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Service Learning in Pacific Island Contexts :  
How Tertiary-Level Institutions Address  
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# Service Learning in Pacific Island Contexts : How Tertiary-Level Institutions Address Community and Indigenous Issues

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## I. Introduction

Service learning is a well-established and remarkably prevalent feature of American secondary and post-secondary education, yet it has received relatively little attention in Japanese educational contexts. While it has been adopted by a handful of schools, service learning remains an unfamiliar concept to many teachers and administrators in Japan. Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is to :

- a) introduce the principles and practice of service learning to educators in Japan ;
- b) provide examples of successful service learning programs and activities at tertiary-level institutions in the U. S., particularly in the Pacific region ;
- c) describe how these programs address community needs and, in some cases, promote awareness of indigenous issues, traditions, and values ; and
- d) show how participation in service learning activities may be beneficial for Japanese students.

Based on this discussion, recommendations for constructing culturally-appropriate service learning programs in Japan will be provided.

## II. Introduction to Service Learning

### A. What is service learning ?

#### 1. Definitions

Definitions and descriptions of service learning are abundant and evolving. Some examples will serve to illustrate this point and the concept itself :

“Service learning is a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility. Service learning enhances what is taught in the college by extending student learning beyond the classroom and providing opportunities for students to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities” (Franco, 2002, p. 8).

“Service-learning is a structured learning experience that combines community service with preparation and reflection. Service-learning provides college and university students with a ‘community context’ to their education, allowing them to connect their academic coursework to their roles as citizens” (Seifer and Connors, 2007, p. 5).

“Service-learning is an educational method that combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity changes both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content” (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, n. d.).

“Service learning is a teaching method that combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Service-learning programs involve students in organized

community work that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community” (Campus Compact, n. d.).

“Service-learning is the intersection between classroom work and community work. The work you do in the community [helps] inform your learning in the classroom, and you...take skills and ideas that you learn in the classroom with you as you work in the community. The learning is [made] meaningful and deliberate through reflective thinking” (Hawai’i Pacific University, n. d.).

“Service learning combines the best of active learning and citizenship by connecting course content with service projects that help the community. It is a powerful way of understanding course material by learning from experience... Service learning is all about connecting what you’re learning in class to the real world. It helps you find relevance in the material you’re learning and exposes you to real-life situations to enhance your understanding” (University of Hawai’i at Manoa Service Learning Program, n. d.).

Service learning has further been characterized as a high-impact teaching practice that engenders engaged scholarship and serves as a channel for transformative learning (Souza, 2008). As indicated in the preceding definitions, it is distinguishable from other forms of volunteer service because, rather than simply being a community work experience, it involves a structured educational process that is embedded in school curricula, with the service assignments having strong links to course content. These and other core components of service learning will be described briefly below.

## **2. Core Components**

### **a. Community involvement**

One of the key elements of service learning is community service work. Students are asked to spend a specified number of hours (normally 20) during a semester working with a community partner. The work students do should be both relevant to their coursework and meaningful to the community, and the community service agencies should be considered as equal partners with the university in the development and formulation of service assignments (Howard, 2001). By collaborating with community partners to design worthwhile service activities, universities build reciprocal helping relationships that benefit all parties: the students, the university, the community agency and, by extension, the community itself (Butin, 2010).

### **b. Coursework**

In most cases, service activities are a required and graded component of a standard academic course. The specifics of the service requirement are typically outlined in the course description and detailed in the course syllabus so that students understand in advance what will be expected of them. Instructors will usually work with student services staff at their institution to coordinate community service placements for their students, though they may also take the initiative to contact and make arrangements with community agencies on their own. Importantly, efforts are made to insure that the types of community service work that students become involved with are directly related to course content. Students' work experiences are discussed periodically during class time, and assignments are given throughout the course that encourage students to reflect on their service experiences and relate what they have learned in the community to course themes. The instructor determines how to evaluate those assignments, as well as how to assess the students' overall

performance on the service component of the course.

### **c. Reflection**

A crucial and distinguishing feature of service learning is reflection. Students are asked to reflect on their community service experiences, both while their work is on-going and after their service has been completed, and make note of any insights or personal discoveries they may have had. This process creates an opportunity for students to think critically about what they have observed in the community, analyze their own reactions, and find what was most meaningful for them in the service encounter. It also leads students to consider the relevance of what they have studied in class to the real-world issues that they have been dealing with during their community involvement. Reflection exercises often include classroom discussions and sharing of students' service experiences, group work, presentations, reaction papers and other types of personal essays, and the keeping of a journal to record impressions and insights gained throughout the semester. By participating in these types of reflection activities, students deepen their understanding of themselves and their relationship to others in the community. Because of the insights it provides, reflection is one of the most valuable aspects of the service learning experience.

### **3. Benefits of service learning**

The benefits of service learning are many, varied, and well-documented. Service learning programs have been shown to be beneficial to all parties involved : students, teachers, schools, partner agencies, and the communities being served. To begin with, service learning has the potential to have a profound effect on an array of student goals, including academic, civic, social, and career development goals (McLaughlin, 2004). Research indicates that exposure to well-designed service learning pedagogies enriches students' academic learning and performance,

critical thinking skills, and moral development (Astin and Sax, 1998; Eyler and Giles, 1999; Prentice and Robinson, 2010; Rhodes and Howard, 1998). As a result of participation in service learning courses, students have been shown to make significant gains in writing skills (Wurr, 2002) and have improved performance on examinations (Mpofu, 2007). In addition, students become better able to both understand and analyze complex problems (Batchelder and Root, 1994; Eyler and Giles, 1999), and through reflection activities they often gain mastery of content that they otherwise might not achieve (Eyler and Giles, 1999; Pasek et al., 2006). Service learning pedagogies also serve to increase students' intrinsic motivation for learning course-based materials (Covitt, 2002; Furco, 2003).

Furthermore, service learning may act as a vehicle for career exploration. Through their experiences with service agencies, students make contacts in the community and gain exposure to real-world working situations. While providing an opportunity to develop skills for future employment, such experiences may also spawn insights that help students to clarify their professional goals and more realistically assess their intended career paths (Lascell, 2014).

Importantly, research has shown that one of the primary benefits of service learning is instilling in students a heightened sense of civic and social responsibility (Kendrick, 1996). Service work fosters in students a strong sense of connection to their community as they become active participants in civic affairs. Moreover, working with community leaders provides students with role models who may inspire them to become more involved in community issues while also helping them discover their own leadership qualities (McLaughlin, 2004).

Lastly, and perhaps most crucially, service learning has been shown to be a catalyst for the development of empathy (Astin et al., 2000; Eyler, Giles, and Braxton, 1997; Lundy, 2007; Simons and Cleary, 2006; Wilson, 2011). As a result of participation in service learning courses and activities, students often

become more empathetic and more accepting of diversity in all forms—generational, cultural, racial, etc.—transforming previous stereotypical thinking into respect for others (Langstraat and Bowdon, 2011 ; Rosenburg, 2000 ; Torsney, 2012). An enhanced and expanded worldview allows students to feel more comfortable working with and helping others who are different from themselves. This in turn often leads to increased trust in peers and adults, as well as an increased sense of self-esteem (Weiler et al., 2013).

