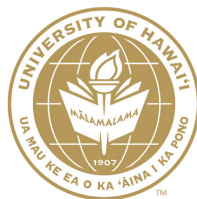


# **Pamantasan Council Systemwide Efforts to Improve the Status of Filipino Americans at the University of Hawai'i**

A Report to the Thirty-Second Legislature  
of the State of Hawai'i



UNIVERSITY *of* HAWAII®

December 2022

**This page is blank**

# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Preface . . . . .   | 3  |
| Pamantasan Council Executive Committee . . . . .  | 4  |
| List of Figures . . . . .   | 4  |
| Executive Summary . . . . .   | 7  |
| Pamantasan Council Background and Activities . . . . .  | 11 |
| Outcomes from 2019 Legislative Appropriation to the<br>Pamantasan Council . . . . .   | 12 |
| Representation and Success of Students, Faculty and Staff . . . . .   | 14 |
| Representation in the Curriculum and Degree Programs . . . . .  | 19 |
| Resource and Budgetary Needs . . . . .  | 21 |
| Recommendations for Curriculum Development . . . . .  | 21 |
| Conclusion: Enhancing Filipino American Success at the University<br>and Meeting State Goals for Access and Inclusion . . . . . | 22 |
| References . . . . .  | 23 |

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII’I PAMANTASAN COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Amy Agbayani</b> , UH Mānoa, Emeritus                | <b>Pua Larson</b> , Kaua’i Community College      |
| <b>Wayne Agurian</b> , Maui College                     | <b>Shane Payba</b> , Maui College                 |
| <b>Jeanne Batallones</b> , Hawai’i Community College    | <b>Christine Quemuel</b> , UH Mānoa               |
| <b>Leon Florendo</b> , Leeward Community College        | <b>Marnelli Joy Ulep</b> , UH West O’ahu          |
| <b>Erica Balbag Gerard</b> , Honolulu Community College | <b>Leighton Vila</b> , Windward Community College |

**LIST OF FIGURES**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Undergraduate Enrollment by Ethnicity in the University of Hawai’i System, Fall 2022 (percent). . . . .  | 14 |
| Figure 2. Hawai’i Public School Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity, 2020-2021 (percent) . . . . .  | 14 |
| Figure 3. Filipino American Undergraduates by University of Hawai’i Campus, Fall 2022 (percent). . . . .   | 15 |
| Figure 4. Undergraduate Enrollment by Ethnicity at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, Fall 2022 (percent) . . . . .   | 15 |
| Figure 5. Four-Year and Six-Year Graduation Rates of First-Time Freshmen by Ethnicity at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa as of Spring 2021 (percent). . . . . | 16 |
| Figure 6. Tenured and Tenure-Track Instructional Faculty by Ethnicity in the University of Hawai’i System, Fall 2021 (percent) . . . . .                         | 18 |
| Figure 7. Tenured and Tenure-Track Instructional Faculty by Ethnicity at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, Fall 2021 (percent) . . . . .                       | 18 |

# Preface

**This page may be blank**

# **Pamantasan Council Systemwide Efforts to Improve the Status of Filipino Americans at the University of Hawai'i**

## **A Report to the Thirty-Second Legislature of the State of Hawai'i**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report was produced in response to Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 132, "Requesting the University of Hawaii to Report on the Pamantasan Council's Systemwide Efforts to Improve the Status of Filipinos at the University of Hawaii," which was adopted by the state legislature in May 2022. The University of Hawai'i Pamantasan Council is a systemwide organization that seeks to enhance the representation and status of Filipino American students, staff and faculty throughout the UH system. In Tagalog, *pamantasan* can be translated as higher education. The council was established in 1988 to address one of the key recommendations of the report of the University of Hawai'i Task Force on Filipinos, which was created by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs the previous year.

Since its inception, the UH Pamantasan Council has served as an organized means for Filipino Americans in the University of Hawai'i system to work together on problems and issues of shared concern. Despite the lack of any designated staff at any UH institution, it has been able to organize various activities, including an annual conference that brings together hundreds of Filipino American employees and students from throughout the system. A full-time faculty member to serve as the director of the Pamantasan Council and for another as the council coordinator can greatly enhance the academic success and status of Filipino Americans in the UH system.

The sections of the report address the specific requests in SCR 132, which states that the report "include information regarding the 2019 appropriation; resource and budgetary needs; recommendations on curriculum development; and representation and success of students, faculty, and staff."

### **Outcomes from 2019 Appropriation to the Pamantasan Council**

In 2019, the state legislature allocated \$155,000 to the University of Hawai'i for two full-time, temporary positions for the Pamantasan Council for two fiscal years, and Governor Ige signed Senate Bill 1418 into law as Act 266. One of the positions was for a faculty specialist to be based at the Office of Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity at UH Mānoa, and the other position was for an administrative, professional or technical (APT) staff person at Maui College. However, due to the hiring freeze as a result of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in spring 2020, the appropriated funds were used instead for three primary purposes: online courses offered by Maui College and Leeward Community College; curriculum development by the UH Mānoa Department of Ethnic Studies; and hiring of temporary staff for particular tasks for the Pamantasan Council.

Beginning in spring 2020, Maui College hired a lecturer to teach four online sections of Ilokano 101 and 102 in three consecutive semesters to almost eighty students, including

## 8 | Executive Summary

those at other UH institutions where Ilokano language courses are not available. The appropriated funds were also used to employ a lecturer to offer online Philippine Studies courses at Leeward Community College and to other community college students. A Filipino American studies specialist in the Ethnic Studies department at UH Mānoa was hired to develop a course module for the Filipino Studies 107 course so that it can be taught by UH community college instructors. Lastly, some funds were used to employ a graduate assistant to develop the social media presence of the Pamantasan Council, which has increased its ability to publicize its activities, and to hire temporarily an institutional data analyst to produce demographic and academic profiles of Filipino American students, staff and faculty for presentation at the annual Pamantasan conference. Thus, all of the appropriated funds were productively used to enhance the academic success of Filipino Americans in the UH system.

### **Representation and Success of Students, Faculty and Staff**

Filipino Americans continue to be underrepresented as undergraduate students in the UH system (14.1 percent) in comparison to their proportion of public school students (23.7 percent) in Hawai'i, among which they are the largest ethnic group. Filipino American undergraduates have their highest percentage representation at Maui College (25.3 percent) and UH West O'ahu (22.3 percent), which can be partially attributed to its proximity to Filipino American communities. However, they persist in being considerably underrepresented at UH Mānoa (10.8 percent) and UH Hilo (6.2 percent). Among graduate students, Filipino Americans are especially underrepresented at only 5.4 percent of such students at UH Mānoa.

