

# The College of Education Reaches Out to the Neighbor Islands

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## Introduction

In 1991, the College of Education, University of Hawai'i at Manoa (UHM), began an outreach program on Maui (including Molokai and Lanai) and Kauai which provides residents of these islands an opportunity to earn basic certification as elementary school teachers. The program was initiated in response to requests from neighbor island politicians for a more effective way to address the shortage of teachers on the islands. Viewed from a broader perspective, the establishment of the outreach program was also a significant step forward in realizing the University of Hawai'i's goal of providing equal educational opportunity to all people in Hawai'i (University of Hawai'i, 1982):

The fundamental mission of the University of Hawai'i encompasses its broad responsibilities as the sole public institution of higher education in the state. It endeavors to provide all qualified people in Hawai'i an equal opportunity for quality college and university education.

The establishment of the community college system in 1965 was an important first step in providing equal educational opportunities to people on the neighbor islands. With campuses on Hawai'i, Kauai, Maui and O'ahu, the community college system has provided students on the neighbor islands with an opportunity for receiving technical training and earning two years of traditional academic education. However, the goal of providing baccalaureate degrees on all islands has been an elusive one. The establishment of the College of Education Outreach Program represents a small but significant step towards the realization of that goal.

The purpose of this article is to describe the history, nature and impact of these outreach programs on the neighbor islands.

## The Program

The outreach programs are designed to provide basic certification in elementary education which may be obtained in two ways: Students without bachelors degrees may enroll in the Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree program, or

students with a baccalaureate degree may enroll in the Professional Diploma (PD) program (now renamed the Professional Diploma in Education or PDE). Approximately half are in the BEd program with the other half in the PD program.

Before enrolling in the Outreach Program, students working towards a BEd degree must first complete a minimum of 55 credits in Arts and Sciences. Those students on Maui and Kauai usually take pre-education core courses for elementary education majors through Maui Community College (MCC) and Kauai Community College (KCC); many students transfer credits from other universities.

Maui and Kauai students are admitted to the College of Education Outreach Programs in cohorts or groups of about 30 students.

The third cohort began on Maui in 1996 and the second cohort is beginning on Kauai in fall 1997. The admission requirements which are the same as those of the College of Education at Manoa, include a satisfactory grade point average (2.75), a personal interview, a passing score on the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) or the Computer Based Test (CBT), documented experience in working with children and completion of the admissions application.

Competition for admission to each cohort is intense, with only about 25% of all applicants being admitted to the program. Interviews are conducted by outreach coordinators and faculty members from the community colleges. The final selection of cohort members is made by an admissions committee composed of outreach faculty and faculty from the Office of Student Academic Services at Manoa.

Outreach students register for courses through the College of Continuing Education and Community Service (CCECS). Tuition for the courses remain with the program, thus making it economically feasible to deliver the program to the neighbor islands; the tuition from most courses cover the costs of the instructor.

Once admitted, outreach students must meet the same requirements as students on the UHM campus. The same courses are required, and all students must complete successfully a semester of student teaching. Courses are offered in the evenings or on weekends. For the most part, cohort members begin and end the program together, taking courses and completing their student teaching at the same time.

### The Students

Ninety-one percent of the outreach students are female with an average age of 37 years, and most of them have full-time jobs. As at UHM, elementary education majors must complete 18 credits in an area of academic emphasis. Hawaiian Studies and Science are the most common fields of study chosen to meet the academic emphasis requirement for the bachelors degree, but on Kauai, Special Education has now become the most common emphasis. Other fields of study selected by students include mathematics, psychology, speech, early childhood education, language arts, social sciences and Hawaiian language.

Because students move through the program as a group over a two-and-a-half year period, close ties develop between members of each cohort, even when students are separated by miles of ocean. Leaders and followers emerge as each cohort develops a unique personality. Although personalities are different from cohort to cohort, the members of each cohort develop a strong sense of "ohana" (family) for one another. They share significant life events such as births, marriages, divorces and deaths and they remain bonded and connected as family long after the program is completed.

### The Outreach Faculty

When available, regular College of Education faculty members travel to Maui and Kauai to teach outreach courses. Usually the course is not part of the faculty member's regular assignment and the course is taught on an overload basis. If a regular faculty member is not available, qualified local lecturers teach the course. Local lecturers also serve as supervisors of student teachers and teach the weekly seminars for neighbor island student teachers.

### The Role of the Outreach Coordinator

The successful operation of the outreach program depends upon the collaboration and cooperation of many people and organizations, some outside the College of Education, including: an outreach coordinator on Kauai and Maui coordinates all program activities; the CCECS offers the courses and arranges for the payment of instructors; the community colleges provides classroom space and sometimes assist with the admission process; the Kauai and Maui District Department of Education provides classroom teachers for field experiences; the Dean's Office in the College of Education provides budgeting support; the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies determines course offerings and selects instructors and the Office of Student Academic Services provides support for admissions and records.

