

# **Filipino Educational Status and Achievement at the University of Hawai‘i**

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This article describes and analyzes the educational status of Filipino “first time freshman” students at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, the main campus in the statewide University of Hawai‘i system, between 1979 and 1986. The data for this article come from a larger study that was primarily concerned with Native Hawaiian first time freshmen at the University (UH Department of Sociology 1988). These data were obtained from student information files maintained by the University’s Office of Admissions and Records. For the purposes of this paper, a first time freshman is defined as a student who, after graduating from high school, initially began college studies at UH Manoa, i.e., a nontransfer student.

The first section of the article reviews the demographic and educational background characteristics of Filipino first time freshmen (henceforth referred to as FTF) prior to entering the University such as their locale of residence and high school grade point average. The next section is concerned with the educational achievement of Filipino FTF students at UH Manoa in terms of their cumulative grade point average, attrition rate and academic status. The third section discusses the graduation of Filipino FTF students from UH Manoa. In addition to FTF students, the following section reviews the educational attainment and graduation of Filipino community college transfer (henceforth referred to as CCT) students at the University. In each of the above sections, the data for Filipino students are compared with those for Native Hawaiian, Japanese and “All” FTF or CCT students. Lastly, an analysis is provided of the educational status of Filipino students at UH Manoa in terms of institutional constraints that restrict their access to and persistence in higher education.

## **Precollege Background**

This section reviews the demographic and educational background prior to attending college of Filipino first time freshmen who entered the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa during the fall semester in the years 1979 through 1985. The various precollege characteristics of Filipinos discussed below include their relative representation, gender division, high school grade point average (GPA) and rank, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, public and private high school graduation, and locale of permanent residence.

Table 1

Filipino, Native Hawaiian, Japanese and All First Time Freshmen  
at UH Manoa, Fall 1979 to Fall 1985

	Filipino		Native Hawaiian		Japanese		All	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1979	119	5.4	86	3.9	1,025	46.6	2,285	100.0
1980	138	6.4	152	7.1	986	45.8	2,230	100.0
1981	146	6.5	160	7.2	976	43.7	2,239	100.0
1982	144	6.9	139	6.7	892	42.9	2,090	100.0
1983	162	7.3	144	6.5	937	42.2	2,224	100.0
1984	156	8.3	113	6.0	757	40.3	1,888	100.0
1985	171	8.8	137	7.0	790	40.5	1,975	100.0
Mean	148	7.1	133	6.3	909	43.1	2,133	100.0

The Filipino FTF cohorts comprised a mean of 148 students and 7.1 percent of all entering freshmen at UH Manoa between 1979 and 1985 (see Table 1). Filipino freshmen generally increased their absolute number and relative percentage each year from 1979 to 1985 which is a significant factor in the increasing representation of Filipinos at the University during the same period and until the present (see Table 2). The above percentage approximates the 6.7 percent of UH Manoa undergraduates represented by Filipinos in 1985 (Office of Institutional Research and Analysis 1985a: 3). However, both percentages are considerably below the 18 percent represented by Filipinos in the public school system in Hawai'i and thus indicate the severe underrepresentation of Filipinos among FTF students admitted to the University.

In contrast to Filipinos, declining numbers in absolute and relative terms was the case with the Japanese and All FTF cohorts between 1979 and 1985. This trend is consistent with the decreased enrollment at UH Manoa since 1983, particularly of Japanese students which is largely due to their declining college age population. Nonetheless, the mean percentage of the Japanese (43.1%) FTF cohorts constitutes considerable overrepresentation relative to their public school enrollment (16%). As for Native Hawaiians, their mean percentage (6.3%) of 1979-85 entering freshmen at UH Manoa indicates substantial underrepresentation in terms of their public school enrollment (23%).

Table 2

Filipino, Native Hawaiian and Japanese Students at UH Manoa,  
Fall 1980 to Fall 1990

	Total		Filipino		Native Hawaiian		Japanese	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1980	20,175	100.0	779	3.5	571	2.8	6,957	34.5
1981	20,446	100.0	838	4.1	801	3.9	7,326	35.8
1982	20,880	100.0	938	4.5	939	4.5	7,461	35.7
1983	20,966	100.0	1,023	4.9	976	4.7	7,441	35.5
1984	19,965	100.0	1,045	5.2	972	4.9	7,067	35.4
1985	19,606	100.0	1,111	5.7	986	5.0	6,993	35.7
1986	18,918	100.0	1,135	6.0	917	4.8	6,625	35.0
1987	18,382	100.0	1,165	6.3	929	5.1	6,191	33.7
1988	18,424	100.0	1,272	6.9	970	5.3	5,960	32.3
1989	18,546	100.0	1,364	7.4	1,037	5.6	5,803	31.3
1990	18,810	100.0	1,488	7.9	1,120	6.0	5,612	29.8

Sources: Fall 1980-84; Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, University of Hawai'i 1985b. Fall 1985-90; Institutional Research Office, University of Hawai'i 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991.