At the UH community colleges, Filipino Americans (17.8 percent) are significantly underrepresented compared to their percentage of Hawai'i public school students. They have their greatest representation at Leeward (23.1 percent) and Honolulu (20.1 percent) Community Colleges, which also can be explained to some extent by their location near to Filipino American communities. As noted above, they also are well represented at Maui College, which offers several bachelor's degrees. Filipino Americans who seek higher education in Hawai'i primarily enroll in the UH community colleges; however, sufficient transfer to the UH four-year universities continues to be an issue of concern.

Despite their underrepresentation as undergraduates, Filipino Americans have attained remarkable academic success as first-time freshmen (FTF), students who enter college directly after graduating from high school. Filipino American FTF have four-year and six-year graduation rates that are higher than the overall rates for their entering cohorts at all three UH four-year institutions. At UH Mānoa, after four years of matriculation, the graduation rate of the fall 2017 beginning cohort of Filipino American FTF (41.7 percent) exceeded the rate of that entire cohort at the university (39.7 percent). At UH West O'ahu, Filipino American FTF have had the highest four-year and six-year graduation rates of all ethnic groups for the past several years, which perhaps can be correlated with their substantial enrollment at that campus as a factor contributing to their outstanding performance.

Regarding faculty, Filipino Americans are especially underrepresented as instructional faculty throughout the UH system, particularly among those who are tenured or tenure track. In fall 2021, their total number was only sixty-nine or 4.2 percent of all such faculty in the system. At UH Mānoa, Filipino tenured or tenure-track instructional faculty numbered just twenty-two (2.5 percent) and had similarly very low representation at UH Hilo (6 faculty, 3.8 percent), UH West O'ahu (4 faculty, 5.3 percent), and the UH community colleges (37 faculty, 6.7 percent). The critical need to increase the number of Filipino American faculty, particularly

in teacher education programs, must be resolved because it is a problem of long standing and directly affects the educational success of P-20 Filipino American students.

Among administrators, at UH Mānoa only two Filipino Americans (the interim Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and the interim Dean of the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene) hold an upper-level administrative position. At UH West O‘ahu, administrators of Filipino descent include the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, while at Hawai‘i Community College, the Chancellor, the interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs are of Filipino ancestry. However, at UH Hilo and the other community colleges, no Filipino Americans are high level administrators. This situation excludes them from having the power for policy decision making and resource allocation at the University.

The University of Hawai‘i Strategic Plan 2023–2029 directly addresses the underrepresentation faced by Filipino American students, staff, faculty and administrators in the UH system. It includes “Diversity and Equity” as one of its four “Guiding Principles,” and this principle asserts that the “UH System embraces its commitment to provide higher education opportunities for all, especially those historically underrepresented including Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Filipino, economically disadvantaged, first generation, LGBTQ+, rural, and students with disabilities – as well as continue to diversify its faculty, staff and leadership.” The principle thus declares that the University recognizes the long-term underrepresentation of Filipino Americans and is committed to provide higher education specifically to them. It also proclaims the University’s commitment to diversify its staff, faculty and administrative leadership based on race and ethnicity.

## Resource and Budgetary Needs

Given the long-term need for administrative staff, funds are requested for two full-time equivalent (FTE) tenure-track faculty positions to serve as such staff for the UH Pamantasan Council. One position will be for a faculty specialist, who will serve as the director of the Pamantasan Council and will be based at the Office of Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity at UH Mānoa. The primary duties of the director include leading the council by working with the council representatives at each UH campus, developing and planning council activities, seeking funding for those activities, and issuing annual reports on the academic progress of Filipino American students, staff and faculty in the UH system.

The other requested position is for a faculty specialist, who will serve as the coordinator of the Pamantasan Council and will be based at Maui College. The principal responsibilities of the coordinator include planning the annual Pamantasan conference by collaborating with the representatives of the UH institution where it will be held, developing and implementing council activities at Maui College, working on council activities with representatives at neighbor island UH campuses, and maintaining the social media presence of the council.

Funds are also requested to re-establish an FTE tenure-track instructional faculty position at Leeward Community College to serve as the coordinator of its Philippine Studies academic subject certificate program. The duties of this position include coordinating the “hub and spokes” model for the certificate with Pamantasan Council representatives at the other community colleges, developing and teaching courses in the program, advising current and prospective program students, and representing the council at the college and in the community.

## Recommendations for Curriculum Development

At the K-12 level, as the largest group of public school students in Hawai'i, Filipino Americans need to see themselves reflected in their education. Their history, culture and perspectives are largely absent from the state Department of Education (DOE) K-12 standards, courses and curriculum, which reinforces the educational inequities they face. The only Filipino-focused courses provided by the DOE are in world languages—Filipino and Ilokano—but are rarely taught. Thus, Filipino content should be required in education standards and in social studies courses, and Philippine language courses need to be offered at high schools with considerable Filipino American enrollment.

In the UH system, more courses on Filipino American historical and contemporary experiences in Hawai'i should be developed and offered at the UH community colleges, UH Hilo and UH West O'ahu. The need for such courses is especially critical at UH West O'ahu where Filipino American students are the second largest ethnic group, but only Ilokano language courses, which are taught by a lecturer and not a full-time faculty member, are regularly available. Such a substantial population at the university and in the surrounding community should be reflected in the curriculum so that students can learn more about their cultural heritage, historical contributions and experiences, and contemporary status and issues in Hawai'i. Consequently, additional full-time instructional faculty need to be hired at the UH institutions with significant Filipino American enrollment to develop and offer courses, conduct research, publish materials, and provide community service to Filipino Americans and others in Hawai'i.

## Conclusion: Enhancing Filipino American Success at the University and Meeting State Goals for Access and Inclusion

The report clearly establishes the urgent need for the state legislature to support the long-term efforts of the UH Pamantasan Council and the University of Hawai'i to foster the academic success of Filipino Americans in the UH system. As detailed herein, Filipino Americans continue to be underrepresented as students, staff and faculty at the various UH institutions, especially at UH Mānoa, despite it having the largest number of Filipino American students and employees. Maui College, Leeward Community College and UH West O'ahu are the only campuses where Filipino American students are represented above or at parity with their percentage of Hawai'i public school students. To address these persisting issues, since the 1970s, Filipino Americans have sought to enhance their status and representation in the UH system by organizing student services programs, such as Operation Manong, and academic programs, such as the bachelor's degree in Philippine Language and Culture.

Since it was established in 1988, the UH Pamantasan Council as a systemwide organization has led and supported those and other efforts and demonstrated an impressive record of achievement in developing initiatives to advance educational opportunities for Filipino Americans at the University. At this point, the council requires full-time administrative staff, including a director and a coordinator, in order to continue its work enhancing Filipino American academic success in the UH system and Hawai'i in general.

