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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**UH West O'ahu trains Hawai'i's future sustainable food and agriculture professionals**

**University to offer new concentration in sustainable community food systems this fall**

**KAPOLEI** --- The University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu is taking an important first step in supporting Hawai'i's future sustainable food agriculture professionals by offering the bachelor of applied science in sustainable community food systems this fall. This exciting multi-disciplinary program addresses the key issues of environmental quality, social equity, community food security and economic development in Hawai'i and beyond by providing higher education and training to support the local food and agriculture industry.

UH West O'ahu is the only University of Hawai'i campus to offer the bachelor's degree in sustainable community food systems, an experiential and applied education focused on the analysis of key ecological and social issues in the food system. The new concentration incorporates problem-based and hands-on learning to develop food system professionals capable of solving real-world problems and transitioning Hawai'i's food and agriculture sector toward greater ecological sustainability and social equity. Integrated into the sustainable community food systems curriculum and located on the UH West O'ahu campus, the UHWO Student Organic Garden serves as one of many "living laboratories" where students directly apply the theoretical knowledge taught in the classroom.

"The food system of Hawai'i is at a crossroads," said UH West O'ahu Assistant Professor of Sustainable Community Food Systems, Dr. Albie Miles. "Importing an estimated 90 percent of its food, fertilizer, energy and seed, the Hawaiian Islands are uniquely vulnerable to statewide food insecurity in the face of rapid global climate change or economic disturbances. Food insecurity and diet-related health disparities have long impacted the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities of Hawai'i. These are but a few of the pressing issues we systematically explore in the sustainable community food systems bachelor's degree program with the aim of training a new generation of food system professionals to think across traditional disciplinary boundaries and to actively solve current problems through work in agriculture, policy-making, planning, business, research and education."

The bachelor of applied science in sustainable community food systems prepares students for a variety of careers including

- Natural resource management
- Agriculture and food policy

- Sustainable inputs and value-added food businesses
- Social enterprise and non-profit organization management
- Certified organic agriculture production and research
- Social work
- K-12 education and more.

The concentration was developed in partnership with Kamehameha Schools' 'Āina-Based Education Department and the Wai'anae Coast's MA'Ō Organic Farms. Funding from Kamehameha Schools was used for sustainable community food systems academic program development, to conduct a food system assessment of O'ahu, and in support of the UHWO Student Organic Garden. Bi-weekly weekend "work parties" are held in the garden where students, faculty and staff come together to prepare soil, build compost, plant fruit trees, install irrigation, sow seed, weed and harvest.

"We're excited to continue our collaboration with UHWO on the Sustainable Community Food Systems program," said Director of Kamehameha Schools 'Āina-Based Education Department, Dr. Brandon Ledward. "From a Hawaiian perspective, food is social, cultural, political, economic, and spiritual. As such, it is best approached from a systems-perspective. This new concentration – and the career pathways it supports – will increase our community's capacity to understand, to engage with, and to innovate solutions to our food system that honor our natural resources and native culture."

MA'Ō Organic Farms is a key UH West O'ahu community partner and was instrumental in the sustainable community food systems program development, providing valuable input about sustainable organic farming that serves the Native Hawaiian community and is based on traditional practices. Qualified West O'ahu area students receive college stipends in exchange for working on the Wai'anae farm as part of MA'Ō's Youth Leadership Training Program.

To apply to UH West O'ahu, visit [uhwo.hawaii.edu/admissions](http://uhwo.hawaii.edu/admissions), call (808) 689-2900 or email [uhwo.admissions@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhwo.admissions@hawaii.edu). The fall 2015 application deadline is July 1. For more information about the UH West O'ahu bachelor of applied science in sustainable community food systems, visit <http://www.uhwo.hawaii.edu/academics/degrees-and-certificates/bachelor-of-applied-sciences/food-systems/>.

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Established in 1976, **the University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu** offers quality education, small classes and personalized attention with academic programs that emphasize the exploration of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural studies. 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



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information, visit [www.uhwo.hawaii.edu](http://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](http://www.ksbe.edu).