



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

February 25, 2010


Dr. Judy Beal
AACN Membership Committee
One Dupont Circle, NW Suite 530
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Dr. Beal,

I am pleased to nominate the 'IKE AO PONO Program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene for the *Innovations in Professional Nursing Education Award* in the institutional category of public school without an AHC. We appreciate this opportunity to share our ongoing work and successes in creating a diverse, competent nursing workforce for our present and future generations. My contact information is below if you have any questions about our initiative.

Mary G. Boland, DrPH, RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor
School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene
2528 McCarthy Mall, Webster Hall 402
Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone: (808) 956-8522
Fax: (808) 956-3257
Email: mgboland@hawaii.edu

Sincerely,


Mary G. Boland, DrPH, RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor

**University of Hawai'i at Mānoa School of Nursing & Dental Hygiene
'IKE AO PONO Program**

Hawai'i is an island state with a highly diverse ethnic population (1.28 million residents) and a vibrant multicultural history and tradition. The geographic isolation of the state requires that we "grow our own" nurses with targeted recruitment and retention efforts. Located in Honolulu on the island of Oahu, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene (SONDH) serves the entire state including the islands of Maui, Hawaii, Kauai, and Lanai. While

constituting 9% of the population (23% if mixed ancestry is included), Native Hawaiians (NH) and Pacific Islanders (PI) represent only 5% of the Hawai'i nursing workforce. Recognizing our responsibility as citizens of Hawai'i that could serve NH/PI in areas such as health, education and social justice, an innovative culturally-based program was developed at the SONDH. The SONDH strategic plan identifies diversity as a core goal focused on improving educational attainment for NH and PIs. To date, the program results have been phenomenal providing significant increases in NH/PI student enrollment and graduation, and serving as a catalyst and model for nursing and other programs in the University system.

The Initiative: In 2004, the school 'IKE AO PONO (IAP) program was created and embedded at the school level with general fund support after the completion of a successful HRSA funded grant. The cultural meaning of its mission is reflected in the name given by the founding Director, Nalani Minton, MA: 'IKE is a shared vision held and nurtured by all; AO is the everlasting quality of continuation; and PONO is the harmony in life sustained by integrity: right relationship, right intention and right action. Together, these concepts present the collective vision of lasting health and wellness for the whole community. The primary purposes are: 1) to improve the health of NH/PI peoples through culturally sensitive care; 2) to increase the number of NH/PI health professionals; and 3) to provide inspiration to younger generations of NH/PI in form of positive role models.

Pre-nursing and currently enrolled nursing students who are NH/PI students are encouraged to join the program. IAP assists NH/PI students apply to, succeed in and graduate from the nursing programs at SONDH. While many of these students come from at-risk and under-served communities, they are inspired and encouraged to succeed through a unique support base. This consists of academic counseling, tutoring, mentoring, a strong student 'ohana (family), scholarships and financial aid, professional and cultural opportunities.

An important factor in IAP student success is the 'ohana learning style where students help each other as a family of learners. The literature identifies two primary needs of under-represented and disadvantaged students for (a) emotional support and (b) interpersonal communication. Students work with the tutor and Director in personal and study group sessions including skills building in reading, writing, studying, test taking, and time management. The dedicated IAP learning room is a safe place where students share their concerns, can feel culturally comfortable and receive encouragement from others in a non-competitive environment.

At the core of the program is IAP's uniquely Hawaiian approach to wellness. Through community service, students spend time tending the lo'i (taro patches), participating in internships focused on serving NH/PI populations, and learning about traditional healing practices. This provides the IAP student a cultural connection to their formal nursing studies enhancing learning while providing a cultural understanding of health.

Students participating in the IAP program have increased opportunities for scholarship and financial aid to promote academic success. Partnering agencies committed to increasing representation of NH/PI in nursing provide funding to support NH/PI academic success. Of special note is The Queen's Medical Center, the largest private hospital in Hawai'i, who has significantly contributed to this effort providing both program and scholarship support to IAP for the past five years. Further, IAP serves as a clearinghouse of scholarship opportunities whereby the Director and staff provide support for students seeking financial aid.

Outcomes: Academic success and community building are the successful outcomes of this effort that creates competence and confidence in underrepresented students choosing a career

in nursing. In the past six years, almost 200 NH/PI students have participated in IAP. IAP has helped graduate 100 (83 BSN, 15 MSN and 2 PhD) nurses – more than all the NH and PIs graduated in the 75 year history of the school. This data reflects significant improvement in the number of NH/PI nurses (from 2% to 10%) graduating from the SONDH. Eighty-eight (88) students are enrolled in the undergraduate and graduate nursing programs in the SONDH.

IAP is leading the way as a role model for workforce and campus programs locally. The IAP Director is active in a federally funded HRSA grant effort to grow similar efforts at the UH Community College associate degree nursing programs. Building on the success of existing programs, SONDH with the support from Kamehameha Schools developed the E ALA program. This program recruits and supports NH graduate level students pursuing advanced public/community health nursing and includes a funded post-graduate internship with a NH serving community based organization

A film narrative in which students “talk story” about their desire to be nurses, their experience as NH/PI, and their goals for the future of their communities has just been completed. Just getting underway are the ‘IKE AO PONO Alumni Association and the formation of the first Native Hawaiian Nursing Association.

Furthermore, IAP has contributed to the SONDH’s increased cultural awareness of NH/PI in the curriculum, clinical sites, and framework for shared governance.

The Project’s Relationship to Award Criteria: IAP has helped to promote change within SONDH, the UH System, and the community. IAP has helped to advance professional nursing education by increasing access and success to the rigorous and highly competitive nursing programs as well as integrating increased cultural awareness.

The significant increase in the number of NH/PI nurses (from 2% to 10%) graduating from the SONDH shows it to be a successful model and similar efforts are being replicated locally among nursing community college programs. There is the potential to adapt this approach to other under-represented populations in the RN workforce, and at SONDH, we are exploring feasibility to do so with Hispanic/Latinos who are also underrepresented in Hawai’i’s RN workforce in comparison to the population (2% vs 8%).

The IAP effort supports AACN’s FY 2009-2011 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives:

1) (Goal 1, Objective 2) The SONDH Dean and IAP Director, champions of diversity, continue to provide strategic leadership to advance professional nursing education through the establishment of collaborative relationships and strategic alliances to sustain and grow the IAP program and strengthening the overall nursing program;

2) (Goal 3, Objective 2) The IAP lends support to develop a diverse community of nurse educators by facilitating the pipeline of NH/PI nurses for graduate education including the nurse faculty role. Two IAP graduated from the PhD nursing program and are nursing faculty in the UH system. As the numbers of NH/PI nurses and faculty increase, we anticipate a further transformation on education and care provided to the population.

3) (Goal 3, Objective 3) The IAP responds to the needs of a diverse membership and external community stakeholders in the State that express the demand for highly qualified culturally competent professional nurses.

4) (Goal 3, Objective 3) The IAP is a successful initiative that is increasing the diversity among nursing students, faculty and the workforce. The basis for the IAP program was to address this growing demand as the increased representation of cultural and ethnic minorities among the health professions leads to improved access and quality of care for minority group populations. The outcomes document these successful and continuing efforts.