The University of Hawai'i, through the Office of Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity at UH Mānoa and the Pamantasan Council, offers its assistance, expertise and resources to the state legislature toward the implementation of the recommendations stated herein.

# **Pamantasan Council Systemwide Efforts to Improve the Status of Filipino Americans at the University of Hawai'i**

The University of Hawai'i is pleased to submit the following report in response to Senate Concurrent Resolution 132 of the Thirty-First State Legislature—"Requesting the University of Hawaii to Report on the Pamantasan Council's Systemwide Efforts to Improve the Status of Filipinos at the University of Hawaii"—which it passed in May 2022. The report was prepared by the Office of Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity (SEED) at UH Mānoa in consultation with Pamantasan Council leaders from the various UH institutions. It specifically addresses the request stated in the resolution that the report include "information regarding the 2019 appropriation [for the Pamantasan Council]; resource and budgetary needs; recommendations on curriculum development; and representation and success of students, faculty, and staff" (Bill Text: HI SCR132 2022). The report begins with an overview of the Pamantasan Council and of previous organized efforts by Filipino American staff, faculty and students to advance their academic success and status in the UH system.

## **Pamantasan Council Background and Activities**

Started in 1988, this systemwide organization seeks to enhance the representation and status of Filipino American students, staff and faculty throughout the University of Hawai'i. In Tagalog, *pamantasan* can be translated as higher education. Formation of the council was one of the key recommendations of the 1988 report of the University of Hawai'i Task Force on Filipinos, which was created by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Anthony Marsella the previous year. He requested the task force "to review the status of Filipinos at the University of Hawai'i and to make recommendations to increase their numbers and improve the academic success and careers of Filipinos and the quality of education for all students at the University." Since its establishment, the council has served as an organized means for Filipino Americans in the UH system to discuss and work together on problems and issues of shared concern. It needs to be emphasized that the council has never had any designated staff at any UH institution and has been able to plan and organize its various activities through the voluntary efforts of Filipino American staff, faculty and students.

Since its inception, the Pamantasan Council has convened an annual conference that brings together Filipino American students, staff and faculty from the UH colleges and universities. The conference rotates among those institutions with Filipino American employees and students at the host campus having primary responsibility for the planning and organizing of activities. The latter generally include panel presentations, small group discussions, a keynote lecture, cultural performances, and awards to honor distinguished members of the University and community. In 2022, the thirty-fourth annual Pamantasan Conference was held at UH West O'ahu on October 21, during Filipino American History Month, with the theme "Together We RISE— Reimagine, Innovate, Spark and Elevate."

During the year, Pamantasan Council leaders and members communicate regularly with one another, especially through its listserv which has several hundred members, on issues of concern and interest to them. These issues include pending bills at the state legislature that would affect Filipino Americans, the next Pamantasan conference, upcoming

events at UH institutions featuring Filipino Americans, and the availability of courses in Filipino American or Philippine studies at UH campuses. However, since its establishment more than thirty years ago, the council has lacked a full or even part-time director to coordinate and direct activities among its campus representatives and members and thereby enhance the academic success and status of Filipino Americans in the UH system. The critical need for a full-time faculty member to serve as director of the Pamantasan Council and for another as the council coordinator is discussed below in the section on Resource and Budgetary Needs.

In addition to the Pamantasan Council, Filipino Americans at the University of Hawai'i have a fifty-year history of seeking to resolve problems in public education they have encountered by creating their own organizations. In 1972, Operation Manong (older brother in Ilokano) was started by a group of Filipino American UH and community leaders. It was organized in response to conflicts between immigrant Filipino and other students, including Hawai'i-born Filipinos, in the public schools as increasing numbers of immigrants from the Philippines began arriving after passage of the 1965 Immigration Act. Under the administrative leadership of Dr. Amy Agbayani and Dr. Melinda Tria Kerkvliet, Operation Manong (OM) was probably the first college program in the United States concerned with fostering equal access to higher education for Filipino Americans. It recruited UH Mānoa Filipino American students to tutor and mentor Filipino immigrants in the public schools. Funding initially was provided by the United Presbyterian Church and a federal grant until 1976 when the state legislature appropriated funds for its establishment as a university-supported program. In 2000, OM became the Office of Multicultural Student Services to reflect its broader scope of services to ethnic minority students at UH Mānoa.

The Tinalak Council is another organization created by Filipino Americans at UH Mānoa to address and advocate for their educational needs and concerns. It was started in 2012 at the College of Education (COE) and consists primarily of COE faculty and doctoral students, both current and alumni (Tinalak Nd). Its name comes from the tinalak cloth woven by the T'boli people of Mindanao, Philippines from the abaca plant. The council was formed after the COE dean requested Prof. Patricia Halagao and Dr. Niki Libarios of the college to advise him on how to alleviate the persisting underrepresentation of Filipino Americans in the COE as both students and faculty. It is the only advisory council to a dean of a major UH college. The result was Tinalak, or the Filipino Education Advisory Council, which seeks 1) to produce more Filipino American teachers, 2) to provide professional development to K-12 teachers working with Filipino American students, and 3) to increase the number of Filipino American faculty in the COE. These goals are highly critical to resolve insofar as Filipino Americans are a plurality of public school students at almost one-fourth but are severely underrepresented as DOE teachers (8.0 percent) (Tinalak Council 2022). The following sections of the report provide the information requested in the SCR 132 resolution.

### **Outcomes from 2019 Legislative Appropriation to the Pamantasan Council**

In 2019, the state legislature allocated \$155,000 for two fiscal years to the University of Hawai'i for two full-time, temporary positions for the Pamantasan Council. Governor Ige subsequently signed Senate Bill 1418 into law as Act 266, and SCR 132 can be understood as a continuation of that act. One of the positions was for a faculty specialist to be based at the SEED Office at UH Mānoa, and the other position was for an administrative, professional or technical (APT) staff person at Maui College. However, a hiring freeze was declared by the UH administration after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in spring 2020, which halted

the hiring process for the two positions. Consequently, the appropriated funds were used for three primary purposes: online courses offered by Maui College and Leeward Community College; curriculum development in coordination with the UH Mānoa Department of Ethnic Studies; and hiring temporary staff for specific Pamantasan Council activities.

In spring 2020, Maui College hired a lecturer to teach introductory Ilokano language courses, which are available only at UH Mānoa and UH West O‘ahu. Historically, Ilokanos from the northern Philippines constituted a considerable majority of Filipino immigrants to Hawai‘i, including post-1965 arrivals, and most Filipino Americans in the state are very likely of Ilokano ancestry. Initially, an online Ilokano 101 course was offered and had full enrollment of twenty-six students, including from every major island. The following fall 2020 semester, the same lecturer taught online Ilokano 101 to twenty students and Ilokano 102 to seventeen students, including most of those who had been in the 101 class the previous semester. In spring 2021, the lecturer offered Ilokano 102 and had fifteen students, including a majority of those enrolled in 101 in fall 2020.

