

TO: Representative Jerry L. Chang, Chair, Committee on Higher Education

FROM:

Lehua Wilson and Ashton Kekailoa Dircks
2106 Kaiwiki Road.
Hilo, HI 96720

LATE TESTIMONY

HEARING: Thursday, January 31, 2008, 3pm, Conference Room 309, State Capitol

COPIES: 35

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HB2976, making an appropriation for
a Master's Program in Cultural Resource Management at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Aloha mai kakou,

We are former students of the Anthropology program here at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and attained our B.A. in Anthropology in Spring 2006. We entered into the field of Anthropology because of a deep sense of kuleana we felt towards our kupuna and their works that still remain today, including their burials.

As students in the B.A. program, we were given the opportunity to investigate the legislation and policies concerning Cultural Resource Management of our mea ku'una, our cultural treasures here in Hawai'i. We quickly realized the sad state of affairs concerning our Cultural Resource Management and decided as individuals and as a couple to dedicate our lives to their proper management and protection. Unfortunately work in this field requires higher degrees that are not currently offered at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. We are asked to leave our homes, and the community and Cultural Resources that we as descendants are obligated to protect to pursue a higher degree in Archaeology or Cultural Resource Management, so that we can be considered professionals in this arena. And that is hewa.

Hawai'i Island is lako, abundant, in Cultural Resources that are threatened daily by development and casual non-chalant attitudes of people who have no connection, genealogically or otherwise, to this place besides the Million-dollar view outside their homes. Hawai'i Island offers the widest array of environments, from rain forest to desert, steeped in Cultural Resources that in recent history has been left to the capitalistic wolves. Offenses to these resources even include the destruction of sites on the National Historic Register with no repercussions, not even an apology. Once again, Hewa.

As life long students, and Academics, we have always believed that education is the best defense against ignorance. Ignorance is the state of the times in reference to Cultural Resource Management. The Anthropology Department under the directorship of Peter Mills has made great efforts at raising the level of awareness and education amongst students at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Most important, the program teaches with a sense of kuleana: Cultural Resource Management is not about capital gain, it is about kuleana to the 'aina, the environment and the people descended from it.

Hawai'i Community College is currently working on extending the academic experience into the two year campuses, allowing for a program that specifically trains field technicians to properly manage the sites that are required under law to be surveyed. Unfortunately the buck falls short

LATE TESTIMONY

after achieving your B.A. This is a real issue that we and many others are currently facing. As a family, we are now forced to decide how to send Ashton away, separated from his family, his support system, and his community that is the driving force behind his commitment to Cultural Resource Management in order to attain the degrees dictated as necessary by Western Governance. Need I say Hewa again?

Why should we be forced to travel abroad to study our Cultural Resources, Lehua couldn't go to California to study Hawaiian Language. Why should we expect Ashton to go to California, or even to O'ahu, which is a very foreign place for a boy from rural Kohala, to study Hawai'i Cultural Resources? Our Island, Hawai'i Island, provides the best lab, our environment, for this study, There are no Sub-Alpine sites on O'ahu to study from. So why not house the Master's for Cultural Resource Management on this island, which provides the most diverse environment? Natural Resource conservation follows the same indigenous principles of place-based learning, which has already been recognized by legislatures through their approval of the Master's of Tropical Conservation Biology & Environmental Science at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo.

The ideal situation is to have a 2 year degree program at each 2-year campus with a Master's at each four year institution, to provide the most opportunities to our Kanaka, we have always been the guardians of these resource, and will continue to be. Why not educate us and allow us the opportunity to be professionals in fields that we are passionate about, in fields that we insist on partaking in? We are discussing Cultural Resources that are as unique as the environment that they are found in and should be treated as thus.

We realize the realities don't often afford the above, but we humbly ask, in the name of our ancestors and our descendants, please take **SERIOUS** consideration of this program being proposed for the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Allow us, the managers of the largest land-mass in the island chain a fighting chance at managing our Cultural Resources.

Me ka ha'aha'a maoli no,

Lehua Wilson and Ashton Kekailoa Dircks

Na Pua o ka Moku O Keawe (descendants of Hawai'i Island)

TO: Representative Jerry L. Chang, Chair, Committee on Higher Education

FROM: Michael L. Gregg, 75-5812 Lewa Place, Kailua-Kona HI 96740

Telephone: 808-987-1491

Email: mikegregg72@hotmail.com

HEARING: Thursday, January 31, 2008, 3pm, Conference Room 309, State Capitol

COPIES: 35

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HB2976, making an appropriation for a graduate degree program in Cultural Resource Management at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo

I am Michael Gregg, a retired archaeologist and historic preservation professional with 40 years of experience in the Northern Plains, Midwest, and Mid-Atlantic region on the mainland. I now live in the North Kona District of Hawai'i County. I see a serious need for locally educated and trained cultural resource professionals.

During the past 40 years, the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act were enacted, leading to federal requirements for consideration of significant historic buildings, structures, and archaeological sites in the process of planning projects that alter the natural and built environments. All states and thousands of counties and municipalities nationwide have followed the federal lead and participated in various ways in historic preservation initiatives. Historic buildings, structures, and archaeological sites have become known as cultural resources. They are nonrenewable resources of many cultural origins. Every facet of the Hawai'ian population today has members who care deeply about cultural resources. However, in Hawai'i we lack the numbers of academically trained cultural resource professionals to meet basic needs for respectfully and reasonably identifying and managing our nonrenewable cultural resources. A graduate degree program in cultural resource management would be an important addition to the academic anthropology program at UH Hilo. The young men and women who complete the program will be equipped to provide valuable service to the State for decades after graduation.

Cultural resources are very important to the fabric of Hawai'ian life. When historic buildings and archaeological features are identified, interpreted for the community, and sustained, they are testaments to the accomplishments of people who have gone before us. Through appreciation of their work, living people extend respect to those who have contributed in the past. Acknowledging those who have gone before gives our lives more meaning because we can see the products of our work will be appreciated by those who come after us.

When a historic building or an archaeological feature is destroyed, it is a disrespectful action that diminishes everyone's quality of life. We are less inclined to be contributing participants in our communities when we see past efforts disrespected. When our community allows the destruction of historic buildings and archaeological features that are important to living community members, it is thoughtless and disrespectful. We need more cultural resource management

LATE TESTIMONY

professionals to work with local communities, planners, and businesses to identify, protect, and interpret significant cultural resources.

The Department of Anthropology at UH Hilo is an appropriate location within Hawai'i's network of institutions of higher education for this proposed graduate program. The Department chairperson, Peter Mills, is ready, willing, and able to begin building a program. He is a highly qualified and respected archaeologist with extensive experience in many facets of the culture history of the Big Island and the State.

I believe the Committee on Higher Education will be providing a valuable service to the people of Hawai'i by supporting the development of this important program.