

UH West O 'ahu Sustainability Committee GE Place-Based Draft Suggestions

The committee has several suggestions regarding appropriate use of language in terms of essential conceptual terms lacking from this document and misappropriation of Hawaiian words and concepts. Clarifying language will address a major shortcoming of this document in that it does not prioritize the concept of mālama 'āina/sustainability, which is critical for this proposal's intention of honoring Hawai'i as a place. And to honor place, the document should be amended so that it does not misappropriate language.

Sustainability/mālama 'āina should be a foundational component of this document and in our understanding of a "place-based" Indigenous serving institution. "Place-Based" needs to be defined at the beginning of the proposal. In defining "place-based", there should be a description of the relevance of this concept. Here is an opportunity to describe honoring wahi pana and the attached mo'olelo, as well as related 'ōlelo no'eau. Honoring place-based education entails sustaining the 'āina on which we live and that sustains us. Thus, sustainability is a key component of place-based knowledge. Indigenous epistemology (ecological knowledge and associated practices) is increasingly being recognized as critical for addressing climate change. It would be a major missed opportunity not to prioritize sustainability in this proposed document. Whether students are pursuing business degrees, studying law or completing degrees in the natural or social sciences, they will need to gain interdisciplinary understandings of sustainability for addressing our most pressing 21st century challenge of climate change.

Place-based learning should be clearly defined since defining it and implementing it necessitates making sustainability a key component of General Education curriculum. Sustainability is currently not clearly outlined or prioritized in the draft. However, without using the term sustainability, a holistic concept of sustainability is highlighted in the Executive Summary where it details one of the primary ways to improve the General Education curriculum:

- "prepare students to confidently face the challenges of a precarious natural environment, rapid technological advancements and pervasive global social inequalities as well as to find solutions that creatively contribute to a thriving community."

There are several ways for addressing how to "prepare students to confidently face the challenges of a precarious environment (...)" as a way to improve a General Education curriculum that honors place-based knowledge. First, the foundational course suggestion of the proposed place-based capacities curriculum must be amended on Page 3. **Sustainability focused courses should be required foundational courses for graduation.** Sustainability should be listed as one of the thematically organized capacities on page 12. Moreover, the importance of faculty development and collaboration is outlined on page 9. Sustainability is an interdisciplinary topic in which this can occur. Regarding the section entitled "Guiding Principles for General Education at University of Hawai'i at a Glance", on page 8, this section should have the guiding principle of sustainability/mālama 'āina integrated as a foundational principle. Faculty and student community engagement (ranging from private sector to non-profit to

informally organized groups to government) is a strategy for actualizing this foundational principle. Community Engagement is directly referenced in the “Proposed Structure: Place-Based Capacities” section on page 11. Since the importance of intercultural understanding and diversity is recognized in this section referencing community engagement so should sustainability.

In regards to intercultural understanding, for avoiding misappropriation of language, there are several considerations. In the Land Acknowledgement section, twice, UH refers to itself as an “Aloha ‘Āina University”. While many understand aloha ‘āina as meaning love of the land, the concept is also political, meaning a patriot of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and should not be used to describe the University of Hawai‘i since it does not currently advocate or fight for the restoration and deoccupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Furthermore, the term “Aloha ‘Āina University” is a part of the strategic plan for the University of Hawai‘i Mānoa and should not be included in a document intended for the University of Hawai‘i System. It is also grammatically incorrect to refer to all of the campuses a part of the UH system in the singular: “as an Aloha ‘Āina University”. The committee recommends, instead, referring to the campuses belonging to the UH system as a part of an “Indigenous-serving institution” or as a “collective of Indigenous-serving universities and colleges belonging to the UH system”. Making these changes also involves appropriate application of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi as used on page 2, second paragraph, first sentence. It should be reworded to Aloha ‘Āina (Hawaiian Kingdom Subjects) in the context it is used in that sentence. Also, the term annexation needs to be changed since no treaty of annexation exists.

To add to this narrative summary, the committee would like to point out additional rephrasing and editorial suggestions:

Page 1 Add nā before haumāna

Page 1 Change kumu to ‘Āuna kumu kula nui (term for faculty)

On page 2, in the first paragraph, rather than state Hawaiian Place of Learning, “Place-Based” rather than “Place” should be used.

For honoring an Indigenous serving institution, where needed, place English words in italics rather than Hawaiian words when defining words/concepts.