As previously mentioned, the benefits of employing service learning curricula extend beyond those pertaining to students. Faculty members may also find incorporating service learning into their courses to be an advantage in that it provides a platform for creating a more hands-on, experiential approach to teaching and learning (McLaughlin, 2004). Utilizing the service learning approach takes the educational experience beyond the classroom and establishes a more realistic learning environment ; in other words, it increases the relevancy of education for students. Teachers frequently find that students are able to apply concepts from the classroom to their service and, conversely, are eager to take what they learn and experience in the field and use it to make contributions that enrich classroom interactions. In these ways, service learning adds a unique and stimulating dimension to the teaching design (Guam Community College, n. d.).

For their part, schools find that offering service learning programs gives them the opportunity to be active, engaged partners in the community. Along with developing community partnerships, schools are better able to invite students to become active community members, thereby promoting civic and social responsibility as well as academic development. Overall, by implementing service learning programs as an educational strategy, schools may cultivate a more cooperative and inclusive school climate and culture (Edina Public Schools, n. d.).

Finally, community groups and agencies may benefit from participation in

service learning programs in numerous ways, including: establishing mutually beneficial school-community partnerships; increasing human resources for services and problem-solving; profile-raising through increased public awareness of the issues the agencies deal with and the services they provide; and mentoring and nourishing young people who may in turn show their appreciation by devoting considerable energy to their causes over time (Roehlkepartain, 2007). Needless to say, these positive outcomes reverberate among the community members who are recipients of the services provided by the participating community organizations.

### III. Service Learning in Pacific Island Contexts

#### A. Hawai'i Pacific Islands Campus Compact

For the purposes of this paper, I will focus attention on educational institutions that are members of the Hawai'i Pacific Islands Campus Compact (HIPICC). HIPICC is a part of the National Campus Compact, a coalition of over 1,100 colleges and universities across the United States committed to linking schools to their respective local communities through the growth and development of campus-based civic engagement. The National Campus Compact “promotes public and community service that develops students’ citizenship skills, helps campuses forge effective community partnerships, and provides resources and training for faculty seeking to integrate civic and community-based learning into the curriculum,” and its affiliated HIPICC member schools are “dedicated to enhancing students’ sense of personal and social responsibility, citizenship, and awareness of the unique communities and peoples of Hawaii, American Samoa, and the Pacific basin, while reinvigorating higher education’s concern for improving the quality of life in society” (University of Hawai’i at Manoa Service Learning Program, n. d.).

HIPICC consists of 17 member institutions (see Appendix 1 for a complete listing). 14 institutions are located in Hawai’i and three elsewhere in the Pacific

region, these being American Samoa Community College, Guam Community College, and Northern Marianas College ; 14 are public institutions and three are private, namely Brigham Young University Hawai'i, Chaminade University, and Hawai'i Pacific University ; eight are colleges or universities, eight are community colleges, and one — the East-West Center — is a research institute. HIPICC operations are coordinated by the Office of Undergraduate Education Service Learning Program at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. In this paper, I will report on the service learning programs at four HIPICC member institutions : American Samoa Community College, Guam Community College, Northern Marianas College, and the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, with particular emphasis on the programs organized by the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

### **1. American Samoa Community College**

Upon joining HIPICC, American Samoa Community College (ASCC) established a Service Learning Office on its campus and set several goals. The first goal was to introduce administrators and faculty members to the new Service Learning Program and demonstrate the ways in which service learning would enhance ASCC's academic programs. To this end, 15 faculty members from various departments were provided with support to attend conferences in several states in the U. S. at which they could interact with their counterparts from similar academic disciplines. In one case, teachers of Samoan language studied about oral history with Hawaiian language teachers. These two Polynesian languages and cultures have many similarities, with oral rather than written communication as their base. The Samoan language teachers found that service learning could be utilized as a pathway for their students to interview the elders in their communities, transcribe their stories, and compile them in a booklet that could be preserved and enjoyed by their respective families.

The second goal set by ASCC was to integrate service learning in college courses, not only as student-centered pedagogy but as a way to authentically serve the community. To meet this goal, departments were empowered to take ownership of the Service Learning Program in their own disciplines and decide for themselves how to best meet community needs. Because the very concept of service is a vital part of Samoan culture, participating departments found that both students and community partners were very receptive to the idea of developing service-based relationships. Taking one example, psychology and sociology students were asked to participate in outreach activities at a Catholic home for the elderly. The students primarily spent time conversing, singing, and playing games with the elderly residents. Most of these students were quite used to taking care of their own grandparents at home, so they felt comfortable in this setting and thoroughly enjoyed their fellowship with the residents. In fact, some students continued to visit the home even after their required hours of service were completed. The residents, for their part, were also greatly appreciative of the students' visits.

ASCC's third goal was to build service-based relationships with both the public and private sectors of the community. The Department of Business Management, for example, is now working closely with the tax office in American Samoa to assist low-income families in filing their taxes. As a result of this partnership, students on service learning assignments have been able to gain important professional skills while providing services to a segment of the community greatly in need of their assistance. Moreover, some ASCC students have been hired directly into full-time positions at the tax office after completing their degrees.

Considering another example, as part of its commitment to building community relationships, the English Language Institute at ASCC now offers summer reading programs at public and private elementary schools, libraries, churches, village centers, and private homes. Students enrolled in reading classes in the Institute's

developmental program teach these courses, thereby sharpening their own reading skills and gaining practice in teaching while fulfilling their own service learning requirement.

Overall, ASCC currently has eleven academic departments managing their own service learning programs. In addition to the community partners already mentioned, department initiatives have extended service to hospitals (Health Science department), a prison (Social Science department), and the ASCC campus community (Mathematics department). Furthermore, the Business Management department has arranged service activities in the neighboring island nation of Western Samoa and a global outreach program in New Zealand. Some of the instructors involved in the initial establishment of service learning programs at ASCC now hold administrative posts and serve as deans, directors, and vice-presidents, thus ensuring continued administrative support of service learning endeavors at the school (E. Faalafi, personal communication, Oct. 28, 2016).

## **2. Guam Community College**

Service learning programs at Guam Community College (GCC) are coordinated by the Center for Student Involvement (CSI). CSI helps individual teachers make connections with a wide array of community-based organizations that are willing to participate as host institutions for service learning placements. CSI has links to over 80 such organizations in Guam. Teachers choose organizations that match up best with their course content and design service learning components that are directly linked to curriculum. Teachers are then responsible for monitoring students' service learning experiences. CSI assists this effort by supplying teachers with a packet of materials that includes a Student Agreement Form, Community Based Organization Letter, Student Time Log Sheet, Student Reflection Paper Outline, and Student Evaluation Survey. As for students, in addition to the work

that they do off campus, they are normally asked to share their experiences with others in class via presentations and group discussions. They also write reflection journals and papers and receive feedback on these from their teachers.

