

# LANGUAGES 2000:

## MEETING TODAY'S NEEDS WITH EXCELLENCE: POISED FOR THE FUTURE

*Languages 2000 Task Force*

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University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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E lawe i ke a‘o a mālama, a e ‘oi mau ka na‘auao.

*Applied knowledge increases knowledge.”*

### MEETING TODAY’S NEEDS WITH EXCELLENCE

A visitor to a University of Hawai‘i language class on any given day might find students searching the Web for a restaurant in Seoul, a hotel in Mexico City, or a painting in a museum in Paris.

Students in a Japanese class might be reporting on overnight e-mail messages from native-speaker peers in Tokyo and fellow learners of Japanese in New York or Berlin.

Students in UH language classes will be found working on ways to make Hawai‘i a friendlier place for visitors and residents alike. Chinese classes videotape hawaii.edu themselves offering tips in Chinese on how to get around campus with the goal of developing a Web site for new arrivals from China. Students in Filipino classes hone their skills by publishing a magazine of their own writing for the local community. Hawaiian classes develop instructional materials that are used in the language immersion program in elementary and high school classrooms.

From bugs to business, students take a role in developing language skills they will need in fields as diverse as marine biology, entomology, health and human services, and the travel industry.

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa offers excellent, innovative courses and techniques for language learning. UHM language professors have written groundbreaking books that are in use worldwide, and have developed innovative programs and language instruction techniques that have changed the face of language learning today and will continue to keep UHM at the forefront of the field in the future.

### Languages in Hawai‘i: Our Heritage, Our Sense of Place

Hawai‘i is a unique crossroads of languages and cultures; it is a microcosm of the United States of the future. Waves of immigrants from Asia, Europe, and the Pacific have commingled with indigenous Hawaiians and created the multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic community that is Hawai‘i today. Many languages are spoken in our islands; according to the 1990 US Census, more than 27% of Hawai‘i residents over age 18 reported speaking a language other than English at home. Hawai‘i also has the distinction of being the only bilingual state in the US: both English and Hawaiian are official languages.

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa is at the center of our living laboratory of languages and cultures; UHM affirms and reflects this diversity in its Strategic Plan which states that the mission of the university is to “prepare students to function effectively in a global society,” to “preserve

and promulgate Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific language, history, and culture and to provide students an educational experience with an international dimension.”

For many UH students, learning a language is a way of strengthening their connection to the world of their grandparents or ancestors whose names are barely known to them. The value of cultural rediscovery of roots, of connection across generations, cannot be measured. In this regard, indigenous Hawaiians have been more successful in perpetuating their language than any other Native American group. The Hawaiian immersion program serves as a model worldwide. This success is due in no small part to the role that UH played in educating the founders of the immersion program and that it continues to play in educating the expanding network of immersion teachers and parents in our community today. No other university in the nation has made such an impact on the survival of an indigenous language.

In the spring 2000 semester, approximately, 5,000 students, or 50% of the enrolled undergraduates, were learning Hawaiian or a foreign language at UHM. Of this number, approximately 3,000 students were learning Hawaiian, East Asian, and Southeast Asian languages. Many if not most of these undergraduates were heritage students learning the language of their ancestors.

#### Language Study and the Liberal Arts Tradition

A liberal arts education teaches the learner to be a reflective, critical thinker and provides a historical context for contemporary life and society. Languages are a key component of the liberal arts because they deepen knowledge of the self and of others in the local and global community.

The commitment to provide students with a general education that contains an international dimension is nowhere better exemplified than in the number of languages taught at the university and in the quality of the programs. Faculty at the University of Hawai'i currently teach courses in approximately thirty languages each semester (see cover) and have the capacity to offer instruction in fifty other languages when demand and staffing permit. Significantly, languages such as Filipino, Hawaiian, Hindi, Ilokano, Indonesian, Khmer (Cambodian), Korean, Samoan, Tahitian, Thai, and Vietnamese are taught at few other universities in the US.

Language study has been one of the cornerstones of the liberal arts curriculum since the inception of universities. The goal of a liberal arts education has always been to provide students with tools that will expand knowledge, discipline the mind, and reveal the interrelatedness of all experience. Languages help students do precisely that by challenging them to perceive the world through the eyes of cultures other than their own. Learning to speak another language means that students break away from the limitations of one cultural, social, and linguistic perspective and approach another. Moreover, research has shown that learning a second language significantly contributes to a better understanding of one's first language.

The mind-stretching perspective that comes with learning another language is further enhanced when undergraduates build on their domestic language study by studying abroad. Study Abroad programs offer students authentic experiences in language and culture and advance the aim of creating well rounded global citizens. The rich variety of Study Abroad programs at UH internationalizes the curriculum and encourages undergraduates to take advantage of overseas academic opportunities.

