

NATIVE HAWAIIAN PLACE OF LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2025-2029

A strategic roadmap fulfilling Tactic #1



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII®

LEEWARD

KE KULANUI KAIĀULU O 'ĒWA

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Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Pillar Committee 2025-2029 Implementation Plan

Executive Summary

This implementation plan for a Native Hawaiian Place of Learning directly addresses Tactic #1 of Leeward Community College's 2023-2029 Strategic Plan. Developed by the Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Pillar Committee, the plan offers a framework for deepening connections to the 'āina, benefiting both Hawai'i's Indigenous people and the entire campus community. Following extensive community involvement, including focus groups, online forums, and stakeholder feedback conducted in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, the Committee established four central themes and seven strategic projects, which are aligned with four overarching pillar goals.

Reshaping our Physical Identity

- 'Ōlelo Project Rename campus buildings and spaces with culturally meaningful Hawaiian names to honor local history and integrate the Hawaiian language into campus life.
- 'Āina Project Integrate place-based learning through campus gardens, native plant restoration, and experiential curriculum that fosters environmental stewardship and connection to the land.

Strengthening Relationships

- Ho'olauna Project Create cross-cultural food events, from potlucks to cooking demonstrations—that celebrate Hawaiian cuisine and the diverse cultural heritage of the campus community
- Kaiāulu Project Develop a comprehensive database of Native Hawaiian and O'ahu-centered community partners to strengthen connections between students, faculty, and local organizations.

Deepening Connection to Place

- Wahi Pana Project Provide structured opportunities for students and employees to engage with significant cultural and historical sites in the college's service area.

Fostering Systemic Transformation

- Kānaka Project Enhance hiring processes by developing standardized position qualifications and interview questions that prioritize Native Hawaiian knowledge, cultural competence, and alignment with the institution's mission.
- A'o Project Establishing permanent leadership for professional development programs, expanding culturally relevant courses, and embedding Native Hawaiian values throughout educational experiences.



The project descriptions provide preliminary descriptions, activities, metrics, timelines, and recommended resources for each project. In the next few years, the Committee will continue to work out the details of each project as time and resources permit.

Background and Context

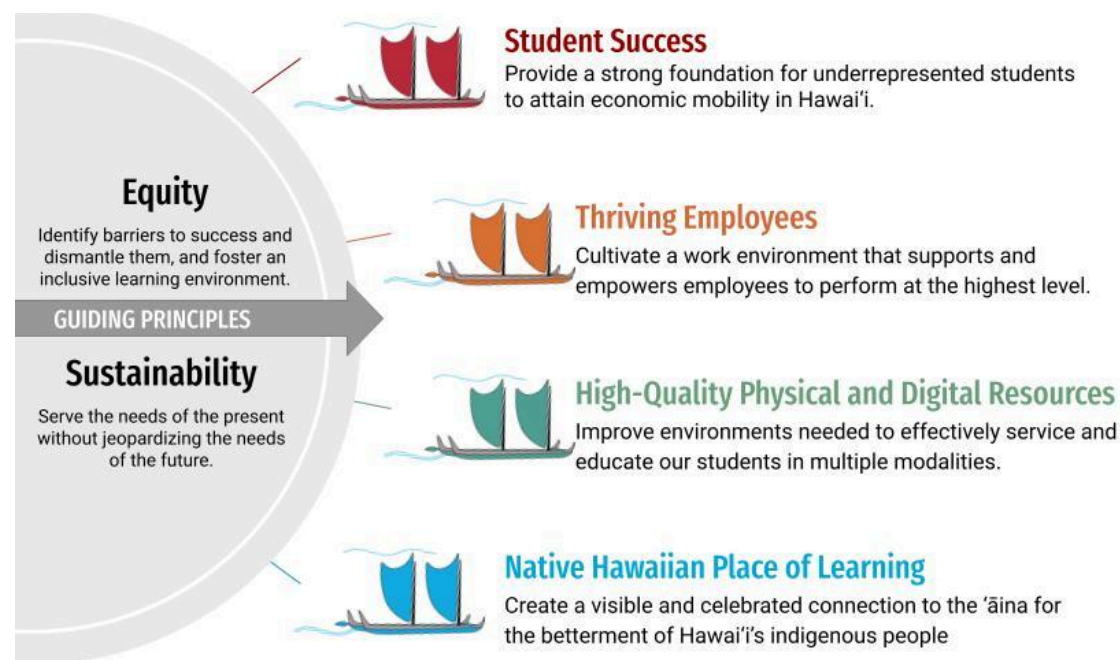
Leeward Community College (Leeward CC) is the largest of the seven University of Hawai'i community colleges, serving the most Native Hawaiian students and the state's largest Native Hawaiian population. In 2012, the College formalized its commitment to becoming a model indigenous-serving institution by incorporating "a special commitment to Native Hawaiians" into its mission statement (Leeward Community College, 2012).

In 2018, the Expanded Leadership Group (ELG) recommended a significant structural reorganization, proposing a new Native Hawaiian Affairs (NHA) unit, led by a Dean of Native Hawaiian Affairs, to consolidate fragmented programs and provide coordinated support for Native Hawaiian initiatives. The College further demonstrated its commitment by translating its vision and mission into Hawaiian and adding a land acknowledgment statement to its website (Leeward Community College, 2022).

Without the proposed structural changes, Native Hawaiian-focused programs remained fragmented, with inconsistent organization, unclear reporting lines, and reliance on overextended grant-funded staff. The COVID-19 pandemic further delayed progress. To address these challenges, Leeward CC adopted a new strategic plan in 2023 with four pillars: Student Success, Thriving Employees, High-Quality Physical and Digital Resources, and Native Hawaiian Place of Learning. Figure 1 illustrates the two guiding principles and four pillars of Leeward CC's strategic plan.

Figure 1

Guiding Principles and Four Pillars of Leeward Community College's Strategic Plan 2023-2029



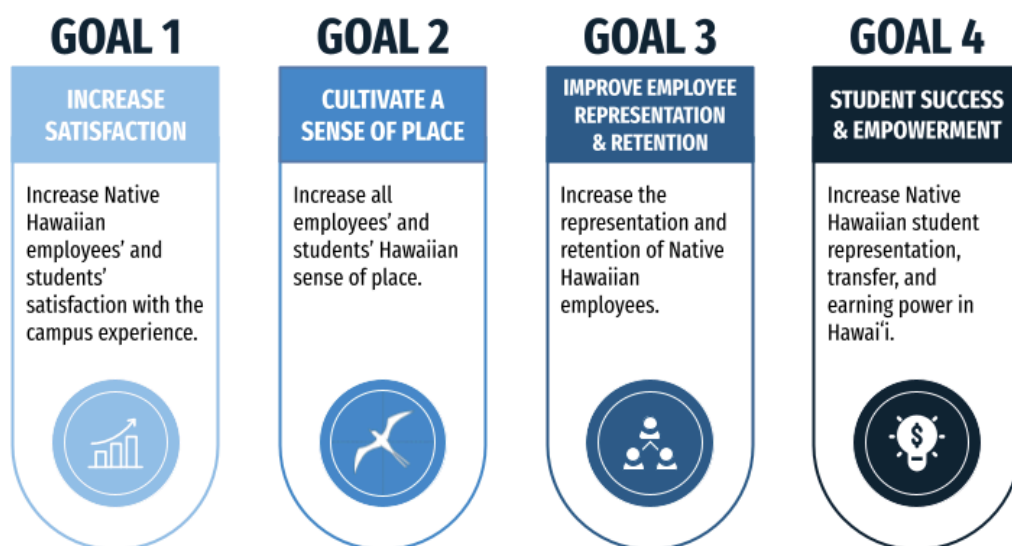
In summer 2025, the College reaffirmed its commitment to the 2018 ELG recommendations by proposing to consolidate Hawaiian Language, Hawaiian Studies, and the Kīpuka Native Hawaiian Center at Pu‘uloa into a new Native Hawaiian Affairs unit under a Dean of Native Hawaiian Affairs. Pending UHCC system approval, this reorganization will operationalize strategic plan goals and provide coordinated support for Native Hawaiian students, employees, and programs.

Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Pillar

The Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Pillar aims to create a visible and celebrated connection to the ‘āina for the benefit of Hawai‘i’s Indigenous people and the entire campus community. Figure 2 illustrates this pillar’s four goals.

Figure 2

Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Pillar Goals



The Committee is also charged with using three main tactics to achieve its goals:

Tactics

1. Create a plan for a Native Hawaiian Place of Learning.
2. Implement practices and programs to increase Native Hawaiian employee representation and retention.
3. Integrate the history, language, and culture of our ‘āina (Waiawa and Lualualei ahupua‘a) into the student and employee experience in order to inform their work.

Members

The Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Committee includes representatives from across the campus community. The table below lists committee members and their respective units or roles at the college.



Table 1

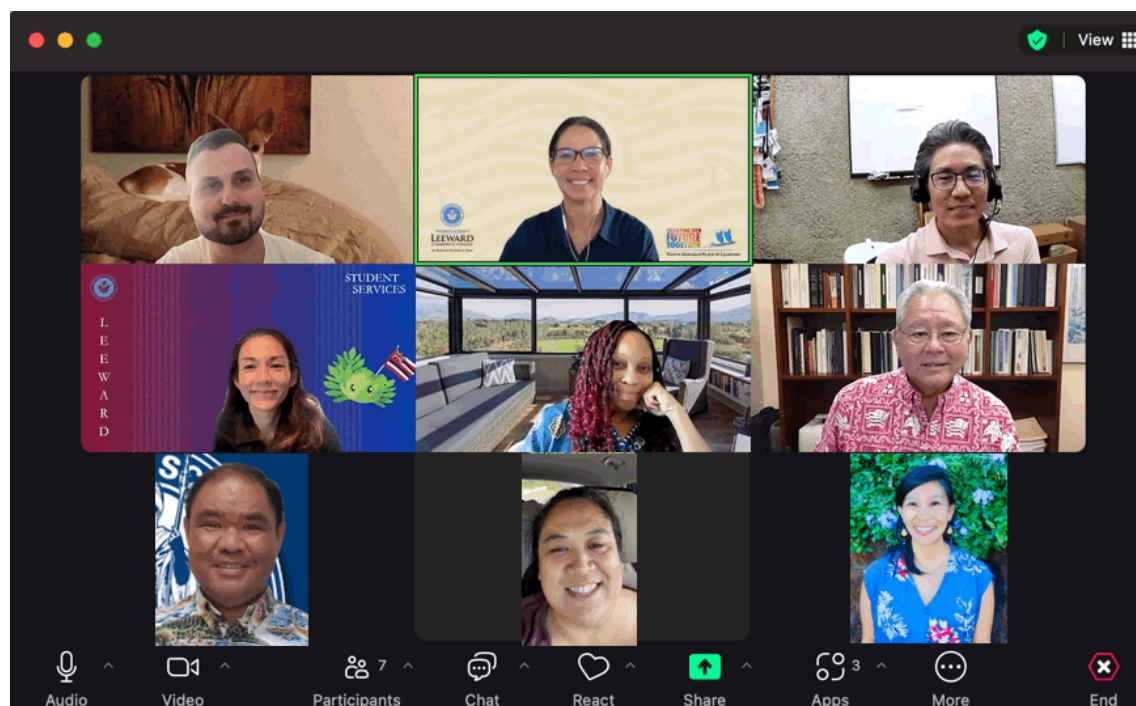
Members of the Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Committee

Member	Unit or Role
Tracie Ku'uiipo Losch (Chair)	Arts & Humanities
William Akama III	Commercial and Aux Enterprise Officer
Cara Chang	Language Arts
Donald Carreira Ching	Language Arts
Genai U'ilani Keli'ikuli	Arts & Humanities
Wayde Oshiro	Academic Services
Syreeta Washington	Student Services
Leilani Yanagi	Student Services
Deja Lei Pacada	ASUH representative (F23-S24)
Kainoa Kaeha	ASUH representative (F 24-S25)
Kealohilani Leopoldo	ASUH representative (F25-S26)

The Committee met regularly in person and via the online platform ZOOM. Below is a screenshot of one of the initial committee meetings.

Figure 3

Screenshot of the Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Committee



Top: Donald Carreira Ching, Tracie Ku'uiipo Losch, Wayde Oshiro

Middle: Leilani Yanagi, Syreeta Washington, Ron Umehira

Bottom: Will Akama, U'ilani Keli'ikuli, Cara Chang

Not pictured: Deja Lei Pacada, Kainoa Kaeha, and Kealohilani Leopoldo



Methodology

At the heart of the Committee’s initial discussions were a set of essential questions that guided our sessions. These included considerations of what characterized a Native Hawaiian place of learning, existing programs aligned with the College’s pillars, methods for measuring progress, and effective ways to gather feedback from employees and students. These conversations shaped the Committee’s guiding vision and mission, emphasizing an academic community where Hawaiian language, values, and practices take center stage, highlighting the need for Native Hawaiian representation, and promoting inclusivity and collaboration among all stakeholders.

Vision	Mission
We envision a vibrant academic community where the Hawaiian language, values, and practices are central, Native Hawaiian representation is honored, and pono guides our collaborative and inclusive environment.	Rooted in Hawai‘i’s unique culture and history, we provide diverse opportunities for all to learn about and engage with the Hawaiian worldview and sustain a strong community presence across all campuses.

In Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, the Committee conducted in-person focus groups, during which we presented the Committee’s vision, mission, and emerging themes to the campus community for discussion and feedback. In addition to in-person forums, the Committee provided multiple avenues for stakeholder engagement, including an online platform (Padlet) and a dedicated website.

Feedback from focus groups and the online platform helped the Committee select projects that align with the pillar goals and previously identified themes. In their decision-making process, the Committee prioritized existing projects with potential for long-term success; assessed demand (the frequency of suggestions or feedback); conducted preliminary asset mapping; outlined preliminary implementation timelines, budgets, and resource requirements; and evaluated the availability (or lack thereof) of data to assess effectiveness.

