

**For Immediate Release**

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*Hawai‘i scholar recognized for postgraduate excellence*

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—August 17, 2011—Hawai‘i scholar Keao NeSmith has been recognized by New Zealand’s University of Waikato for his excellence in postgraduate studies within the School of Māori and Pacific Development.

NeSmith, a doctoral candidate in Applied Linguistics at the university in Hamilton, New Zealand, received the school’s 2011 Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao Postgraduate Excellence Award.

“The fact that I was awarded the 2011 Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao Postgraduate Excellence Award is a real testament to the quality of the academic supervision I have received at the University of Waikato, which I believe is among the best in the world,” NeSmith said. “Secondly, the award is recognition of the gravity of the state of the Hawaiian language today and of the urgent need to address issues relating to how the language of native speakers of the language can and should be taught to those who wish to learn the language as an additional language.”

A 1984 graduate of Kamehameha Schools, NeSmith was born in Waimea, Kaua‘i, and raised in Kekaha. He attended Kekaha Elementary, Waimea Canyon School, and Waimea High schools. He earned a bachelor’s degree in Hawaiian studies with an emphasis on language at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, and an M.A. in Pacific Islands studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. He is a Hawaiian language instructor at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, and his area of interest is Hawaiian language continuity in the era of Hawaiian language revitalization.

NeSmith was also selected as a 2010 Mellon-Hawai‘i Doctoral Fellow in recognition of his commitment to the advancement of scholarship on Hawaiian cultural and natural environments, Hawaiian language, history, politics, and society. The Mellon-Hawai‘i Fellowship Program was founded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and The Kohala Center in collaboration with Kamehameha Schools. In the academic year 2010-2011, the Kahiau Foundation joined in support.

NeSmith’s doctoral dissertation is "The teaching and learning of Hawaiian in mainstream educational contexts—Time for change?"

“In my research, I have observed that Hawaiian language teachers are primarily motivated by their love for Hawaiian language and culture, but almost all have not been trained to teach additional languages,” NeSmith said. “My thesis proposes teaching strategies based on effective methods that incorporate Hawaiian and local culture. This award is recognition of the potential and significance of the recommendations proposed in the thesis.”

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“Each year a number of Te Pua Wananga ki te Ao Postgraduate Excellence Awards are made to Ph.D. students,” said NeSmith’s mentor, Winifred H. Crombie, Ph.D., associate professor of Language and Language Education with University of Waikato’s School of Māori and Pacific Development. “NeSmith's award related largely to the fact that he submitted his Ph.D, in applied linguistics after less than three years of full-time equivalent enrolment in spite of the fact that he was dealing with what was, for him, a new discipline area.”

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