

HB 3144 - PI/NH SS Act
2/15 Hearing ROS

Testimony

Portland State University's Pacific Islander and Asian American Studies Working Group

Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian (PI/NH) communities are one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in Oregon, according to the 2020 census. However, PI/NH students face serious challenges to educational equity, including access to culturally responsive curricular initiatives, as well as resources and student support. This produces a significant achievement gap amongst dominant groups and PI/NH students.

The achievement gap is especially apparent once data on PI/NH students are disaggregated, rather than being combined with Asian students' data. The following are noteworthy findings:

- PI/NH students at Portland State University have the lowest graduation rate with only 48% receiving a bachelor's degree within 6 years of entry compared to 58.9% of White students and 67% of Asian students.
- PI/NH students at Portland State University experience the highest rates of D, F, W, or No-Pass Grades at 19.8%, followed by Black students at 17.9% and Native American students at 13.5%. The DFW rate is even higher (25.3%) for PI/NH students with First Generation status whose parent(s) or guardian(s) have not completed a Bachelor's degree.

PI/NH students at Portland State University also experience substantial barriers to completing college. Among respondents to the 2022 Student Experience Survey

- More than 90% of PI/NH respondents said that that paying for college and living expenses was a challenge
- 82% of PI/NH respondents indicated that emotional/mental health was a challenge.
- More than half PI/NH respondents said they worried about whether they could pay their rent or mortgage and 25% worried about running out of food before they could buy more

As faculty, researchers, teachers, administrators, and students in Portland State University's Pacific Islander and Asian American Studies Working Group, we have been engaged in a dialogue, conversation, and action to create a new academic program to serve the unrepresented students of both communities. However, as we have

undertaken this work, it has become increasingly obvious to us that the educational disparities that PI/NH students and community members face needs very timely attention in this climate of racial reckoning and calls for indigenous sovereignty. The PI/NH community is very diverse, and PI/NH students need culturally responsive curricula and support. We firmly believe that the Pacific Islander Student Success Act will provide resources and targeted interventions to address the academic opportunity gap hurting Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian students throughout K-12 and higher education settings. We urge you to vote YES on the Pacific Islander Student Success Act.

Betty Izumi, Professor and Interim Associate Dean of Student & Alumni Affairs, OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

Bree Kalima, Senior Program Coordinator, Pacific Islander, Asian & Asian American Student Center

Marie Lo, Professor and Chair, English

Alma M. Ouanesisouk Trinidad, Professor and Bachelor of Social Work, Program Director/Chair, School of Social Work

Kai Cheang, Assistant Professor, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Anne Dungalén, undergraduate student

Katie Hashimoto, undergraduate student

Serene Dressel, Coordinator, Student Sustainability Center and graduate student

Cynthia Lam Moffett, Senior Lecturer, College of Education

Sri Craven, Associate Professor and Chair, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Lalaine Sevillano, Assistant Professor; School of Social Work