



**Division of Gender Studies
School for Cultural and Social Transformation**

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www.transform.utah.edu/gender-studies/

October 21, 2019

Susie Porter, Chair
Division of Gender Studies

To Whom It May Concern,

I appreciate the opportunity to express the Gender Studies Division's enthusiastic support for the Interdisciplinary Certificate in Pacific Island Studies. The Gender Studies Division has been a strong and active supporter of the Pacific Islander Studies initiative on campus, from the time it was a Transformative Excellence Proposal (coordinated and written in part by Gender Studies faculty), through recent hiring (two faculty who specialize in Pacific Islander Studies call Gender Studies their home), and Gender Studies staff support for the PI initiative and Mellon grant. Based on extensive conversations with Dr. Aikau and my reading of the proposal, the certificate will greatly enhance student experiences and learning, including but not limited to those in the Gender Studies Division.

The certificate provides an excellent opportunity for students to pursue a line of study of great importance to the history of the state of Utah. My expectation is that the certificate will also send a positive message to Pacific Islander students that their history, culture, and people are valued. The classes on Pacific Islander studies already offered through Gender Studies greatly enhance the major and minor. The interdisciplinary nature of the certificate lends itself to the way many of our students move through the Gender Studies major and minor. I expect that the certificate in PI Studies will create an exciting synergy for students, both in terms of individual college career pathways and in terms of what a more vibrant presence of students who pursue Pacific Islander Studies will bring to other classrooms.

Gender Studies is delighted to support the Interdisciplinary Certificate in Pacific Island Studies.

Sincerely,

Susie Porter, Chair
Professor of History and Gender Studies
University of Utah

October 17, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter of support for the proposed Pacific Islands Studies Certificate. For at least the better part of a decade, the Division of Ethnic Studies has long recognized the urgent demand and need for knowledge of and serving the Pacific Islander communities here in Utah. During that time, we began disaggregating the study of Pacific Islanders from Asian Americans in our courses which traditionally had been lumped together. We began offering ETHNC 2590 Pacific Islander American Experiences as a regular part of our introductory curriculum. We began cultivating relationships with faculty and graduate students from outside Ethnic Studies who would be qualified to teach a range of PI related upper division courses such as ETHNC 3590 Pacific Islander Health Dynamics. When the opportunity presented itself in 2017 for a PI hiring initiative that would build a critical mass of PI Scholars across campus, Ethnic Studies was an enthusiastic partner and we were thrilled to be able to appoint a senior scholar, Dr. Aikau, who could provide leadership and guidance in expanding and sustaining not just our own interest in PI Studies, but also across the University and perhaps between educational institutions throughout Utah as well.

In short, the Division of Ethnic Studies views the proposed Pacific Islands Studies Certificate as an exciting and propitious step within a larger recalibration of our research, teaching, and service missions to better include and incorporate PI Studies. Since the proposed PI Studies Certificate would be open to all majors, we see it as opening up pathways for students to gain greater exposure to our own Ethnic Studies courses and perhaps consider adding an Ethnic Studies major or minor of their own. ETHNC 2590, a required course under the proposal, is consistently our best filling introductory course, routinely filling its 60-student cap. Hence, even should the PI Studies certificate not materialize, we would continue to offer 2590. While we are not currently offering ETHNC 3560 Tongan American & Tongan Diaspora, it was a fairly popular class that could not be continued simply due to budgetary reasons. In other words, should the PI Studies Certificate prove successful in the coming years, the Division would certainly consider offering it again or even developing new courses that may fit within the Certificate. Finally, ETHNC 5910 Advanced Explorations in Ethnic Studies serves as the capstone course for both our Ethnic Studies major as well as in the PI Studies Certificate. This currently fits nicely since Dr. Aikau is the instructor of record for this course and for the foreseeable future. However, there may be questions and challenges that may arise in the future should too many PI certificate students who are not ES majors take this relatively small cap course or if Dr. Aikau is unable to teach this course. Undoubtedly, there will be growing pains but the PI Studies Certificate represents a

step that aligns with our larger strategic vision and I wholeheartedly support the proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edmund Fong', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Edmund Fong
Associate Professor and Chair
Division of Ethnic Studies



School for Cultural and Social Transformation

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Kathryn Bond Stockton
Distinguished Professor of English
Dean, School for Cultural and Social
Transformation
University of Utah

October 31, 2019

Undergraduate Council

LETTER OF SUPPORT:
Pacific Islands Studies Certificate

Dear Council members—

We are ready to deliver on a central promise. Happily, it's informed by community wisdom *and* fulfills the vision of what we proposed to the Mellon Foundation one year ago. We ask you to support this critical mission that advances the spread of Indigenous, diasporic knowledge at the U.

It's a joyful development.