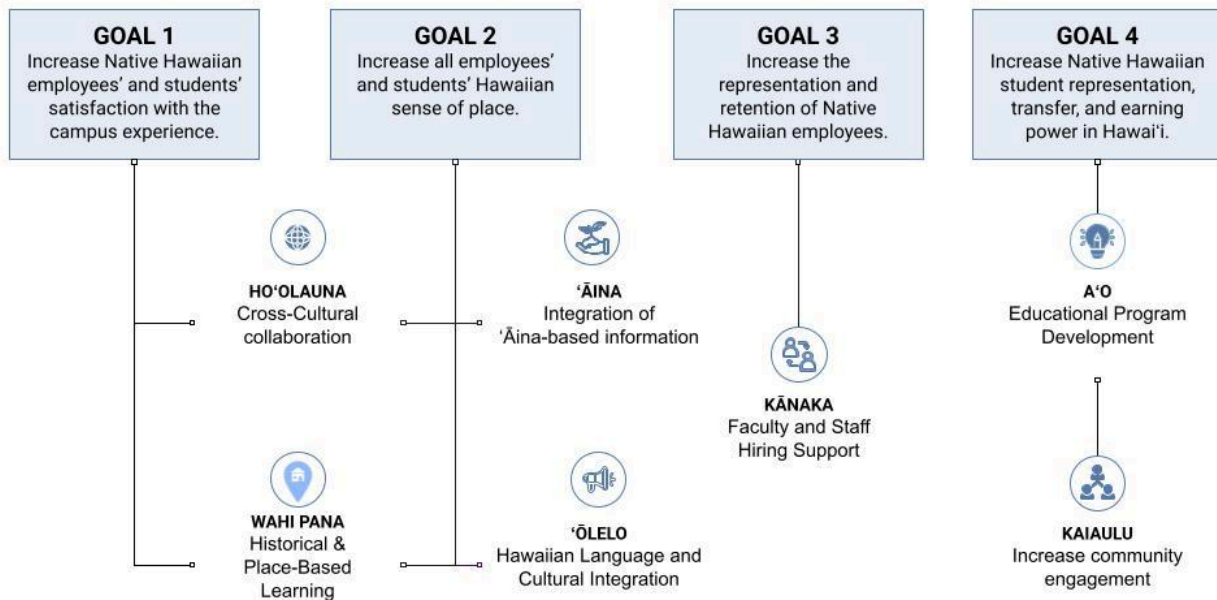
Proposed Strategic Projects

The Committee identified seven projects that align with the pillar goals and previously identified themes. Figure 4 illustrates each project against the pillar goals.



Figure 4

Recommended Projects Aligned With The Native Hawaiian Place Of Learning Pillar Goals.



The seven projects also fall into four themes: (1) Reshaping our Identity, (2) Strengthening Relationships, (3) Deepening our Connection to Place, and (4) Fostering Systemic Transformation. Table 2 shows each project in its corresponding theme.

Table 2

Recommended Projects Grouped Thematically

Theme	Project Title	Project Description
Reshaping our Physical Identity	‘Ōlelo Project	Rename campus buildings and spaces with culturally meaningful Hawaiian names to honor local history and integrate the Hawaiian language into campus life.
	‘Āina Project	Integrate place-based learning through campus gardens, native plant restoration, and experiential curriculum that fosters environmental stewardship and connection to the land.
Strengthening Relationships	Ho‘olauna Project	Create cross-cultural food events, from potlucks to cooking demonstrations—that celebrate Hawaiian cuisine and the diverse cultural heritage of the campus community

	Kaiāulu Project	Develop a comprehensive database of Native Hawaiian and O‘ahu-centered community partners to strengthen connections between students, faculty, and local organizations.
Deepening Connection to Place	Wahi Pana Project	Provide structured opportunities for students and employees to engage with significant cultural and historical sites in the college's service area.
Fostering Systemic Transformation	Kānaka Project	Enhance hiring processes by developing standardized interview questions and position qualifications that prioritize Native Hawaiian knowledge, cultural competence, and alignment with the institution's mission.
	A‘o Project	Indigenize curriculum and campus culture by establishing permanent leadership for professional development programs, expanding culturally relevant courses, and embedding Native Hawaiian values throughout educational experiences.

The following sections provide preliminary descriptions, activities, metrics, timelines, potential stewardship arrangements, and recommended resources for each project. The Committee will continue to work out the details of each project as time and resources permit.

Reshaping our Physical Identity

Goals 1 and 2 support increasing Native Hawaiian employees’ and students’ satisfaction with the campus experience while fostering a stronger Hawaiian sense of place for all employees and students. Five of the seven proposed projects will impact goals 1 and 2.

Table 3

Summary of Projects Aligned with the Reshaping our Physical Identity theme

Project	Key Action(s)	Estimated Timeline	Key Personnel & Resources
‘Ōlelo (perpetuating ‘ōlelo)	Rename campus buildings and spaces with culturally meaningful Hawaiian names to honor local history and integrate the Hawaiian language into campus life.	Multi-year	Funding for 2 leads
‘Āina (our land)	Improve and increase the number and visibility of Native Hawaiian and Polynesian introduced plants on our campuses	Multi-year	Funding for 1 lead and to support gardens



‘Ōlelo Project

Overall goal: Integrate Hawaiian Language and History in Our Campus Environment (Goal #1, 2; Tactic #3)

Primary Activity: Rename campus buildings and spaces with culturally meaningful Hawaiian names to honor local history and integrate the Hawaiian language into campus life.

The ‘Ōlelo Project at Leeward Community College brings Hawaiian language, knowledge, and cultural identity into campus life. This effort grew out of years of campus discussions, focus groups, and planning to honor local history by giving campus buildings and spaces meaningful Hawaiian names. Community feedback shows strong support for these changes, highlighting a shared commitment to keeping Hawaiian culture and values alive on campus.

The project relies on existing committees and administrative support to make the renaming process collaborative and lasting. In this spirit of shared kuleana, administrators, faculty, and students are positioned as co-caretakers of place names, fostering stronger buy-in and commitment to cultural stewardship. Along with renaming, the ‘Ōlelo Project offers educational programs on the Hawaiian language, history, and the meaning behind names. Involving the campus community and working with cultural experts keeps these efforts accurate, relevant, and inclusive, showing Leeward’s dedication to Hawaiian culture.

Objectives

The ‘Ōlelo Project’s goal is to bring Hawaiian language, knowledge, and cultural identity into campus life by giving buildings and spaces meaningful Hawaiian names that honor local history and heritage. When choosing names, the Project will:

- Develop and provide educational resources that promote understanding of the Hawaiian language, history, and the significance of naming.
- Engage the campus community in the renaming process to ensure broad participation and respect for community voices.
- Consult Hawaiian language and cultural experts to ensure cultural accuracy and relevance in naming and educational initiatives.

Key Actions & Activities

Key Actions & Activities lists the main steps the ‘Ōlelo Project will take to achieve its goals and bring Hawaiian language and culture to campus life.