With regard to the gender division of the Filipino FTF students, there were overall more females (59.3%) than males (40.3%), and this relative ratio generally was the case for every cohort. The Native Hawaiian, Japanese and All students cohorts also had more women than men but in slightly lower percentages than Filipinos.

In terms of high school grade point average, the Filipino FTF cohorts had the highest mean GPA from 1979 to 1985 (3.25 on a maximum 4.0 scale): Native Hawaiians (3.00), Japanese (3.16) and All students (3.14) (see Table 3). Data from another study which included several other ethnic groups (e.g., Chinese) indicate that Filipinos may well have the highest mean high school GPA of all freshmen entering the University (Takeuchi 1988: 32).

High school quintile rank refers to a student's relative ranking on a five point scale in his or her high school graduating class that is based on cumulative grade

Table 3

Mean High School Grade Point Average of Filipino, Native Hawaiian, Japanese and All First Time Freshmen at UH Manoa, Fall 1979 to Fall 1985

	Filipino		Native Hawaiian		Japanese		All	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1979	102	3.27	69	2.99	968	3.16	2,062	3.15
1980	115	3.29	128	2.98	934	3.19	2,000	3.16
1981	129	3.21	135	2.99	919	3.16	1,941	3.13
1982	114	3.26	108	3.05	852	3.16	1,826	3.14
1983	147	3.24	119	2.97	902	3.16	1,999	3.13
1984	138	3.26	92	3.06	730	3.17	1,708	3.15
1985	153	3.22	117	2.99	771	3.15	1,752	3.14
Mean		3.25		3.00		3.16		3.14

point average. Given their comparatively highest mean high school GPA, it is not surprising to find that Filipino freshmen had by far the highest mean quintile rank (4.64) compared to Native Hawaiians (3.97), Japanese (4.40) and All students (4.33). Filipinos also had by far the greatest mean percentage of students in the fifth or highest quintile (upper 20% of high school graduating class): Filipinos (72.2%), Native Hawaiians (37.1%), Japanese (58.6%) and All freshmen (55.3%).

As for Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, the Filipino freshmen generally increased their scores between 1979 and 1985, particularly their SAT verbal and combined scores. However, their mean SAT mathematics (482), verbal (393) and therefore their combined (873) scores generally were lower than those of the other groups: Native Hawaiians (908), Japanese (972) and All students (958). These lower SAT scores of Filipinos are somewhat anomalous given that they had the highest high school GPA of all entering freshmen and thus perhaps are an indication of the inherent cultural biases of standardized achievement tests such as the SAT (Cabras 1989: 10). The relation of SAT scores to the academic performance and graduation of Filipino and other students at the University is discussed below.

A majority of Filipino entering freshmen at UH Manoa from 1979 to 1985 was graduated from a public (80.7%) rather than a private (15.9%) high school in Hawai'i. The data also indicate that the overwhelming majority (96.6%) of Filipino FTF students was graduated from a Hawai'i high school (as was the case with Native Hawaiian and Japanese freshmen) with smaller numbers graduating from schools in the continental United States, Guam and the Philippines. The Native Hawaiian FTF cohorts had by far the highest mean percentage of private high school graduates (59.9%), especially from the Kamehameha Schools, compared to Japanese (18.4%) and All students (25.1%). Conversely, Native Hawaiians had the lowest mean percentage of public high school graduates (37.8%) in comparison to the Japanese (79.1%) and All (64.7%) freshman cohorts.

In terms of locale of permanent residence, the Filipino FTF cohorts between 1979 and 1985 were primarily from rural O'ahu (39.7%), followed by Honolulu (32.0%) and the neighbor islands (26.1%). Native Hawaiian freshmen also resided for the most part in rural O'ahu (42.3%), then Honolulu (34.0%) and the neighbor islands (22.8%). In contrast, Japanese freshmen were primarily from Honolulu (44.8%), followed by rural O'ahu (30.8%) and the neighbor islands (23.0%). Similarly, All students generally were from Honolulu (45.2%), then rural O'ahu (29.8%) and lastly the neighbor islands (17.1%).

Thus, the typical Filipino first time freshman at UH Manoa is female, had a "B+" grade point average in high school which numerically is the highest of all FTF students, was in the fifth quintile of his or her high school graduating class, has lower SAT scores than the average entering freshman at the University, was graduated from a public high school in Hawai'i and is from rural O'ahu.

#### Academic Achievement at UH Manoa

This section reviews the educational achievement of Filipino first time freshman students at UH Manoa between 1979 and 1986. In contrast to the previous section, the discussion is limited to the 1979, 1980 and 1981 FTF cohorts since they are the only groups of which a significant proportion of students would have been graduated by 1986. The college achievement characteristics reviewed below include grade point average, attrition rate, and academic status, i.e., probation, suspension or dismissal from the University.