The UHM Study Abroad Center in collaboration with academic departments offers programs for a summer term, a semester, or an academic year in East and Southeast Asia, Europe, and South America. The largest programs are in Japan and France. In the last five years, 11% of the undergraduate population at UH has participated in Study Abroad programs, as compared to approximately only 9% of undergraduates nationally. The largest number of participating UHM students come from the College of Business, but students also come from the Colleges of Engineering, Nursing, and Tropical Agriculture, as well as the College of Languages, Linguistics and Literature.

The Study Abroad program allows students to earn UH credits while studying in-country and developing valuable language proficiency. Students who achieve a certain degree of mastery can also greatly improve their career potential. Not only are they sought out by international companies, but they may also have the opportunity to work abroad.

### Building Hawai'i's Local and Global Resources

Telecommunications and aviation technology are neutralizing barriers of time and space that have sometimes isolated Hawai'i in the past. In a world where national boundaries are increasingly giving way to globalization, and where people from different continents and cultures mingle more closely and freely than ever, the key to our competing in the new economy will lie in our ability to develop a skilled population. There can be no doubt that a multilingual human resource base will help ensure a place for Hawai'i in the economy of tomorrow.

In the year 2000, as the world moves toward a global economy, our local economy is increasingly dependent on the international economy, particularly since the visitor industry continues to be the mainstay of Hawai'i's local economy. Total visitor spending in 1997 in Hawai'i represented approximately one third of the gross state product. The Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), reports that 2,628,530 visitors from non-English-speaking countries came to Hawai'i in 1997 alone. Significantly, from 1985 to 1997 foreign visitors to Hawai'i spent over \$57,000,000 in our state.

The June 2000 issue of the Japan Report cites a survey of 500 Japanese tourists conducted at the Honolulu airport in May 2000. In response to the question "What do you think of when you think of Hawai'i?", 54% of the visitors replied "Japanese is spoken." This response ranked third behind

“beautiful oceans” and “good weather.” The report concludes that “the ability to speak in their native tongue in Hawai‘i gives the Japanese a sense of safety and control even though they are in a foreign country. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that people in Hawai‘i speak Japanese in order to put Japanese tourists at ease.”

Non-English-speaking visitors coming to Hawai‘i for both business and pleasure need and expect a full range of products and services in languages other than English. Consequently, UH offers special courses in Chinese and Japanese for Business and Travel Industry Management. Plans are being made to offer these and other special-purpose courses in additional languages as well. It is important to keep in mind that Hawai‘i’s language-related jobs are not limited to business and the travel industry, however. Hawai‘i’s immigrants and visitors also require a full range of health and social services, thus creating a host of language-related jobs in the medical professions, law enforcement, the legal system, education, and other fields.

### World-Class Language Programs at UHM

Excellence in languages is one of the reasons that the University of Hawai‘i was listed in America’s 100 Best College Buys 1999. An editorial in the October 29, 1999, Honolulu Star-Bulletin began by quoting the book: “The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa is a public research university with an outstanding academic reputation. While many colleges and universities talk about returning to the basics, UH at Mānoa never left them.” It then singled out three particular strengths of the curriculum at UHM, mentioning that undergraduates are required to study world civilizations, Hawaiian or a foreign language, and master a number of writing-intensive courses. Foreign languages are taught in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, which houses the largest Japanese program in the US, the Department of Languages and Literatures of Europe and the Americas, and the Department of Hawaiian and Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures. The College of Languages, Linguistics and Literature (LLL) also houses the Departments of English, Linguistics, and Second Language Studies (formerly English as a Second Language) which is widely regarded as the premier second language acquisition research program in the world. Besides supplying multilingual Hawai‘i with most of its teachers of English as a Second Language, its large (100+) MA program attracts second language teachers from around the world to develop their skills with researchers and second language teacher educators who are internationally famous. In addition, the doctoral program in second language acquisition prepares junior scholars to be the researchers and academics of the future.

The University of Hawai‘i, more than any other institution in the US, places extraordinary emphasis on Asia and the Pacific. There are only five goals articulated in the University’s current ten-year Strategic Plan. They focus on 1) quality 2) access, 3) diversity, 4) responsible management,

and 5) “Strengthening the University as the premier resource in Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific affairs and advancing its international leadership role.”

The University of Hawai‘i’s extensive resources on Asia have been organized into separate units within the School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies. The Centers for Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, the Philippines, and, of course, Hawaiian Studies, are renowned local and national resources. East Asia is represented by nationally recognized Centers for Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Studies.

The strength of UH language programs is evidenced by the fact that UH houses one of the three original National Foreign Language Resource Centers (NFLRCs) funded by the US Department of Education in a nationwide competition. The UH NFLRC has continued to be among the most highly ranked centers in successive competitions. The excellence of Hawai‘i’s NFLRC is built upon innovative research, teacher training, and materials development, particularly as it relates to languages of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.

