As you may know, Leeward Community College began over 40 years ago. It was developed in a very interesting time in United States and world history. The 1960s was a time of social change in the United States and the all over the World. By social change I mean things were a certain way in education for a long period of time and then they began shift. Up to the 1960s, education in the United States had traditionally been reserved for middle and upper classes consisting largely of a European-American and male populations. As populations of people changed in the American landscape changed, the diverse populations of American society engaged in the process of civil rights and civic engagement. Schools emerged as an important place to address lingering issues social inequality and inequity. Community colleges were at the forefront! The community college in the US is an extremely important institution and as the average yearly cost of a 4 year degree program reaches nearly 20,000 dollars, it will become even more so. I say all of this because I want you to recognize the important and long history of the school that you attend. You are now a part of history.

Welcome to Leeward Community College! Now some of you may have heard that LCC is referred to as Last Chance College, similar to where I am from and our local community college ECC being called easy credit college. This could not be further from the truth. Education,
learning, experiences and knowledge are some of the greatest pleasures in life and definitely a gateway to being able to create the life that you choose to live.

I once had a student on campus tell me that she chose Leeward because it was her last choice and pretty much her only choice.

**Think about this: Is this your perspective????**

I told her to wake up and smell the Kona coffee. The reality is this,

![Image](image.png)

Leeward is the best choice!

#1 in value

#1 in class size

#1 in teacher/student relationship

First of all you must see yourself in a positive light connected to your family, community and environment. You must begin to think. School is here to provide you with positive experiences to help you make new connections and experiences in your life. Don’t get me wrong, school is not always awesome and fun, it can be boring, difficult and trying at times, but the idea is that these experiences will make you think about your own goals and future.

**Stop** for a second and think about why you are here and what you intend to accomplish:

Leeward Community College, and the AAT program in particular, has an incredibly knowledgeable and dedicated staff of instructors, counselors and aides trying to make this program the best on offer. Our staff is a mix of really caring, intelligent, experienced, and thoughtful people who want nothing more than to see you succeed. With your success (becoming a college graduate and teacher) we can change the world, ONE STUDENT AT A TIME!

The **REASON** behind the program is to address the teacher shortage here in the state of Hawai`i and provide good jobs to local people. Not only that, but we have to make sure that our students are receiving the best and most appropriate education which will help our communities thrive.
The state of HI has hired nearly 1500 teachers a year for the last 10 years. Where do you think that the majority of these teachers come from?

That is right, the mainland!

The average teacher from the mainland lasts about 2-4 years here on Oahu. Many of these teachers come while they are young, and then as they move on towards family age, they want to go home to their communities and serve there. It is great for Hawai‘i that many people are willing to come and help out the state and people for a few years. But, after this they go home, and the state is left to rehire someone from Michigan, New York, Connecticut, California, etc. I know at least 20 teachers in my own circle of friends who are from the mainland.

There is one program in particular who accomplishes this goal of bringing young teachers to the state, Teach for America.
This organization provides HI with about 60-80 teachers a year. They recruit from elite schools and elite student populations. Many come from schools you may have heard of such as Harvard, Yale, Brown, Cornell, etc. These are some of the most “best educated” people in the country. They are very talented, creative and driven.

But

1. How much do you think their education has told them about the ways, values, and customs of the Makaha Valley?
2. How well do they know the experiences of a large Filipino family sponsoring relatives to come to Hawai‘i?
3. What do they know about Hawai‘ian history, or of the Bishop museum, plantation houses, and local heiau?
4. What do they know of the struggles of military families making it through multiple deployments?
5. What knowledge do they have to make the IMPORTANT connections to the learning of young students with their knowledge of local places and local peoples?

In the beginning, Probably, not much!!!!!!!!

Hey, this is not to say that these individuals are a great asset to the state of Hawai‘i. They are bringing ways, customs and values from their communities, college, and mainland society here to the island. It is usually never a bad thing to expose students and citizens to all kinds of perspectives and peoples. This helps them grow into wise and experienced adults. But, this program is trying to ensure that our students in the state of Hawai‘i are exposed to local peoples, knowledge and ways, and all of the diversity that is Hawai‘i, so that our students may mature into the types of adults and citizens that the people of Hawai‘i and its communities feel is best for the state.

What we need is:
I urge you to begin to understand your place in the propagation, or continuing of local knowledge and local values to support the needs of local children and communities. I do not want to put you in a place of competition against mainland teachers, values or ideas, as we will all have to work with many types of people from different cultures, places and countries. All good values and people should be respected and treated in a caring and professional manner. Sharing and caring are important messages we need to pass on to the youth and our students in particular.

But, I want you to know that you have a special role to play in HI schools.

Have a look at me:

I am a mainland teacher. I came to Hawai‘i looking for the opportunity to teach and do research on this problem especially. I wanted to figure out how we can best serve local peoples in order to build strong foundations for unity and harmony.

I came here looking for the opportunity to help support local people to build capacity, strength and knowledge to solve local issues. Local solutions to local problems.

I currently do research and study at University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. I was teaching at UH before I came to Leeward Community College.

Prior to this, I was actually living in my van!!
No, not down by the river, but all over the mainland. I was doing a number of community service projects, including helping to rebuild New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and teaching drug addicted, incarcerated and foster youth to snowboard in Utah. I was also creating a photo project consisting of over 50 schools, private, public, and traditional schools. These included military academies, Harvard, inner-city schools and Navajo reservation schools.

A little bit about my educational background, I am publicly educated my whole life. I can’t get enough! I have even been in graduate school for 10 years!

I went to the University of Buffalo for my B.A. degree in Sociology, focusing in education. I then went to University of Maryland-College Park, where I did a dual master’s degree program in International Education Policy and Education Leadership and Policy. After going to graduate school, I taught middle school for three years in Washington, DC. I taught 6th, 7th and 8th grade. Wow that was a challenge! I also did my teaching credentials in Special Education. I focused on English and Social Studies, and Special Education. My school was about 40% special education students. This was a challenging place to teach. My school was three miles from the White House and in my classroom; I only had 4 working lights on my ceiling out of 16! This taught me a lot about teaching and perseverance. I hope to share some of these experiences with you and relate them to situations here in Hawai`i.

(Not always Sun-Shiny in the classroom!)
1. I have been teaching for 8 years. All ages and grades from young children to adults.
2. I have a casual and conversational style in the face-to-face classroom. Hopefully, some of this will translate to the virtual one.
3. I am available and accessible most days. Feel free to email, call, or stop by. I will do my best to keep up with contact, especially email. (We all know how difficult that can be!)
4. It is important to all of us that we develop relationships in this course. You will be relying on one another over the coming years in the AAT program, undergraduate schooling, and graduate schooling and in your professional lives! Seriously, this is one of the most fundamental aspects of the educational process!

5. Also, I want you to know that I consider you local experts on education. I did not go to school here. I did not spend twelve years of my life thinking about teachers, classes, homework. I hope you can add to this course with your knowledge and experiences.
6. Don’t worry. I have spent 12 years studying and practicing teaching, organizing classes, developing homework and tests, supporting students, and working in schools. Education and Teaching is my passion, and I hope to pass this on to you all!