

# Reviewing the Admissions Policy

*A look at the issues surrounding the offer of admission to a non-Hawaiian student at Kamehameha Schools-Maui*

On July 11, 2002, Kamehameha Schools announced that its Maui campus was admitting a non-Hawaiian student for the 2002-03 school year.

The announcement generated a groundswell of response from the Hawaiian community. Hundreds of comments and inquiries poured in to Kamehameha, most quite emotional and all expressing concern for what is believed to be one of the last opportunities for educational success for Hawaiians.

The Board of Trustees and Chief Executive Officer Hamilton McCubbin responded immediately with a press conference to express regret that the issue could not have been shared earlier, and to announce a series of meetings to provide more information about the decision.

*I Mua* magazine has gathered and reprinted here key documents presented by Kamehameha Schools on this issue. The most important message is that the trustees and CEO will defend and uphold Kamehameha's policy of providing preference to Hawaiian children.

They are also committed to an ongoing dialogue with KS stakeholders about ways to align Kamehameha's admissions criteria and procedures with the goals of the institution's Strategic Plan and the communities it serves.

## Interim Changes Announced

On Aug. 11, KS announced that it would implement one-year interim admissions changes for the current admissions cycle that begins Aug. 15, 2002.

"The interim changes were approved by the Board of Trustees," said Kamehameha Schools CEO Hamilton McCubbin. "They are designed to improve student recruitment at our Maui and Hawai'i campuses and better align the campuses to serve their communities."

The changes will only be in place for one year and will not apply to the Kapālama Campus on O'ahu.

The four one-year interim changes for the Hawai'i and Maui campuses are as follows:

- **A one-time waiver of the application fee.**

Kamehameha has received community feedback that the \$25 application fee presents an obstacle to some families. It is expected that waiving the fee for one year will encourage more applications.

- **No applicants screened out at Preliminary Evaluation.**

Applicants to the Maui and Hawai'i campuses in grades one through 10 will not be screened out in any Preliminary Evaluation process.

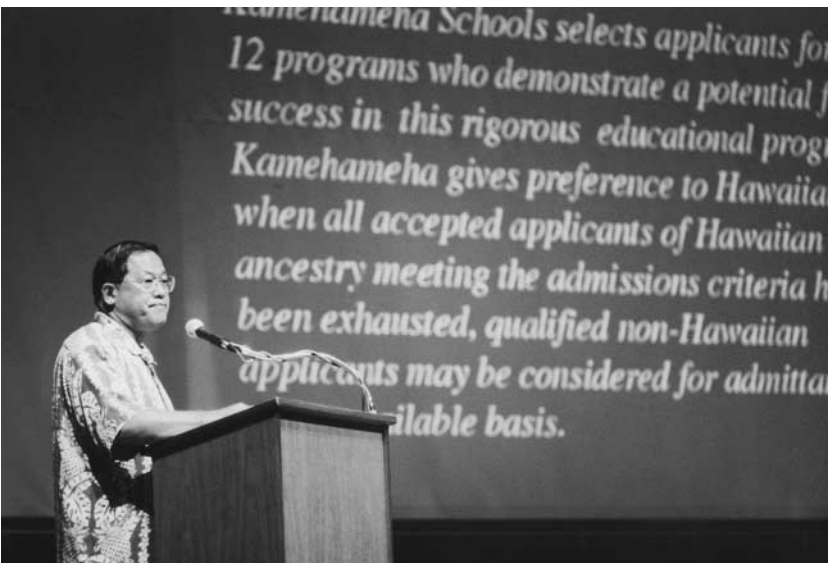
This process is utilized at the Kapālama Campus to help manage the large number of applications received.

Because there are fewer applicants to grades 1-10 at the Maui and Hawai'i campuses, the Preliminary Evaluation screening will be waived for those grades.

- **Suspend use of minimum scoring threshold.**

A minimum cutoff score will not be used to eliminate any applicants to the Maui and Hawai'i campuses in grades one through 10.

The admissions criteria remains the same, and applicants will still be evaluated on the basis of test scores, grades, teacher recommendations and ratings by the Rating Committees.



Chief Executive Officer Hamilton McCubbin addresses the crowd at a July 15 meeting on the Kapālama Campus to discuss Kamehameha's admissions policy.

- **Allow applicants from West Hawai'i to apply to either the Hawai'i Campus or Kapālama Campus.**

Kamehameha's campuses on Maui and Hawai'i are intended to serve the children and families of those islands. It is Kamehameha's desire to provide more opportunities for more children on these islands to attend Kamehameha Schools programs.

For the current admissions cycle, residents in KS' West Hawai'i district (Honoka'a to South Point) will be eligible to apply to either the Kapālama Campus as boarders (grades 7-12) or to the Hawai'i Campus as day students (grades K-10).

Previously, students from West Hawai'i and remote communities on Maui were eligible to apply only to the Kapālama Campus, which has boarding facilities.

Students from remote communities on Maui will continue to be eligible to apply to either Maui (K-10) or Kapālama campuses (grades 7-12).

