

For Immediate Release

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Native Hawaiian scholars selected for 2015–2016 Mellon-Hawai‘i fellowships *Program supports emerging intellectual leaders from Hawai‘i*

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—November 10, 2015—Three Native Hawaiian scholars have been selected as 2015–2016 Mellon-Hawai‘i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows to pursue original research and advance their academic careers.

The [Mellon-Hawai‘i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program](#), now in its eighth year, recognizes and supports the work of Native Hawaiian academics early in their careers, and others who are committed to the advancement of knowledge about the Hawaiian natural and cultural environment, Hawaiian history, politics, and society. The program provides a stipend and mentoring to enable doctoral fellows to complete their dissertations before accepting their first academic posts, and postdoctoral fellows the opportunity to publish original research early in their academic careers. This year's cohort is pursuing research that focuses on a unique combination of Hawaiian science, community and culture.

The 2015–2016 Mellon-Hawai‘i Fellows and Mentors are:

- Doctoral Fellow **Kahikina de Silva**, Ph.D. candidate in the political science program at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. De Silva’s dissertation examines the relationship between mele (songs) of Hawai‘i and aloha ‘āina, drawing attention to their decolonizing and resurgent capacities. Her mentor is Noenoe K. Silva, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.
- Doctoral Fellow **Natalie Kurashima**, Ph.D. candidate in the botany program at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Kurashima’s research focuses on the restoration of traditional Hawaiian food systems and landscapes as a tool for biodiversity conservation, cultural perpetuation, and resilience against climate change. Her mentor is Tamara Ticktin, Ph.D., Professor of Botany, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.
- Postdoctoral Fellow **Dr. Mehana Vaughan**, Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies (2013), Stanford University. Vaughan’s book examines the collaboration between local community and government to restore sustaining relationships with ‘āina. Her mentor is Louise Fortmann, Ph.D., Professor of the Graduate School and Professor Emerita,

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Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, University of California Berkeley.

“For eight years now the scholars accepted to the Mellon-Hawai‘i Fellowship Program have addressed contemporary issues from a Hawaiian perspective and advanced Hawaiian culture and practices in academia, government, and the private sector,” said Dr. Kamanamaikalani Beamer, The Kohala Center’s president and CEO. “While the three scholars in this year’s cohort are focused on very different topics, what’s interesting about their work is that it all united by the values of aloha ‘āina, or love of the land.” Beamer himself was a postdoctoral fellow in the program’s inaugural cohort in 2008–2009 while an adjunct assistant professor at the UH Mānoa.

A distinguished panel of senior scholars and kūpuna (esteemed elders) assisted The Kohala Center in selecting this year’s cohort:

- Panel Chair, Robert Lindsey, Jr., member, Board of Directors, The Kohala Center; and Trustee, Office of Hawaiian Affairs
- Panel Executive Advisor, Dr. Shawn Kana‘iaupuni, director, Public Education Support Division, Kamehameha Schools
- Dr. Dennis Gonsalves, former executive director, Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center; and Professor Emeritus, Cornell University
- Dr. Pualani Kanahale, distinguished professor, Hawai‘i Community College and member, Board of Directors, the Edith Kanaka‘ole Foundation
- Dr. James Kauahikaua, scientist-in-charge, U.S. Geological Survey Hawaiian Volcano Observatory

[The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) and [The Kohala Center](#), with the support of [Kamehameha Schools](#), established the fellowship program in 2008. Additional support is provided this year by the Deviants from the Norm Fund and Dr. Paul and Elizabeth Nakayama. The Kohala Center administers the program from its headquarters in Waimea on Hawai‘i Island. Since its inception, the fellowship program has awarded thirty-two fellowships totaling \$1.3 million.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2016-2017 Mellon-Hawai‘i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. Application materials and more information about the program are available online at MellonHawaii.org or by calling The Kohala Center at (808) 887-6411. The deadline to apply is February 29, 2016.

About The Kohala Center

Founded in the year 2000, The Kohala Center (kohalacenter.org) is an independent, community-based center for research, conservation, and education. We turn research and ancestral knowledge into action, so that communities in Hawai‘i and around the world can thrive—ecologically, economically, culturally, and socially.

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2015-2016 Mellon-Hawai‘i Fellows 2015-2016 (from left) Kahikina de Silva, Natalie Kurashima, and Mehana Vaughan. Photo courtesy of The Kohala Center.

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