Robert (Bob) Kiste first became interested in the Pacific people and their islands while in the Army at Schofield Barracks in the mid-1950s. For his Ph.D. program, he chose the University of Oregon for its strong Pacific Islands anthropology department. He worked with the people of Bikini Atoll and Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands. His first job was at the University of Minnesota as its Pacific anthropologist for 12 years. In 1978 he became director of the UH Pacific Islands Studies Program (later Center for Pacific Islands Studies). In his interview Kiste points out 3 new organizations important to Hawaii that were created in 1980: Pacific Telecommunications Council (PTC), Pacific Basin Development Council (PBDC), and EWC’s Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP). The birth of PIDP followed the first Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders. Kiste has much to say about the history of PIDP, the interaction between EWC and UH Pacific Islands programs, and the memorable leaders in the Pacific arena over the last 50 years. Retired from UH, Kiste is currently a visiting fellow with PIDP and the lectures about the Pacific Islands on Smithsonian’s annual Pacific Islands cruise.

Read Kiste's interview narrative (see separate pdf)

- Personal Background
- Life Before EWC - Pacific Islands Studies - Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP)
- Partnerships and Networks - PIDP & Center for Pacific Islands Studies (CPIS)
- Intellectual Innovations - PIDP Leadership - PIDP Research/Project - PIDP/"Talanoa” - Research Fellow at EWC/Pacific Islands Policy Series - Pacific Islands Report - PIDP/CPIS Publications
- Life After EWC - Reflections on Career, Pacific Leaders - Macu Salato
Interview Quotes
"CPIS [UH Center for Pacific Islands Studies] and PIDP [EWC Pacific Island Development Program] have always had a very close working relationship. It was one in which I always worked with the directors of the PIDP, and it was always supportive about what we were doing at UH. It has been one of the best cooperative relationships between any two units on the Manoa campus."

"I am not directly involved with PIR [EWC’s Pacific Islands Report], but it has had a huge impact as an important source for news on the Pacific. PIR is important for anyone interested in the Pacific. As far as visibility for PIDP and the EWC, there could not have been a better move. People all over the Pacific and elsewhere in the world now read it each weekday. Formerly, Pacific news was always hard to get, but PIR changed that."

These narratives, which reflect interviewees’ personal perceptions, opinions and memories, may contain errors of fact. They do not reflect positions or versions of history officially approved by the East-West Center.

LINK (as of 06/05/2020)
https://www.eastwestcenter.org/research/research-information-services/oral-history-project/robert-kiste