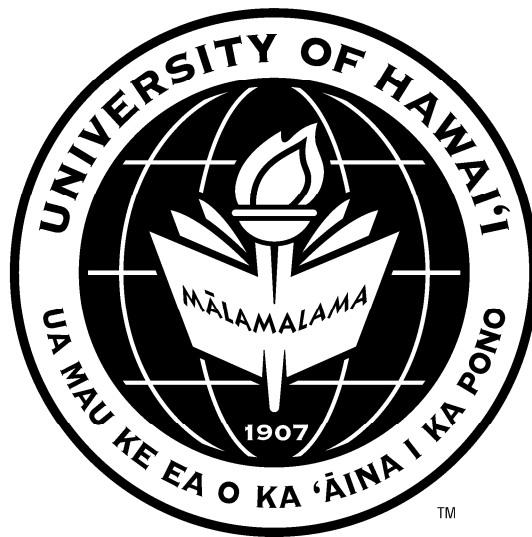


UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM ANNUAL REPORT



REPORT TO THE 2008 LEGISLATURE

Final Report on the
Needs of the Pacific Islanders in Hawai'i

House Concurrent Resolution 129, SD1 (2007)

June 2008

Center for Pacific Islands Studies
School of Pacific and Asian Studies
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

UHM Center for Pacific Islands
Studies Report on the
Needs of Micronesians in Hawai‘i

Pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 129, S.D. 1
Regular Session of 2007

Submitted to
The Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
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INTRODUCTION

During its regular 2007 session, the Twenty-Fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii passed House Concurrent Resolution 129, S.D. 1. The resolution called upon the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Center for Pacific Islands Studies “to convene and lead a task force to identify and address the needs of Pacific Islanders in Hawai‘i.” (See Appendix A for background on the Center for Pacific Islands Studies.) The resolution further requested that the center submit a report, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the start of the 2008 regular session.

In consultation with Senators Suzanne Chun-Oakland and J. Kalani English, Center for Pacific Islands Studies Director David Hanlon and other center staffers decided that a conference on Micronesians in Hawai‘i, already in the planning stages for April 2008, would be the most appropriate, effective, and beneficial way for the Center for Pacific Islands Studies to meet its responsibilities under H.C.R. 129, S.D. 1. One of the major goals of the conference became the formulation of a set of policy recommendations to the legislature.

To insure that the conference reflected the breadth of the needs of Micronesians in Hawai‘i, the conference organizers convened a diverse steering committee of Micronesian community members who are involved with the Micronesian communities in Hawai‘i, in both personal and professional capacities. The steering committee included Nia Aitaoto (Papa Ola Lokahi), Margarita Cholymay (Central Middle School ESL Program and St. James Chuukese community leader), Canisius Filibert (Pacific Resources for Education and Learning), Dr. Hilda Heine (Pacific Resources for Education and Learning), Jocelyn Howard (Goodwill Industries), Joanna Jacob (Hawai‘i State Department of Education), Emelihter Kihleng (UH Mānoa student), Rodrigo Mauricio (Pacific Resources for Education and Learning), Richard Salvador (McKinley Community School for Adults), and Lillian Segal (UHM Center on Disability Studies).

More than 300 people attended the “Micronesian Voices in Hawai‘i” conference, which was held 3–4 April 2008 at the East-West Center’s Imin Conference Center. The conference was funded by the center’s United States Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center Grant with assistance from the UHM School of Pacific and Asian Studies and the Sidney Stern Memorial Trust.

RATIONALE FOR THE CONFERENCE, “MICRONESIAN VOICES IN HAWAI‘I”

Micronesians are among the fastest-growing migrant groups in the state of Hawai‘i. The compacts of free association between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau (ROP) allow citizens of these freely associated

countries to travel, work, and live in the United States without visas. As a consequence, many are migrating to Hawai‘i and other parts of the United States in search of educational, employment, and health opportunities that are not available to them in their home countries. The number of Micronesians in Hawai‘i (which includes Marshallese, Palauans, Chuukese, Yapese, Pohnpeians, and Kosraeans) is estimated to be between 12,000 and 20,000.