The Filipino freshmen had a mean GPA of 2.37 (on a maximum 4.0 scale) after their first semester at UH Manoa which is substantially above the Univer-

sity standard for satisfactory academic performance (2.0). Their GPA was higher than that of Native Hawaiians (2.11) but lower than that of the Japanese (2.55) and All (2.52) FTF cohorts.

The University of Hawai'i at Manoa has as one of its admission requirements for incoming freshmen an SAT verbal score of 430, although this minimum standard is not applied rigorously in the admissions process (Ikeda et al. 1985: 12). A substantial majority (70.5%) of Filipino students who had SAT verbal scores below 430, nonetheless, achieved grade point averages of 2.0 or higher during their first semester at UH Manoa. That is, those students performed satisfactory or better college work despite having SAT verbal scores that would have prevented them from being admitted to the University if the SAT verbal standard was strictly applied as the sole criterion for admission. In fact, none of the seven Filipino FTF cohorts from 1979 through 1985 had a mean SAT verbal score above 430, although their grade point averages at UH Manoa demonstrate clearly that they are more than capable of successful college study. Significant majorities of Native Hawaiian (56.5%), Japanese (73.9%) and All (73.0%) FTF students who had SAT verbal scores less than 430 also attained grade point averages of 2.0 and above during their first semester at the University. Recall that the Native Hawaiian (419), Japanese (434) and All (431) FTF cohorts all had mean SAT verbal scores very proximate to the 430 standard. Thus, the above data indicate that the present SAT verbal standard for admission to UH Manoa is not an especially accurate predictor of satisfactory academic performance insofar as it would deny entry to the great majority of incoming freshmen who are quite able to perform successfully in college. Therefore, its salience as an admission criterion relative to other criteria such as high school grade point average should be reevaluated.

The mean attrition rate of Filipino freshmen from UH Manoa after the first semester was 6.7 percent, i.e., that proportion of each entering cohort between 1979 and 1981 did not enroll for the second semester at the University. However, based on other data that were obtained through interviews, some of those students later may have resumed their studies at UH Manoa or transferred to a community college or another university. At any rate, the first semester attrition rate of Filipinos was lower than that of Native Hawaiians (12.2%) but higher than that of Japanese (3.2%) and All (5.9%) students.

Filipino freshmen who were enrolled at UH Manoa for the entire first year performed more than satisfactorily on the whole. They had a mean grade point average of 2.43 compared to that of the Native Hawaiian (2.23), Japanese (2.64)

and All (2.61) FTF cohorts. Also, a substantial majority of Filipino freshmen (70.7%) had a GPA of 2.0 or above after their first year at the University, although this percentage was lower than that of Japanese (80.6%) and All (76.8%) students but higher than for Native Hawaiians (59.4%).

In terms of their academic status as determined by cumulative grade point average, a considerable majority of the Filipino FTF students (61.6%) experienced no academic difficulty (probation, suspension or dismissal) while attending UH Manoa. This percentage was below that of Japanese (73.7%) and All (72.3%) students but above that of Native Hawaiians (57.8%).

With regard to students ever placed on academic probation (cumulative GPA below 2.0), the Filipino FTF cohorts (27.7%) had a slightly greater mean proportion than Native Hawaiians (26.8%), Japanese (20.0%) and All students (20.3%). However, in terms of students ever academically suspended from the University, Filipinos (24.5%) were intermediate between Native Hawaiians (32.9%) on the one hand, and Japanese (16.2%) and All students (17.7%) on the other. Filipinos also had an intermediate ranking in terms of the mean percentage of students ever academically dismissed from UH Manoa: Filipinos (8.5%), Native Hawaiians (10.9%), Japanese (5.4%) and All students (5.6%).

Almost one-half (46.9%) of the Filipino FTF nongraduates of UH Manoa, that is, students who had not yet completed their bachelor's degrees or who had left the University, did not experience any academic difficulty, at least as evident from their cumulative GPAs, while at UH Manoa. This figure suggests that many Filipino students do not graduate from the University for nonacademic reasons, perhaps because of financial constraints or family commitments that require them to terminate their studies or because of transfer to another university. In comparison with the other groups, the Filipino percentage approximated that of Native Hawaiians (46.2%) but was lower than that of Japanese (53.7%) and All students (56.8%).

### Graduation from UH Manoa

For reasons stated above, data on graduation from UH Manoa for only the 1979, 1980 and 1981 Filipino FTF cohorts were analyzed. The graduation rate of the 1981 FTF cohort was lower than that of the other two groups because the data available extended only through the 1985-86 academic year, i.e., for five years in the case of the 1981 cohort but for six and seven years for the 1980 and 1979 cohorts, respectively. The longer period of matriculation at UH Manoa

Table 4

Filipino, Native Hawaiian, Japanese and All First Time Freshman  
Graduates of UH Manoa: 1979-1981 Cohorts

	Filipino		Native Hawaiian		Japanese		All	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1979	119	49.6	86	33.7	1,025	66.1	2,201	56.9
1980	138	43.5	152	30.9	986	62.0	2,154	52.6
1981	146	27.4	160	21.3	976	42.2	2,231	36.9
Mean		40.2		28.6		56.8		48.8

reviewed for the latter two groups contributes to their higher rates of completion of college studies. For this reason, those rates are probably more representative of the ultimate graduation outcomes of the FTF cohorts than the tabulated means on graduation for the 1979, 1980 and 1981 groups discussed below.