Examples of departments and courses at GCC linking curriculum with community-based work include : Accounting, which places students with the Guam Girls Scouts to assist with accounting and inventory of supplies and equipment ; American Sign Language, which connects students with the Guam Special Olympics and which also sponsors an annual Deaf Expo on campus ; Early Childhood Development, which connects students with Island Girl Power to tutor elementary and middle school girls ; Math, which sponsors an on-campus Math Carnival consisting of math-oriented games and activities ; and Science and Botany, which place students in agencies where they have the opportunity to do environmentally-oriented fieldwork.

While many courses at GCC feature service learning, there is no general requirement at the school for service learning participation. That is, students have the option of choosing courses in which service learning is a requirement, but they may also choose to forgo such courses. According to CSI, those who choose courses that require service learning do so for a variety of reasons, including a desire to begin networking for job opportunities after graduation, as well as simply having a desire to take part in volunteer work to help others.

CSI reports that, in addition to its prevalence in tertiary-level education, service learning is now a staple feature of public high school education in Guam, with 75 hours of work being required of each student before graduation. Civic engagement and service learning activities have also become popular at many junior high schools, though much of the work takes place within the schools rather than outside. Thus, it may be the case that some students at GCC choose courses that involve service learning because of their previous positive service learning experiences in

junior and senior high school (B. L. Guerrero, personal communication, July 17, 2015).

### 3. Northern Marianas College

Northern Marianas College (NMC), located on the island of Saipan, the largest island in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, has operated service learning programs for the past several years with the goals of promoting the value of service and developing servant leadership among its students. To accomplish these goals, NMC has established close working relationships with a variety of community partners. Focus areas have included marine and coastal resources, environmental awareness and stewardship, and community health services. NMC's programs initially involved partnerships between four community agencies and three academic departments offering nine college courses. A total of ten faculty and staff members helped provide support to over 100 student participants.

More recently, NMC has utilized an outcome-based approach to its service learning projects. According to materials provided by NMC staff (Northern Marianas College, 2015), three specific outcomes have been targeted, as follows :

Outcome #1 : Implementing a student-driven project to engage students in promoting awareness of the benefits of alternative energy resources and the investments needed to implement their use in the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.

Outcome #2 : Introducing strategies to reduce energy consumption at three community partner sites.

Outcome #3 : Partnering with three to four instructional faculty to design and integrate service learning projects into courses in order to support student interest in environmental, energy, and health issues in the Commonwealth.

To achieve these outcomes, new community partners were developed through initiatives and project plans presented by students enrolled in courses whose faculty were identified as being affiliated with the NMC service learning program. New course/faculty partnerships were developed based on faculty commitment to integrating service projects into the curriculum that addressed either environmental, energy, or health-related issues in the community. Faculty who expressed commitment to integrating service learning projects into courses were invited to participate in a service learning information and orientation session.

Additionally, a week-long event was held on the NMC campus to promote service projects in the college community, and presentations were made by students participating in service learning projects. These students also engaged in round-table discussions to identify strategies for effective community outreach as well as for increasing public awareness of alternative energy resources and methods for reducing energy consumption. As part of their program training, service learning students were divided into base groups and participated in various team-building exercises. By means of discussion and debate, academic and social competition, and other group projects, members of these base groups learned to support one another while acquiring skills useful for their college lives. Lastly, to enhance and bolster their self-understanding, students were required to keep reflection logs in which they reported their observations of and reactions to their service learning experiences.

As can be seen in the above descriptions, students at NMC not only participated in service projects, they were actively involved in each stage of the development of the service learning program itself. In this sense, they were utilized as responsible partners for the advancement of service learning at NMC (L. Pangelinan, personal communication, Aug. 28, 2016).

#### **4. University of Hawai'i at Manoa**

The University of Hawai'i at Manoa (UHM), the flagship campus in the University of Hawai'i system with an enrollment of over 20,000, extensively promotes service learning for its undergraduate students. Service learning programs are coordinated by two separate offices: the previously mentioned Office of Undergraduate Education Service Learning Program and the College of Social Sciences Program for Civic Engagement and Service Learning.

##### **a. Office of Undergraduate Education Service Learning Program**

The Service Learning Program (SLP) at UHM's Office of Undergraduate Education began its operations in 1994. It supports professors who wish to include a service learning component in their courses by helping to arrange fieldwork opportunities for their students in relevant community organizations (that is, with those organizations whose missions are aligned with the professor's course content). SLP currently has links with over 175 community organizations and agencies in Honolulu. Additionally, it provides service learning orientations for classes, and it encourages and helps UHM faculty members involved in service learning to network and share ideas and experiences with one another. In these ways, SLP functions as both a guide for and an active link between professors, students, and community partners.

In addition to the activities described above, SLP also administers the Manoa Service Award, a scholarship program in which selected students receive assistance with tuition plus \$1,000 per term in exchange for completing 100 hours of service-related work on campus and in the community. This is a rare example of student service work being supplemented by financial incentives (University of Hawai'i at Manoa Service Learning Program, n. d.).

### **b. College of Social Sciences Program for Civic Engagement and Service Learning**

The Program for Civic Engagement and Service Learning at UHM's College of Social Sciences (CSS) is modeled on the idea that "giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and...working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life" (Prentice and Robinson, 2010). Civic engagement, a broad term that encompasses service learning and other community-related activities, has been defined as "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes" (Ehrlich, 2000). According to CSS materials, civic engagement involves "actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community" (University of Hawai'i at Manoa College of Social Sciences, n. d.). For students, civic engagement may include community-based research, participation in service-learning classes and projects, or other types of community service activities.

To achieve its aims of promoting civic engagement and addressing vital community issues, the CSS program coordinates a variety of interdisciplinary service learning programs and projects for CSS students and faculty. Many of these projects are also open to students and faculty from other tertiary institutions on O'ahu. The program allies itself with numerous community groups, organizations, and agencies, working closely with them towards the shared goal of improving living conditions for Native Hawaiians as well as other Pacific Islanders and immigrant groups in Hawai'i. More specific objectives include combatting racism and discrimination while improving health, education, housing, and employment opportunities for the previously mentioned groups.

CSS students who participate in service learning or other community-engaged projects as part of their course requirements receive credit for the hours that they devote to community work. In this way, students' community service activities, coupled with related class discussions and reflection assignments, constitute a significant and meaningful portion of their coursework.

Faculty development is also a goal of the CSS program. Program-related materials state that CSS “offers professional development through mentoring, workshops, institutes, and conferences, and help with curriculum and community-relations development, student-learning outcomes and assessment, research, and publication” (University of Hawai'i at Manoa College of Social Sciences, n. d.).

