

Subject: Nomination of Morris K. Lai for 2011 COE Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Morris K. Lai is being nominated for the Lifetime Achievement Award due to his sustained and exceptional work performance, service, and leadership as demonstrated through his professional contributions to the Curriculum Research & Development Group (CRDG), the UHM College of Education, and the University of Hawai'i as well as to the academic and professional field of educational research. As an exemplary nominee for this award, Dr. Lai brings distinction and recognition to the College. His performance (e.g., developing new, indigenous evaluation techniques) addresses the initiation of new and unprecedented service, and his development of highly visible and recognized evaluation criteria demonstrates initiative and leadership of the highest and rare category. There is no question concerning the national and international recognition he brings to the University. Add to this his impressive record of productivity (e.g., in the generation of external funding) and you have the very definition of "outstanding."

Dr. Lai's work remains at the cutting edge internationally in developing and disseminating culturally appropriate evaluation methods. His expertise is widely sought after. Dr. Lai is a member of the Evaluation Hui, a consortium of Native Hawaiian and Maori evaluators, and serves on the Advisory Committee, Hawai'i Comprehensive Cancer Control Program. He was selected to review proposals for the Native Hawaiian Education Council (NHEC) and serves on a committee revising performance indicators for future externally funded projects coordinated by the NHEC. For the Indigenous Peoples in Evaluation Topical Interest Group of the American Evaluation Association he serves as co-chair. Continuing his extraordinary efforts to influence culturally appropriate evaluation methods, Dr. Lai is a member of the editorial review boards of the *Pacific Educational Research Journal* and *Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being*.

Dr. Lai has generated over \$22,000,000 over the past 6 years (and more than \$28,000,000 since 1989). His grants alone account for nearly half of the total external funding received by CRDG. Morris Lai is consistently in the top 25 of UH PIs in terms of funding for grants and contracts; his total external funding is the second highest among all principal investigators in the College of Education.

Dr. Lai's work demonstrates continuous professional merit and competence that is recognized by his colleagues, supervisors, and peers locally, nationally, and internationally. Dr. Lai and co-authors recently received first place in the alternate evaluation methods category in the Excellent Publications Competition of Division H (School Evaluation) of the American Educational Research Association. He is a seven-time award winner in this prestigious and highly-respected national American Educational Research Association's Division H (School Evaluation) Excellent Publications Competition (1981, 1984, 1991, 1996, 2000, 2006, and 2008). In 1993, 2000, and again in 2008, Dr. Lai and co-authors won the Hawaii Educational Research Association Distinguished Paper Award, and he was invited to present the winning papers at the American Educational Research Association annual conference each year.

His competence in Hawaiian language and English language writing was critical in creating and eliminating errors and in generally raising of the quality of the writing of the *Ka Wana* series developed by the Pihana Project. The 11 booklets are now being published as one book, *No Na Mamo*, combined into a full hardcover book by UH Press. He served for several years as a co-editor of the *Pacific Educational Research Journal* and was known for his willingness to work with first-time authors to improve their journal writing and presentation skills.

Dr. Lai actively serves in departmental, college, and campus affairs as well as national affairs, exhibiting the highest level of integrity and dedication to the mission of CRDG, UHM COE, and the field of educational research.

Dr. Morris Lai is a leader in CRDG, an organized research unit in the UHM COE that conducts research and creates, evaluates, disseminates, and supports educational programs that serve students, teachers, parents, and

other educators in grades preK–12. He has served as a member of the CRDG Leadership Council and regularly participated in the R&D Committee. His contributions are vital in assisting CRDG faculty in designing valid program evaluations that result in nearly \$9 million in externally funded projects annually. He also assists faculty in analyzing, interpreting, and publishing the results of their work. He has also started a CRDG library on materials related to traditional and contemporary Hawaiian beliefs and practices, contributing to the huge collection of publications he has amassed over his long career.

Dr. Lai has served as an active member of the Graduate Faculty in Educational Psychology at the University of Hawai‘i since 1982, attending weekly meetings and participating in most departmental activities including teaching and advising. Dr. Lai has served on the doctoral committees of over 50 students, including those from Curriculum Studies and Educational Psychology; he chaired five of those committees. He has also served on the committees of 14 master’s students who completed their degrees, serving as chair on at least three of those master’s committees. This service to the College has been beyond his formal job responsibilities at CRDG and has been a huge professional contribution and commitment made to the UHM COE Educational Psychology Department at no additional cost to the university.

In addition, Dr. Lai contributes his expertise to the College by serving on the COE Research Council, COE Senate Committees on Diversity (including the Institutional Racism subcommittees), COE Native Hawaiian Faculty Committee, COE Faculty Senate, advisory group for one of the federal grants to the Center on Disabilities Studies: *The I in IEP*, and the advisory board of the Hawai‘i Educational Policy Center.

Continuing his contributions to the Manoa campus, Dr. Lai served on the Search Committee for the new Dean of the COE, Committee on Human Studies/Institutional Review Board (alternate member), and cooperating graduate faculty in Communication and Information Sciences.

Dr. Lai is the lead evaluator and supervisor of the evaluation coordinator of an early-childhood project funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation through a not-for-profit organization. As a result of this effort, he has established solid relationships with professionals from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Battle Creek, MI); Walter R. MacDonald Associates (Washington, DC); Good Beginnings Alliance (Honolulu, HI); the Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture (Kapolei, HI), a Native-Hawaiian not-for-profit community-based entity; and from the other seven project sites (Florida, New Mexico, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington, DC).

Dr. Morris K. Lai well deserves the recognition that the Lifetime Achievement Award represents.