A mean of about forty percent (40.2%) of the Filipino FTF cohorts was graduated from UH Manoa (see Table 4). However, with the passage of time, it can be conjectured that the eventual graduation rate of the three cohorts would exceed this percentage and approach or perhaps even surpass that of the 1979 cohort (49.6%). In contrast, the Native Hawaiian (28.6%) cohorts had a lower mean graduation rate, while the Japanese (56.8%) and All students (48.8%) cohorts had higher completion rates, all of which also can be expected to increase over time. For example, a study of the 1979 FTF cohort at UH Manoa over a seven year period found the following graduation rates: Chinese (70%), Filipinos (50%), Native Hawaiians (34%), Japanese (66%), Koreans (48%) and All students (56%) (Takeuchi 1988: 43).

Filipinos represented a mean of 5.0 percent of all FTF graduates of UH Manoa from the 1979-81 cohorts, a percentage which is slightly lower than their proportion (6.1%) of entering freshmen at the University between 1979 and 1981. Since more Filipinos from the 1980 and 1981 cohorts can be expected to have graduated, the actual difference between the above two percentages is probably minimal.

In comparison, Native Hawaiian FTF students comprised a mean of 3.5 percent of the FTF graduates from the three cohorts which is considerably lower than the 6.1 percent of entering UH Manoa freshmen between 1979 and 1981 that they represented. In contrast, Japanese students constituted 52.7 percent of the FTF graduates of the University which is substantially greater than the 45.4 percent of entering freshmen that they comprised from 1979 to 1981. Thus, in relation to their percentage of FTF students at UH Manoa, Filipinos are proportionately represented among FTF graduates, Native Hawaiians are underrepresented, and Japanese are overrepresented.

As for the schools and colleges of the University from which they were graduated, a plurality (41.6%) of Filipino FTF students were graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences. Filipinos also were graduated in significant percentages from the College of Business Administration (14.6%), School of Nursing (13.1%), College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (10.9%), and College of Engineering (6.7%). Unfortunately, a somewhat low percentage of Filipino FTF students were graduates of the College of Education (5.0%) since Filipinos continue to be severely underrepresented as teachers in the Hawai'i public school system (3.6%) (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin* 1989: A-3). Filipinos also were not especially well represented among graduates of the School of Travel Industry Management (3.1%) despite the substantial number of Filipino workers in the tourist industry in Hawai'i.

With regard to the other groups, they also had a plurality of their FTF graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences, and all had significant numbers of graduates from the Colleges of Business Administration, Engineering, Education, and Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

The Filipino FTF graduates of UH Manoa had a mean cumulative grade point average of 2.85. This figure was slightly lower than the GPA of Native Hawaiians (2.89), Japanese (3.06) and All students (3.04).

In terms of their academic status as determined by cumulative grade point average, 17.1 percent of the Filipino FTF graduates had been in some type of academic difficulty (probation or suspension) at some time during their undergraduate tenure at the University. This percentage was higher than that of the other groups: Native Hawaiians (13.7%), Japanese (11.7%) and All students (11.5%).

As for the number of years necessary to graduate from UH Manoa, for each of the Filipino FTF cohorts, a majority of graduates required at least five years to complete their bachelor's degrees. Of the Filipino graduates from the 1979

cohort, 59.4 percent required five years or less to finish their undergraduate studies. This percentage was higher than that for Native Hawaiians (55.1%) but lower than that for Japanese (68.8%) and All (68.7%) FTF graduates. The data also show clearly that less than one-fifth of the FTF graduates of the University are able to graduate in the traditional four year period. The extended period of study required for graduation is probably due to working while attending college.

To summarize the academic achievement characteristics of the Filipino FTF graduates of UH Manoa, they were likely to have had almost a "B" cumulative grade point average, not to have ever been in academic difficulty (probation or suspension), to have been graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences, and to have graduated in five years.

#### *Precollege Characteristics of Graduates*

The demographic and educational background characteristics prior to entering UH Manoa of the Filipino FTF graduates may indicate factors that can be correlated with academic success and thus which should be the focus of University concern. A majority of the graduates were females (61.9%) as was the case with their 1979-81 entering cohorts at roughly the same percentage. The other FTF graduates also were comprised of more women than men: Native Hawaiians (57.8%), Japanese (62.4%) and All graduates (60.8%). Native Hawaiian and Japanese females also appear to complete their degrees in a shorter period of time than their male counterparts.