- Collaborate with Hawaiian language experts, cultural practitioners, and the Keone‘ula committee to develop culturally meaningful and accurate Hawaiian names for campus buildings and spaces.
- Develop and implement a transparent renaming process with clear guidelines, timelines, and opportunities for the college community to participate.



- Create and distribute educational resources (e.g., informational materials, workshops, signage, digital content) to explain the significance and history of the new names.
- Integrate Hawaiian language and naming significance into the curriculum and campus events through lectures, displays, and student projects.
- Host campus and college community events to celebrate the unveiling of new names and promote awareness of the Hawaiian language and culture.
- Monitor, evaluate, and document the renaming process to ensure cultural accuracy, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability.
- Provide ongoing professional development for faculty and staff on Hawaiian language, naming practices, and cultural protocols to ensure campus-wide understanding and support.

Alignment

The ‘Ōlelo Project aligns with the following Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Pillar goals and tactics:

- Goal #1: Increase Native Hawaiian employees’ and students’ satisfaction with the campus experience.
- Goal #2: Increase all employees’ and students’ Hawaiian sense of place.
- Tactic 3: Integrate the history, language, and culture of our ‘āina (Waiawa and Lualualei ahupua‘a) into the student and employee experience in order to inform their work.

Stewardship

The Keone‘ula Committee of the College’s Pūko‘a no na ‘Ewa Native Hawaiian Council is guiding initial planning for the ‘ōlelo Project, and its cultural expertise and campus engagement have been invaluable. However, as the project grows in scale, complexity, and resource needs, stewardship should be transferred to the College’s future Dean of the Office of Native Hawaiian Affairs. Assigning responsibility to this new leadership will provide the sustained vision, cross-campus coordination, and institutional support necessary to ensure the project’s long-term success and meaningful impact.

Timeline

This project will take about 4 years and require at least 2 project leads, as well as additional grant funding. The first year will focus on planning, community consultation, and the formation of key committees. The second year will involve more community engagement, the creation of naming proposals, and the development of educational materials. In the third year, the project will carry out the renaming, add new signs, update the curriculum, and hold campus events. The fourth year will focus on reviewing the process, making improvements, and ensuring the project’s long-term success. This timeline is a starting point and may change as the project develops.



Phase 1 (Year 1): Planning & Foundation	● Appoint project leads with stipends and/or TEs to manage the project. ● Establish a clear framework and collaborative partnerships. ● Begin creating educational resources and materials explaining the significance of names and the renaming process. ● Work directly with the Pūko‘a no na ‘Ewa Council and its Keone‘ula committee to establish guidelines for the naming process. ● Work with the Creative Media Center for consistent signage design ● Identify the first cohort of 3-4 buildings to be renamed. ● Plan the presentation of the naming installation
Phase 2 (Years 2-4): Implementation & Community Engagement	For each building cohort, the project leads will ● Facilitate a series of community forums to gather input on potential names. After the names are selected, we will ● Work with the college’s facilities and marketing teams to create and install permanent signage and develop educational materials.
Phase 3 (Ongoing): Integration & Legacy	● The project leads will work with academic and student services units to integrate the new building names and their associated stories into orientation, curriculum, and campus tours.

Resource Requirements

Personnel & Support

- Provide stipends or overloads for a coordinator and a second lead to manage planning and implementation.
- Allocate stipends or honoraria for Hawaiian language experts, cultural practitioners, and committee members supporting the project.
- Professional development funds for faculty and staff training

Operations & Materials

- Funding for the creation and installation of new signage and plaques
- Budget for developing educational content and information campaigns.
- Supply materials for events such as unveiling ceremonies and workshops.

Assessment & Communication

- Tools for gathering community input (surveys, forums, focus groups)
- Marketing and outreach funds to promote awareness and engagement



Assessment & Metrics

We will use a mix of methods to regularly check how well the project is working and its impact during the four years.

- Number of buildings and spaces successfully renamed with culturally meaningful Hawaiian names.
- Level of campus and community participation in focus groups, planning sessions, and related events
- Quantity and quality of educational materials and resources developed (e.g., signage, workshops, curriculum)
- Number of faculty and staff participating in professional development related to the Hawaiian language and culture
- Student, faculty, and community awareness and understanding of the significance of new names (measured through surveys and feedback)
- Evidence of integration of Hawaiian language and cultural knowledge into curriculum and campus programming

‘Āina Project

Overall Goal: Integrate ‘Āina-based information in our natural environment (Goal #1, 2; Tactic #3)

Primary Activity: Improve and increase the number and visibility of Native Hawaiian and Polynesian introduced plants on our campuses

The ‘Āina Project aims to integrate place-based learning, sustainability practices, and Hawaiian environmental elements into college life by fostering stewardship and environmental responsibility among students, faculty, and staff through hands-on activities such as campus gardens, native plant restoration, and experiential curriculum modules, while also increasing the visibility and presence of Native Hawaiian and Polynesian-introduced plants on Leeward CC campuses.

To address this, the project will bring together facilities, faculty, and student groups to design, install, and maintain culturally appropriate gardens as outdoor learning spaces. For example, the Hawaiian Studies program and Kīpuka Native Hawaiian Center, in collaboration with the Shadehouse manager, the Math & Science faculty, and Operations & Maintenance, created gardens to support ‘āina-focused courses, such as HWST 105 and HWST 285. In spring 2025, six raised beds with irrigation were installed next to the DA 101 Ethnobotany lab to invite community engagement.



Objectives

The objectives of the ‘Āina Project outline its main goals and guide its activities and outcomes.

- Integrate place-based learning and Hawaiian environmental values into campus life and curriculum.
- Promote stewardship and environmental responsibility through hands-on activities like campus gardens and native plant restoration.
- Increase the presence of Native Hawaiian and Polynesian plants on campus.
- Encourage sustainable practices across the college community.
- Build partnerships with cultural practitioners and community organizations.

Key Actions & Activities

The following actions outline practical steps to integrate Hawaiian environmental values into campus life, promote hands-on learning and stewardship, and foster meaningful connections between students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community.

- Establish and maintain campus gardens and native plant restoration projects as living learning laboratories.
- Develop and integrate place-based curriculum modules and courses in partnership with Hawaiian studies faculty and community experts.
- Host workshops, volunteer days, and community events focused on sustainability, native ecosystems, and cultural practices connected to ‘āina.
- Develop interpretive signage and educational materials to highlight the significance of Native Hawaiian and Polynesian-introduced plants on campus.
- Create opportunities for student-led research or capstone projects related to ‘āina stewardship and sustainability.

Alignment

This project advances the following goals and tactics of the Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Pillar:

- Goal 1: Increase Native Hawaiian employees’ and students’ satisfaction with the campus experience.
- Goal 2: Increase all employees’ and students’ Hawaiian sense of place
- Tactic 3: Integrate the history, language, and culture of our āina (Waiawa and Lualualei ahupua’a) into the student and employee experience to inform their work.