While a number of Micronesians in Hawai‘i hold professional positions across sectors of the economy, many Micronesians face challenges in achieving economic self-sufficiency—these challenges include new cultural expectations, an unfamiliar language, confusing educational and health bureaucracies, and changes in the composition of their households. State and local agencies and organizations are also facing challenges, in their attempts to understand and respond to the needs of this new group of migrants.

Given the challenges recent Micronesian migrants are facing, the Center for Pacific Islands Studies envisioned the conference as an opportunity for Hawai‘i government officials, service providers, and the general public to learn about the needs of Micronesian migrants directly and the initiatives that Micronesian community members—professionals and community leaders—are taking to address the challenges faced by new migrants. Because Micronesian community leaders are familiar with Micronesian cultural expectations, as well as the requirements of achieving success in Hawai‘i, they have been able to develop educational and community-building initiatives that can serve as models for other service providers. The center also envisioned the conference as an opportunity for all the major stakeholders—state officials, representatives from the different Micronesian communities, service providers, academic experts, and concerned citizens—to bring multiple perspectives to bear in fashioning initiatives that help us, as community members, better understand and serve one another. (See Appendix B for affiliations of conference participants.)

CONFERENCE STRUCTURE AND PROGRAM

At the conference, three distinguished Micronesian leaders provided background on Micronesian migration and the situation for Micronesians in Hawai‘i: Benjamin Graham (current nominee for RMI Ambassador to the United States), Dr. Hilda Heine (Director of the Pacific Comprehensive Center, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning), and the Honorable Andon L. Amaraich (a lead negotiator for the first FSM Compact of Free Association and current chief justice of the FSM). All three speakers highlighted the desire for a better education as an important driver of migration, beginning in the 1960s. Increasingly, however, migration, particularly from the RMI and the FSM, is being driven by economic factors and, to a lesser extent, is being undertaken for medical reasons (see “Determinants and Dynamics of Micronesian Emigration,” by Ben Graham, at <http://www.yokwe.net/ydownloads/Reports08/DeterminantsDynamics.pdf>.)

According to Graham, unemployment is high in the FSM and RMI, particularly among youth, and real incomes have fallen since the 1990s. Micronesia has a rapidly growing labor supply, but employment opportunities are growing slowly and wages are low—circumstances that will continue to spark Micronesian emigration.

Once Micronesian migrants reach Hawai‘i, the lack of affordable housing, together with limited English language skills, cultural misunderstandings on both sides, a lack of technical training opportunities, and low wages for entry-level jobs result in many migrant families (an average of 42%) living below the poverty line. At the same time, according to Heine (see “Micronesians Contributions and Challenges in Hawai‘i” at <http://www.yokwe.net/ydownloads/Reports08/MicroContributions.pdf>), many Micronesians are contributing to Hawai‘i, not only culturally and socially, but economically—as wage earners and taxpayers in fields such as medicine, education, and law; and as workers in sectors such coffee, sugar cane, and macadamia farming—jobs that others have not wanted to take.

CONFERENCE PANELS

The major part of the conference was devoted to panels that featured Micronesian community leaders and professionals speaking about the work they are doing in the community, the resources that are required, the education that needs to take place, and opportunities to make a positive impact. There were four panels that focused on specific themes: (1) strengthening communities, (2) increasing effective communication, (3) building programs in education and health, and (4) educating about rights and responsibilities. In a fifth, open-ended panel, four Micronesian pastors talked about the wide range of important services they provide for community members.

Following the panel presentations, conferees met with panel members in breakout groups to brainstorm recommendations for policy makers. At the conclusion of the breakout sessions, the group leaders met to compile a preliminary list of recommendations. These recommendations were then presented for comment and response to representatives from the governor’s and Honolulu mayor’s offices during the final conference session. The recommendations reflected common themes and concerns that emerged across the breakout groups. The preliminary list was reviewed and refined during a post-conference assessment meeting of the conference organizers and the steering committee, resulting in the following Joint Policy Recommendations.