A slight plurality of the Filipino FTF graduates were from the neighbor islands (35.5%) and were followed by those from rural O'ahu (34.8%) and Honolulu (26.8%), although only 29.8 percent of their 1979-81 FTF cohorts were from the neighbor islands. The higher graduation rate of neighbor island students might be attributed to their probable greater tendency to reside in University dormitories than students from Honolulu since campus residence has been found to be positively associated with undergraduate academic success. Dormitory residence provides students with facility of access to libraries, peer support networks, professors, computer laboratories and other campus facilities and academic activities.

There is a slight tendency for the Native Hawaiian FTF graduates to have rural O'ahu (38.5%) as their primary locale of permanent residence rather than Honolulu (36.1%) or the neighbor islands (25.4%). This residence pattern also was the case for the Native Hawaiian freshman cohorts between 1979 and 1981.

Table 5

Mean SAT Verbal Score of Filipino, Native Hawaiian, Japanese and All First Time Freshman Graduates of UH Manoa: 1979-1981 Cohorts

	Filipino		Native Hawaiian		Japanese		All	
	N	SAT	N	SAT	N	SAT	N	SAT
1979	56	399	25	440	660	433	1,228	433
1980	52	397	44	419	598	438	1,119	434
1981	37	395	32	403	409	432	800	427
Mean		397		421		434		431

The Japanese FTF graduates were primarily from Honolulu (44.8%), then rural O'ahu (29.9%) and the neighbor islands (24.2%) as were their 1979-81 FTF cohorts. Similarly, All FTF graduates were from Honolulu (46.4%), followed by rural O'ahu (27.2%) and the neighbor islands (19.1%) which also was the case with All FTF students between 1979 and 1981.

As for their high school educational background, the Filipino FTF graduates generally had higher educational achievement characteristics than their 1979-81 freshman cohorts. For example, the Filipino graduates had a mean high school grade point average of 3.36 which was somewhat higher than the mean GPA of the Filipino freshman cohorts between 1979 and 1981 (3.26). The Native Hawaiian (3.10), Japanese (3.26) and All (3.24) FTF graduates had lower mean high school GPAs than that of the Filipino graduates. The Filipino FTF graduates had a mean high school quintile rank of 4.80 which was considerably higher than that of Filipino freshmen between 1979 and 1981 (4.65). The quintile ranking of the Filipino graduates was much higher than that of the Native Hawaiian (4.21), Japanese (4.55) and All (4.51) FTF graduates.

The Filipino FTF graduates (84.4%) had a greater percentage of students in the fifth quintile of their high school graduating class than did the 1979-81 Filipino entering freshmen (74.2%). This percentage was substantially higher than that of the Native Hawaiian (48.2%), Japanese (68.2%) and All (65.2%) FTF graduates.

With regard to SAT scores, the Filipino FTF graduates (484) had a slightly higher mean SAT mathematics score than that of their 1979-81 entering freshman counterparts (472). They also had a similarly higher mean SAT verbal score (397) than Filipino freshmen between 1979 and 1981 (385) (see Table 5). The Filipino FTF graduates had a mean SAT combined score (881) somewhat greater than that of their 1979-81 freshman counterparts (854). Note that the SAT verbal score of the Filipino FTF graduates is well below the 430 standard for admission to UH Manoa and thus demonstrates that students who score below that standard are quite capable of graduating from the University.

In comparison with the other groups, the mean SAT scores, i.e., mathematics, verbal and combined, of the Filipino FTF graduates all were lower than those of the Native Hawaiian, Japanese and All FTF graduates. The mean SAT verbal score of the Native Hawaiian graduates (421) also was lower than the 430 admission criterion, while the scores for Japanese (434) and All (431) FTF graduates were only minimally higher, thus again bringing into question the relative significance of the SAT verbal standard for University admission.

A much higher proportion of the Filipino FTF graduates attended public high schools (88.0%) in Hawai'i than private high schools (8.7%) which also was the case for Filipino entering freshmen between 1979 and 1981. In contrast, Native Hawaiian (64.3%) FTF graduates generally attended private Hawai'i high schools, while Japanese (85.1%) and All (73.2%) FTF graduates primarily attended public high schools in Hawai'i.

Thus, in terms of their precollege demographic and educational background, the typical Filipino FTF graduate is female, is from the neighbor islands or rural O'ahu, had a "B+" grade point average in high school, was in the fifth quintile of his or her high school graduating class, had lower SAT scores than the other FTF graduates of UH Manoa and was graduated from a public high school in Hawai'i.

#### *Graduates and Nongraduates*

The precollege demographic and educational background characteristics of the 1979-81 Filipino FTF graduates can be compared with those of the Filipino FTF students from the same cohorts who did not graduate from UH Manoa. This comparison can delineate which, if any, of the background characteristics are potential predictors of graduation from the University for Filipino students and, conversely, which are not. Obviously, such information is relevant to University admission requirements and policies, particularly as they affect minority students.