Stewardship

The Hawaiian Studies Program and Kīpuka Native Hawaiian Affairs have partnered, in consultation with the College’s Shadehouse and Math & Science faculty, to build outdoor learning spaces that support both Hawaiian Studies courses and Kīpuka activities. This collaboration serves as a pilot for future initiatives. Going forward, stewardship of similar projects may be best shared among the pending Office of Native Hawaiian Affairs, the College’s Shadehouse Manager (from the Math & Science Division), and the respective unit requesting a garden space. This shared stewardship model will promote ongoing collaboration, clear accountability, and alignment with both cultural and academic objectives.



Timeline

Year 1	Launch pilot garden and restoration projects, develop initial curriculum modules, and host inaugural events.
Year 2	Expand gardens and curriculum integration, increase community partnerships, and evaluate program impact.
Year 3	Institutionalize successful practices, scale up activities, and secure ongoing funding and resources

Resource Requirements

This section lists the key resources needed to carry out and sustain the ‘Āina Project.

Personnel & Support

- Funding for stipends or overload compensation for at least one person to lead project coordination, maintenance, and event management.
- Professional development funds for faculty and staff.
- Honoraria for Cultural Practitioners/Community Experts.

Operations & Facilities

- Funding for garden supplies, tools, and materials.
- Dedicated spaces or facilities for project activities and storage.
- Budget for interpretive signage and educational materials.
- Communication resources for outreach, event promotion, and community engagement.

Assessment & Metrics

The assessment section explains how the ‘Āina Project’s progress and impact will be measured using clear, relevant metrics.

- Number of students participating in ‘āina-based activities
- Number of courses and programs incorporating place-based learning
- Number of Native Hawaiian and Polynesian-introduced plants established and maintained on campus
- Attendance and participation at workshops, volunteer days, and community events
- Number and impact of community partnerships or cultural practitioners engaged.
- Number of student-led research or capstone projects completed
- Student and faculty feedback on learning outcomes and engagement



Strengthening Relationships

Table 4

Summary of projects aligned with the Strengthening Relationships theme

Project	Key Action(s)	Estimated Timeline	Key Personnel & Resources
Ho'olauna (getting acquainted)	Create cross-cultural food events, from potlucks to cooking demonstrations, that celebrate Hawaiian cuisine and the diverse cultural heritage of the campus community	Event series, semester	1, 2 leads and funding for ingredients and supplies
Kaiāulu (community)	Develop a comprehensive database of Native Hawaiian and O'ahu-centered community partners to strengthen connections between students, faculty, and local organizations.	Single event	Funding for 1 lead

Ho'olauna Project

Overall objective: Cross-cultural collaboration (Goal #1, 2; Tactic #3)

Primary Activity: Create cross-cultural food events, from potlucks to cooking demonstrations, that celebrate Hawaiian cuisine and the diverse cultural heritage of the campus community

The Ho'olauna project aims to create an engaging platform where students and faculty from various cultural backgrounds can learn about Hawaiian foods and share and celebrate their heritage dishes. This initiative would showcase the rich tapestry of our community's cultures and encourage dialogue, understanding, and friendships among participants.

This project can take many forms, from a simple potluck to a "Chopped Leeward" contest. Therefore, we have compiled a variety of actions and activities.

Objectives

- Foster a welcoming and inclusive campus environment for students, faculty, and staff.
- Promote understanding and appreciation of Hawaiian culture, language, and campus traditions.
- Facilitate social connections and community building among students, faculty, and staff.



Key Actions & Activities

The following is a list of possible events, ranging from themed potlucks to campus food festivals, celebrating Hawaiian and campus community foods. The project may offer cooking demonstrations and hands-on workshops led by local chefs, cultural practitioners, and knowledgeable community members. For example, participants might learn to prepare Hawaiian favorites like poi or laulau, Japanese sushi, or Filipino lumpia, gaining insight into the history and traditions behind each dish. Smaller tasting events, such as “A Taste of the Pacific” series, can be held throughout the semester, each highlighting a different culture or theme. These varied event formats ensure ongoing opportunities for learning, celebration, and connection, making food a central and unifying element of campus life.

Alignment

This project aligns with the following pillar goals and tactics.

- Goal #1: Increase Native Hawaiian employees’ and students’ satisfaction with the campus experience.
- Goal #2: Increase all employees’ and students’ Hawaiian sense of place.
- Tactic #3: Integrate the history, language, and culture of our ‘āina (Waiawa and Lualualei ahupua‘a) into the student and employee experience to inform their work.

Stewardship

This project encompasses a variety of activities that differ in type, scope, and availability. As a result, stewardship will range from individual volunteer efforts to coordinated initiatives led by specific units.

Timeline

Since the types and scopes of these events vary, the recommended timelines will vary accordingly. The Committee recommends starting with smaller, simpler events that may eventually lead to a larger, regular (annual) food festival. A timeline to plan for 1 event per semester might look like the following:

- Planning and Partnership Building (Months 1–2): Identify campus and community partners, secure funding, and set event dates.
- Promotion and Recruitment (Month 3): Advertise the event, recruit participants, and finalize menus and activities.
- Event Implementation (Month 4): Host the food festival or main event, including cooking demonstrations, tastings, and educational sessions.
- Feedback and Assessment (Month 5): Collect feedback, evaluate outcomes, and document recipes and stories for future use.

Resource Requirements

Below is a list of recommended resources for this project. Actual resource needs will vary depending on the event.

Personnel & Support

- Stipend or overload for an event coordinator or lead organizer
- Volunteers or student assistants for event setup, coordination, and cleanup



- Cultural advisors or community liaisons
- Guest chefs, cultural practitioners, or speakers

Operations & Materials

- Honoraria or stipends for guest speakers, chefs, and cultural experts
- Budget for food ingredients and supplies
- Kitchen or food preparation facilities
- Tables, chairs, tents, and serving equipment
- Cooking demonstration equipment (stoves, utensils, etc.)
- Audio/visual equipment for presentations or performances
- Marketing and promotional materials (flyers, posters, digital outreach)
- Insurance and permits for food service and public events

Assessment & Communication

- Tools for feedback collection (surveys, comment cards, online forms)
- Documentation resources (photography, videography, recipe collection)
- Communication platforms for organizing and promoting events (email lists, social media, campus website)

Other considerations include ensuring accessibility for participants with dietary needs or disabilities and providing transportation funds for off-campus guests, field trips, or ingredient sourcing.

Assessment & Metrics

This initiative includes a variety of activities, ranging in scope and complexity. However, we can measure the success of the Hawaiian/cross-cultural food-centered events by tracking participation, educational impact, inclusivity, and community engagement.

