Hawai‘i Receives $6 Million National Science Foundation Grant For K-12 Science, Math And Technology Education

HONOLULU—A consortium led by the Department of Education (DOE) and the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa (UH) has received a $6 million, five-year award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to improve science, math, and technology education in the state’s rural public schools.

The initiative, known as the Hawai‘i Networked Learning Communities (HNLC), is part of NSF’s Rural Systems Initiatives program. Funds will be used to deliver high quality teaching and learning opportunities to approximately 60 elementary and secondary schools in rural areas statewide. As teachers receive training and school-university partnerships are established, at least 24,000 students will benefit through new curriculum and projects.

“We are excited about the prospects of teaming with the University of Hawaii to focus resources and training to produce more students who will graduate from our schools and pursue post-secondary interests in mathematics, science, engineering and technology,” said Dr. Paul LeMahieu, superintendent of education. “This initiative will both strengthen our efforts to teach students from a standards-based approach in these subject areas and enhance teaching skills to better prepare our students for technology jobs in the future.”

According to Evan S. Dobelle, president of the University of Hawai‘i, “This initiative gives us the opportunity to create a seamless education from kindergarten through graduate school. Our schools will leap beyond the educational boundaries between the urban and rural populations of our state and between our state and the world.”

The Department of Education will be working with the University’s Department of Information and Computer Sciences and the School for Ocean, Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) to establish "Networked Learning Communities" with these schools.

As a result of this initiative, the targeted schools will enjoy the following benefits:

- Extensive teacher training with the latest technology tools.
- Curriculum aligned with the DOE’s math and science standards.
- Establishment of an interactive, on-line center (virtual community center) that links schools with science and math experts locally and nationally.
- Student-teacher collaboration on projects across schools.
- Effective partnerships between public schools and the University system to increase resource support to targeted schools.

The National Science Foundation is an independent U.S. Government agency responsible for promoting science and engineering through programs that invest over $3.3 billion per year in nearly 20,000 research and education projects.

The principal investigators for the Hawai‘i Networked Learning Communities project are Victoria Kajicjka, director, DOE Advanced Technology Research; Daniel Sichers, assistant professor, UH Department of Information and Computer Sciences (ICS), and Violet Harada, associate professor, ICS, Library and Information Science Program.

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