

Nā Kumu o Kamehameha

Letters to the Editor (possible Viewpoint)

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Kamani Incident Strengthens Kamehameha Faculty Resolve

On Sunday, July 6, 1997, seventeen-year-old graduate and outgoing Student Body President Kamani Kualā'au became a public figure when his disclosure of the treatment he received from Trustee Lokelani Lindsey made the front page of the Honolulu Advertiser. Kamani has confirmed to us Greg Barrett's report that he "was called from class" and "summoned downtown by Bishop Estate trustee Lokelani Lindsey" where "Lindsey questioned him intensely for 2 1/2 hours." The way Kamani was handled runs counter to sound educational practice.

This incident should make it clear that there are fundamental problems within Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate (KSBE): a climate of fear and the threat of personal intimidation, the undermining of the values we represent as educators, and the removal of authority from those most directly responsible for the care of students.

We salute Kamani for his courage. In his effort to restore a sense of *pono* to the Kamehameha community, he was able to make the facts of his story known.

Kamani and Senior Class President James Moniz, also mentioned in Sunday's article, identified what they saw as serious problems in our school community and initiated efforts to address them. Their actions exemplify much of what their teachers have tried to instill: a capacity for critical thinking and creative problem solving, a strong sense of self-worth, a commitment to the principles and values of our community, and a willingness to take personal action to improve that community. It is our firm belief that these qualities foster an informed citizenry disposed to work toward the well being of our world.

We are appalled that Kamani was reprimanded for applying these very values and skills. Ideally, the concerns of Kamani and other students should have been addressed as an educational opportunity leading to a forum for dialogue and resolution.

A paramount responsibility of all adults in a school community is to serve as positive role models. Any attitudes, words, or behaviors which disillusion, confuse, or harm students are unacceptable. What Kamani relates as having happened violates these standards. No teacher or school administrator successfully intervened in the chain of events that led to Kamani's experience. Let no more of our students be driven into the corner that Kamani faced.

We believe the continued efforts of the Kamehameha 'ohana will promote the openness, trust, and collective involvement vital to a healthy school community. Crucial to these efforts is the immediate documentation of all questionable incidents that have occurred at KSBE. We support the urging of Nā Pua a Ke Ali'i Pauahi that all parties who have knowledge of such incidents submit descriptions of these to the court-appointed fact-finder,