It is worth noting that the CSS Program in Civic Engagement and Service Learning is centered in its Ethnic Studies department. The Department of Ethnic Studies at UHM places emphasis on Pacific and Asian peoples and is a leader in the emerging sub-field of Oceanic ethnic studies. It focuses on an array of issues associated with “key words in the field : indigeneity, race, culture, ethnicity, class, labor, migration, property, land, *aloha aina* (love and reverence for the land), sustainability, community, gender, sexuality, and pedagogy” (University of Hawai'i at Manoa Department of Ethnic Studies, 2015). The department embraces a research and teaching philosophy emphasizing direct civic involvement and the application of academic theories to complex community concerns. In keeping with this approach, the department maintains “a commitment to ongoing interactions with local communities on the basis of mutual respect and a two-way exchange of knowledge” (University of Hawai'i at Manoa Department of Ethnic Studies, n. d.). This attitude of respect for collaborating community partners and their bases of knowledge is reflected in the many service learning projects that the Ethnic Studies department has initiated and oversees. The most prominent of these projects will be described below.

(1) **Programs addressing Hawaiian and Pacific Island history, culture, and environmental issues**

(a) **Malama I Na Ahupua'a**

Malama I Na Ahupua'a is an environmental and cultural program focusing on environmental protection and traditional Hawaiian practices of land stewardship. It is open to UHM students and students from all member institutions of the Hawai'i Pacific Islands Campus Compact. Participants are allowed to bring friends and family members, particularly children, with them to the activities. This is encouraged, in fact, in recognition of the importance of both families and hands-on learning in Pacific Island contexts.

Concerning the name, *malama* in Hawaiian means to take care of, tend, preserve, or protect. An *ahupua'a* is a traditional division of land, usually running from the mountains to the sea and extending out to the reef. In ancient Hawai'i, those residing within an *ahupua'a* had access to diverse ecological zones (i. e., uplands, plains, and coastal areas). By utilizing the resources of these zones in a sustainable manner, they were able to function as self-sufficient communities. Following in this tradition, Malama I Na Ahupua'a emphasizes environmental preservation and stewardship of particular land and sea areas through sustainable use of resources and practices promoting food sovereignty. The program aims to give students a sense of place and an appreciation of native Hawaiian practices of sustainable living by creating a pool of shared knowledge and a wealth of hands-on experience. Activities include outdoor experiences in the uplands, midlands, and lowlands, and range from difficult manual labor to the collection of oral histories. All are designed to shed light on the relationship of people and the environment in Hawai'i, and to illustrate the traditional Hawaiian approach to self-sufficient and sustainable living.

(b) **Ka Holo Wa'a**

Ka Holo Wa'a, meaning 'the voyaging canoe', is a canoe-building and intercultural sharing project designed to give college, high school, and middle school students a chance to help construct a three to four-meter canoe in traditional Micronesian style using natural canoe-building materials. In the initial project, students worked under the tutelage of the master carver Plasito Eseluquipi from the Micronesian island of Satawal. Plasito is the son of the master navigator Mau Pailug, also from Satawal, who in the mid-1970s helped Native Hawaiians reestablish their knowledge of traditional open ocean navigation and wayfinding methods by guiding the newly-built Hawaiian voyaging canoe Hokule'a from O'ahu to Tahiti. He was quoted as saying at the time, "I have placed the stick [bridge] between Micronesia and Polynesia. I like we make one family" (University of Hawai'i at Manoa College of Social Sciences, n. d.). The Ka Holo Wa'a project, which is subtitled 'Creating Oceanic Pathways—Walking the Stick of Our Ancestors,' is meant to follow in this spirit by continuing to rebuild and strengthen the reciprocal relationship among the peoples of Oceania. By creating a canoe together, young people from Hawai'i and recent immigrants from Micronesia, who often have a tense and antagonistic relationship in the schools and on the streets of present-day Honolulu, are able to 'walk the stick', or cross the bridge, of their ancestors and find a shared, essential point of their traditional backgrounds. The canoe, then, represents both the physical and symbolic or spiritual connection between Native Hawaiian and Micronesian history and culture.

Carving of the canoe takes place at Ho'olua Aina, a community partner dedicated to cultural education, environmental sustainability, and community transformation, which manages 100 acres of forest land at the back of Kalihi Valley on O'ahu. At this site, additional field activities are offered to facilitate cultural and environmental learning. These include gathering the natural materials needed to

build various parts of the canoe, such as the *'iako* (crossbeams), *ama* (outrigger), *kia* (mast), *pe'a* (sail), *hoe uli* (steering blade), and *kaholo*, *kumuhele*, *lanalana*, *kumupou*, and *pau-o-lu'ukia* (various types of cordage for lashing). By gathering these materials, students become intimately familiar with the landscape and its foliage and more knowledgeable of the steps in the canoe-building process and the vital role that the natural elements played in Hawaiian and Pacific Island cultural practices.

Some participants in this project are also provided experience in sailing a previously constructed canoe, the *Kanehunamoku*, which is a replica of an eight-meter double-hulled traditional coastal sailing vessel. These students spend 25 hours during the semester learning about the parts and functions of the canoe, along with traditional sailing and navigational skills. They later take part in a canoe festival that is held annually on Oahu's east shore, sharing what they've learned with local community members.

### (c) **Kaho'olawe**

Kaho'olawe, the smallest of the eight major Hawaiian islands, was used during World War II and for decades afterwards as a training ground and bombing range by the United States military. After many years of protest by Native Hawaiians, jurisdiction over the island was returned to the State of Hawai'i in 1994. The island is now protected by the State and designated, along with its surrounding waters, as the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve. Access is controlled and is limited to selected individuals and groups involved in conservation and restoration efforts and to those whose visits are related to Native Hawaiian cultural and spiritual practices. Students participating in this project have the unique opportunity to visit the island for several days and assist the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana and the Kaho'olawe Preservation Commission in their efforts to document Hawaiian archeological sites.

Students also assist in cleaning up designated areas, replanting native grasses, shrubs, and trees, and developing plans for the revitalization of the island.

**(d) Native Hawaiian Initiative**

The Native Hawaiian Initiative seeks to “expand the network of faculty cooperating across disciplines to inspire and support research and teaching strategies grounded in Hawaiian values and knowledge systems...[in order to] strengthen learning, social sciences literacy, critical thinking, and student leadership while building strong programs for community engagement and supporting a meaningful and productive home base for indigenous students at the College of Social Sciences” (University of Hawai’i at Manoa College of Social Sciences, n. d.). CSS currently has eight Native Hawaiian faculty members and offers more than 40 courses with a Hawai’i or Pacific focus, many of which include a service learning component. In addition to their regular duties on campus, CSS faculty also participate in special programs focused on Native Hawaiian issues, such as the following :

— Kupopolo Heiau Field School : A three-year archaeological field school and oral history project on Oahu’s North Shore that trains undergraduates, graduates, and community members in archaeological and ethnographic methods as wells as cultural and social protocols. The school responds directly to the needs of the Hawaiian community in the areas of cultural resources management, historic preservation, and burial sites protection.

— University of Victoria Indigenous Governance Graduate Exchange : A University of Hawai’i-University of Victoria graduate exchange program in which students study local, indigenous ways of theorizing and practicing land use, both in the past and at present, and explore how these concepts might be applied in different contexts. Two key concepts that are investigated are *kuleana* (rights, responsibilities, obligations, and authority) and sustainable self-

determination.