Two outreach coordinators, one on Maui and another on Kauai, oversee the operations of each program and are the catalysts which bring the various components together to deliver the program. The coordinators are faculty members in the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies who live on the neighbor islands. They travel to the Manoa campus to attend departmental meetings and maintain close contact with College administrators, faculty and staff.

Since the outreach coordinators are the only members of the College faculty on their respective islands, they must perform a wide range of duties.

One of the major roles is that of academic advisor. They maintain close relationships with students throughout the duration of the program. Other duties include: recruiting students; admissions procedures including the processing of applications, interviewing applicants and evaluating transcripts; scheduling courses and arranging for instructors; recruiting and training cooperating teachers; coordinating the program activities with the CCECS; establishing and maintaining positive working relationships with classroom teachers, school principals, district educational specialists and the district superintendent; serving as liaison with the community colleges; planning and budgeting; processing payments for field experiences and evaluating the courses and field experiences. Because the roles of the outreach coordinators are so diverse, outreach students have described the coordinators as the "heart and central nervous system" of the outreach programs.

### The Role of Interactive Television

Instructional television and distance learning technology are the backbone of neighbor island programs in Maui county where programs must be provided to students on three islands (Maui, Molokai, and Lanai). This technology not only makes outreach possible; it makes it economically feasible as well.

In Maui county, all basic certification courses must be delivered via interactive television since students are located at three sites. This is made possible through use of the interactive television system at Maui Community College known as *Skybridge*. Courses must be scheduled during available times (usually evenings and weekends) and during times suitable for instructors. If locally qualified instructors cannot be found, Manoa faculty and lecturers fly to Maui and Kauai to teach courses.

While *Skybridge* is the major delivery system for courses, the Hawai'i Interactive Television System (HITS) also plays a role in televising courses to outreach students (University of Hawai'i, 1990). For example, students from Molokai and Lanai were recently allowed to enroll in a Special Education course offered for students in the Alternative Secondary

Certification (ASC) Program—a joint effort of the College of Education and Hawai'i State Department of Education designed to offer temporary teachers an opportunity to gain certification. This course was used by the College of Education outreach program to meet the complementary course requirement for basic certification. Allowing outreach students to enroll in courses from other programs when space is available benefits both students and the program. Students have access to a greater variety of courses and the additional student tuition helps make the courses financially solvent.

Teaching on interactive television is a challenge, even to the most talented instructor. Initially, professors were reluctant to teach courses over television, feeling that the nature of the courses required face-to-face interaction with students. However, the list of professors willing to put their courses "on the air" continues to grow.

According to Michael Hayes, assistant professor in the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum and Instruction, the key to a successful instructional television course is planning. Hayes, who recently taught for the first time on interactive television in Maui county, found that the logistics of making course materials, textbooks and syllabi available in three sites at the appropriate time required careful, advanced planning. When asked to describe how much adaptation of his course was required to fit the interactive television system, he reported that very little was needed. "I included the same hands-on, interactive activities and organized students into groups across three sites with amazingly good results," Hayes stated. When asked if he would do it again, Hayes replied that he would. "Although I was skeptical at first, I think my course was as effective as the self-contained courses I teach on O'ahu."

The most recent development in distance education is the use of electronic mail as a means of faculty-student and student-student interaction. Students are now routinely assigned addresses and passwords at the beginning of each course. If students do not own a computer with access to electronic mail, arrangements are made for them to use the computer labs at the community colleges. The use of e-mail permits instructors to keep in close contact with students on a daily basis, thus helping to overcome the communication gaps resulting from the geographic isolation among the islands. In a very real sense, technology has greatly enhanced the relationships between students and their instructors.

#### Evaluation and Improvement

When the first Maui cohort graduated in 1993, the students were asked to complete a questionnaire in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the outreach program. The questionnaire was developed for the Maui Outreach Program following an analysis of seven similar

instruments in current use by the University of Hawai'i system: the MCC Skybridge Evaluation Form; the Student Teacher Evaluation of the COE Program; the Division of Field Services instruments for Evaluating Cooperating Teachers, Student Teacher Workshops and College Coordinators; the Office of Student and Academic Services Follow-Up Employment Survey instrument and the CCECS Student Evaluation of Courses and Instructors instrument.

The 10-page questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert-type scale to assess the following areas: (1) respondent background information, (2) foundations for teaching, (3) skills development, (4) field experiences, (5) overall preparation for teaching and (6) evaluation of specific courses by course rubric and title. Open-ended questions offered students an opportunity to express any other opinions they might have had about the program. All responses were anonymous.

The results of the questionnaire identified areas of program strengths and weaknesses. In assessing the outcomes of the courses, students agreed that they received realistic information about the teaching profession, learned things that were helpful to them, developed a personal and professional philosophy about teaching and believe that they know their professional strengths and weaknesses better because of the program. In assessing their instructors, students agreed that the instructors were helpful, that they emphasized basic teaching skills and were good models for teaching.

