



HAWAII

STATE FOUNDATION on
CULTURE and the ARTS

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DEPT. COMM. NO. 312

December 29, 2022

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
State Capitol Room 409
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker of the House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 431
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Report of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts to the Legislature

**S.C.R. 83, S.R. 75, H.R. 162 (2022) Requesting the State
Foundation on Culture and the Arts to report information of the
collaborative efforts initiated for the establishment of a Hawaii
State Poet Laureate Program, its findings, recommendations,
implementation plan, and any proposed legislation.**

I am pleased to provide the following report as requested.

Sincerely,

Karen Ewald
Acting Executive Director

Enclosures



December 29, 2022

Report of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts to the 2023 Legislature

S.C.R. 83 (2022) REQUESTING THE HAWAII COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES, STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS, AND THE HAWAII STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM TO COLLABORATE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HAWAII STATE POET LAUREATE PROGRAM.

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Introduction

We are pleased to report on the progress of the establishment of the Hawaii State Poet Laureate Program. The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, Hawaii Council for the Humanities, and the Hawaii State Public Library System spent a year planning to develop a Poet Laureate Program which will recognize an accomplished poet dedicated to accessible, engaging, and impactful community work statewide. The three organizations created and signed a Memorandum of Understanding, agreeing to collaborate to conduct a sustainable statewide program. Each organization participated in monthly meetings. The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts led the application and adjudication process, as well as provided funding for the Poet Laureate award and to the Hawaii Council for the Humanities to administer the program. Hawaii Council for the Humanities will lead the administrative and programmatic efforts throughout the multi year term. Hawaii Public Library System will provide venue support and supplies for the program. After months of planning and meetings, the Poet Laureate Program officially launched its application to the public in June of 2022. More information on the application process can be found in the [Poet Laureate Overview sheet](#).

The Application Process

Applicants were selected based on the following eligibility requirements and selection criteria:

Eligibility Requirements

- Must be a legal, full-time Hawai'i resident.
- Must maintain Hawai'i residency during the full multiyear term of office.
- Must be available to travel statewide and give presentations.
- Nominees will not be considered until they indicate their consent to the nomination.

Selection Criteria

- A body of work that has been professionally published/performed/exhibited and acknowledged as achieving a high degree of artistic excellence.
- 10 years or more of doing poetry in Hawai'i.
- 3 or more years of poetry facilitation / educator experience.
- Demonstrated deep commitment to Hawai'i and understanding of our diverse communities and histories.
- An established history of community service in the advancement of poetry in Hawai'i, and the ability to present poetry, and effectively and creatively engage with a public audience.

Applications were received between June and August of 2022. Seven completed applications were accepted from across the State. From September through October 2022, applications were reviewed by a curated panel committee. The selected panel consisted of esteemed Native Hawaiian and local poets of multiple generations, as well as staff from the public libraries and the Hawaii Board of Education. Each panelist was also connected to different islands throughout the State. After careful review of each application, the panelists attended a Panel Review

Meeting where they discussed each application and the scores they gave. After the discussion, the panelists came up with the final three candidates. In October, the panel committee conducted interviews with each of the top three candidates. Following the interviews, the panelists attended a final discussion meeting and came to a final decision. After rigorous review and careful consideration, the panel committee selected Brandy Nālani McDougall as the next Hawaii State Poet Laureate.

Born and raised on Maui in the ahupua‘a of A‘apueo in Kula, Brandy Nālani McDougall is the author of the poetry collection, *The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Pa‘akai* (2008). She teaches as an Associate Professor of American Studies specializing in Indigenous Studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Her second poetry collection, *‘Āina Hānau, Birth Land*, is forthcoming from the University of Arizona Press in Summer 2023. She has made substantial contributions to Hawai‘i literature and community as an editor and publisher, as a teacher and mentor (at Kamehameha Schools, at UH Mānoa, and in community settings), and as a literary event organizer. As part of her term as Hawai‘i State Poet Laureate, McDougall wants to highlight the ways in which poetry can heal and bring connection. “Poetry really gave me a place and a way to heal, and right now, as we’re all emerging from a space where we’ve been literally isolated for two years—where we weren’t able to meet as much with other people and have genuine human to human connections, or even human to ‘āina connections, so there’s a real need for that healing in this space and time. I think poetry can be that space for a lot of people. As the Hawai‘i Poet Laureate, I’d like to be able to share that.”

