



MidWeek

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"Making a difference"

Waipahu High School Principal **Keith Hayashi** was absolutely beaming when he announced that the school's Academy of Health Sciences and Academy of Natural Resources have been accredited by the National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) earlier this month. The two WHS programs have been designated National Model Academies – the highest ranking possible – as judged against ten national standards. Only 72 career academies have been accredited nationwide this year. The WHS Health and Sciences Program is one of only twelve among the best in the U.S. The Academy of Natural Resources is the first in the country to meet the highest standards.

I was invited to the Waipahu campus to meet the NCAC accreditors when they came to evaluate the two programs. It was a universally positive experience, with Health and Sciences students offering basic health screenings, and student chefs from the Culinary Arts Academy serving a delicious meal. The culinary program and the Public Health and Human Services Pathway will be next up to seek national accreditation. These disciplines are among ten WHS academies who's junior and senior year students work with industry and post-secondary partners.



Waipahu High junior Sherry Bonilla - from the Health and Sciences Academy - checked my blood pressure during a visit to the campus.

Career and college readiness have been a focus at the school under Principal Hayashi's leadership. He points to the campus successes with this pledge: "All of us working together will continue to make a significant difference in the lives of our students."

Congratulations to teachers and students for the hard work that has brought distinction to the Marauder Nation!

UH West Oahu serving our communities

I have often referred to the University of Hawaii – West Oahu as "our" university since it's the four-year UH campus in our part of the island. But beyond geography, UHWO offer a real alternative to UH Manoa with flexible scheduling, innovative programs and a brand new campus that is a real source of pride for our central and west Oahu communities.

There are about 2,700 students enrolled at UHWO this semester. Of that total, 309 indicate home addresses in the 96797 zip code – encompassing Waipahu and adjacent neighborhoods such as Royal Kunia, Village Park, Waikele and Waipio that are in my district. Another 241 students live at 96789 zip code addresses in Mililani, the other part of Senate District 18. Those 550 students represent fully 20 percent of the UHWO student population – a true indication that the campus is providing higher education opportunities for this part of the island.

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As might be expected, we have invested heavily in buildings for the campus in its first few years. Those facilities will serve keystone programs in allied health services and creative media in the years to come that will help the state fill career opportunities in health care fields and diversify our economy in movie-making and digital media.

Former Chancellor **Gene Awakuni** guided development as UHWO's permanent campus opened three years ago. Current Chancellor **Rockne Freitas** has brought stability and program innovation to the planning process and has been a passionate advocate for his campus, his colleagues and his students. "Rock" has announced that he will retire at the end of the year, capping a more than 20-year career in the University of Hawaii system. With his departure, the state will bid aloha to a devoted public servant who has always focused on the most effective ways to help others fulfill their dreams. The successes at UH West Oahu will be a fitting legacy to Rockne's years at UH and we wish him well in retirement.



UH West Oahu Chancellor Rockne Freitas prepares for retirement after more than 20 years of service to the University.