Participation and Engagement

- Number of attendees at each event (students, faculty, staff, community members)
- Number of cultures or communities represented in the events
- Number of volunteers, student assistants, and campus organizations involved

Educational Impact

- Number of cooking demonstrations, workshops, or educational sessions held
- Pre- and post-event surveys measuring participants' knowledge and appreciation of Hawaiian and other cultures, and what participants learned or valued most

Community and Cultural Partnerships

- Number of collaborations with local chefs, cultural practitioners, and community organizations
- Participant satisfaction ratings for guest speakers, chefs, and cultural presenters
- New or strengthened partnerships resulting from the project

Inclusivity and Accessibility

- Availability of dietary options and accessibility accommodations at events
- Feedback from participants with dietary needs or disabilities regarding their experience

Resource and Event Quality



- Amount and diversity of foods prepared and shared
- Quality and usefulness of educational materials (e.g., recipe collections, handouts)
- Quality of event logistics and organization, as measured by post-event surveys

Impact and Sustainability

- Number of repeat participants or increased attendance at subsequent events
- Requests for similar or expanded programming in the future
- Documentation of recipes, stories, and cultural knowledge for ongoing campus use

Kaiāulu Project

Overall Objective: Increase community engagement (Goal #1, 2; Tactic #2, 3)

Primary Activity: Develop a comprehensive database of Native Hawaiian and O‘ahu-centered community partners to strengthen connections between students, faculty, and local organizations.

Leeward’s students are eager to connect with organizations along their career paths, and instructors want to help them build connections that advance their careers. Leeward CC is fortunate to have several community partners that work with the college and its various programs. However, information about the College’s partners and other community organizations, especially Native Hawaiian and O‘ahu-centered organizations, is not readily available.

The main objective of this project is to consolidate information on Leeward’s community partners, non-profits, and other Native Hawaiian and O‘ahu-centered organizations into a single database accessible to all faculty and staff.

Objectives

- Build stronger community connections by working with local partners, non-profits, and organizations.
- Highlight local culture and build closer relationships between the college and the wider community.

Key Actions & Activities

- Develop a comprehensive database of Native Hawaiian and O‘ahu-centered community partners to strengthen connections between students, faculty, and local organizations.

Alignment

This project aligns with the following pillar goals and tactics.

- Goal #1: Increase Native Hawaiian employees’ and students’ satisfaction with the campus experience.
- Goal #2: Increase all employees’ and students’ Hawaiian sense of place.
- Tactic #2: Implement practices and programs to increase Native Hawaiian employee representation and retention.



- Tactic #3: Integrate the history, language, and culture of our ‘āina (Waiawa and Lualualei ahupua‘a) into the student and employee experience to inform their work.

Stewardship

Stewardship of the Kaiāulu Project should be a collaborative effort led by the pending Office of Native Hawaiian Affairs, in partnership with relevant academic departments and community organizations.

Timeline

Estimated time: 1 year

Semester 1: Database Development & Foundation Building	● Select a project lead and a possible student worker to assist ● Design database structure (fields, categories, search functions) ● Conduct an inventory of existing community partnerships across all college departments and programs ● Contact department chairs and program coordinators to identify current partners
Semester 2: Expansion, Enhancement & Launch	● Develop standardized outreach templates for gathering partner information ● Identify and compile contact information for Hawaiian-serving non-profits and community groups ● Gather feedback from faculty and staff who have contributed partner information ● Revise/update the database platform and address any technical issues

Resource Requirements

Below is a list of recommended resources for this project. Actual resource needs will vary.

Personnel & Support:

- Project coordinator(0.5 FTE for two semesters) to manage database development, research, and community outreach
- Student worker(s) (15-20 hours/week) to assist with data entry, research, and verification of organization information
- Administrative support for coordination with department chairs and program coordinators

Assessment & Metrics

- Creation of a database of existing and potential partners for collaboration.
- Track the number of community partners engaged.



Deepening Connection to Place

Table 5

Summary of projects aligned with the Deepening Connection to Place theme

Project	Key Action(s)	Estimated Timeline	Key Personnel & Resources
Wahi Pana (historical places)	Provide structured opportunities for students and employees to engage with significant cultural and historical sites in the college's service area.	Event series, semester	Funding for 1 lead, transportation, and food.

Wahi Pana Project

Overall Objective: Create opportunities for historical and place-based learning (Goal #1, 2; Tactic #2, 3).

Primary Activity: Provide structured opportunities for students and employees to engage with significant cultural and historical sites in the college's service area.

Leeward Community College serves a community with a rich history, but many students and employees yearn for a meaningful connection to the land's historical and cultural significance. This disconnect can diminish their sense of belonging, appreciation for local heritage, and access to place-based education. The Wahi Pana Project addresses this by connecting students, faculty, and staff with the wahi pana of Waiawa and Lualualei ahupua'a.

Objectives

The Wahi Pana Project has the following objectives:

1. Deepen cultural understanding by offering experiential learning at significant cultural and historical sites in our service area.
2. Strengthen sense of place and belonging by fostering connections between the college community and the 'āina where they live, work, and learn.
3. Integrate place-based education into the college culture by creating ongoing opportunities for engagement with local wahi pana.
4. Honor indigenous knowledge by prioritizing Native Hawaiian perspectives, mo'olelo, and cultural practices in educational programming.



5. Build relationships with cultural practitioners, community organizations, and kūpuna who steward and preserve knowledge of these significant places.

Key Actions & Activities

The project will be implemented through these activities:

1. Site Identification and Partnership Development: Identify key wahi pana within the College's service area (the moku of 'Ewa, Wai'anae, and Waialua) and establish partnerships with cultural practitioners, land stewards, and community organizations who provide access and cultural expertise.
2. Program Design: Develop a schedule of site visits, cultural workshops, and educational experiences for students, faculty, and staff. Create materials that provide historical and cultural context for each site.
3. Cultural protocols, environmental stewardship, and respectful engagement with sacred and significant sites.
4. Facilitated Site Visits: Lead regular excursions to wahi pana, guided by cultural practitioners and kūpuna who share mo'olelo, historical context, and cultural significance.
5. Curriculum Integration Support: Collaborate with faculty to develop resources and strategies for integrating wahi pana experiences into coursework and sharing learning outcomes with the broader campus community.

Alignment

This project directly addresses

- Goal 1: Increase all employees' and students' Hawaiian sense of place by providing the resources to implement
- Tactic 3: Integrate the history, language, and culture of our āina (Waiawa and Lualualei ahupua'a) into the student and employee experience to inform their work.

Stewardship

Stewardship of the Wahi Pana Project may be led by the pending Office of Native Hawaiian Affairs in close collaboration with the Hawaiian Studies Program, and Kīpuka Native Hawaiian Center at Pu'uloa, campus facilities staff, and community cultural practitioners.

Timeline

Months 1-3	Research phase – Identify wahi pana sites, establish community partnerships, and develop cultural protocols.
Months 4-6	Program design – Create visit schedules, develop educational materials, and plan logistics.
Months 7-9	Pilot phase – Conduct initial site visits with small groups, gather feedback, and refine programming.



Months 10-12	Full implementation – Launch regular site visit schedule, integrate with curriculum, and begin ongoing assessment.
Ongoing	Maintain partnerships, update programming based on feedback, and expand participation.

Resource Requirements

Personnel & Support

- Stipend or overload for an event coordinator or lead organizer who would manage partnerships, coordinate logistics, and oversee programming; cultural consultant stipends for practitioners and kūpuna who guide site visits and provide cultural expertise.