Poet Laureate Duties

Over the course of the multi-year term, the Poet Laureate will work with the three organizations to carry out the Poet Laureate program duties. These duties include participating in at least four events annually involving the Governor’s Office, State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, Hawaii State Public Library Systems, or the Hawaii Council for the Humanities, one community-engaged poetry publication, eight community-engaged poetry workshops per year, and one annual reading featuring other local poets. The selected Poet Laureate is expected to create opportunities for diverse communities (cultural, age, location, gender, class, language, abilities) throughout the State to read, write, and perform poetry in different community spaces. This kind of community-engaged literature empowers many different community voices to share unique stories and histories, and build human connection and understanding across differences.

Future Projects

Brandy’s 3-year proposal focuses on connecting and building opportunities for diverse and vulnerable communities, which is a key component of the program. A few examples of projects include the creation of an online poetry resource site entitled *Puka Kinini*. The site will feature poetry videos, poems by local poets, presentations, links to local poetry presses and bookstores, local poet websites, and more. A major goal of this project is to make poetry more accessible to the community and to add to the continuity of Hawai‘i poetry. Brandy has also proposed to do workshops for a wide range of groups such as JABSOM doctors, medical

residents, and students, Special Education students in the DOE, as well as deaf and blind communities.

Budget

	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025
Poet Laureate Award*	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Hawaii Council for the Humanities Contract	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000

*\$5,000 from the \$20,000 Poet Laureate Award is spent on expenses used to carry out the duties of the Poet Laureate

Community partners

Being that the Poet Laureate is expected to actively engage and serve communities throughout the State, the program committee has worked to secure multiple community partners to support the program. The following are secondary community partners: Pacific Islands Development Program (building capacity/leadership among Pacific Islanders), Maui Arts and Cultural Center (runs a Youth Poet Laureate Program), Hawaiian Airlines (sponsoring travel to ensure equitable program outreach to diverse community throughout our islands), Moloka'i High School Library (community/youth programming in rural Moloka'i). Interest has been shown from various other community organizations on multiple islands.

Closing

We are currently working on having the selected Poet Laureate perform a poem on Opening Day of the Legislature. On behalf of the Poet Laureate committee, I thank the members of the Hawai'i Legislature for their continued support of the program and we respectfully request additional resources in the future.

MAR 11 2022

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE HAWAII COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES, STATE
FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS, AND THE HAWAII STATE
PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM TO COLLABORATE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A HAWAII STATE POET LAUREATE PROGRAM.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii has a rich and diverse culture that melds
2 the customs, art, history, traditions, and music of Native
3 Hawaiians and the many peoples that comprise the community that
4 is Hawaii; and

5
6 WHEREAS, this unique culture is expressed in the mele, oli,
7 and mo'olelo of the Hawaiian people, and the literature, music,
8 and traditions of the various peoples that have settled in
9 Hawaii; and

10
11 WHEREAS, literature and poetry are a way to blend the
12 multicultural voices, languages, and traditions in a manner that
13 promotes dialogue, pride, and understanding within our diverse
14 communities with the world; and

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16 WHEREAS, storytelling and literature strengthen civic
17 responsibility and civic engagement through promoting deep
18 thinking, increased empathy and understanding, and stronger
19 connections to ourselves and each other; and

20
21 WHEREAS, the State of Hawaii is committed to the
22 preservation and advancement of culture, the arts, history, and
23 the humanities, especially literature and music; and

24
25 WHEREAS, the United States of America provides for the
26 periodic appointment of a poet laureate by the Library of
27 Congress; and

28
29 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Council for the Humanities, State
30 Foundation on Culture and the Arts, and Hawaii State Public
31 Library System have the qualifications and expertise to



1 establish a Hawaii State Poet Laureate Program to nurture and
2 connect the various cultures in Hawaii; now, therefore,

3
4 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
5 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022, the
6 House of Representatives concurring, that the Hawaii Council for
7 the Humanities, State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, and
8 Hawaii State Public Library System are requested to collaborate
9 for the purpose of establishing a Hawaii State Poet Laureate
10 Program, which may include:

- 11 (1) The periodic appointment of a Hawaii poet laureate;
- 12
- 13 (2) The promotion of reading, writing, and appreciation of
- 14 poetry;
- 15
- 16 (3) Literary, cultural, and poetry workshops for students,
- 17 communities, and the people of Hawaii; and
- 18
- 19 (4) The gathering of writers, poets, storytellers,
- 20 musicians, and others representing the multi-ethnic
- 21 cultures of Hawaii to share their experiences and
- 22 creative works; and
- 23
- 24

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Foundation on Culture
26 and the Arts is requested to submit a report of the
27 collaborative efforts initiated for the establishment of a
28 Hawaii State Poet Laureate Program, its findings,
29 recommendations, implementation plan, and any proposed
30 legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior
31 to the convening of the Regular Session of 2023; and
32

33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
34 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Executive Director
35 of the Hawaii Council for the Humanities, Executive Director of
36 the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, and State
37 Librarian.

38
39
40 OFFERED BY:

