

## **Conference Explores the Intersection of Evaluation and Research with Practice and Native Hawaiian Culture**

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One of the great potential sources of innovative thinking in evaluation is events where indigenous peoples come together to explore the ways in which evaluation and research can be designed in a way that is culturally relevant and useful to the communities served by these activities.

In recent years, there have been several *hui* (gatherings) where Native Hawaiian and New Zealand Māori researchers and evaluators have come together to explore this theme. Currently, a Māori/Native Hawaiian working group is compiling a series of papers on the topic for possible publication in a monograph series.

Last October, the Policy Analysis & System Evaluation (PASE) department of Kamehameha Schools organized a conference at their Hawai‘i (Big Island) campus. The purpose of the gathering was to gain a better understanding of Hawaiian well-being by bringing together multiple viewpoints from diverse disciplines.

The event attracted a broad cross-section of researchers, educators, and cultural practitioners from the fields of education, health, family, economics, leadership, environmental studies, cultural practices, politics, and spirituality. “The variation of research presented was wonderful,” said one participant. “I am amazed at how far we have come [to be able to] present from a Hawaiian perspective.”

An overarching theme throughout the conference was the charge to rely on *kiipuna* (elders) wisdom and to balance that knowledge with scientific learning. Presenters also insisted that native voices are necessary to provide a more complete and accurate portrait of *kānaka maoli* (indigenous activities).

“It was very special to have the conference on our campus and to be talking about the wellbeing of our children while they were among us building their own futures through education. It made tangible the direct connections between our research and the education of Hawaiian children,” says PASE director Shawn Malia Kana‘iaupuni, PhD. “Everything we do—the surveys, the longitudinal studies, statistical analyses, technical reports, evaluations, and the sharing of findings with other researchers—is to help achieve a better understanding of how to make a difference for the keiki (children) and families we serve.”

For more information about PASE, call (808) 541-5372 or visit [www.ksbe.edu/pase](http://www.ksbe.edu/pase). To view presentations from this year’s conference, visit <http://www.ksbe.edu/pase/researchproj-ksrschcon.php>.