Thus, almost eighty students benefited from hiring the lecturer to provide four online sections of Ilokano 101 and 102 in three consecutive semesters at Maui College, including students from other UH institutions where those courses are unavailable. However, despite that strong student interest, lack of funding has resulted in Ilokano courses no longer being taught at Maui College since fall 2021. Besides hiring the Ilokano lecturer, some of the allocated funds were used to purchase the required equipment, such as computers, software, microphones and lighting, for teaching the courses online and is being used for other distance education courses.

The appropriated funds were also expended for a lecturer at Leeward Community College (LCC) so that courses in its Philippine Studies program could continue to be offered following the retirement in 2020 of the tenured faculty member who taught those courses. LCC students can earn an academic subject certificate in Philippine Studies, which the Pamantasan Council would like to make available to students at other UH community colleges through online instruction. In spring 2022, the coordinator of the Philippine Studies program obtained administrative approval to change the title of its courses to “Filipino Studies,” which students had asked for because of their greater interest in the Filipino American experience. Accordingly, a request has been made to the LCC administration to change the name of the certificate to Filipino Studies, which is pending approval. Since spring 2020, enrollment in the certificate program courses has increased with the teaching of classes online.

Some of the appropriated funds were used to hire a faculty member of the Department of Ethnic Studies at UH Mānoa on an overload basis to develop a course module for the Filipino Studies 107 course. The faculty member is a tenured professor whose area of scholarly expertise is Filipino American studies and who regularly teaches the Ethnic Studies course on Filipinos in Hawai‘i. He modified that course so that it could be offered as an introductory course for community college students and developed a module for it that could be used by other instructors. The course module includes a syllabus with weekly lecture topics, recommended readings, and suggested student assignments and class activities. Most significantly, it also provides instructions on teaching the course using the UH LauLima online course management system, which facilitates communicating with students, uploading reading materials, and sending class assignments, so that others can use it.

Lastly, the appropriated funds were used to hire temporary staff for activities directly related to the Pamantasan Council. Since the teaching of courses online as a result of the

Covid pandemic, a faculty member at Hawai'i Community College was employed on an overload basis to develop a "hub and spokes" model for providing the Philippine Studies academic subject certificate at LCC to other community college students. By offering its courses, LCC serves as the hub, and the other community colleges are the spokes whose students can enroll in LCC Philippine Studies courses. Pamantasan Council leaders are currently seeking administrative approval for community college students throughout the UH system to earn the Philippine Studies certificate by taking online courses from LCC.

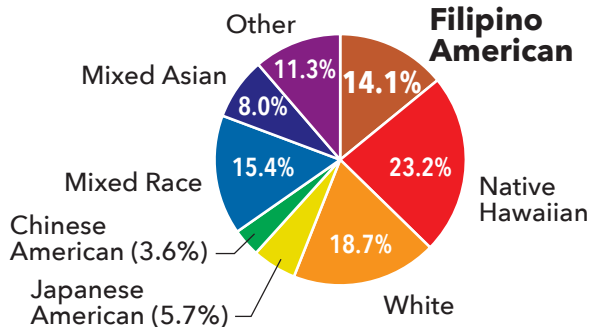
In addition, a UH Mānoa graduate assistant was hired to develop the social media presence of the Pamantasan Council, such as on Facebook and Instagram. This has enhanced the council's ability to publicize its activities and events and those of other Filipino American organizations and individuals to its more than four hundred followers. Funds were also spent to employ an institutional data analyst to produce demographic and academic profiles of Filipino American students, staff and faculty at UH institutions for presentation at Pamantasan conferences.

As is evident from the above review, the legislative appropriation in 2019 to the Pamantasan Council was productively used to advance the academic success of Filipino American students in different ways. By hiring a lecturer at Maui College, online Ilokano courses were made available to students throughout the UH system. Funds were also used to hire a lecturer at Leeward Community College so that courses in its Philippine Studies certificate program could continue to be offered, including to students at other campuses. A course module for the Filipino Studies 107 course, including guidelines on teaching the course online using the Lulima course management system, was developed by employing an Ethnic Studies faculty member at UH Mānoa. Thus, continued legislative support of the Pamantasan Council for hiring full-time faculty can be expected to result in beneficial and long-term results for enhancing Filipino American representation and achievement in the UH system, especially for students.

### Representation and Success of Students, Faculty and Staff

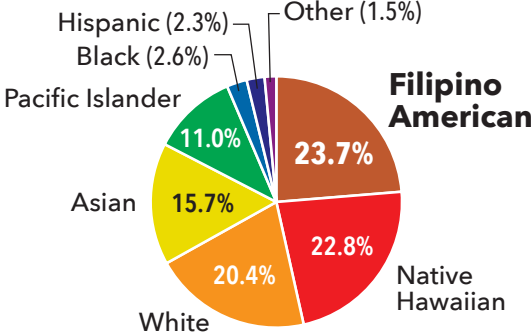
Filipino Americans continue to be underrepresented as undergraduate students in the UH system (14.1 percent, see Figure 1) in comparison to their proportion of public

**Figure 1. Undergraduate Enrollment by Ethnicity in the University of Hawai'i System, Fall 2022 (percent)**



Source: UH Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning Office (2022b).

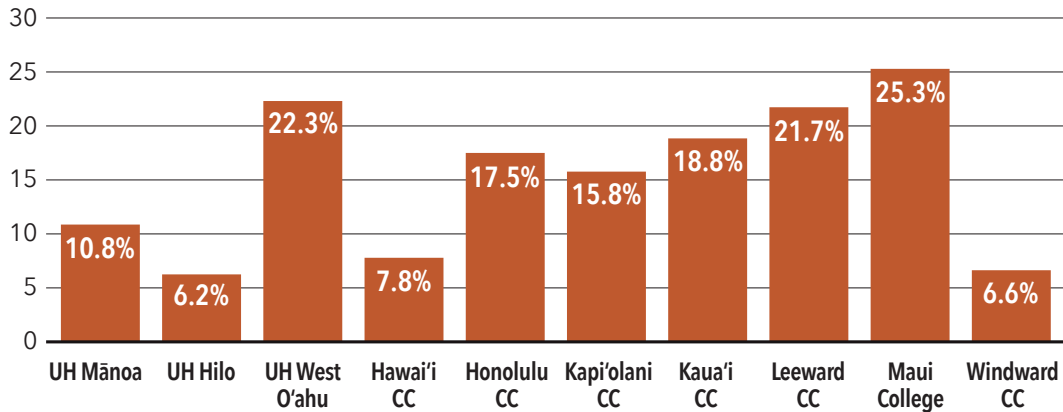
**Figure 2. Hawai'i Public School Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity, 2020-2021 (percent)**



Source: Hawai'i Department of Education (2022).

school students (23.7 percent, see Figure 2), among which they are the largest ethnic group (Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning Office [from hereon IRAPO] 2022b).

