



MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani was published in the MidWeek **WEST VOICE** section on Wednesday, October 18, 2017.

Back to school

Students and teachers at campuses on the traditional school calendar are back in their classrooms this week after the October fall break. A few weeks ago, the Department of Education released public school enrollment figures for the school year, and we learned that **Waipahu High School** has the third-largest student population among all high schools in the state with 2,554 students grades 9-12 on campus. And **Waipahu Intermediate School** has the third largest number of students on campus among intermediate and middle schools statewide with 1,294 youngsters enrolled.



As Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, it is my responsibility to work in the best interests of all public schools across the state. But as a Senator representing my Waipahu community neighbors it's important to advocate for our own schools as well. We are fortunate to be able to celebrate student success in all of our neighborhoods thanks to dedicated teachers and committed school leadership.



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UHWO enrollment

Speaking of student numbers, our closest University of Hawaii campus – **UH West Oahu** – **led the entire nation** in enrollment growth during a ten-year period (2005-2015) surveyed by the prestigious *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Enrollment more than tripled during that period – from 858 students to 2,692 – topping enrollment growth at 87 other U.S. colleges that focus on four-year degrees.

Many factors contributed to the growth. Most significantly during the ten-year period in the survey, UHWO expanded from a two-year school to four-year degree programs. Then in the fall semester 2012, the school moved to a totally new permanent campus in Kapolei. With new instructional areas being added since then, current enrollment is now

3,082 in the 2017 fall semester. **The University notes that West Oahu is the only one of the ten campuses in the UH system to show an increase in the student population this year.**

Film & TV production

About a month ago I was invited to a reception where the new film trailer from the **UH West Oahu Academy for Creative Media** was premiered. The 90-second production, entitled *A Love Letter from the Ocean*, is a short film exploring the Westside community's appreciation for and connection to the ocean. ACM student **Ashley Guzman** produced the trailer with help from **Kevin Bechayda**,

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Janelle Saole, and Jonah Shaul. Also attending the event was ACM professor **Gary Shimokawa**, whose credentials include directing one of my all-time favorite classic TV shows – *Golden Girls*. This amazing film was scheduled to screen at the Regal theater in Kapolei Commons as part of the theater company’s corporate support for ACM-West Oahu and these exceptionally talented students.

UHWO ACM All-stars preview their new film trailer that’s showing in the Regal Theaters in Kapolei.

From left, Rep. Ty Cullen, Janelle Saole, ACM professor Gary Shimokawa, film producer/director Ashley Guzman and Kevin Bechadya.



Photo courtesy Scoringlive

Marauders on a roll

The **Waipahu Varsity Football Marauders** finished their season as the only undefeated team in the OIA Division 2 with 7 regular season wins and no losses. The D-2 playoffs opened last weekend with the top-seeded Marauders scheduled to take on fourth seed Roosevelt. That game will be in the books by the time you read this column, but no matter what the result, players and coaches have provided our Waipahu communities with lots to cheer about this season. ***Mahalo to everyone who has contributed to the team’s successes this season!***