

HEALTH

MAULI OLA

To improve the quality and longevity of life, Native Hawaiians will enjoy healthy life-styles and experience reduced onset of chronic diseases.

Ola Hou I Ka Hula – Return to health through hula

By Aukahi Austin Seabury, Ph.D.

As a mother, teacher, and kumu hula, Tatiana Tseu Fox and her ‘ohana have been cultural practitioners serving the lāhui for many years. As a kupa of Honouliuli in ‘Ewa on O‘ahu, she feels a strong connection to her ‘āina and community. When she was asked to join I Ola Lāhui in a program to help Native Hawaiians with high blood pressure in ‘Ewa through hula, she immediately agreed. “When you hear the kāhea, you respond.”

She joins a group of kumu kula led by Kumu Hula Māpuana de Silva, along with physicians, researchers from the Department of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine and community organizations, who are working together to study how hula can improve heart health. Over the past nine years, this team has found remarkable success in helping individuals with heart problems heal and stay on a healthy path. Now, the team is focusing on prevention of heart problems with hula. “It starts with you coming to that first class. You learn more about your body – how to move it, how to keep it healthy. You start with familiar mele and hula as something to build upon. We’ve all been exposed to hula, whether it’s May Day or Merrie Monarch.



Tatiana Fox and Māpuana De Silva. - Photo: Courtesy

Hula and the mo‘olelo you learn help you get to that place where you are pono, in balance physically, emotionally, spiritually and socially.”

To extend its reach, the program is offered in different communities including ‘Ewa, Honolulu, Papakōlea, Waimānalo, Wailuku and even Seattle. In each of those places, Native Hawaiian men and women who participate get healthier, feel better, and make another step forward in improving the vibrancy of our people.

“Ola Hou I Ka Hula gives people with health challenges the chance to do something different for themselves that they can do for the rest of their lives,” says Kalehua Tolentino, the teacher for Honolulu classes. “The program looks at the individual’s well-being, not just their health problems, and that’s exciting.” Having been a hula dancer for most of her life, she has experienced firsthand the impact hula can have on health. She has brought her knowledge of health care and her training, experience and love of hula to her work with the study team for the past five years. “By bridging science and culture together, we can help make positive change happen and share the benefits of our cultural practice with the community.”

If you are Native Hawaiian, have high blood pressure and are interested in participating in the program, contact (808) 525-6234 or via email at info@iolalahui.org. We are now enrolling for both our ‘Ewa and Honolulu locations. The first class in ‘Ewa near the Queen’s Medical Center–West O‘ahu begins Tuesday, Sept. 13. Our next round of Honolulu classes begins in January. You can also contact Tricia Mabellos at the Department of Native Hawaiian Health at tusagawa@hawaii.edu or (808) 692-1043 for more information or if you are interested in classes at other locations. ■

Mellon-Hawai‘i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows announced

Program fosters development of Native Hawaiian intellectual leadership

News release submitted by Liam Cornell

The Kohala Center has selected three Native Hawaiian scholars for the ninth cohort of its Mellon-Hawai‘i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship program. The fellows join 32 Native Hawaiian scholars who have pursued original research and advanced their academic careers through the program.

The Kohala Center, an independent, community-focused nonprofit organization based on Hawai‘i Island, launched the Mellon Hawai‘i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program in 2008 with support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Kamehameha Schools and the Deviants of the Norm Fund.

The program recognizes and supports the work of Native Hawaiian academics early in their careers,



The 2016–2017 cohort of Mellon-Hawai‘i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows. From left to right: Dr. Kiana Frank, No‘eau Peralto, Kealoha Fox. - Photo: Courtesy The Kohala Center

and others who are committed to the advancement of knowledge about the Hawaiian natural and cultural environment, as well as Hawaiian history, politics and society. Fellowships provide stipends and mentoring to enable doctoral fellows to complete their dissertations before accepting their first academic posts, and to afford postdoctoral fellows the opportunity to publish original research early in

their academic careers.

The research topics being pursued by this year’s fellows, while diverse, all focus on supporting the health and well-being of Hawai‘i’s modern-day communities by examining and harnessing ancestral knowledge and practices. This cohort marks the first time fellows have been selected from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the John A. Burns School of Medicine.