In the 1990s, over 12 million dollars in language-related grants and contracts were awarded to UH to fund national Centers for East Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Island Studies, the National Foreign Language Resource Center, and a Center for International Business Education and Research. Additional private endowments totaling \$10,000,000 supported studies of the cultures of East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea.

#### POISED FOR THE FUTURE

As the United States becomes more culturally and linguistically diverse, its demography is changing rapidly, and our schools and workplaces are changing with it. More and more individuals who enter our schools and our workforce speak languages other than English at home. During the 1980s, close to ten million people immigrated to the US. Between 1980 and 1990, the Asian-American population more than doubled, the Hispanic population grew by more than 50%, and the percentage of non-English speaking students in our school arose by more than 50%. As the composition of the US population continues to change, those who possess some degree proficiency in a language other than English will increasingly comprise the pool of prospective students and members of the workforce.

In the next decade, the service economy will provide 85% of the jobs, and workers in high-end information and knowledge industries will hold about half of those service economy jobs.

Expanding ties with the Pacific Rim and international alliances such as NAFTA will provide many opportunities for US workers. In a global society, providers of services must be able to speak languages other than English and possess an understanding of other cultures and societies.

Students who want to succeed as productive participants in the global economy and in

multicultural settings in the 21st century will require an education that combines linguistic and cross-cultural knowledge, expertise in their field, and the use of new technologies.

The world-class language programs at UHM will prepare students to take their place in the new economy of the global society of 2000 and beyond by offering instruction that emphasizes flexibility and ease of access, personalization, and enhancement of other disciplines.

#### Access, Personalization, Enhancement of Other Disciplines

In 2000 UHM began offering third-year Chinese and Korean courses entirely on-line. Since technology-based foreign language instruction can be delivered any time, anywhere via the Internet, on-line courses do not have regular class meetings. Thus, on-line learning allows students greater flexibility in juggling jobs and academic and family responsibilities.

With the advent of on-line learning and other distance learning formats such as cable and interactive television, a growing number of language courses at UHM are utilizing integrated delivery formats. Increasingly in the context of a one-semester course, some class meetings are being held conventionally, while others are being held “virtually,” and still other student-student and student-teacher interactions are occurring asynchronously via Web forums or other computer-mediated formats.

The language programs at UHM are personalizing instruction to accommodate individual needs, preferences, and learning styles. The multimedia computer labs in the College of Languages, Linguistics and Literature are open 45 hours per week for walk-in student use, class meetings, and self-paced activities such as individualized, computer-mediated practice utilizing language software programs and interactive CD-ROMs.

Technology is helping language faculty personalize foreign language instruction and allowing students to concentrate on areas of interest and expertise. Thus, students can simultaneously increase competence in a foreign language and in their area of specialization.

Examples of technology-oriented instructional projects and activities include constructing target-language Web sites on individually selected topics, working with authentic Web-based foreign language subject matter using on-line dictionaries and grammar texts, joining on-line chat groups with peers in the country where the target language is spoken, and watching and reading breaking news presented by the international media in the target language. Some of the best self-paced language learning CDs and web-supported teaching models for Asian languages and Hawaiian have been developed by UHM faculty and students.

The language programs at UHM have a long tradition of teaching interdisciplinary courses in languages other than English. For some time, the Department of East Asian Languages has been offering courses in Chinese and Japanese for Business and Travel Industry Management, and a number of Asian Studies courses in other disciplines are also taught in the target language.

Recently, the Department of East Asian Languages and the Ethnic Studies Department embarked on a project to coordinate courses across disciplines to facilitate community service projects in heritage language communities in Honolulu. This project is supported by funds from the US Department of Education, and it is hoped that this collaboration will become a model for national implementation. Similar interdisciplinary collaborations are being planned with other departments and disciplines.

The faculty and language programs at UHM are world class. We are poised to assist the next generation in finding its place in the new economy and making a positive contribution to the local and global society of 2000 and beyond.

I ka 'ōelo nō ke ola, il ka 'ōelo nō ka make.

*“In language is contained the power of life and death.”*

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## Organizational Units of

College of Languages, Linguistics and Literature (LLL) &  
School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies (SHAPS)

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### LLL UNITS

- Center for Translation and Interpretation Studies
- Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures
- Department of English
- Department of Hawaiian and Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures
- Department of Languages and Literatures of Europe and the Americas
- Department of Linguistics
- Department of Second Language Studies
- Language Telecommunications, Resource and Learning Center
- Mānoa Writing Program
- National Foreign Language Resource Center
- Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center

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### SHAPS UNITS

- Center for Chinese Studies
- Center for Hawaiian Studies
- Center for Japanese Studies
- Center for Korean Studies
- Center for Pacific Island Studies
- Center for Philippine Studies
- Center for Russia in Asia
- Center for South Asian Studies
- Center for Southeast Asian Studies

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