

For Immediate Release

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Native Hawaiian Scholars Awarded Mellon Fellowships

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—September 2, 2009—Three Hawaiian scholars have been selected as 2009 Mellon-Hawai‘i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows.

Receiving the fellowships are University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa postdoctoral scholars Ku‘ualoha Ho‘omanawanui and Karin Ingersoll, and University of Hawai‘i at Hilo doctoral scholar Kauanoē Kamanā.

“The Mellon Fellows are bilingual scholars who are steeped in Hawaiian intellectual traditions. By referring back to original sources and by interpreting them through a rigorous understanding of Hawaiian interpretive traditions, these scholars are helping to rewrite Hawaiian history and our understanding of contemporary culture and society in Hawai‘i,” said Matt Hamabata, executive director of The Kohala Center, which created the program in collaboration with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Kamehameha Schools.

The Mellon-Hawai‘i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program provides Native Hawaiian scholars the opportunity to complete their dissertations or to publish original research. The program supports scholars who are committed to the advancement of scholarship on Hawaiian cultural and natural environments, Hawaiian history, politics, and society.

“The program is benefiting talented Hawaiian scholars, giving them time to work towards publication, showcasing the value of their place-centered knowledge, and strengthening their position in a global intellectual context. It's an awesome opportunity!” said Cristina Bacchilega, Ph.D., professor in the Department of English, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and mentor for Fellow Ho‘omanawanui, who has her doctorate in English from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, where she is an Assistant Professor of Hawaiian Literature in the English Department.

“Ho‘omanawanui's work promises to transform the ways in which Hawaiian literature has been read—or not read—in contexts that include comparative and indigenous literatures,” Bacchilega said.

Ingersoll, who will receive her Ph.D. this summer in political science at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, said, “Having the opportunity to dedicate this next year to writing my book manuscript(s) is a privilege, but more significantly, the fellowship encourages the establishment of relationships between us as fellows, and some of Hawai‘i’s leaders. It has been a remarkable and humbling experience to receive feedback and insight on my work from such minds and hearts.”

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The fellowship program's mission is "to create effective, credentialed Hawaiian academics/intellectuals," said Michael J. Shapiro, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and Ingersoll's mentor for the program.

"The Mellon program recognizes the fine work that we have been doing," said Kamanā, a doctoral fellow who is earning a doctorate in Hawaiian language and indigenous language and culture revitalization at the College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Her mentor is Kalena Silva, Ph.D., director of Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language, University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Her dissertation is titled "*Ke Ō O Ka 'Ike Ku'una Ma O Ka Mo'oki'ina Ho'oponopono Ma Ke Kula 'O Nāwahōkalanī'ōpu'u: Living Traditional Culture through the Contemporary Application of the Conflict Resolution System, Mo'oki'ina Ho'oponopono*, at Ke Kula 'O Nāwahōkalanī'ōpu'u School."

The program is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Kamehameha Schools. Postdoctoral fellowships of \$50,000 each were awarded to Ho'omanawanui and Ingersoll, and a doctoral fellowship of \$40,000 was awarded to Kamanā.

Fellowship applicants were evaluated on the basis of their leadership potential as well as their demonstrated commitment to the advancement of Hawaiian scholarship. They were selected by a distinguished panel of senior scholars and *kūpuna* (elders) comprised of Robert Lindsey, Jr., The Kohala Center board of directors and Office of Hawaiian Affairs trustee; Dr. Shawn Kana'iaupuni, Kamehameha Schools; Dr. Dennis Gonsalves, Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center; Dr. Pualani Kanahēle, Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation; and Dr. James Kauahikaua, U.S. Geological Survey Hawaiian Volcano Observatory.

"The Mellon-Hawai'i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows selected last year were outstanding and are doing great," said selection committee member Gonsalves. "This year, the pool of outstanding candidates was even larger and the competition tougher. I have great expectations for the incoming Mellon-Hawai'i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows! It does my soul good and proud to see such outstanding Hawai'i people being selected."

Receiving doctoral fellowships in 2008 were Noelani Arista, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at Brandeis University; and Nālani Sing, who received a Ph.D. in interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in educational leadership/systems from Union Institute & University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Sing said, "The Mellon Fellowship was instrumental in helping me attain my goal by providing me the gift of time and resources. During the fellowship year, I was able to focus on my research study and spend quality time reflecting and writing my dissertation. I am truly grateful for this experience and am honored to be a Mellon-Hawai'i Fellow."

The 2008 postdoctoral fellowships were awarded to B. Kamanamaikalani Beamer, Ph.D. in geography from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Sydney Lehua Iaukea, Ph.D. in political

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science from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa; and Kathleen L. Kawelu, Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of California at Berkeley.

The Kohala Center will support the progress of the Mellon-Hawai‘i Fellows, bringing the scholars together for retreats that focus on their writing and the presentation of their ideas, as well as introduce scholars to leading intellectuals in Hawai‘i and to acquisitions editors in Hawai‘i and the U.S. Mainland.

Ingersoll said the opening retreat for the Mellon-Hawai‘i Fellowship, held in Pahala, logistically and emotionally prepared incoming fellows for a productive year of work, which will be buoyed by a group of peers and community leaders.

“What is especially valuable about the retreat is the commingling of inchoate Hawaiian intellectuals (the grantees), established scholars (the mentors), the committed Kohala Center staff with its experience and passion for the mission, and key Hawaiian leaders/sponsors. That mix leads to provocative and inspiring conversations that are likely to edify the grantees and, at the same time, create bonds among the participants that will live on to support the Center's mission,” said mentor Shapiro.

“I love it that it [the retreat] was a most rounded experience: intellectual without separating the mind from the senses or the place we were in. I appreciate it that "mentors" are included because I learned a lot from all fellows and presentations,” said mentor Bacchilega.

“As someone who grew up in Hawai‘i, I had difficulty fully understanding the Hawaiian history that I was being taught at school,” Hamabata said. “It somehow didn’t make sense to me, and I couldn’t retain it. It felt foreign to me. And it turns out that the history I was being taught actually is a ‘foreign’ view of Hawai‘i’s history, and the Mellon-Hawai‘i scholars are now uncovering a whole different perspective, an indigenous perspective. What I once experienced as foreign is now finally beginning to make sense to me.”

The Kohala Center is an independent nonprofit academic center. Through innovations in research and education, The Kohala Center sustains the natural environment, strengthens the social fabric, and develops the economy of Hawai‘i Island, and at the same time, advances the work of the academy. The Kohala Center is also committed to the development of intellectual leadership from Hawai‘i ... for Hawai‘i and the world.

For more information about the Mellon-Hawai‘i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, visit <http://kohalacenter.org/mellonabout.html>. Applications for the academic year 2010-2011 are due February 15, 2010.