The Filipino FTF nongraduates comprised a mean of 7.1 percent of the FTF students who did not graduate from UH Manoa. This percentage was higher than the representation of Filipinos among all FTF graduates (5.0%) and among all FTF students who entered the University between 1979 and 1981 (6.1%). Thus, Filipinos are slightly overrepresented among the FTF nongraduates of UH Manoa. Native Hawaiian nongraduates (8.4%) also were overrepresented among All FTF nongraduates, while Japanese nongraduates (37.8%) were considerably underrepresented in relation to their proportion of 1979-81 entering freshmen at the University (45.4%).

As were the Filipino FTF graduates, a majority of their nongraduates were females (56.7%). Native Hawaiian (51.8%) and Japanese (52.2%) FTF nongraduates tended to be men in contrast to their primarily female graduates, while All FTF nongraduates were almost equally divided between women (50.3%) and men.

The Filipino FTF nongraduates were predominantly from rural O'ahu (40.0%) in contrast to their graduates who had a slight tendency to be from the neighbor islands. Native Hawaiian FTF nongraduates tended to reside in rural O'ahu (47.5%) as was true of their graduates. Almost one-half of Japanese (48.3%) and All (46.8%) FTF nongraduates were from Honolulu as was the case with their graduates.

With regard to their high school educational attainment, the Filipino FTF nongraduates (3.19) had a considerably lower mean high school grade point average than both their graduates (3.36) and all entering Filipino freshmen at UH Manoa between 1979 and 1981 (3.26). The same general pattern also was true for the other FTF cohorts.

Similarly, in terms of high school quintile rank, the Filipino FTF nongraduates (4.53) had a lower ranking than their graduates (4.80) and the 1979-1981 Filipino freshmen (4.65). The same tendency also held for the other groups. A similar ranking pattern prevailed with regard to the percentage of the Filipino FTF nongraduates who were in the fifth quintile of their high school graduating class. This percentage was the lowest for the Filipino nongraduates (66.7%), was the highest for their graduates (84.4%), while their 1979-81 freshmen cohorts held an intermediate position (74.2%). The other FTF groups had the same general pattern as Filipinos.

As for SAT scores, the mean SAT mathematics score of the Filipino FTF nongraduates (466) was lower than that of their graduates (484). The nongraduates of the other groups also had lower mean mathematics scores than their respective

Table 6

Mean SAT Verbal Score of Filipino, Native Hawaiian, Japanese and All First Time Freshman Non-Graduates of UH Manoa: 1979-1981 Cohorts

	Filipino		Native Hawaiian		Japanese		All	
	N	SAT	N	SAT	N	SAT	N	SAT
1979	50	377	44	399	310	420	870	430
1980	62	382	81	419	336	430	909	427
1981	95	370	104	413	532	423	1,247	422
Mean	376		410		424		426	

graduates. The mean SAT verbal score of the Filipino FTF nongraduates (376) was also below that of their graduates (397) (see Table 6). As for the other groups, the difference in the SAT verbal scores of graduates and nongraduates was only 11 points for Native Hawaiians, 10 points for Japanese and only 5 points for All students with the graduates having higher scores in all three cases. These essentially minimal differences between graduates and nongraduates, particularly for All FTF students, clearly negate the supposed significance of the SAT verbal score as a predictive indicator of not only satisfactory academic performance in college but also of graduation.

The mean SAT combined score of the Filipino FTF nongraduates (836) was lower than that of their graduates (881). This pattern also was the case for the other FTF cohorts. However, the difference in the SAT combined scores of FTF graduates and nongraduates was only 31 points for All students, was 32 points for Native Hawaiians and was even smaller for Japanese (27 points), again raising questions concerning the predictive validity of SAT scores for academic performance and graduation.

A majority of the Filipino FTF nongraduates attended public high schools in Hawai'i (80.6%) as was also true of their graduates. Similarly, the Japanese (76.6%) and All FTF nongraduates (61.8%) were predominantly from Hawai'i public high schools as was the case with their graduates, although in greater proportions. In contrast, a majority of Native Hawaiian FTF nongraduates (58.7%) attended private high schools in Hawai'i as was also the case for their graduates.

### Community College Transfers

The following section is concerned with the academic achievement of Filipino students at UH Manoa who had transferred to the University from a local community college. In order to compare the educational attainment of community college transfer (CCT) and first time freshman students at UH Manoa, the discussion is focused on three cohorts of CCT students. These groups are defined in terms of the year that the CCT students were graduated from high school, i.e., 1979, 1980 and 1981. Thus, the CCT cohorts are somewhat comparable to the three groups of FTF students discussed above that entered UH Manoa in 1979, 1980 and 1981. However, the students in a given CCT cohort transferred to UH Manoa in different years and thus vary in terms of the number of years they were enrolled in the University.

#### *Precollege Background*

At UH Manoa much less information is available on the demographic and high school background of community college transfer students than of first time freshmen. For example, limited data have been recorded on the high school GPA and SAT scores of CCT students, although they may not have taken the SAT since it is not required for admission to community colleges in Hawai'i.

A mean of 77 Filipino students from each of the high school graduating classes between 1979 and 1981 transferred to UH Manoa from the community colleges. They comprised a mean of 9.0 percent of all such CCT students at the University which was intermediate between the proportion of Native Hawaiian (7.1%) and Japanese (37.3%) transfer students.