Again, these changes will apply for one year to the Maui and Hawai'i campuses only for the admissions cycle that begins Aug. 15, 2002.

These interim changes were shared with a number of stakeholder groups, including the Kamehameha Schools Alumni Association Board of Presidents, the Kamehameha Schools Board of Advisors, the Maui Campus Advisory Council, KS admissions staff, faculty and administrators from the Maui and Hawai'i campuses, Kapālama administrators, and others.

### Community Meetings Scheduled

Kamehameha Schools has just begun its fourth cycle of strategic planning Community Advisory Meetings (CAMs) that will run from September 2002 through February 2003.

Input from these meetings will help to align admissions criteria and procedures with the KS Strategic Plan.

The plan, in turn, will support KS' efforts to extend the reach of Pauahi's legacy to serve more people of Hawaiian ancestry and will further define the role of KS in serving the K-12 population.



Kamehameha's CEO and Board of Trustees respond to questions from the audience at the July 15 meeting.

We encourage our *'ohana* to participate in these forums.

The following Community Advisory Meetings are scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. at these locations:

- Oct. 8 King Kaumuali'i cafeteria (Kaua'i)
- Oct. 10 KS-Maui Campus cafeteria
- Oct. 15 KS-Hawai'i Campus cafeteria
- Oct. 28 Kūhiō Hall, Dept. of Hawaiian Homelands West Hawai'i (Waimea)
- Oct. 29 Kealakehe Intermediate School Cafeteria (Kona)
- Oct. 30 KES Dining Hall, Kapālama Campus

For the most current schedule of meetings, visit [www.ksbe.edu](http://www.ksbe.edu).

# Trustees Speak Out on Admissions Issue

(On July 26, 2002, *The Honolulu Advertiser* and *The Honolulu Star-Bulletin* published this article by the Board of Trustees)

*"If we have learned nothing else from this, it is that Hawaiians want us to educate more of Ke Ali'i Pauahi's children."*

The last two weeks have been painful, not only for the Hawaiian community, but for us, the trustees charged with protecting the legacy of Ke Ali'i Pauahi. We have felt the overwhelming hurt, and the anger from those who fear the Trust will fall. The reaction has been resounding and powerful, and we are listening attentively.

If we have learned nothing else from this, it is that Hawaiians want us to educate more of Ke Ali'i Pauahi's children. We couldn't agree more. Indeed, this is the same message that was delivered when the community helped us shape our Strategic Plan.

Ke Ali'i Pauahi intended the Kamehameha Schools to serve a broad range of students. However, for the last decade the admissions process has been heavily weighted toward academic performance, which is only one measure of talent and potential.

Although the situation on Maui resulted from an unusually small applicant pool, it brought the problems with the admissions process into sharp focus. As a result, we have pledged to work with the Hawaiian community to carefully review our admissions process so we can align our campuses and programs with the needs of the specific communities they serve.

To accomplish this, we are setting up a series of community meetings. But as we move forward, we also need to clear up some common misunderstandings:

## **First, the trustees did not change the admissions policy.**

We upheld the school's policy of preference for children of Hawaiian ancestry. That policy was set by the first Kamehameha Schools trustees, under the leadership of Ke Ali'i Pauahi's widower, Charles Reed Bishop.

Ke Ali'i Pauahi's will directs her trustees to "devote a portion of each year's income to the support and education of orphans and others in indigent circumstances, giving the preference to Hawaiians of pure or part aboriginal blood."

The original trustees expanded that preference to include all Hawaiian *keiki* because they believed that was Ke Ali'i Pauahi's intention, but they allowed for non-Hawaiian admissions.

## **Second, the Maui admissions process was fairly applied to all applicants.**

All the applicants on Maui went through the same process and were evaluated by the same criteria. Non-Hawaiians have always been able to apply to Kamehameha, and in the past, some have.

All applicants are considered without regard to ancestry. Ancestry is verified only at the end of the admissions process, after applicants have been notified of their acceptance.

In the Maui case, the trustees were told in May that a non-Hawaiian was offered admission. Again, the trustees were informed after the applicants had been notified and asked to verify their ancestry. There were no Hawaiian children on the waiting list.

Some have said we should have offered the vacancy on the Maui campus to a Hawaiian student wait-listed on another island. Some have said we should have changed the admissions criteria to keep the non-Hawaiian student out.

We couldn't do either of those.

To change the process in mid-stream would be unfair and unethical, and unworthy of the high moral character and integrity that Ke Ali'i Pauahi expected of her children and her trustees.

Nor did we feel we could change the admissions policy from one of preference to one of exclusion. That would certainly have endangered Pauahi's legacy, which we have vowed to protect and defend. We must stand by the decision, despite the pain it has caused.

We do regret the way the decision was communicated, and we have apologized for that. The process of evaluating individual applicants is confidential and must be kept private in order to protect the integrity of the trust and the privacy of applicants.

Most importantly, we see this situation as something that can help the Kamehameha Schools grow and serve a broader segment of the Hawaiian community.