## **(2) Programs addressing other community issues and concerns**

### **(a) Pacific Connections**

This project involves a network of community groups, organizations, and agencies that are working to improve the living conditions of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Island immigrant groups residing in Hawai'i, particularly immigrants from the Micronesian islands. Students provide community service work that targets the improvement of health conditions, education, housing, and employment opportunities for these groups.

### **(b) Palolo Pipeline**

The Palolo Pipeline is an umbrella program consisting of numerous community partners in and around Honolulu's Palolo Valley. The program's goal is to improve education and the overall quality of life for residents of the housing projects located in the valley. While emphasizing early childhood education, it aims to "create and sustain a pipeline of educational support that will provide lifelong learning...and help students move through the educational system from pre-school to higher education" (University of Hawai'i at Manoa College of Social Sciences, n. d.).

Three neighboring institutions of higher education — Chaminade University, Kapi'olani Community College, and the University of Hawai'i at Manoa — work together with community partners to support valley residents and their children. Key resource groups for the program are service learning students and faculty members from these three schools. Service learning students may find themselves working at the Palolo Ohana Learning Center, a community center with extensive after-school support programs, or at one of Palolo's public elementary or secondary schools, with their activities centered around tutoring and mentoring the students of

these schools. The Palolo Pipeline has proven to be so successful that it now serves as a model for work in similar low-income areas nationwide.

**(c) Project SHINE**

SHINE is an acronym meaning ‘Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders.’ Project SHINE is a national service learning initiative that entails students tutoring elderly immigrants in civic education and English in preparation for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization Test. Funding for the program has been provided over the years by the Corporation for National Service, the U. S. Department of Education, and Learn and Serve America.

In Hawai‘i, Project SHINE functions as a partnership between Chaminade University, Kapi‘olani Community College, and the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa (the same three schools coordinating the Palolo Pipeline) and, aside from the coordinator’s position, is almost entirely student-run. Students participating in Project SHINE normally engage in weekly tutoring sessions of two hours per week for a total of ten weeks and may receive credit for their work through classes offering SHINE as a service-learning option. Through this experience, students gain exposure to immigration and immigration law, legal and ethical issues related to culture and ethnicity in Hawai‘i and the U. S., and various aspects of poverty in local communities. While developing their teaching skills, students are also able to facilitate and promote the empowerment of an often marginalized set of immigrants in Hawai‘i.

**(d) No Mo’ Haus**

No Mo’ Haus’ is a project dedicated to helping the homeless in Hawai‘i, with a special focus on children. Student participants often serve as mentors and tutors for children from homeless families at the Next Step Homeless Shelter in the Kaka‘ako

area of Honolulu. This shelter houses up to 200 people, about one-third of whom are children. A large portion of the people using the shelter are recent immigrants, mostly from Micronesian countries.

Students are asked to put in 25 hours of work during a semester, usually in weekly two-hour sessions. Activities normally include helping children with their homework assignments as well as simply spending time playing with them. Students may also be asked to help with serving food or assisting in other useful ways at the shelter. After they have become familiar with the shelter and comfortable with their work there, students with time and enthusiasm are given the chance to create a special program for the residents. These programs might be educational in nature or set up just for fun. Examples of previous programs include a Valentine's Day breakfast event ; Surf to Serve, a weekend surfing activity ; and an English as a second language class offered for older shelter residents. In some cases, students may be granted permission to conduct research at the shelter, though this requires first showing commitment to, and building trust with, shelter residents and staff.

(e) **Local 5**

Local 5 is part of an ongoing collaboration between the Department of Ethnic Studies at UHM and Local 5, a labor union representing over 11,000 hotel, health care, and other service industry workers throughout Hawai'i. The purpose of the program is to "expose students to the issues affecting working families and to...raise awareness and encourage students to become agents of social justice and social change beyond the university" (University of Hawai'i at Manoa College of Social Sciences, n. d.). The program provides opportunities for students to learn about grassroots and union organizing by working with Local 5's community and political organizers and participating in Local 5's Hotel Workers Rising Campaign. Students

may also conduct community-based research as part of their participation in this program.

**(f) Other programs**

Other programs coordinated by the Department of Ethnic Studies at UHM as part of the College of Social Sciences Program for Civic Engagement and Service Learning include :

- Hawai'i Plantation Village : Students work at the Hawai'i Plantation Village, an outdoor museum of Hawaii's multicultural plantation history, assisting in docent training, website development, systematization of historic photos, oral histories, and other documents, and organization of special events.
- Bridging the Digital Divide at Kuhio Park Terrace : Students assist children and adults at the Kuhio Park Terrace housing project in acquiring and/or improving computer literacy skills.
- BIN-I Program : Students assist the Office of Multicultural Student Services at UHM with its tutorial program for immigrant students enrolled in public schools in Honolulu.

As the many examples given above illustrate, member schools of the Hawai'i-Pacific Islands Campus Compact have a clear dedication to civic engagement and the service learning process. Each institution has worked to develop an extensive set of community partnerships and to establish a broad assortment of service learning programs that deepen and enhance the educational experience of their students while addressing local community concerns and historical, cultural, and environmental issues pertinent to the indigenous populations of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

Turning now to the appropriateness of service learning for Japanese students,

the following section will utilize a series of case studies to consider the impact of participation in service learning programs at UHM on study-abroad students from Japan.

## **IV. Service Learning and Study-Abroad Students from Japan**

### **A. Case Studies**

In order to obtain first-hand accounts of the effect of participation in service learning programs on Japanese students studying abroad, interviews were conducted with three such students enrolled at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Although their backgrounds and circumstances varied, all three took courses in the Department of Ethnic Studies that contained service learning components, and as a result they participated in programs run through the College of Social Sciences Program for Civic Engagement and Service Learning, such as the previously described *Malama I Na Ahupua'a*, *Ka Holo Wa'a*, and *SHINE*. The interviews with these three students are summarized below.

#### **1. Momoko**

Momoko, age 20, is from Okayama Prefecture in southwestern Japan. During her high school days, she saw a Japanese movie ('Paradise') that depicted the experience of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i during World War II. The movie also provided Momoko with her first views of Hawaiian hula. This inspired her to want to live and study in Hawai'i someday, as well as to begin taking hula lessons in Okayama. When the time came for her to enter college, she deliberately chose a school, Ryukoku University in Kyoto, that had an exchange agreement with the University of Hawai'i. Momoko majored in Intercultural Communication and continued her hula lessons in Kyoto. As she approached her junior year of studies, she applied for a one-year study abroad program at the University of Hawai'i at

Manoa and was accepted.

Because of her interest in issues pertaining to minority groups, Momoko chose to study in the Ethnic Studies department at UHM. As part of her studies, Momoko took courses on Hawaiian and other Pacific Island cultures. She was not aware, however, that service learning would be an essential component of many of her classes and, in fact, before beginning her studies at UHM she had no idea what service learning was. She eventually participated in several service learning projects, including Malama I Na Ahupua'a and Ka Holo Wa'a. Excerpts from her service learning journal, in which she comments on her experiences, are shown in Appendix 2.