A slight majority of the Filipino CCT students were females (51.5%) as was the case with their FTF students. In contrast, Native Hawaiian (54.0%) and All CCT students (51.1%) were primarily males, while Japanese were equally represented by both sexes. Over three-fourths (76.9%) of the Filipino CCT students were graduated from public high schools in Hawai'i which also was true of their FTF counterparts. In contrast, almost one-half (49.9%) of the Native Hawaiian CCT students was graduated from private high schools in Hawai'i, while Japanese (88.0%) and All (67.9%) CCT students were predominantly graduates of local public high schools.

#### *Educational Achievement at the Community Colleges*

The data in this section are limited to the cumulative credits earned by the transfer students while at the community colleges. The Filipino CCT students



Table 7

Filipino, Native Hawaiian, Japanese and All Community College Transfer Students Graduated from UH Manoa: 1979-1981 High School Graduates

	Filipino		Native Hawaiian		Japanese		All	
	N	SAT	N	SAT	N	SAT	N	SAT
1979	79	24.1	68	39.7	307	36.5	891	32.4
1980	76	19.7	66	15.2	357	31.9	911	28.8
1981	75	12.0	48	12.5	290	13.5	767	14.3
Mean	18.6		22.5		27.3		25.2	

transferred to UH Manoa with a mean of 40.6 credits. This figure represents a little more than three full time semesters (12 credits per term) of study, although a majority of community college students attend on a part time basis. The mean number of transfer credits of Filipinos was quite comparable to that of Native Hawaiian (40.3), Japanese (41.8) and All (40.9) CCT students.

With regard to the year when the Filipino CCT students transferred to the University, a plurality (30.4%) of the 1979 high school graduates enrolled at UH Manoa in 1982, three years after leaving high school. However, of the 1980 and 1981 high school graduates, a plurality of students in each group transferred two years after graduating from high school. As for the other groups, in general, their transfer patterns to UH Manoa were quite similar to that of Filipinos.

#### *Graduation from UH Manoa*

A mean of 18.6 percent of the Filipino CCT students from each of the high school graduating classes was graduated from the University (see Table 7). The graduation rates of the 1980 and 1981 high school graduates are considerably lower than that of the 1979 graduates (24.1%) because the data available for our study extended only through the 1985-86 academic year, that is, for five and six years for the 1981 and 1980 groups, respectively, compared with seven years for the 1979 cohort. Thus, the actual graduation rate of the Filipino transfer students can be assumed to have increased over time and probably approximates that of the 1979 cohort.

In comparison with the other CCT groups, the mean graduation percentage of Filipinos was the lowest: Native Hawaiians (22.5%), Japanese (27.3%) and All CCT students (25.2%). The graduation rate of the 1979 Filipino high school graduates serves as an indication of the potential academic success of Filipino CCT students at UH Manoa. This low percentage (24.1%) denotes that the average Filipino CCT student does not graduate from the University as is also the case for all other community college transfer students.

The Filipino FTF students had a much higher graduation rate (40.2%) than their CCT counterparts. The same also is true for the Native Hawaiian, Japanese and All FTF students with the latter two groups having completion rates about twice as high as their respective CCT counterparts. Thus, it is clear that first time freshman students have much greater chances of graduating from UH Manoa than do community college transfer students.

As for their absolute and relative representation among CCT graduates of the University, a mean of 14 Filipino CCT students was graduated from each of the three high school graduating cohorts. They comprised a mean of 6.9 percent of the CCT graduates which is lower than the Filipino representation among all CCT students (9.0%). The minimal mean number of Filipino CCT graduates compared to the annual mean number of their FTF graduates (53) belies the claim made that the community colleges serve to prepare students, particularly those of ethnic minority background, for eventual transfer to and graduation from a baccalaureate degree granting institution. There are three times as many Filipinos (3,794) in the six community colleges in Hawai'i as there are Filipino undergraduates at UH Manoa, although not all of the former intend to earn a bachelor's degree (IRO 1991: 13). Nonetheless, the mean number of Filipinos from a given high school graduating class that eventually will transfer to the University (77) from the local community colleges is less than 60 percent of the mean number of Filipino students in a given FTF cohort (134). Furthermore, students from UH Manoa, UH Hilo and UH West O'ahu also transfer to the community colleges (at an annual mean rate of 842 students between 1979 and 1984), thus offsetting community college transfers to those baccalaureate granting universities (OIRA 1985b: 26).

Studies on the U.S. mainland have found that while three-fourths of community college freshmen intend to earn a bachelor's degree, only one-fourth actually do so (Astin 1982: 192). Similarly, the supposedly "open door" admission policy of community colleges in Hawai'i is actually a closed door for the great majority of their students who hope to transfer to and graduate from a four year institution. This situation is especially significant for minority students

such as Filipinos (17.4%) and Native Hawaiians (11.4%) given their much higher enrollment in the community colleges than at UH Manoa (IRO 1991: 13). Filipino and other students of any ethnic background would increase substantially their probability of graduating with a bachelor's degree if they begin their undergraduate studies at a four year university rather than at a community college. Therefore, the University should increase its recruitment and admission of minority students as first time freshmen rather than assume that their significant community college enrollment is an indication of their eventual transfer to and graduation from UH Manoa.