**Figure 3. Filipino American Undergraduates by University of Hawai'i Campus, Fall 2022 (percent)**

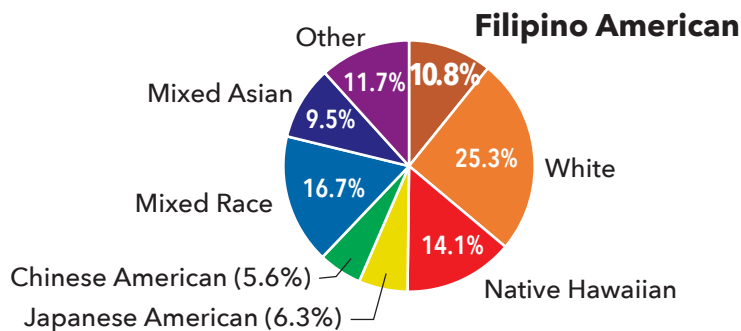


Source: UH Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning Office (2022b).

In fall 2022, Filipino Americans have their highest percentage representation at Maui College (25.3 percent) which, while primarily a community college, offers several bachelor's degrees (see Figure 3). They are also well represented at UH West O'ahu (22.3 percent), which can be partially attributed to its proximity to Filipino American communities in that area.

However, as can be seen in Figures 3 and 4, Filipino Americans persist in being considerably underrepresented at UH Mānoa (10.8 percent), UH Hilo (6.2 percent) and the community colleges (17.8 percent). Despite continuing underrepresentation, the overall trend at UH Mānoa for Filipino American undergraduates during the past twenty years has been steady numerical increase from less than 1,200 students in 2001 to 1,500 in fall 2022. However, among graduate students, Filipino Americans are especially underrepresented at only 5.4 percent of such students at UH Mānoa (Tinalak Council 2022: 8).

**Figure 4. Undergraduate Enrollment by Ethnicity at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Fall 2022 (percent)**



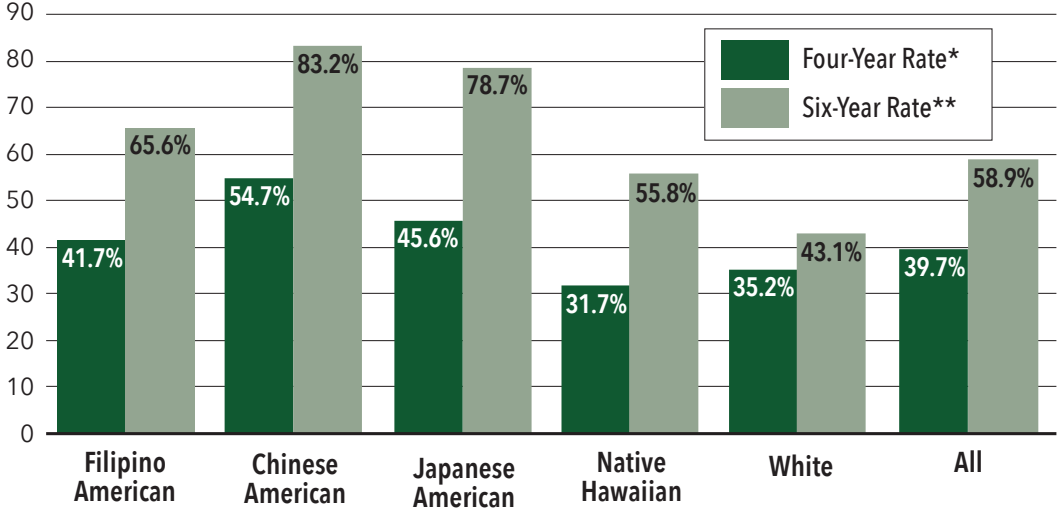
Source: UH Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning Office (2022b).

At the UH community colleges, Filipino Americans have their greatest numerical representation at Leeward Community College (21.7 percent, see Figure 3) and are also considerably present at Honolulu Community College (17.5 percent), which can be explained to some extent by their location near to Filipino American residential communities (IRAPO 2022b). However, enrollment persists in being low at Hawai'i Community College (7.8 percent), which very likely impacts their number at UH Hilo. While the college going rate for Filipino Americans (54 percent) is very near the median for Hawai'i public high school graduates (Tinalak Council 2022: 7), those who seek higher education in Hawai'i primarily enroll at the UH community colleges, such as the almost 4,200 students in fall 2022.

However, Filipino Americans do not perform well in transferring to UH four-year universities compared to other students (Libarios and Bachini 2016: 21), which has been a long-term issue. The increased cost of those institutions, including higher tuition and possible dormitory and travel expenses, may restrict their transfer, as argued by university administrator Robert Bachini (2011), who found that finances are a significant factor in the persistence of Filipino American college students in Hawai'i. Compounding those problems, community college advisor Jeanne C. Batallones (2020: 81) stated in her doctoral dissertation on Filipino American UH community college students that they reported not having their history or culture represented in their high school curriculum, feeling ashamed of their ethnic identity, and being aware of demeaning stereotypes of Filipinos in Hawai'i.

While underrepresentation in the UH system continues as a problem for Filipino American students, they have attained significant academic success as first-time freshmen (FTF)—students who enter a university directly after graduating from high school. At UH Mānoa, Filipino American FTF have four-year and six-year graduation rates higher than the overall rates for their entering cohorts, as shown in Figure 5. After four years, the fall 2017 beginning cohort of Filipino American FTF had a graduation rate (41.7 percent) that was significantly above the overall rate for that cohort of FTF at Mānoa (39.7 percent) (IRAPO

**Figure 5. Four-Year and Six-Year Graduation Rates of First-Time Freshmen by Ethnicity at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa as of Spring 2021 (percent)**



Source: UH Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning Office (2022a).  
\*Fall 2017 entering cohort; \*\* Fall 2015 entering cohort

2022a). Furthermore, the Filipino American fall 2017 cohort graduation rate represented more than a doubling compared to their fall 2007 cohort rate (20.1 percent). Similarly, the six-year graduation rate of the fall 2015 entering cohort of Filipino American FTF (65.6 percent) was considerably higher than the overall rate for that cohort of Mānoa FTF (58.9 percent). The Filipino American six-year graduation rate also has risen steadily over the past ten years since the fall 2005 cohort rate (55.8 percent) and was above 70 percent several times in recent years.

