



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

---

### Written Testimony Presented Before the House Committee on Higher Education

March 13, 2008 2:00 p.m.

By

Peter Mills, Ph.D.

Chair, Anthropology Department, University of Hawai'i at Hilo

**HR 130/HCR 157** REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO DRAFT A FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR A GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM IN CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Bertram, III and Members of the Committee:

I am Peter Mills and I am Chair of the Anthropology department at UH Hilo. I hold a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of California at Berkeley, and I serve as a Governor's appointee to the Hawaii Historic Places Review Board. I have been a professor at UH Hilo for 10 years, and I have over 17 years of professional experience in archaeology and cultural resource management in Hawai'i.

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo first published the concept of developing a M.A. program in Cultural Resource Management in 2002 in its overall Strategic Plan. System wide priorities in coming years focus on more active engagement and retention of Native Hawaiian students in STEM related disciplines, and serving the needs of the community in general. I feel that the CRM program provides the best-fit for meeting these goals at Hilo.

I am sure that the Legislature is aware of the State's staffing shortages in Historic Preservation, and many of the problems it has caused, and that Hawai'i Administrative Rules Title 13, Chapter 281 require principal investigators conducting archaeological work or cultural impact assessments in Hawai'i to possess graduate degrees in archaeology, or anthropology, or an equivalent field. Many of these problems in the State's historic preservation program can be addressed by providing graduate training in Cultural Resource Management (CRM) at UH Hilo.

There are several reasons why the UH Hilo campus would provide the best opportunities for effecting positive changes in Hawai'i's Historic Preservation Program. Of the 26 private consulting firms operating in Hawaii, **none** of them have principal investigators who are of Native Hawaiian ancestry. This is despite the existence of MA training in anthropology at Manoa since 1930, and the awarding of the first Ph.D. in anthropology in 1967. The UH Hilo Anthropology Department has graduated a large

number of Native Hawaiian students, and many of them have had an interest in pursuing a graduate degree in CRM. I support Manoa re-directing their anthropology program to train more indigenous practitioners in CRM, but I feel the largest positive effect will be obtained by creating a MA program in Hilo.

Whatever decision this year's legislature makes, the effects of funding new graduate training programs will take time to reach the public sector. I believe that UH Hilo's proposed CRM Program provides the best opportunity for changing what is clearly a broken system. We hope to design our program in concert with the extant graduate training program at Manoa and with feeder programs from other UH campuses, but we will need to expand our faculty from the current number of five tenure-track instructional positions. There are several reasons why funding a program at Hilo will result in the best outcome for the State.

First, the UH Hilo anthropology program maintains strong ties with Ka Haka `Ula o Ke`elikolani, our highly acclaimed College of Hawaiian Language, and it is our mutual mission to better serve the needs of the Native Hawaiian community and State by placing more Native Hawaiians and other individuals of local ancestry in key management positions in historic preservation. Because our relationship with Ka Haka `Ula is so amicable, we can build meaningful partnerships between indigenous communities and our proposed resource management program.

Second, Hawaii Community College's Hawaiian Lifestyles Department in Hilo has already initiated an additional A.A.S. track called Kahu Kuuna: Cultural Resource Stewardship, directed by one of our graduates, Sean Naleimaile, who undertook Herculean efforts to finish his MA at Manoa despite being a Hilo resident who is married, and a father of six. He was forced to commute between Hilo and Manoa to finish his graduate degree. Few students with similar backgrounds have been willing or able to make the same sacrifices. By providing the opportunity for both BA and MA degrees in Hilo, the state will most effectively expand its opportunities to provide graduate training to underserved communities, particularly to Native Hawaiian students at HCC and UHH who could continue on to graduate degrees without leaving their families and jobs.

Third, the Big Island has an enormous land-base managed by both State and Federal agencies that could directly benefit a graduate program in Hilo. Currently, many of our B.A. level graduates majoring in anthropology are working for one of the aforementioned 26 private archaeological consulting firms, or work in entry level positions for state and federal agencies. UH Hilo students that I have instructed over the last ten years are currently working on Hawaii Island for the State Historic Preservation Division, Volcano National Park, Pu`ukohola Heiau National Historic Site, Kaloko Honokohau National Historical Park, Pu`u Honua o Honaunau National Historical Park, Pohakuloa Training Area, and several of the private consulting firms that operate in the State. Without graduate degrees, BA level graduates remain stuck in entry-level positions. Approximately half of the individuals I refer to are of Native Hawaiian ancestry and 80% were born and raised in Hawai'i. These are precisely the people who could best serve the needs of the State in identifying and protecting cultural sites as part of the state regulatory process.

Finally, I understand that Kaloko Honokohau National Historical Park has initiated a proposal to construct a 4 million dollar curatorial facility with federal monies in West Hawaii. By placing a graduate program in Hilo, it will be possible to form a strong partnership with Kaloko through graduate training in collections management that could lead to the resolution of our need to establish better curatorial facilities in the State, and simultaneously provide more opportunities for university training to one of the least well served populations of potential college students in Hawai`i.

This resolution is necessary to re-establish a strong and efficient historic preservation program for Hawai`i. I envision a holistic training program in cultural resource management that will engage and empower individuals of local ancestry in the management of their own heritage. Without such a program, we will continue to suffer staffing shortages in key regulatory positions, and foster unneeded distrust between our constituencies and those charged with leading historic preservation projects in Hawai`i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions I would be more than happy to address them to the best of my ability. You may contact me at 808 974-7465.