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## University of Hawai'i Receives \$3.3 Million to Bolster College to Career Pathways across the State

*Grants from local and national funders build on multi-year effort to Prepare graduates with in-demand skills, build local job market*

The University of Hawai'i (UH) today announced a \$3 million grant from Strada Education Network, a national nonprofit dedicated to strengthening America's education to employment pathways, to continue the advancement of career pathways in Hawai'i. In addition, the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation provided a \$300,000 grant to amplify the work across the state.

### The goals of the combined philanthropic investments are to:

- Sustain the industry-led sector partnerships to advance economic development and develop workforce solutions, while establishing a governance structure to provide oversight to statewide strategic planning.
- Enhance Hawai'i's STEM career pipeline by:
  - Aligning the Department of Education's Career & Technical Education pathways with UH and advancing initiatives to improve UH students' math and English scores to better position them for successful careers as they transition from high school to postsecondary education.
  - Developing UH STEM academic pathways in Engineering, Information Communications Technology, Biological Sciences, and Environmental & Physical Sciences for the transition from community college to 4-year campuses.
  - Bridging the success gap in STEM for students from under-represented groups.
- Provide integrated student support to help students face fewer barriers to achieving their academic and career plans.
- Enhance and promote the Hawai'i Industry Sectors website to be more user-friendly for students and policy makers. This includes linking to UH's nationally award-winning online graduation pathway system, STAR.

In 2016, UH received a [\\$4.6 million investment](#) from Strada to launch the *Building Hawai'i's Innovation Economy & Workforce* initiative. The initiative builds on and advances two of UH's key strategic directions—the [Hawai'i Innovation Initiative](#) and [Hawai'i Graduation Initiative](#). The overarching goal is to expand the state's economy beyond tourism and military spending to create high-quality, living-wage career opportunities for residents, while working to ensure our graduates have the skills that employers want and need.

“Our goal is to prepare Hawai'i's students and our workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow in a manner that is highly informed by employers and supported by educational pathways from K-12 to college to career,” said UH President David Lassner. “Strada's

remarkable investments are paving the way for others like the Harold K. L. Castle Foundation to join us and take the positive momentum even further. It is gratifying and energizing to partner with national and local funders who recognize and believe in our groundbreaking work that is increasingly becoming a model for other states.”

### **Impact Highlights to Date:**

- Eight industry-led sector partnerships in banking/finance, IT, engineering, food manufacturing, healthcare (Oahu & Maui), and agriculture (Hawai'i Island & Kaua'i) launched in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii. The sector partnership convenings provide a venue for industry to collectively address opportunities for growth as well as challenges; and partner with economic and workforce development, education, and other stakeholders to build solutions.
- 237 state, county, and nonprofit employees received STEM training/certification through the STEM Workforce Fund.
- 16.2 percent increase in enrollment and completion rates for minority students under-represented in STEM fields across the UH System between fall 2014 (2,432 students) and fall 2017 (2,825 students). Degree completion increased 18.3% from 415 students in FY 2015 to 491 students in FY 2017.
- Developed and aligned STEM academic pathways to increase student enrollment, persistence and transfer. For example, the engineering pathway was aligned so that all associates degree coursework counts towards a Bachelor of Science in Engineering at UH Mānoa.
- Launched the award-winning [Hawai'i Industry Sectors website](#) which uses data visualization to align Hawai'i's economic and workforce needs with degree offerings at UH.
- Enhanced statewide data and reporting tools have allowed UH to create dashboards and develop a culture of data use to inform policy decisions. For example, the STEM dashboard allows faculty/staff to track progress on STEM enrollment, transfer, retention, and graduation.

“Improving outcomes and opportunity for the students of Hawai'i has always been a critical part of our mission as we work to strengthen pathways between education and employment for all Americans,” said Bill Hansen, president and CEO of Strada Education Network. “The University of Hawai'i System has become a leading innovator in higher education, working alongside local and government leaders to improve student success and build the state's talent pipeline. We're honored to support this work and to be joined by collaborative partners like the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation to sustain and scale these innovative programs in Hawai'i.”

Terry George, Harold K.L. Castle Foundation president and CEO added, “For Hawai'i to truly thrive, K-12 and higher educational opportunities must reflect labor market needs and lead to family sustaining wages. We are pleased to partner alongside Strada Education in helping the University of Hawai'i enroll far more students in career pathways that prepare them for in-

demand jobs and obtain a degree that employers actually value. Working together, we can help Hawai'i's youth to fulfil their most ambitious dreams.”

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**The University of Hawai'i Foundation**, a nonprofit organization, raises private funds to support the University of Hawai'i System. The mission of the University of Hawai'i Foundation is to unite donors' passions with the University of Hawai'i's aspirations by raising philanthropic support and managing private investments to benefit UH, the people of Hawai'i and our future generations. [www.uhfoundation.org](http://www.uhfoundation.org)

**Strada Education Network<sup>SM</sup>** is a national nonprofit dedicated to improving lives by catalyzing more direct and promising pathways between education and employment. We engage partners across education, nonprofits, business and government to focus relentlessly on students' success throughout all phases of their working lives. Together, we address critical college to career challenges through strategic philanthropy, research and insights, and mission-aligned affiliates — all focused on advancing the universal right to realized potential we call Completion With a Purpose<sup>®</sup>. Learn more at [StradaEducation.org](http://StradaEducation.org).