Filipino American students are well represented at UH West O'ahu where they also have the highest four-year and six-year FTF graduation rates of all ethnic groups at that university. The fall 2017 entering cohort of Filipino American FTF had a four-year graduation rate (34.2 percent) that greatly exceeded that for the entire cohort (23.0 percent) (IRAPO 2022a). Similarly, after six years, the graduation rate of the fall 2015 Filipino American FTF cohort (45.9 percent) was significantly above that for the full cohort of FTF (36.8 percent). Constituting a substantial proportion of the students may be a factor contributing to Filipino American academic success at West O'ahu.

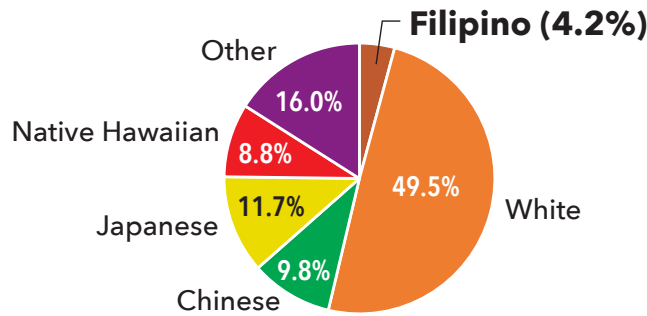
At UH Hilo, the four-year and six-year graduation rates of Filipino American FTF also surpass the overall rates for such undergraduates at the university. After four years, the graduation rate of the fall 2017 beginning cohort of Filipino American FTF (32.3 percent) was much higher than the rate for that entire cohort of Hilo FTF (25.1 percent) (IRAPO 2022a). The six-year graduation rate of the fall 2015 entering cohort of Filipino American FTF (50.0 percent) also exceeded the overall rate for that year's cohort (42.7 percent). The above-average graduation rates of Filipino American FTF at all three UH four-year institutions demonstrate an outstanding record of academic achievement given the obstacles against them, such as the limited number of Filipino American faculty.

An issue that impacts Filipino American enrollment in the UH system is how the University counts Native Hawaiian students (Okamura 2020: 154). In 2010, the University adopted a "rule," which simply stated is "Hawaiian/part-Hawaiian trumps all." In other words, a student who indicates on the UH System Application Form that they have Hawaiian ancestors or that their "race" is Native, Part-, or Mixed Hawaiian is categorized as solely Native Hawaiian, even if they denote belonging to other ethnic groups, including "Filipino," on the application form. Thus, a student with Hawaiian and Filipino ancestry is tabulated as Native Hawaiian by the University, although they may claim Filipino American as their primary ethnic identity in their daily life. A study by a UH institutional researcher estimated that without the "trumping" categorization rule the number of Filipino American students in the UH system would be double what is stated in University enrollment reports (Vila 2015).

Among instructional faculty, Filipino Americans are especially underrepresented throughout the UH system, particularly among those who are tenured or tenure track (IRAPO 2021). In fall 2021, they totaled only sixty-nine or 4.2 per cent of all such faculty in the system (see Figure 6).

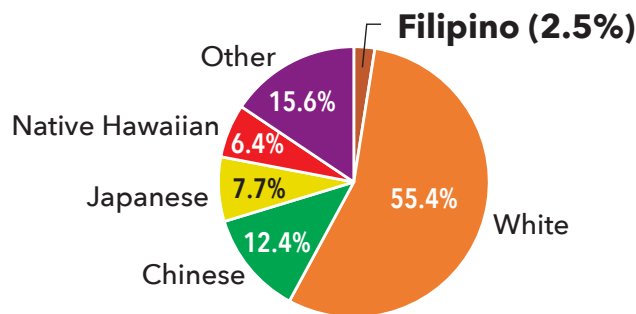
At UH Mānoa, Filipino tenured or tenure-track instructional faculty numbered just twenty-two (2.5 percent, see Figure 7) and had similarly very low representation at UH Hilo (6 faculty, 3.8 percent), UH West O'ahu (4 faculty, 5.3 percent), and the UH community colleges (37 faculty, 6.7 percent). These numbers have not increased much during the past decade; in fall 2011 Filipino tenured or tenure-track instructional faculty in the UH system totaled sixty-eight or 3.3 percent of such faculty, including seventeen (1.7 percent) at UH Mānoa.

**Figure 6. Tenured and Tenure-Track Instructional Faculty by Ethnicity in the University of Hawai'i System, Fall 2021 (percent)**



Source: UH Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning Office (2021).

**Figure 7. Tenured and Tenure-Track Instructional Faculty by Ethnicity at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Fall 2021 (percent)**



Source: UH Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning Office (2021).

Clearly, the critical need to expand the number of Filipino American faculty needs to be addressed because it is a problem of long standing and directly affects the academic performance of Filipino American students. As instructional faculty, they arguably can have their greatest impact in fostering the educational and professional advancement of Filipino American students through regular classroom interaction and personal support of them. The need to recruit and hire more Filipino American faculty is especially acute at the College of Education at UH Mānoa, particularly its teacher education program, where the four faculty members (one in a non-tenure track position) constitute just 2 percent of the college faculty (Tinalak 2022: 9).

With regard to administrators, at UH Mānoa only two Filipino Americans, the interim Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and the interim Dean of the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene, hold an upper-level administrative position. At UH West O'ahu, persons of Filipino descent serve as the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. At Hawai'i Community College, the Chancellor, interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs are of Filipino ancestry. Such limited numbers of high ranking administrators exclude Filipino Americans from having the power for policy decision making and resource allocation at the University.

The University of Hawai'i Strategic Plan 2023–2029 directly addresses the issue of underrepresentation of Filipino American students, staff, faculty and administrators in the UH system. It includes “Diversity and Equity” among its four “Guiding Principles” (University of Hawai'i 2022a). This principle asserts that the “UH System embraces its commitment to provide higher education opportunities for all, especially those historically underrepresented including Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Filipino, economically disadvantaged, first generation, LGBTQ+, rural, and students with disabilities – as well as continue to diversify its faculty, staff and leadership.” It thus declares that the University of Hawai'i recognizes the long-term underrepresentation of Filipino Americans and is committed to providing higher education specifically to them, many of whom are also economically disadvantaged and first-generation college students. The Diversity and Equity principle also proclaims the University's commitment to diversify its staff, faculty and administrative leadership based on race and ethnicity.