CONFERENCE JOINT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Policy Recommendations constitute the single most important product of the “Micronesian Voices in Hawai‘i” conference. They are offered as both goals and guidelines in the formulation of policy and the drafting of legislation affecting the various Micronesian communities now living in Hawai‘i:

1. Establish a centralized, physical, as well as virtual (Internet) place for better dissemination of information, resources, material, etc.—a sort of one-stop shop for Micronesians.
2. Conduct an accurate and culturally sensitive census of the Micronesian populations in Hawai‘i as required by law.
3. Provide clear, consistent information for state service providers on programs and services for which Micronesians are eligible.
4. Establish and fund a pool of full-time qualified, certified, readily available interpreters in all major Micronesian languages (Marshallese, Kosraean, Pohnpeian, Chuukese, Yapese, Palauan).
5. Adequately fund cultural awareness training for service providers.
6. Encourage state agency personnel to participate in regular meetings of stakeholder groups, such as Nations of Micronesia.
7. Strengthen training, bridging, and mentoring programs in workforce development, at all levels, especially for youth.
8. Increase collaboration between Hawai‘i and Freely Associated States (FAS) governments, on health, education, and other major issues.
9. Encourage FAS governments to better prepare and orient people prior to their departure regarding health and education documents needed, etc., as well as rights and responsibilities.

IN CONCLUSION

Although the Center for Pacific Islands Studies worked independently of the Attorney General’s COFA Task Force (Senate Resolution No. 142, S.D. 1), a comparison of the reports of both groups reveals a great deal of overlap in their conclusions and recommendations. Both reports highlight the need for an accurate, in-depth census. In the area of services, both reports stress the importance of language access and the need to develop and fund an adequate pool

of interpreters and translators; the importance of developing training and mentoring programs; the need to develop multipurpose resource centers (“one-stop shops”); the need to increase collaboration between Hawai‘i and the Freely Associated States in order to insure a smoother transition for migrants; and the importance of ensuring cultural sensitivity in the delivery of services. This overlap strengthens the recommendations of both reports and indicates the existence of a consensus on some core issues and desirable responses.

The UHM Center for Pacific Islands Studies offers this summary report and the accompanying complete transcript of the conference’s proceedings in satisfaction of the requirements specified in H.C.R. No 129, S.D. 1 (2007). Additional materials can be found on the program and resources pages of the conference Web site (<http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis/2008conf>). Resources include links to the presentations by Benjamin Graham and Dr. Hilda Heine, the contact addresses and numbers for conference presenters, the nine conference joint policy recommendations, summary recommendations from the individual breakout sessions, and links to media coverage of the conference and to other resources for service providers and Micronesian migrants. The Web site will also include this report and a copy of the conference transcript. A videotape of the conference made by ‘Ōlelo Public Television will be broadcast in segments in June 2008. For more information, please consult the conference Web site or the center’s director, Dr. David Hanlon, at 956-7700 or hanlon@hawaii.edu.

APPENDIX A – BACKGROUND ON THE UHM CENTER FOR PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDIES

The Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa has been in existence for 57 years. It is the only academic program in the United States to focus on the entire Pacific region and the only National Resource Center for this region recognized and supported by the US Department of Education for 35 years. The center has a faculty of over 40 regional specialists who devote most of their time and energy to Pacific Islands–related research and teaching. It publishes an award-winning journal, *The Contemporary Pacific*; a Pacific Islands Monograph Series; an Occasional Paper Series; and a quarterly newsletter.

Over the years, through its students and its directors, the center has had a special relationship with the region known as Micronesia. The center has always had an active program of outreach to the community in the form of conferences, seminar series, and teachers’ workshops, and for the past several years, the workshops have emphasized the Micronesian region and Micronesians in Hawai‘i, in particular. (See <http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis>)

