities and experiences... providing direct and indirect, positive influence on the development of the next generation of Hawai‘i’s pharmacists.
E ke akua nui, akua iki
Akua loa, akua pokoh
Akua lipo ka pō i akua lile ke ao
O wehea nāhi o lani
ʻOi ola wai honua

To profound potential great and small,
near and far...
The fertile profoundness of night
for the glistening of day
Lay open the fires of heaven
While there is still water on earth.

Na Taupōuri Tangarō
The Uluākea Process focuses upon the cyclical relationship that lies in the interdependence between process and outcome. It involves taking a holistic approach toward observation, participation, and adaptability, with a focus on accountability to the environment.

http://kipuka.uhh.hawaii.edu/faculty_services.php
Uluākea Process: Ka Hoʻokua ʻĀina - A holistic focus on both place, space, and energy.
A learning environment imbued with social and cultural contexts that draws on awareness and alignment with the natural settings, and personal experiences that encompass Hawai‘i.
A foundation in Hawai‘i’s environment and ecology; a recognition of and commitment to the relationships that exist between the natural and social phenomena in our environment.
Ka Pilina ʻĀina - A participatory consciousness of the cyclical, interdependent relationship between all things
Ka Ho‘oulu ‘Āina - Accountability to the reciprocal relationships that exist within both the social and natural environments.
Uluākea: Profound Inspiration