The UH Strategic Plan 2023–2029 also has four “Imperatives,” the first of which is “Successful Students for a Better Future,” which has the “Goal: Educate more students, empowering them to achieve their goals and contribute to society” (University of Hawai'i 2022b). To attain that goal, “UH will increase participation in post-secondary education statewide,” which again demonstrates our intention to enhance access to a college degree for Filipino Americans. Imperative Two in the Strategic Plan, “Meet Hawai'i Workforce Needs of Today and Tomorrow,” has as its “Goal: Eliminate workforce shortages in Hawai'i while preparing students for a future different than the present” (University of Hawai'i 2022c). The University plans to eliminate or at least reduce workforce deficiencies in “key sectors/occupations (e.g., teacher shortage),” which we understand is of major concern to Filipino Americans as the largest ethnic group among public school students while being considerably underrepresented among teachers.

### ***Representation in the Curriculum and Degree Programs***

Filipino Americans have a long history of being included in the University curriculum, although primarily at UH Mānoa and with a limited number of courses. The Department of Ethnic Studies at Mānoa started offering a course on Filipinos in Hawai'i in 1972 soon after it was established as an academic program two years earlier. The department has had a tenure-track position for a specialist in Filipino American studies in Hawai'i since the early 1990s. The Department of American Studies began teaching a course on Filipino Americans, which includes their experiences in the continental United States, about the same time as Ethnic Studies did. American Studies also has a course on Filipino Americans: History, Culture and Politics. Ethnic Studies and American Studies also offer in alternating semesters a cross-listed course on Asian Americans, which includes significant content on Filipino Americans.

Courses on Philippine languages have a longer history at UH Mānoa with the first class in Tagalog made available in 1962 to five non-Filipino students through the Department of Asian and Pacific Languages. In 1971, the first tenure-track professor in Philippine languages, Prof. Teresita Ramos, was hired to teach two levels of Tagalog. Given the majority Ilokano population among Filipino Americans in Hawai'i, Ilokano classes began to be provided the following year.

Through the Department of Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures at UH Mānoa, students can earn a bachelor of arts degree in Philippine Language and Culture, specializing in either Filipino or Ilokano, and can also minor in either language. While the department offers numerous courses on Filipino and Ilokano language, culture and literature each

semester, most of them are taught by instructors or lecturers rather than by tenured or tenurable faculty, who number only three for the Filipino and Ilokano programs combined.

The Department of Asian Studies at UH Mānoa has courses on the Philippines at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and offers bachelor's and master's degrees in Asian Studies with a concentration on the Philippines. Most of the courses that students can enroll in for the BA or MA degrees are provided by other departments, such as History and Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures.

The Center for Philippine Studies is one of eight such area centers in the School of Pacific and Asian Studies (SPAS) at UH Mānoa. It was established in 1975 initially as a program, the first such academic unit focused on the Philippines in the United States, by the state legislature in recognition of the contributions of Filipinos to Hawai'i and of the academic expertise on the Philippines at UH Mānoa (UHM Center for Philippine Studies Nd). With 1.5 tenure-track positions, the center promotes and engages in teaching, research, and community service concerned with the Philippines and Filipino Americans in Hawai'i.

UH Hilo started its Filipino Studies Program in 2012 through which students can earn a certificate in Filipino Studies by taking three required courses in Filipino language and culture and two more electives in language, culture, and related subjects. The program is administered by a part-time coordinator and has five affiliated faculty in social science, humanities, and natural science departments, who teach courses that students enroll in to meet the certificate requirements while earning their bachelor's degrees in other disciplines.

Leeward Community College has a Philippine Studies academic subject certificate for which seventeen course credits are required, including in Filipino language, Philippine history, Philippine contemporary issues, and Filipino American history and culture. A tenured faculty member taught most of the courses but, since his retirement in 2019, two lecturers have continued to provide most of the non-language courses needed to earn the certificate.

None of the other UH institutions offers a degree or certificate in Filipino American or Philippine studies, although a few have individual courses, especially language. UH West O'ahu has been providing an Ilokano language course since 2015 and also has a Philippine culture and language course. Kapi'olani Community College offers four levels of Filipino but only two different courses each semester, while no other community college provides Philippine language classes except for Leeward.

The above review has demonstrated how during the past fifty years Filipino Americans have sought to alleviate their underrepresentation as students, staff and faculty and have furthered their advancement in the University system. They have initiated academic programs, such as the Filipino Studies Program at UH Hilo and the Philippine Studies academic subject certificate at Leeward Community College, and student services programs, such as Operation Manong at UH Mānoa. Those programs and their funding by the University resulted from the active intervention and leadership of Filipino Americans at UH and in the community, especially to gain the support of state legislators for their establishment.

Filipino Americans also have formed their own academic organizations at the University to enhance their representation and status, such as the Pamantasan Council and the Tinalak Council, which can serve as a model to advise college deans on Filipino American issues. Thus, the Filipino American struggle for inclusion, success and empowerment continues, as it has for the past five decades, and as it must to advance their collective efforts for equal opportunity in higher education.

## Resource and Budgetary Needs

Funds are requested to foster the academic representation and success of Filipino American students, staff and faculty in the UH system by implementing the recommendations discussed above concerning hiring additional faculty. These funds will be used to create at a minimum two full-time equivalent (FTE) tenure-track faculty positions to serve as administrative staff for the Pamantasan Council and another FTE tenurable faculty position for the coordinator of the Philippine Studies certificate program at Leeward Community College.

One position will be for a faculty specialist, who will serve as the Pamantasan Council director and will be based at the SEED Office at UH Mānoa. The primary duties attached to this position include leading the council by working with the council representatives at the UH campuses, developing and planning council activities, seeking external funds to support those activities, representing the council in the UH system and community, and monitoring and issuing annual reports on the academic progress of Filipino American students, staff and faculty in the UH system.

Another requested position will be for a faculty specialist, who will serve as the coordinator of the Pamantasan Council and will be employed at Maui College. The principal responsibilities of this position include planning the annual Pamantasan conference by collaborating with the representatives of the UH campus where it will be held, developing and supporting council activities at Maui College, working on council activities with the UH institutions on the neighbor islands, maintaining the council's listserv and Facebook page with information on upcoming events, and representing the council at Maui College and in the community.

Funds are also requested to establish an FTE instructional faculty position at Leeward Community College to serve as the coordinator of its Philippine Studies academic subject certificate program. The duties of this position include coordinating the hub and spokes model for the certificate with Pamantasan Council representatives at the other community colleges, developing and teaching courses in the program, advising current and prospective students in the program, and representing the council at the college and in the community. This position is key to the success of the hub and spokes model to ensure the regularity of course offerings so that students at LCC and the other community colleges can earn the certificate in a timely manner.