Operations & Materials

- Transportation: Van rental or transportation services for site visits to locations
- Educational Materials: Development and printing of site guides, cultural resource materials, and educational handouts; photography and documentation equipment.
- Cultural Protocols: Resources for appropriate offerings, site care and maintenance materials, and supplies for cultural practices.
- Professional Development: Training sessions for faculty and staff on place-based education and cultural protocol.
- Operational Costs: Communication and coordination expenses; liability insurance for off-campus activities; refreshments and supplies for site visits.

Assessment & Communication

- Tools for feedback collection (surveys, comment cards, online forms)
- Documentation resources (photography, videography, recipe collection)
- Communication platforms for organizing and promoting events (email lists, social media, campus website)

Assessment & Metrics

The success of the Wahi Pana Project will be evaluated through the following assessment strategies:

- Participation Metrics: Track the number of students, faculty, and staff participating in site visits and related activities; monitor participation trends across semesters and academic years.
- Sense of Place Assessment: Conduct pre- and post-surveys measuring participants' knowledge of local history and culture, connection to place, and sense of belonging to the college community.
- Learning Outcomes: Assess participants' understanding of wahi pana significance, cultural protocols, and indigenous knowledge through reflection papers, discussion participation, and feedback forms.
- Curriculum Integration: Document the number of courses incorporating wahi pana experiences and track faculty adoption of place-based pedagogies.



- **Qualitative Feedback:** Collect testimonials and stories from participants, cultural practitioners, and community partners to understand the program's deeper impact on individuals and the institution.
- **Long-term Impact:** Conduct annual reviews to assess the program's contribution to institutional goals related to the Hawaiian sense of place and cultural integration.

Foster Systemic Transformation

Table 6

Summary of projects aligned with the Foster Systemic Transformation theme

Project	Key Action(s)	Estimated Timeline	Key Personnel & Resources
Kānaka (people)	Enhance hiring processes by developing standardized position qualifications and interview questions that prioritize Native Hawaiian knowledge, cultural competence, and alignment with the institution's mission.	1-2 semesters	Funding for 2 project leads
A'o (learning)	Establishing permanent leadership for professional development programs, expanding culturally relevant courses, and embedding Native Hawaiian values throughout educational experiences.	Multi-year	Hire a full-time Cultural Curriculum Specialist or similar

Kānaka Project

Overall Objective: Faculty and staff hiring support (Goal #3; Tactic #2).

Primary Activity: Enhance hiring processes by developing standardized position qualifications and interview questions that prioritize Native Hawaiian knowledge, cultural competence, and alignment with the institution's mission.

The Kānaka Project aims to improve Leeward Community College's hiring practices by creating standardized tools and resources for screening committees. These resources will help evaluate candidates by focusing on Native Hawaiian history, issues, and communities, and on their alignment with the college's mission.



By enhancing hiring processes and emphasizing Native Hawaiian knowledge and culture, the project seeks to build a workforce that reflects our community's values and diversity. The standardized tools will give all hiring committees culturally grounded, mission-aligned resources to support fair and effective candidate evaluation.

Objectives

The Kānaka Project aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Standardize cultural competency assessment by developing consistent, equitable tools for all hiring committees to evaluate candidates' understanding of Native Hawaiian history, culture, and issues.
- Strengthen mission alignment by providing resources that help committees identify candidates committed to serving Native Hawaiian students and communities.
- Enhance the hiring committee's effectiveness by providing clear rubrics and evaluation criteria to reduce bias and support evidence-based decisions.
- Integrate Native Hawaiian values into position descriptions by developing adaptable model language and qualifications for various roles and departments.
- Build institutional capacity for culturally responsive hiring by establishing sustainable tools and practices for long-term use.

Key Actions & Activities

The project will be implemented through the following key activities:

- Environmental Scan and Resource Gathering: Review current interview questions, evaluation rubrics, and position description language used at the college and other UH campuses. Identify best practices and gaps in assessing cultural competency.
- Stakeholder Consultation: Consult Hawaiian studies faculty, cultural practitioners, Native Hawaiian staff and faculty, Human Resources, and hiring committee chairs to gather input on key competencies and assessment strategies.
- Interview Question Bank Development: Develop a comprehensive bank of pre-approved interview questions to assess candidates' understanding of Hawaiian issues, cultural competency, commitment to Native Hawaiian communities, and alignment with the mission. Organize questions by competency area and position type. Provide clear criteria for assessing candidate responses and support consistent, equitable evaluation across committee members.
- Position Description Language Development: Draft model qualifications related to Native Hawaiian history, culture, and the Mission for adaptation across faculty, staff, and administrative roles.
- Pilot Testing and Refinement: Test tools with upcoming hiring committees, gather feedback on usability and effectiveness, and refine materials based on results.
- Training and Implementation Support: Create training materials and guidance for hiring committees on effective use of the question bank, rubrics, and position description language.

Alignment

This project directly addresses

- Goal 3: Increase the representation and retention of Native Hawaiian employees.



- Tactic 2: Implement practices and programs to increase Native Hawaiian employee representation and retention.

Stewardship

Members of the NHPoL Committee have initiated conversations with Leeward’s Human Resources office. Future stewardship of the Kanaka Project may be led by the pending Office of Native Hawaiian Affairs, working in partnership with the Hawaiian Studies Program, or student support services.

Timeline

Month 1-2:	Environmental scan - Review existing materials and identify best practices
Month 3-4:	Stakeholder consultation - Gather input from faculty, staff, cultural practitioners, and HR
Month 5-7:	Tool development - Create interview question bank, rubrics, and position description language
Month 8-9:	Review and refinement - Seek feedback from stakeholders and revise materials
Month 10-11:	Pilot testing - Implement tools with select hiring committees and gather feedback
Month 12:	Finalization and launch - Complete final revisions, develop training materials, and prepare for campus-wide implementation

Note: The timeline may be adjusted based on the evolving higher education landscape and institutional priorities.

Resources Requirements

Personnel & Support

- Stipend or overload for two project leads responsible for coordinating activities, gathering materials, and developing resources.

Operations & Materials

- Design and produce question banks, rubrics, training guides, and position description templates.
- Secure web hosting or platform access for the digital resource repository.

Assessment & Metrics

The success of the Kānaka Project will be evaluated through the following assessment strategies:



- **Tool Adoption and Usage:** Track the number of hiring committees using the interview question bank, rubrics, and position description language; monitor adoption rates across different departments and position types.
- **Hiring Committee Feedback:** Conduct surveys and focus groups with committee members who use the tools to assess usability, effectiveness, and impact on the hiring process.
- **Position Description Integration:** Monitor the number of position descriptions that incorporate the model language and desirable qualifications related to Native Hawaiian knowledge and culture.
- **Workforce Diversity and Cultural Competency:** Track long-term trends in the cultural competency and diversity of new hires, recognizing that this project is one component of broader institutional efforts.
- **Tool Refinement and Improvement:** Collect ongoing feedback to identify areas for improvement and update materials to reflect evolving institutional needs and best practices.
- **Institutional Impact:** Assess the project's contribution to creating a workforce that reflects and serves the Native Hawaiian community through annual reviews and alignment with strategic goals.

A'o Project

Overall Objective: Integrate Native Hawaiian culture, values, and history throughout Leeward Community College's curriculum and campus environment (Goal #4; Tactic #3).

