

Fall 2008

Comments by the Executive Director on The Kohala Center's Initiatives in Research and Education

If you have subscribed to our electronic newsletter, you probably have witnessed The Kohala Center become more and more effective in its ability to serve island communities and island environments and in its ability to produce knowledge that will be of value to the world. We have begun to see our early efforts to address issues of local and global concern mature:

- In 2002 The Kohala Center held an Energy Roundtable that brought island experts and leaders together with nationally-recognized energy specialists. The Roundtable seeded a conversation that ultimately led to significant legislation that Governor Linda Lingle signed in 2006. This legislation outlines a comprehensive energy policy package and has the potential to transform Hawai'i—the most oil-dependent state in the nation and the one with the highest energy costs—into a state that will lead the nation with low-cost, sustainable, locally-produced, and secure energy. In 2007 our work to address the global and local energy crisis continued with the presentation of the County of Hawai'i Energy Sustainability Plan, which was developed in collaboration with the County of Hawai'i and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Visionary yet practical, one of the results of the study shows that the increase in fossil fuel consumption between 2007 and 2030 could be eliminated through efficiency measures alone. If renewable energy were more fully deployed, consumption of fossil fuel between 2007 and 2030 would actually be reduced.
- Our ability to attract the world's finest minds to work with island expertise is based on the island itself. Given its vast array of ecosystems, Hawai'i Island is a microcosm of the planet. The challenges to the island's environment mirror global challenges. Furthermore, the relatively closed system of island boundaries and the scale of the island allow us, scientists and lay members of the community, to develop solutions for the island that also serve as models of success for the world. In the last year, we added to the value of our island as a source of global solutions by working with the Redlands Institute to begin developing a unified Geographic Information System (GIS) infrastructure that will integrate Western scientific data with Hawaiian scientific and cultural data on an *ahupua'a* by *ahupua'a* basis. Information will be organized and made available to scholars and community planners to enhance Hawai'i Island's value as a model *of* and *for* the world. We are especially grateful to our colleagues at the Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation and the Hawaiian Studies faculty at Hawai'i Community College for their expert guidance in this project. When this project is completed, the value of the Island of Hawai'i as the world's most vibrant research and learning laboratory, a source of life-enhancing knowledge, will be unparalleled. The National Endowment for the Humanities supported initial planning efforts for this project.
- Since much of what we do develops the science and education sectors of island society, we are committed to enhancing the leadership potential among scholars from our root culture. With the

support of the Kamehameha Schools and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Kohala Center launched the Mellon-Hawai'i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program this fall. The Mellon-Hawai'i Fellowship program is designed to support gifted Native Hawaiian intellectuals as they move into important leadership positions in the academy.

- In the arena of science and environmental education, our very special relationship with the Kohala Elementary School continues to grow deeper and stronger. With the support of our Circle of Friends, we now serve all second, third, fourth and fifth grade students with an innovative instructional program that integrates both art and science in (a) ocean studies for 2nd graders, (b) forest ecology for 3rd graders, (d) astronomy for 4th graders, and (e) earth sciences for 5th graders. As a result, science is now among the most popular subjects in this school. For 1st graders, we are creating a program that will be implemented this fall. Also forthcoming: with the completion of a new science resource room, students and parents can look forward to special after school activities that make science and mathematics fun for the entire family.
- Our special summer science experiences for Hawai'i Island high school students continue to thrive. And, thanks to the support of our Circle of Friends, deserving young scholars from Hawai'i Island high schools receive academic scholarships to attend environmental science and engineering programs at both Brown University and Cornell University over the summer.
- Finally, we are in active conversation with teacher-leaders to develop programs that will boost science and mathematic achievement for students in ways that reach an entire Department of Education Complex.

These are just a few examples of our initiatives in research and education. And, while there is so much more to tell you, I'm afraid that I've gone on much too long. So, to stay current with our work—if you haven't done so already—please subscribe to our free newsletter. Or, if you find yourself in Waimea, stop by our offices. We are located in the historic Lindsey House, right behind the High Country Traders' Building, which is almost directly across from the Hawaiian Style Café on Kawaihae Road. Come on over! We would be delighted to tell you about our work in person.

With my warmest aloha and sincere thanks for your interest in our work,

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www.kohalacenter.org

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