Before coming to Hawai'i, Momoko saw it as a place with nice beaches and good shopping. Her first impression after arriving was of an "urbanized and Westernized" place. Through service learning, however, she says she was able to discover and explore Hawaiian culture in a unique way, and this changed her view of and relationship with Hawai'i entirely. Momoko describes her participation in service learning activities as a "very special opportunity" that she is thankful for having had. She says that through these activities she developed an interest in self-sufficiency, sustainability, and the preservation of traditional culture. Concerning this last point, she says she was especially impressed to see Hawaiian *kupuna* (elders) passing down their cultural knowledge to future generations. Finally, experiencing Hawaiian culture in a deep and personal way made her want to learn more about her own Japanese culture, something she hopes to do after returning to Japan.

After graduating from her university back in Japan, Momoko now plans to become involved in international development work. She also hopes to find a way to help promote traditional Japanese culture. She plans to return to Hawai'i often to continue the relationships she developed through her studies at UHM and,

particularly, through her participation in service learning projects.

## 2. Saki

Saki, age 24, is from Fukuoka Prefecture in southwestern Japan. She began her university studies by attending Seinan University in Fukuoka. While there she studied about Asian Americans in her American history seminar class, and she developed an interest in Japanese Americans in Hawai'i through independent reading. Saki was generally uninspired by her university courses and longed to do something different. She accompanied her family on a trip to Hawai'i, and something resonated with her there. She decided to move to Hawai'i and begin a new phase of her life there.

Saki left her university, came to Hawai'i, and initially joined a language school to improve her English. Though she had no previous volunteer experience in Japan, she began volunteering at the Japanese Cultural Center in Honolulu. Later she enrolled at Kapi'olani Community College and became involved with a program for foreign students called the International Café. She worked closely with one of her teachers who introduced her to various service learning activities available through the school.

After completing her studies at the community college, Saki transferred to the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, majoring at first in Asia-Pacific history and then transferring to Ethnic Studies. Through her involvement in Ethnic Studies courses, she participated in several service learning programs. She was less than satisfied with her experience in SHINE due to what she perceived as a lack of structure in the program and a lack of guidance by the program supervisors. She was especially disappointed by the lack of interaction with other SHINE student participants. Her comments here serve to underscore the importance of proper supervision and guidance in a service learning program, and the necessity of creating ample

opportunities for interaction among student participants.

In contrast to her experience with SHINE, Saki was very impressed by the Malama I Na Ahupua'a program, which she described as being "very fulfilling." She noted that the program was "full of surprises" and opened her mind to a different side of Hawai'i that she didn't know existed. She was able to discover different places and people that she felt she previously did not have access to as a foreign student.

Saki was greatly impressed at the talks given by the leaders at some of the program sites. She particularly recalled a talk at Ulupo Heiau in which a *kupuna* explained the Hawaiian cosmology, including the story of how humans came to be in the islands. These ideas were different from other belief systems she was familiar with because Hawaiians gave great value to plants as part of the evolutionary process and in fact believed that humans evolved from the taro plant, not from another animal, and not as the creation of a god or gods. This spurred her interest in the Hawaiian understanding of and relationship with nature. It also caused her to reflect on the traditional Japanese understanding of nature, which she felt had many similarities with Hawaiian views. For Saki, the concepts of *aloha aina* (love for the land) and *malama aina* (protecting and caring for the land) encapsulated the Hawaiian viewpoint.

Saki made multiple visits to some program sites, deepening her relationship with the people and places on each visit. With her broadened perspective on Hawaiian people, culture, and traditions, she said she began to feel sorry for the Japanese tourists who had "no clue" about the side of Hawai'i she was experiencing. Later her feeling changed to one of gratitude for having had the chance to encounter Hawaii's natural environment and its culture and traditions in a unique way through service learning activities and work on the land. Simultaneously, she furthered her understanding of Hawaiian perspectives through her study of the Hawaiian language,

which she said helped her to more readily comprehend the concepts discussed at each of her service learning sites.

After graduating from the University of Hawai'i, Saki plans to return to Japan to attend graduate school, where she intends to focus on minority issues. She hopes to eventually become a teacher, or perhaps work at a university. When she begins her own teaching career, her hope is to organize service learning and other experiential learning activities for her students. She believes that Japanese students would benefit immeasurably from out-of-classroom, "real life" learning experiences, such as the ones she gained so much from in Hawai'i.

### 3. Makiko

Makiko, age 55, is from Kanagawa Prefecture in the Kanto region of Japan. She holds a BA degree in English literature from Tamagawa University in Tokyo. She began studying hula in Japan at age 47. Her Japanese instructor had studied under a well-known *kumu hula* (master hula teacher) from the island of Maui named Ku'ualoohanui Kaulia. She gradually became interested in Hawaiian culture, and especially the language, because of the many Hawaiian language *oli* (chants) and terms used in hula.

With her husband's encouragement, Makiko came to Hawai'i to learn more about the culture and language. She enrolled at Kapi'olani Community College for two years and then transferred to UHM to become a Hawaiian language major. She will earn her BA in Hawaiian language in the near future.

Makiko's initial exposure to service learning took place at the community college. As a requirement for her botany class, students had the choice of doing research and making a presentation at the end of the term or participating in service learning projects. She chose service learning and, she said, was eventually quite glad that she did. Makiko found the Malama I Na Ahupua'a program to be

particularly rewarding. Though she was only required to do 25 hours of work during the term, she ended up putting in well over 30 because she simply enjoyed the experience. One activity in the program that she found stimulating was working at He'eia Fish Pond. On her first visit she went on a one-hour walking tour of the pond during which she heard about the traditional Hawaiian approach to aquaculture, which she understood to be exceptionally clever. Afterwards, she worked alongside 40 students from various colleges and universities around O'ahu, clearing brush and helping to maintain and rebuild parts of the pond. When the work was finished, she enjoyed sharing lunch and talking with her fellow students. She said that this was an excellent way to begin new relationships and expand her social network in Hawai'i.

Makiko believes that though she learned much about Hawai'i through the study of Hawaiian language and hula, participation in service learning activities significantly strengthened and deepened her knowledge of Hawaiian culture. She said she learned through direct experience how Hawaiians valued and took care of the land and sea, the *kalo* (taro) and the fish. In other words, service learning provided her with an immersion experience in Hawaiian culture which served to expand and fortify her understanding of not only the language, but of the people and their culture. Furthermore, since most of the communication that took place during her service learning activities was in English, she was also able to hone her English language skills in the process.

Makiko explained that she discovered there is an enormous difference between learning about a language, culture, and place through classroom lectures and the understanding gained by experiencing these things directly as she did through service learning. She believes that in order to fully comprehend a language, one must be very familiar with the culture and customs of the people, the natural environment in which they live, and most importantly the people themselves. She felt fortunate to

have been able to learn about all of this through her involvement in service learning projects.