## Recommendations for Curriculum Development

At the K-12 level, as the largest group of public school students in Hawai'i, Filipino Americans need to see themselves reflected in their education. Their history, culture and perspectives are largely absent from the state Department of Education (DOE) K-12 standards, courses and curriculum, which reinforces the educational inequities they encounter. A review of more than 2,500 courses offered by the DOE showed that the only Filipino-focused courses are in world languages—Filipino and Ilokano (Tinalak 2022: 11). These courses were available only at Farrington and Waipahu High Schools but rarely taught. The stark absence of Filipino content in the K-12 curriculum sends a damaging message that it is not important for students' education and that the histories and contributions of Filipino Americans are insignificant to the people of Hawai'i. Accordingly, Filipino content should be required in education standards and in social studies courses, and Philippine language courses need to be offered at the high school level. Through its Department of Curriculum Studies and Department of Ethnic Studies at UH Mānoa, the University offers its expertise

and resources to the state Department of Education to implement a Filipino history, culture and identity social studies course for high school students, as recently requested by the legislature. Lastly, to increase the low percentage of Filipino American teachers, funds should be provided to assist financially students who wish to become educators.

In the UH system, additional courses on Filipino American historical and contemporary experiences in Hawai'i should be developed and offered at the community colleges and UH Hilo and UH West O'ahu. The need for such courses is especially acute at UH West O'ahu where Filipino American students are the second largest ethnic group at more than 22 percent, but only Ilokano language courses, which are taught by a lecturer and not a full-time faculty member, are regularly available. Such a substantial population at the university and in the surrounding community should be reflected in the curriculum so that students can learn more about their cultural heritage, historical contributions and experiences, and contemporary status and issues in Hawai'i. Accordingly, more full-time instructional faculty need to be hired at the UH institutions with significant Filipino American enrollment to develop and offer courses, conduct research, and publish materials on Filipino Americans in Hawai'i. These faculty include those for the UH teacher education programs, who can equip teacher candidates with Filipino curriculum content and instructional strategies for the K-12 setting.

### **Conclusion: Enhancing Filipino American Success at the University and Meeting State Goals for Access and Inclusion**

This report has clearly established the critical need for legislative funds to support the long-term efforts of the UH Pamantasan Council and the University of Hawai'i to foster the academic success of Filipino Americans in the UH system. As detailed above, Filipino Americans continue to be underrepresented as students, staff and faculty at the various UH institutions, especially at UH Mānoa, despite it having the largest number of Filipino American employees and students. Maui College, Leeward Community College and UH West O'ahu are the only campuses where Filipino American students are represented above or at parity with their percentage of public school students in Hawai'i. To address these persisting issues, for the past fifty years, Filipino Americans have sought to advance their status and representation in the UH system by organizing student services programs, such as Operation Manong, and academic programs, such as the bachelor's degree in Philippine Language and Culture.

Since its establishment in 1988, the UH Pamantasan Council as a systemwide organization has led and supported the above and other efforts and has demonstrated an impressive record of accomplishment in developing initiatives to expand educational opportunities for Filipino Americans as students and employees throughout the University. These achievements include its annual conference, which brings Filipino Americans together for productive dialogue from the UH campuses and the community, the Philippine Studies academic subject certificate, which provides community college students the opportunity to learn about their languages, culture and history in Hawai'i and the Philippines, and serving as a centralized source for information, resource sharing, and support. However, as emphasized above, the Pamantasan Council has never had any dedicated full-time, administrative staff, such as a director and a coordinator, which would enable it to accomplish much more than it already has in enhancing Filipino American academic success in the UH system and Hawai'i in general.

The University of Hawai'i, through its Office of Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity and the Pamantasan Council, offers its assistance, expertise and resources to the state legislature toward the implementation of the recommendations stated herein.

## References

- Bachini, Robert C. 2011. "An Intercultural Perspective on Filipina/o American Persistence: Implications for College Success." Doctoral dissertation (Education Administration), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.
- Batallones, Jeanne C. 2020. "A Narrative Inquiry: Decolonizing Practices with Filipino Students at a Community College in Hawai'i." Doctoral dissertation (Education), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.
- Bill Text: HI SCR132. 2022. Hawai'i Senate Concurrent Resolution 132. LegiScan. <https://legiscan.com/HI/text/SCR132/2022>.
- Hawai'i Department of Education. 2022. Official Enrollment Count by Race/Ethnicity (graph). <https://hidoedata.org/state/999/profile>.
- Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning Office, University of Hawai'i. 2021. Selected Characteristics of UH Instructional Faculty (UHM, UHH, UHWOA, UHCC) - University of Hawaii. [https://data.hawaii.edu/#/reports/FAC09?SEM\\_YR\\_IRO=2021-8&TENURE\\_TOGGLE=TEN\\_TT](https://data.hawaii.edu/#/reports/FAC09?SEM_YR_IRO=2021-8&TENURE_TOGGLE=TEN_TT).
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2022a. Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity for UH Four-Year Campuses, First Time, Full Time Freshmen (table). Special tabulation by IRAPO, University of Hawai'i, September 21.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2022b. Fall 2022, Undergraduate Classified Enrollment by Ethnicity (table). Special tabulation by IRAPO, University of Hawai'i, September 26.
- Libarios, Niki and Robert Bachini. 2016. Filipinos at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa: Condition and Opportunities to Foster College Success. *Educational Perspectives*, 48(1-2):21-27.
- Okamura, Jonathan Y. 2020. Ethnic Inequality in Public Education in Hawai'i. In *Race and Ethnicity in Unequal Hawai'i, 1980-2020*. Honolulu: Department of Ethnic Studies, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.
- Tinalak Council. 2022. Filipinos: An Invisible Majority in Hawai'i's K-12 Education. [https://www.canva.com/design/DAE2WQxs0U/ZSg7sryKrS76WBffMjo3PA/view?utm\\_content=DAE2WQxs0U&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAE2WQxs0U/ZSg7sryKrS76WBffMjo3PA/view?utm_content=DAE2WQxs0U&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton).
- Tinalak. Nd. Tinalak. <https://coe.hawaii.edu/tinalak/mission/>.
- UHM Center for Philippine Studies. Nd. Center for Philippine Studies. <https://www.hawaii.edu/cps/about/>.
- University of Hawai'i. 2022a. UH Strategic Plan 2023-2029 - Guiding Principles. <https://www.hawaii.edu/offices/vp-academic-strategy/uh-strategic-plan-2023-2029/guiding-principles/>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2022b. Imperative One: Successful Students for a Better Future. <https://www.hawaii.edu/offices/vp-academic-strategy/uh-strategic-plan-2023-2029/imperative-one/>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2022c. Imperative Two: Meet Hawai'i Workforce Needs of Today and Tomorrow. <https://www.hawaii.edu/offices/vp-academic-strategy/uh-strategic-plan-2023-2029/imperative-two/>.
- Vila, Leighton. 2015. "Filipino Demographic Report: Fall 2015 Snapshot, Trumped and Untrumped." Presentation at Pamantasan Conference, Maui College, March.

[Back Cover]

This page is blank