Even as we review our admissions process, we have instructed Kamehameha Schools CEO Hamilton McCubbin to implement the Strategic Plan that will dramatically expand the schools' reach.

The plan, which spans all age groups, from preschool to adult education, was developed over two years with input from more than 4,000 members of the community. It is a 15-year plan. We project that in just five years the number of Hawaiians we serve will double.

We all want Kamehameha to serve as many Hawaiians as possible. It is the wish of our beloved Princess. Let us unite behind that common goal. / *Mua* Kamehameha.

## **Kamehameha Schools Board of Trustees,**

Douglas Ing  
Constance Lau  
Nainoa Thompson  
Diane Plotts  
Robert Kihune

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# KS Admissions: A Historical Perspective

## Did Pauahi define in her will who could attend Kamehameha Schools?

Regarding admissions, Pauahi Bishop's will does not say that KS will admit Hawaiians exclusively. Nor does it say that the schools are for all the children of Hawai'i. It only says:

- "devote a portion of each year's income to the support and education of orphans, and others in indigent circumstances, giving the preference to Hawaiians of pure or part aboriginal blood;" and
- "I also give unto my said trustees full power to make all such rules and regulations as they may deem necessary for the government of said schools and to regulate the admission of pupils, ..."

The Board of Trustees have stated and affirmed that Kamehameha Schools was not intended to admit Hawaiian children exclusively.

- "The noble minded Hawaiian chiefess who endowed The Kamehameha Schools, put no limitations of race or condition on her general bequest. Instruction will be given only in the English language, but The Schools will be opened to all nationalities." (Prospectus of The Schools – Dec. 23, 1885)
- "...the terms of the will do not exclude other nationalities from the enjoyment of its privileges, if Hawaiians do not chose to avail themselves of the advantages offered to them." (Trustee Charles M. Hyde – April 1894).
- "Education of the natives was the first, but not the exclusive and perpetual purpose of the Founder of the Schools." (Charles Reed Bishop – Feb. 20, 1901)

Nonetheless, the trustees recognized it was Pauahi's intent to give Hawaiians a limited preference in admissions. This is confirmed by the writings of her husband, Charles Reed Bishop, a Kamehameha Schools trustee from 1884-1897. The preference policy has been adhered to by successor trustees for 115 years.

- "...it was decided that schools should be preferred, not for boys and girls of pure or part aboriginal blood exclusively, but that class should have preference; that is they should have the first right, provided, of course, that they took advantage of the opportunity and complied with the conditions and rules of the Will and of the Trustees of the Estate..." (Charles Reed Bishop letter to Samuel Damon, Oct. 9, 1911)
- Pauahi foresaw "...that, in a few years the natives would have to compete with the other nationalities in all the ways open to them for getting an honest living; And so, in order that her own people might have the opportunity for fitting themselves for such competition, ...these schools were provided for, in which Hawaiians have the preference, and which she hoped they would value and take the advantages of as fully as possible." (Charles Reed Bishop address to Kamehameha School for Boys students, Dec. 19, 1887)

- "...it was intended and expected that the Hawaiians having aboriginal blood would have preference, provided that those of suitable age, health, character and intellect should apply in numbers sufficient to make up a good school." (Charles Reed Bishop letter to Samuel Damon, March 15, 1901)

## What did the will say about tuition?

- Pauahi's will states that a portion of the estate's annual income, devoted to support of orphans and indigents, is to be determined solely by her "trustees they to have full discretion." The will also states that the trustees have full power "...to determine if tuition shall be charged in any case." Both statements suggest that she did not intend Kamehameha Schools to be a charity school.
- The official prospectus of the school approved by the KS trustees Dec. 23, 1885 supports the above view. The trustees deemed "it advisable that specific though moderate charges should be made for the advantages offered by The School...the testator's designs being evidently not to establish an orphan asylum or a charity school." The Schools' earliest students paid more than 25% of the cost of their education.
- For the 1999-2000 school year, KS subsidized about 95% of KS K-12 students' tuition costs. Despite that, 2,277 K-12 students system-wide (about 65% of 3,530 total students) received \$3.8 million in additional financial aid.

## What is the legal status of KS' admissions policy?

In 1999, the IRS concluded, "The Estate's admission policy is consistent with the requirements for recognition of exemption as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the [Internal Revenue] code." The IRS based the ruling on its determination that:

- Applicants of any racial or ethnic background are admitted, as long as they have at least one Hawaiian ancestor.
- The admissions policy does not exclude an individual of any particular racial or ethnic group as long as the Hawaiian ancestry requirement is met.
- Kamehameha students (past and present) belong to a wide variety of ethnic and racial groups including Caucasian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, African-American, Arabian, Native Alaskan and Native American.
- The IRS ruled on the admissions policy in July of 1975. It concluded then that the Trustees' policy was not indicative of racial discrimination.
- In its latest ruling in 1999, the IRS reaffirmed its 1975 ruling, finding that there were no significant changes of fact that would warrant a different conclusion.