Makiko believes that there are many similarities between Hawaiian and Japanese culture, including the ancient relationship between the people and their many gods, the naming of different types of winds and rains (as she found in hula chants and songs), and the many ways that nature and peoples' relationship with it is interwoven in the traditional way of life. At the same time she realizes that, though she is Japanese, she really does not know her own culture deeply. As such, her service learning experiences have motivated her to make an effort to learn more about Japanese culture, history, and environment upon her return to her country.

## V. Discussion

The preceding sections of this paper have illustrated the pervasiveness of the service learning approach in the educational systems of schools in the Pacific region, as well as the diversity and richness of the programs offered at specific tertiary institutions. The examples given show that successful programs create a strong collaborative bond between faculty, students, and community partners in which all parties become fully engaged in a reciprocally beneficial relationship.

All of the programs described above seek to address the needs of their local communities, while some also promote awareness of indigenous issues, traditions, and values. Of the four schools included in this study, the University of Hawai'i at Manoa placed the most emphasis on raising awareness of indigenous culture and issues of importance to native people in the community. Programs such as Malama I Na Ahupua'a, Kaho'olawe, and the Native Hawaiian Initiative expressly aim to shine a light on traditional Hawaiian culture and values as well as on the pressing contemporary social concerns of the Hawaiian people. Ka Holo Wa'a brings together traditional Native Hawaiian and Micronesian cultural practices in one

project, and by doing so builds and enhances the respect that the two communities have for one another.

American Samoa Community College, at least in one of its past programs, also focused on indigenous culture with its oral history project involving elders in the Samoan community. On the other hand, Guam Community College and Northern Marianas College, both in Micronesia, have not designed programs with Native Chamorro culture at their core. This may reflect the differing statuses of the native peoples and cultures in different parts of the Pacific. The Hawaiian people are now a minority in their own homeland, and their language and culture were repressed for decades after the overthrow of their kingdom until a 'cultural renaissance' began in the 1970s. The Micronesian peoples have had a different history, and perhaps feel less need to reclaim cultural identity. This question lies beyond the scope of this study, but it presents fertile ground for future research.

Regarding the effect of service learning on Japanese students, the interviews with the three study abroad students at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa indicated that numerous benefits resulted from their participation in service learning programs. First, their fieldwork activities provided an opportunity for an immersion experience in another culture, in this case Hawaiian culture. Students were able to obtain direct experience of traditional customs and practices and greater awareness of cultural concepts and spiritual symbolism. As a result, they were able to understand Hawaiian culture in a deeply personal way and access a side of Hawai'i that those visiting as tourists rarely encounter.

These students also began to see similarities between Hawaiian and Japanese culture. This seems to have created in them a desire to learn much more about their own culture and spurred an interest in protecting and preserving their Japanese cultural traditions. One commonality they perceived between Hawaiian and Japanese thought was an appreciation of nature, and they observed the ways in

which a close relationship with nature was interwoven in the traditions of both cultures. This, along with their participation in certain land-based service learning activities, increased their environmental awareness and interest in issues such as food self-sufficiency, organic agriculture, use of non-GMO crops, and environmental sustainability.

Service learning seems to have both reinforced and promoted an interest in minority group issues for the three students, especially with regard to Japanese Americans. While two of the students came to Hawai'i with prior exposure to basic facts concerning Japanese Americans, all became more knowledgeable of and empathetic towards Japanese Americans and other minority groups in Hawai'i after working with them in the context of service learning activities. These experiences have motivated at least one of the students to learn more about minority groups in her own country. Thus, service learning seems to have the potential for helping ethnic Japanese become more cognizant of the non-mainstream groups in Japanese society and the range of issues that these groups face.

Lastly, the students remarked that service learning helped them to see the merits of building strong personal relationships with people of other cultures. Given the normally monocultural nature of interactions in Japanese society, the intercultural experiences provided by service learning were truly a unique opportunity for them and left a lasting impression. These students not only served but worked side by side with people from disparate cultures and walks of life, sometimes developing close relationships with them. This helped them to bolster their English (and, in one case, Hawaiian) language skills, but just as importantly they came to personally recognize the worth of person-to-person intercultural cooperation and understanding. By extension, they also realized the value of community service, as well as international development work. They became proponents of volunteerism as a way of not only helping others but also removing

barriers and building bridges between peoples of diverse origins and backgrounds. It seems very likely that they will seek out further volunteer experiences and continue to cultivate positive intercultural relationships after their return to Japan.

## VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the discussion presented above, some recommendations can be made for constructing service learning programs appropriate to the Japanese context. Beginning with domestic programs, as shown previously a key point is to identify the needs of the community being served and to work closely with community partners in establishing truly useful programs that will thrive by harnessing student support. The needs of specific local communities no doubt differ, but in Japan's aging society programs centered around services for the elderly might prove particularly welcome. Like their Samoan counterparts, many Japanese students have experienced living with a grandparent and would likely feel comfortable working with, and learning from, this population. Programs geared towards work with children would also fall within students' 'comfort zone' and address prevalent community needs.

By contrast, many college-age students have had little chance to interact with members of Japan's diverse minority groups. Service learning programs focused on ethnic Koreans, Chinese, Brazilians, or Filipinos would introduce students to groups within their country with backgrounds and worldviews strikingly different from their own, thus heightening the learning experience involved while increasing the prospect of the formation of new intercultural friendships. Similarly, programs centered on Japan's own indigenous peoples, the Ainu and the Okinawans, would expose students to traditional cultures which, much like that of the Hawaiians, share some traits and values with Japanese culture but are remarkably different, deep, and vibrant in their own ways. In all of these cases, students would learn not only

about the cultures of the people they would work with, but also about the issues that these groups face as non-mainstream members of Japanese society.

Colleges and universities in Japan may also wish to design international service learning programs. Such programs often involve environmentally-based work in rural settings in developing countries, giving students experience in a world quite removed from their normally urban, modernized lifestyles. However, some international programs, particularly those run in conjunction with partner universities overseas, involve the types of community-based projects that students might participate in domestically, albeit in significantly different surroundings. In either case, the impact of participating in service projects in a foreign setting often produces a kind of learning experience that is profound and lasting, and that is impossible to replicate in any classroom. The value of such programs for Japanese students cannot be overstated.

## VI. Conclusion

The present study has shown service learning to be a compelling experience for college-level students, including those from Japan. It has the capacity to transform mundane coursework into a captivating educational experience, bringing a sense of authenticity to academic lessons. Through service learning, students have a chance to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world settings. By participating in community service projects, they are able to bolster their understanding of local and global issues while contributing to the well-being of community members. In the process, they become more informed, engaged, and socially responsible individuals.

Ty Kawika Tengan, a Native Hawaiian, in writing about the political, cultural, and ecological issues now facing Hawai'i and the Pacific, states "With ancestral knowledge as our guide, we will navigate anew the large and small currents of

Oceania” (University of Hawai’i at Manoa Department of Ethnic Studies, 2015). In the same vein, the practice of service learning may reconnect Japanese students with their cultural traditions and, by also shedding light on contemporary issues and concerns, help prepare them to navigate the currents of the Asia-Pacific region in which they reside.