Students also indicated a desire for more training in classroom management and methods of teaching exceptional or mainstreamed children. In response to this finding, complementary courses in these two areas have since been made available to outreach students.

Informal feedback through written and verbal comments from outreach students has been collected as well. Such feedback is overwhelmingly positive and characterized by a strong sense of appreciation to the College for providing outreach programs. These comments have been echoed also by parents, grandparents, spouses, brothers, sisters, children and friends of outreach students.

#### Outreach Continues to Grow

When the College of Education began its outreach program in 1991, it was believed that the program would be a short-term venture. However, because of continued teacher shortages in the State of Hawai'i and strong support of education programs from neighbor island residents, the role of the outreach effort is growing. As evidence of this, in June 1996, the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents voted to establish University of Hawai'i Centers on the islands of Maui, Kauai and Hawai'i (University of Hawai'i, 1996). These Centers create a permanent University of Hawai'i presence in communities that otherwise lack access to

programs offered elsewhere in the University of Hawai'i system.

Courses from the College of Education and other colleges within the University of Hawai'i system will be offered through the University Centers. The College of Education's Interdisciplinary Masters of Education degree (IMED) program is currently being offered on Maui through the University of Hawai'i Center on Maui (UHCM), the first of three University of Hawai'i Center sites on the neighbor islands. Discussions are also underway for providing a post baccalaureate program on Maui for persons with non-Education baccalaureate degrees wishing to become high school teachers.

### Impact

Table 1 contains the enrollment and completion data for the outreach programs on Maui. Sixty-two students received certification in the first two cohorts. This represents 85 percent of those who enrolled in the program. Of those who received certification, 49 (or 79 percent) have been hired by the Hawai'i State Department of Education. A third cohort began in fall 1996 with 35 students.

Table 1 Summary for Maui Outreach

Cohort	Year	No. Admitted	No. Completed	No. Employed
1	1991	36	28 (78%)	25 (89%)
2	1993	37	34 (92%)	24 (71%)
Totals for Two Cohorts		73	62 (85%)	49 (79%)
3	1996	35	(In progress)	

The program on Kauai is another story. Shortly after the program began in 1992, Hurricane Iniki hit the island with devastating results. The homes of many students were destroyed and a sense of despair gripped the island. Concerns for survival and subsistence replaced the concern for education as the students coped with the devastation. Courses for the fall 1992 semester were terminated, and due to the destruction on the island, the program did not begin again until fall 1993. Due in part to the lingering effects of Iniki, the Kauai outreach program advanced at a slower pace than did the program on Maui.

As shown in Table 2, seventeen of the original 27 cohort members received certification in December 1996. Of these, fifteen (or 88%) have been employed by the Department of Education. The table also shows that a new cohort was started on Kauai in 1997.

Table 2 Summary for Kauai Outreach

Cohort	Year	No. Admitted	No. Completed	No. Employed
1	1993	27	17(63%)	15 (88%)
Totals for One Cohort		27	17 (63%)	15 (88%)
2	1997	28	(In progress)	

Thus, 64 teachers have been trained and are teaching in the public schools as a result of the outreach program. While this is a modest number, it is nonetheless significant. Many of the new teachers on Kauai and Maui have traditionally been mainland recruits. Some have difficulty relating to island students and many leave their jobs within a year or two. Thus, the addition of 64 teachers with local roots will have an impact in the schools.

While numbers are important, the impact of the outreach programs is not determined solely in terms of body counts; they are also measured in terms of human lives. One such life is that of Vanda Wahinekuipuialeihuapuakea Hanakahi, from Kualapuu, Molokai. Vanda was a member of the second Maui Cohort. Her grandfather farmed five acres of Hawaiian Homestead land manually, cultivating such crops as watermelon, bananas, peanuts, papayas, corn and sweet potatoes. From the age of five, Vanda worked alongside her grandfather, tilling the soil, planting, watering and harvesting. This experience taught her to love and respect the land. "From my grandparents," she says, "I learned malama (protect) and ho'okipa (hospitality)."

Referred to by the younger cohort members as "Auntie Vanda," she was an extremely popular member of the cohort who distinguished herself through her high academic achievement and her commitment to Hawaiian Studies. Vanda is a native speaker of Hawaiian and her knowledge of Hawaiian culture and fluency in the Hawaiian language make her an outstanding resource. Although she has served as a teacher of the Hawaiian language and culture on the island of Molokai for many years, she was not certified.

Without the outreach program, Vanda Wahinekuipuialeihuapuakea Hanakahi, from Kualapuu, Molokai, would never have realized her dream of becoming a teacher. It is primarily for Vanda, and many others like her, that the outreach program exists. Thanks to the College of Education Outreach Program, the Board of Regents' goal of providing all qualified residents of Hawai'i an equal opportunity for a college or university education is one step closer to being realized.



*Students in the second cohort of the Maui Outreach program*



*Vanda Hanakahi and Marilyn Colvin*

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