Primary Activity: Establishing permanent leadership for professional development programs, expanding culturally relevant courses, and embedding Native Hawaiian values throughout educational experiences.

The A'o Project seeks to indigenize curriculum and campus culture at Leeward Community College by expanding culturally relevant courses, programs, and professional development for faculty and staff. Since 2020, three major initiatives have shown that the College fully supports expanding culturally relevant courses, programs, activities, and professional development for faculty, staff, and students. The Kawaimanomo professional development program, launched in 2020, has empowered 82 employees to deepen their understanding of Hawaiian culture and inspire related projects. In 2024, it was honored at the Annual Community College Futures Assembly, confirming our advancement toward greater inclusion and Native Hawaiian values.

A five-year, \$2.5 million federal grant, "He Loa Ke Aho," launched in 2021, aims to increase Native Hawaiian student success at Leeward Community College by institutionalizing culturally relevant practices, expanding support services, and embedding Native Hawaiian values and perspectives throughout the curriculum and campus life. For example, in fall 2025, Leeward launched a new course, IS 116: Principles of Hawaiian Enrichment, designed to immerse students in indigenous Hawaiian values, including spirituality, genealogy, leadership, and sense of place. Students will be challenged to reflect on their responsibility as stewards of Hawai'i. This course establishes Native Hawaiian knowledge as integral to education.

The Kawaimanomo program has clearly demonstrated its success, but relying on a one-person department and volunteer instructors jeopardizes its future. Likewise, the He Loa Ke Aho grant has underscored the power of dedicated personnel to transform campus culture, yet its conclusion in 2026 threatens to stall momentum. Establishing a permanent, full-time leadership position is not merely preferable; it is essential to safeguard and



advance these gains. Only by investing in lasting leadership and support can Leeward ensure that Native Hawaiian heritage remains at the core of our mission, driving true indigenization and guaranteeing a sense of belonging for all students.

Objectives

Advance the indigenization of curriculum and campus culture by:

- Enhancing faculty and staff understanding of Hawaiian culture.
- Promoting Native Hawaiian student success and sense of belonging.

Key Actions & Activities

- Create a permanent, full-time curriculum specialist position.

To ensure Leeward Community College leads with integrity and vision, establish a permanent, full-time specialist position to champion the integration of Hawaiian history, language, and culture. This position will be a catalyst—mentoring faculty, guiding staff, and driving the creation of culturally enriched educational materials. Provide robust incentives and equitable workload adjustments for faculty contributing to new courses and mentorship. Prioritize stipends and fair compensation funded by grants or external support, sending a strong signal of institutional commitment. These actions are imperative not only to achieve workload fairness but also to secure broad faculty senate and community support for these transformative initiatives.

Alignment

This project advances the following goals and tactics of the Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Pillar:

- Goal 1: Increase Native Hawaiian employees’ and students’ satisfaction with the campus experience.
- Goal 2: Increase all employees’ and students’ Hawaiian sense of place.
- Tactic 3: Integrate the history, language, and culture of our ‘āina (Waiawa and Lualualei ahupua‘a) into the student and employee experience in order to inform their work.

Stewardship

The Innovation Center for Teaching and Learning (ICTL) has submitted a request for a curriculum specialist through the College’s institutional priorities process. If approved, ICTL may assume stewardship of the project.

Timeline

The timeline below details objectives and activities for each year from 2025 to 2029 to ensure a clear, gradual, and sustainable rollout of initiatives.

Year 1: Foundation and Launch	● Hire a full-time Cultural Curriculum Specialist and assemble a support team. ● Review and update project goals and strategies with stakeholders and existing programs. ● Establish assessment tools and baseline data.
Year 2: Program Expansion and	● Increase faculty and staff participation in professional development. ● Launch new or revised courses across additional disciplines. ● Host cultural events, workshops, and community partnership activities.



Community Engagement	● Gather and analyze initial feedback and outcomes data.
Year 3: Institutionalization and Evaluation	● Institutionalize successful practices and integrate them into college policies. ● Continue professional development and course offerings at scale. ● Refine programs based on assessment and feedback. ● Expand outreach to students and community partners.
Year 4: Sustainability and Growth	● Evaluate long-term impact and overall project outcomes. ● Secure ongoing funding and resources for continued efforts. ● Develop a sustainability plan to maintain and grow initiatives. ● Share results and best practices with the broader campus and community.

Assessment & Metrics

The following metrics will measure progress toward the project's objectives, demonstrate its value to the college community, and guide ongoing improvements. By tracking indicators related to participation, course development, student outcomes, and community engagement, the project ensures accountability and secures its long-term sustainability.

- Hire a 1.0 FTE Cultural Curriculum Specialist or similar position.
- Increase the number of employees completing professional development.
- Increase the number of culturally relevant courses/programs/activities offered.
- Student and faculty feedback on cultural integration and belonging.
- Increase the retention and success rates of Native Hawaiian students and employees.

Resource Requirements

Personnel & Support

- Full-time Cultural Curriculum Specialist or similar position.
- Administrative support staff to assist with program logistics, outreach, and event coordination.

Operations & Facilities

- Professional development funds for faculty and staff to participate in external workshops, conferences, or cultural immersion experiences.
- Budget for guest speakers, cultural practitioners, and community partnerships to enrich program offerings.
- Materials and supplies for workshops, trainings, and cultural activities.
- Dedicated physical space for meetings, workshops, and cultural events.
- Marketing and communication resources to promote the project and engage the broader campus community.



Institutionalization and Accountability

To ensure the long-term sustainability, consistency, and effectiveness of the Native Hawaiian Place of Learning (NHPoL) Plan, the College must intentionally institutionalize this work beyond time-limited committees, volunteer leadership, or individual champions. The following mechanisms are recommended to embed the NHPoL Plan into the College's core structures, decision-making processes, and culture:

- **Formal Adoption and Alignment**

The NHPoL Plan should be formally recognized as an implementation document of the College's Strategic Plan and made publicly visible alongside the Strategic Plan on the College website.

- **Designated Stewardship**

A stable, standing campus entity (e.g., the pending Office of Native Hawaiian Affairs, or equivalent) should be formally designated as the steward of the NHPoL Plan, with responsibility for oversight, coordination, and continuity. This stewardship role should be reflected in the entity's charter or bylaws.

- **Integration into Planning, Budget, and Reporting Cycles**

College units should be encouraged, or required, to reference the NHPoL Plan in program reviews, annual plans, and budget requests, as relevant, demonstrating alignment with NHPoL goals and strategies.

- **Grant Alignment and Sustainability**

Grants and externally funded initiatives that serve Native Hawaiian students, employees, or communities should reference the NHPoL Plan and identify how proposed activities advance its goals and will be sustained beyond the grant period.

- **Cross-Governance Integration**

Other campus governance groups and pillar committees should reference the NHPoL Plan when developing initiatives related to curriculum, hiring, facilities, student success, and community engagement.

- **Assessment and Transparency**

Progress on NHPoL goals and projects should be periodically assessed and shared with the campus community to promote accountability, learning, and continuous improvement.