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**Appendix 1: Hawai'i Pacific Islands Campus Compact (HIPICC) Member Institutions and Their Locations**

American Samoa Community College — Pago Pago, Tutuila, American Samoa

Brigham Young University-Hawai'i — Laie, O'ahu, Hawai'i

Chaminade University — Honolulu, O'ahu, Hawai'i

East West Center — Honolulu, O'ahu, Hawai'i

Guam Community College — Barrigada, Guam

Hawaii Community College — Hilo, Hawai'i Island, Hawai'i

Hawaii Pacific University — Honolulu, O'ahu, Hawai'i

Honolulu Community College — Honolulu, O'ahu, Hawai'i

Kapi'olani Community College — Honolulu, O'ahu, Hawai'i

Kaua'i Community College — Lihue, Kaua'i, Hawai'i

Leeward Community College — Pearl City, O'ahu, Hawai'i

Northern Marianas College — Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands

University of Hawaii at Hilo — Hilo, Hawai'i Island, Hawai'i

University of Hawai'i Maui College — Kahului, Maui, Hawai'i

University of Hawaii at Manoa — Honolulu, O'ahu, Hawai'i

University of Hawaii-West Oahu — Kapolei, O'ahu, Hawai'i

Windward Community College — Kaneohe, O'ahu, Hawai'i

## Appendix 2: Momoko's Service Learning Reflection Journal

- Mālama I Nā Ahupua'a

I joined the Mālama I Nā Ahupua'a (MINA) project this semester. In this service learning project, I visited Ho'oulu 'Aina and 'Ulupō Heiau. At Ho'oulu 'Aina, I learned about organic agriculture and helped promote it through participation in community work. Before we started our work, we made a big 'aloha circle' with all the participants, introduced ourselves, and prayed to the land. We worked in a vegetable garden and harvested crops that would be sold at the market. Through working at the organic farm, I met the people who contribute to promoting organic food products and increasing the food self-sufficiency rate in Hawaii.

I learned that one of the big issues in Hawaii is the extremely low food self-sufficiency rate. If more people were to work in the fields growing local products on small farms it would increase the food self-sufficiency rate. Another serious issue I learned about is the large-scale experiment with GMO (genetically modified organism) products that is currently taking place. It is important to have an interest in what we eat in our daily lives in order to promote healthy agricultural practices in Hawaii. We have a responsibility to choose safe products for our bodies and need to be more concerned about food safety as we try to develop local agriculture.

In addition to working at Ho'oulu Aina, I joined the service learning project at 'Ulupō Heiau. Before we began work at the *heiau* (Hawaiian shrine), we made a *kukui* (candlenut) lei with the other participants and dedicate it to the heiau. We used only fallen yellow leaves which we found on the ground, but it was still a very beautiful lei. Using only fallen leaves means that we do not kill any living creatures. After that, we worked on the heiau and cleared away the weeds. The Hawaiian woman who instructed us told us that the heiau is a very sacred place, so we need to leave all of our negative thoughts behind before we enter there, and we

should not think about something bad once we enter, but only positive things such as thankfulness to the land.

The most interesting thing that I learned on that day is the meaning of the name ‘Ulu $p\bar{o}$ .’ *Ulu* means “inspire” or “grow,” and *p\bar{o}* means “beginning” or “darkness”. Therefore, ‘Ulu $p\bar{o}$ ’ means “beginning in darkness,” and implies that a human baby grows inside the darkness of the mother’s womb, just like a seed grows up in the dark ground and sprouts on the earth. It is really interesting for me because it means that both humans and plants come to the earth in a similar way. In my opinion, it also shows us a strong relationship between nature and people. The reason I think that way is that we are what we have from nature. After people die, they are going to return to the soil, and people have food and water from the land on which their ancestors also existed. Therefore, people and nature have a strong relationship, and it teaches us the importance of keeping a good balance with the earth.

- Ka Holo Wa’a

I also worked on the Ka Holo Wa’a service learning project this semester. Through this project, I learned much about the culture and knowledge related to the Hawaiian voyaging *wa’a* (canoe). One of the most impressive experiences I had was when I participated in ‘Imi Na’auao, the ‘*ohana wa’a* (canoe family) crew training on Kauai.

In this program, we worked on building a canoe named Nāmāhoe, which is going to be launched in June, 2015. I learned to tie some sailor’s knots and built one part of the wa’a. Even though it was heavy work, we cooperated and helped each other to build it. It was such a joy to see the part we finished building by ourselves. One of the leaders told us that Nāmāhoe means “twin,” and this wa’a is made up of two parts: the left side is *wahine* (female), and the right is *kāne*

(male). This shows the importance of the balance between kāne and wahine, and that we need to support and respect each other when we voyage. It was a really meaningful experience for me to learn the traditional skills related to the wa'a and to take part in building the Nāmāhoe. I also felt the significance of learning these techniques from people who have had experience in building traditional canoes and sailing them on the open ocean.

On the third day of the program, we went to a place called Hule'ia to help the local NPO organization that is working on removing mangroves there. In this location there used to be a large Hawaiian-style fishpond for aquaculture and a big *lo'i* (taro patch) ; however, these traditional features have not been maintained because invasive mangroves have overgrown the area.

In order to do our work there and clean up the area, we cut back the mangroves and formed a long human line to pass and remove the wood. As a result of others before us taking care of this land, there are some native plants now growing tall. I was so impressed by that because I could see the result of people's effort of *mālama 'āina* (protecting and caring for the land). It may be little by little, but the land is surely getting back to the way it used to be. It was a hot day and hard work, but I personally experienced and felt for the first time what 'mālama 'āina' means.

We worked on building Namahoe again on the last day, and I varnished the underside of the wa'a. Before we left, I humbly gave her leis made of ti leaves, which I made with other members. We all gave offerings in front of her to show our thanks and pray for her. It was a sacred moment, and many of us were even crying. At that moment, I really felt as if she is living and I recognized that she is really one of the 'ohana (family members) who will voyage with the crew members.

On the morning of the day we left, we made our last offerings outside. Before leaving, we made a circle with all the participants and sang a song. While we were

singing, tears ran down from my eyes naturally. I was so thankful to everyone who had shared such a special time with me ; therefore, I was really sad to say goodbye to them. It was only four days, but people were very welcoming, and I could make a very strong relationship with them within such a short time. I think that is a real canoe family, and I learned how great the spirit of welcoming and accepting other people is, which is necessary as a crew member. I appreciated that people shared so much of the Hawaiian culture with me. It was really a meaningful and significant experience to learn Pacific culture and skills related to the voyaging and wa'a from many great persons.

Through my service learning projects, I met many people who are protecting their own culture, and there are many things to learn from them. These experiences made me want to know more about not only Hawaiian culture, but also my own culture back in Japan, and to begin learning these things from our own *kūpuna* (elders). I believe that engaging in community service to meet our needs will create a stronger connection among all the people in the community and will help us to more deeply appreciate and understand our own culture and our relationship with nature.