UH West O‘ahu receives funding from Kamehameha Schools for sustainable community food system research and program development

KAPOLEI --- For the second straight year, the University of Hawai‘i – West O‘ahu has received a generous grant from Kamehameha Schools’ ‘Āina-Based Education Department to support research and program development for a proposed academic concentration in Sustainable Community Food Systems (SCFS). To date, Kamehameha Schools has donated nearly $285,000 to UH West O‘ahu in support of the SCFS academic program development, UHWO Organic Campus Garden development, and the first comprehensive assessment of the O‘ahu food system by UH West O‘ahu Assistant Professor and Principal Investigator, Dr. Albie Miles, and colleagues.

“This generous donation from Kamehameha Schools is being used to develop a program designed to improve the overall health and well-being of Hawai‘i’s people,” said UH West O‘ahu Chancellor Rockne Freitas. “It falls directly in line with the missions of our two educational institutions and we are looking forward to working together to create a more sustainable future for Hawai‘i.”

The UHWO Service Area Food System Assessment involves multiple analytical approaches to evaluating key aspects of the food system including inputs, production, distribution, processing, consumption, and waste management. This information is valuable for creating a common understanding and shared vision for developing a more sustainable community food system that enhances economic development, preserves environmental quality, and ensures the long term health of the state’s population, particularly for the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community that is disproportionately affected by diet-related illnesses such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and heart disease.

“Together with our Land Assets Division here at Kamehameha Schools, we’re happy to support UH West O‘ahu and the SCFS program development,” said Dr. Brandon Ledward, director of Kamehameha Schools’ ‘Āina-Based Education Department. “Partnerships like this are critical in meeting the educational needs of students as we work toward our goal of growing a new generation of farmers and local food advocates in Hawai‘i. By working together, along with community partners like MA‘O Organic Farms, UH West O‘ahu hopes to provide training and resources to students who are highly invested and interested in improving Hawai‘i’s food security.”

“A sustainable community food system is one in which producers, retailers, community members and governmental and non-governmental organizations partner to create a vibrant and resilient local food economy where the environmental, economic, and social health of a particular place is
enhanced and sustained over the long term,” said UH West O‘ahu’s Dr. Miles. “Developing more sustainable community food systems for Hawai‘i represents an opportunity to create a new food economy that integrates the objectives of job creation, economic development, land stewardship, food security, environmental protection, and climate change resiliency with community health and well-being.”

Funding from Kamehameha Schools ‘Āina-Based Education Department has also been used for the completion and maintenance of UH West O‘ahu’s Organic Campus Garden. MA‘O Organic Farms, the social enterprise organic farm in Wai‘anae, is a key community partner and instrumental in the development of UH West O‘ahu’s proposed SCFS program.

###

**UH West O‘ahu** became a four-year, regional comprehensive university when it served its first class of freshmen in fall 2007. The University offers quality education, small classes and personalized attention at convenient locations. UH West O‘ahu serves approximately 2,700 students at its brand new, state-of-the-art campus that opened in the City of Kapolei in 2012. For more information, visit www.uhwo.hawaii.edu, call (808) 689-2800 or toll-free (866) 299-8656. Find us on Facebook and Twitter.

**Kamehameha Schools** is a private, educational, charitable trust founded and endowed by the legacy of Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop. Kamehameha Schools operates a statewide educational system enrolling over 6,900 students of Native Hawaiian ancestry at K-12 campuses on O‘ahu, Maui and Hawai‘i and 30 preschools statewide. Over 40,400 additional learners and caregivers are served each year through a range of other Kamehameha Schools outreach programs, community collaborations and financial aid opportunities in Hawai‘i and across the continental United States. Income generated from its endowment portfolio of Hawai‘i real estate and other investments funds the Schools’ educational mission. Nā Mamo Mahi‘ai – Growing Farmers is a goal set through the 2009 Kamehameha Schools’ land legacy Strategic Agricultural Plan. More information can be found at www.ksbe.edu.