APPENDIX B – AFFILIATIONS OF CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Aloha Medical Mission Clinic
 Argosy University
 Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Hawai‘i
 Bronster, Hoshibata Law Firm
 Catholic Charities of Hawai‘i
 Central Union Church
 Pohnpeian Fellowship Ministry
 Child and Family Service
 Healthy Start
 City and County of Honolulu Mayor’s Office
 Department of Community Services, Youth Services Center
 Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai‘i
 College of Micronesia
 Chuuk Campus
 FSM National Campus – Pohnpei
 Consulate of the Federated States of Micronesia
 Consulate of the Republic of the Marshall Islands
 Domestic Violence Action Center
 East-West Center
 Pacific Islands Development Program
 Easter Seals Hawai‘i
 Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia
 First Chuukese Congregational Church
 Foster Family Programs
 Good Beginnings Alliance
 Goodwill Industries of Hawai‘i
 Governor’s Office, State of Hawai‘i
 Guam-Hawai‘i Medical Referral Office
 Hawai‘i Medical Center
 Cancer Screening and Education Program
 Hawai‘i Pacific University
 Hawai‘i Parental Information and Resource Center
 Hawai‘i Public Housing Authority
 Hawai‘i State Board of Education
 Hawai‘i State Department of the Attorney General
 Crime Prevention and Justice Administration Division
 Hawai‘i State Department of Child and Family Services
 Hawai‘i State Department of Education
 Behavioral Counseling Research Center
 Central Middle School
 Fern Elementary Program
 Honolulu District English Language Learners Program
 Kaimukī High School

Leeward District Office
 McKinley Community School
 McKinley High School
 Roosevelt High School
 Waipahu High School
 Hawai'i State Department of Health
 Ala Moana Health Center
 Bilingual Health Education
 Child and Family Services, Enhanced Healthy Start
 Chronic Disease and Management Control Branch
 Communicable Disease Division
 Comprehensive Cancer Control Program
 Diabetes Prevention and Control Program
 Family Health Services Division
 Family Planning Program
 Hansen's Disease Community Program
 Healthy Hawai'i Initiative
 Maternal and Child Health Branch
 Public Health Nursing
 Tobacco Prevention and Education Program
 Hawai'i State Department of Human Services
 Office of Youth Services
 Hawai'i State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
 Office of Community Relations
 Office of Language Access
 Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts
 Hawai'i State Hospital
 Hawai'i State Judiciary Committee on Court Interpreters
 Hawai'i State Legislature
 Hawai'i Youth Services Network
 Healthy Start
 Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
 HMSA
 Holo Loa'a Inc. / Weinberg Waimanalo Village
Honolulu Advertiser
 Honolulu Community Action Program
 Honolulu Police Department
 Imi Loa Program, Employment Services
 Institute for Human Services
 Judiciary Office on Equality and Access to the Courts
 Kalihi-Pālama Health Center
 KNDI Radio
 Kōkua Kalihi Valley Health Center
 Kosrae-Honolulu Congregational Church
 LDK Consulting
 Legal Aid Society

Life Foundation
 Lighthouse Outreach Shelter
 Marshallese Education Day Committee
 Maui District Health Office
 Micronesian Community Network
 Micronesians United
 National Cancer Institute
 Cancer Information Service, Pacific Region
 Nations of Micronesia
 Network Enterprises Inc.
 'Ōlelo Public Television
 One Voice Publications LLC
Pacific Magazine
 Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
 Pālama Settlement
 Papa Ola Lokahi
 Parents Inc.
 Reachout Pacific
 River of Life Mission
 Rotary Club of Hawai'i
 Service Learning, Hawai'i Pacific Islands Campus Compact (HIPICC)
 Small Island Networks
 Susannah Wesley Community Center
 Tenrikyo Pearl Church
 United Church of Christ, Hawai'i Conference
 Women's Board of Missions
 United States Department of the Interior
 Office of Insular Affairs
 United States Public Health Service
 University Lab School
 University of Guam
 University of Hawai'i at Hilo
 University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
 Center for Pacific Islands Studies
 Center on the Family
 College of Education
 Cooperative Extension Service
 Department of Anthropology
 Department of Family Medicine
 Department of Geography
 Department of History
 Department of Linguistics
 Department of Pediatrics
 Department of Psychology
 Department of Urban and Regional Planning
 Hamilton Library's Special Pacific Collection

John A. Burns School of Medicine
Office of International Programs and Exchange
Office of Public Health Studies, Hui Mālama o ke Kai
Pacific Islands Connection
Pacific Voices Program
School of Nursing
School of Social Work
University of Hawai‘i at West O‘ahu
Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Care Center
Waikīkī Marshallese Assembly of God Church
WCA Waipahu Weed and Seed