To go back a little, when SPVAA Ruth Watkins and I were running the Faculty Hiring Initiative from 2015-2018, with an eye to engaging, in all humility, our vibrant Pacific Islander community in the state of Utah, we committed to hiring four PI Studies professors in a two-year period. We did just that. Then, in the spring of 2018, President Watkins asked a group of us—four members of Transform (the School for Cultural and Social Transformation)—to mount a detailed proposal to Mellon for our crafting the best Pacific Islands Studies program outside of Hawai'i. We jumped at the chance. And Mellon granted us \$600,000 to fulfill our three objectives: 1) attract Pacific-Islands-interested students here to the U through the PI Studies Program we are building; 2) advance our research through this attraction; 3) seek community knowledge as foundational to this two-way flow.

To signal our commitment to two-way exchange, Professor Hoku Aikau (jointly appointed in Gender Studies and Ethnic Studies and Director of Pacific Islands Studies in Transform) conducted, all last spring, seven focus groups on the U of U campus and in the community. This process proved important, trust building, and sound. At these

sessions, we solicited thoughts about needs, impact, and concerns surrounding our establishing a Pacific Islands Studies Certificate at the U. The response was overwhelmingly positive. For PI community members, the Certificate encourages PI college attendance and demonstrates the relevance of college for families who think in terms of job trajectory. For advisors from disciplines across the University, our curriculum promises recruitment and retention of PI students in relation to their majors. For Pasifika students, our curriculum informs their sense of heritage, empowering them, while it more broadly educates their classmates about Pacific Islanders, their issues, and their homelands. As well, we conducted surveys with high school students and their families in order to grasp what they need and want from a PIS curriculum.

Seeking international perspectives on these matters, in March Professor Aikau engaged in a two-day workshop hosted by the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Entitled “Envisioning Pacific Islands and Oceania Studies in the U.S. and Beyond,” this hui gathered scholars and community organizers from Hawai‘i, the U.S. continent, and U.S.-affiliated Pacific Island territories. International guests also included representatives from New Zealand and Australia.

That is to say, we come to you with thoughtful plans. They are fully doable. Given the boldly interdisciplinary, intersectional nature of Transform, the School (rather than one of our divisions—say, Ethnic Studies) is the right location for the Certificate, especially given our college-level partnership with Humanities. We have pledged to Mellon (a foundation for Humanities and Arts funding) that we will craft Humanities-centered curricula for PI Studies. Also, I am happy to state and underscore: no additional monies will be needed for this plan; our current student success coordinator, Jen Wozab, confirms she can meet our advising capacity; and MOUs with key participating faculty members (Hokulani Aikau, Maile Arvin, and Kehaulani Vaughn) will allow the needed courses to be sustained.

For all these reasons, I embrace this proposal—and ask you now to do the same.

With warmest respect,



Kathryn Bond Stockton
Dean, School for Cultural and Social Transformation
Distinguished Professor, English Department

October 22, 2019

Hōkūlani K. Aikau, Phd
Associate Professor
Gender Studies and Ethnic Studies
Director, Pacific Island Studies

The University of Utah
375 S 1530 E
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Dear Dr. Hōkūlani,

The J. Willard Marriott Library appreciates your request to comment on our ability to support students earning a Certificate in Pacific Island Studies.

The Marriott Library has extensive holdings to support learning and research in this area, and has supported undergraduate studies in the area of ethnic studies for decades. For two years, we have specifically focused on developing our Pacific Island Studies collections.

The Library regularly acquires scholarly books in several important areas including Pacific literature, history, and epistemology with an emphasis on materials written from a decolonized perspective. Further, we are able to purchase specific books and films upon request, and are dedicated to continually working with faculty and students to build Marriott Library collections in any needed areas.

The Library currently maintains subscriptions to a number of noteworthy journals that would support this certificate, including: *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, *Pacific Asia Inquiry*, *The Pacific Studies Journal*, *Asia Pacific world: the journal of the International Association for Asia Pacific Studies*, and numerous other titles. In addition, students in this program will also have access to important databases such as: *Australasian Literature: Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands*, *Bibliography of Asian Studies*, and *Diversity Studies*.

The Marriott also has significant resources to support the multimedia communication projects that students in the new program may be undertaking. Students may take advantage of the software packages available in the Knowledge Commons as well as the expertise and equipment available in the Library.

Professional library staff offer training workshops, online tutorials, and one-on-one consultations to University of Utah students and faculty. Similarly, we offer class presentations and one-to-one

consultations with library specialists who will suggest appropriate search strategies and help students locate relevant resources for their course-related and independent research projects.

The Marriott Library is looking forward to engagement with the faculty and students in this new program.

Sincerely,

Rachel Blume

Rachel Blume
Collection Development & Serials Librarian
Ethnic Studies Liaison
J. Willard Marriott Library
University of Utah