Kealoha Fox is pursuing a Ph.D. in clinical research at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UH Mānoa). Her dissertation investigates uplifting health in Native Hawaiian communities by reconnecting with the traditional Hawaiian health system and revitalizing ancestral assessment, diagnostic, and treatment practices. Her mentor is Dr. Kamana‘opono Crabbe, Ka Pouhana (CEO) of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. In addition to her scholarly work, Fox is OHA’s executive manager to the CEO.

Fox’s research is inspired in large part by her family and a genuine desire to contribute to positive health outcomes for Hawai‘i’s people. “When

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I look at my son, I am constantly reminded that the next generation of Native Hawaiians deserves improved health strategies that command positive systemic shifts and reinvest well-being back into our 'ohana (families) and kaiāulu (communities)," she said. "By tracing our traditional practices of medicine and creating a comprehensive resource inventory, my research seeks to rebuild Hawaiian assessment and diagnostic processes that are largely absent from contemporary health-care delivery."

No'eau Peralto is a Ph.D. candidate in the indigenous politics program in the department of political science at UH Mānoa. A resident of Pa'auilo, Hāmākua, Hawai'i Island, Peralto's research focuses on the continuity and resurgence of Native Hawaiian 'āina (land) restoration and stewardship practices in two ahupua'a (ancestral

land divisions) in Hawai'i Island's Hāmākua District. Through his research, Peralto seeks to contribute to deeper understandings of indigenous, place-based land tenure practices and governance structures as models of ea – community resurgence and independence. His mentor is Dr. Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, herself a Mellon-Hawai'i doctoral fellow in 2010-2011 and associate professor of political science at UH Mānoa.

"My work is inspired by my kuleana (responsibilities) to my 'ohana, my community, and my kulāiwi (homelands)," Peralto said. "One of those kuleana is the telling of our mo'olelo (stories). Mo'olelo give birth to our values, beliefs, and practices, so it is important that we tell our mo'olelo of truth in ways that empower our people." Peralto hopes to fill significant gaps in the historical records of Hāmākua and Hawai'i by re-telling past and present mo'olelo of those who mālama 'āina (care for the land) and aloha 'āina (love the land) in the region, and evaluat-

ing how these accounts and efforts contribute to the resurgence of place-based mālama 'āina systems and the enactment of sustainable self-determination in Hawai'i.

Dr. Kiana Frank received her Ph.D. in molecular cell biology from Harvard University in 2013. Her postdoctoral fellowship will enable her to focus on manuscripts exploring the intersection of ancestral and contemporary science by investigating the biogeochemical drivers of microbial processes in Windward O'ahu's He'eia Fishpond and correlating them to the pond's cultural history and management practices. Frank is being mentored by Dr. Davianna McGregor, professor of ethnic studies at UH Mānoa.

"I study microbes in our 'āina – who they are, what they are doing, and their importance in traditional management – to enhance the productivity, sustainability, and resilience of Hawai'i's aquacultural and agricultural resources," Frank said. "I believe that science is an important tool in our community,

not only to drive data-based policy, but to advance our understanding of our place and how we fit into that place. It is important to recognize that science is not separate from our culture and our identity, but rather that science is a strength of our indigenous culture." Frank hopes that her work will help inspire a shift in how science is perceived in both indigenous and scientific communities by demonstrating how place-based knowledge and traditional management practices can complement and enhance contemporary technology and scientific knowledge systems.

Since its inception, the Mellon-Hawai'i Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program has awarded \$1.48 million in fellowship support to 35 Native Hawaiian scholars. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which initially agreed to underwrite the program for three years, extended its support for two additional three-year periods. The 2016–2017 cohort represents the final year of The Foundation's support.

"The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's investment in this fellowship program has had a profound impact not just on the lives of Native Hawaiian scholars, but on future generations of keiki (children) who will be inspired by these intellectual role models to pursue meaningful careers and strive for excellence — for Hawai'i and the world," said Robert Lindsey Jr., a member of The Kohala Center's Board of Directors and chairman of the program's selection committee, as well as chairman of the OHA Board of Trustees. "We are deeply grateful for The Foundation's support over the past nine years, and we are hopeful that new partners will join with Kamehameha Schools and the Deviants from the Norm Fund and enable us to continue to offer these fellowships to Hawai'i's emerging intellectual leaders." ■

Liam Kernell is Director of Communications at The Kohala Center, an independent, community-based center for research, conservation and education.

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