As for the other groups, a mean of 14 Native Hawaiian CCT students from each of the 1979-81 high school graduating classes was graduated from the University. They represented an overall mean of 6.2 percent of the CCT graduates, a percentage which is slightly lower than that of the Native Hawaiian CCT students at UH Manoa (7.1%). In contrast to the above groups, the mean of 88 Japanese CCT graduates constituted 39.4 percent of all transfer graduates which is a little higher than their mean proportion of All CCT students (37.3%). In sum, as is the case with the FTF graduates, relative to their percentage of CCT students at UH Manoa, Filipinos and Native Hawaiians were slightly underrepresented among CCT graduates, while Japanese were minimally overrepresented.

With regard to their academic achievement at UH Manoa, the Filipino CCT graduates had a mean cumulative grade point average of 2.76 which was comparable to that attained by the Native Hawaiian (2.79), Japanese (2.88) and All (2.88) CCT graduates. It also approximated the cumulative GPA of the Filipino FTF graduates (2.85).

The Filipino CCT graduates earned more cumulative credits at UH Manoa than the other groups: Filipinos (99.8), Native Hawaiians (88.2), Japanese (94.1) and All graduates (92.4). This result is partially due to their also having the highest number of cumulative credits carried at the University: Filipinos (101.9), Native Hawaiians (90.1), Japanese (96.7) and All graduates (94.7). The difference between the number of credits earned and credits carried by the Filipino transfer graduates (2.1) is one of the lowest of all the groups and indicates that they had minimal academic difficulty in terms of enrolling in courses for which they received no credit. However, the high number of credits carried by the Filipino CCT graduates might denote that they enrolled in several courses that ultimately were not required for them to graduate.

The mean number of community college transfer credits of the Filipino CCT graduates (40.2) is the lowest of all the groups: Native Hawaiians (47.4), Japanese (40.6) and All graduates (42.3). It would require somewhat more than three semesters of full time enrollment (12 credits per semester) at a community college to earn the transfer credits of the Filipino CCT graduates and eight full time semesters or four academic years of study to gain their cumulative credits at UH Manoa. Thus, it can be estimated that Filipino CCT graduates require about five and a half years of full time study in order to graduate from the University which is a semester longer than the five years generally required by the Filipino FTF graduates.

In sum, the typical Filipino community college transfer student who graduates from UH Manoa is female, was graduated from a public high school in Hawai'i, earned credits at a community college equivalent to more than three semesters of full time study before transferring to UH Manoa, earns credits at the University equivalent to about four years of full time enrollment, has a "B-" cumulative GPA at UH Manoa, is graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences, and requires a cumulative total of about five and a half years of full time study in order to graduate. In comparison with All CCT students, the Filipino transfer students are almost as likely to graduate from UH Manoa, although they have a much lower probability of graduating than their FTF counterparts.

## Discussion

The description above reviewed the educational status of Filipino first time freshman and community college transfer students at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa between 1979 and 1986 in terms of their precollege demographic and educational background and their academic achievement and graduation from the University. The comparatively lower educational status and achievement of both Filipino first time freshman and community college transfer students, particularly with regard to graduation from the University, were clearly established. In comparison to Japanese and All students, Filipinos tend to earn lower grades, have a higher attrition rate from UH Manoa, are more likely to experience some form of academic difficulty (probation, suspension or dismissal), require a longer period of study to graduate, have a lower graduation rate and thus are underrepresented among graduates of the University.

However, on a more positive note, it was shown that Filipino FTF students have the highest high school grade point average of all entering freshmen at UH

Manoa, although they also have the lowest SAT scores. This disparity in precollege achievement characteristics can be attributed to University admissions policies that have the ultimate effect of restricting Filipino entry to UH Manoa. While Filipino students with sufficiently high SAT scores and high school GPAs are being admitted to the University, it appears that students with adequate high school GPAs (>2.5) but with low SAT scores are being denied admission, and those with low SAT scores but with very high GPAs have a greater chance of being admitted. This admissions procedure may account for Filipinos having the highest high school GPA of all entering freshmen, but it also denies entry to Filipino and other students who probably could graduate from UH Manoa as indicated by their high school GPA. The study mentioned above of the 1979 FTF cohort at UH Manoa found that Filipino students with high school GPAs of 3.0 and above had a much higher graduation rate (58%) than students with GPAs below 3.0 (35%) (Takeuchi 1988: 35). Similarly substantial differences in graduation rates between students with high school GPAs of 3.0 and higher and those below 3.0 also were evident among Native Hawaiians (49% vs. 24%) and Japanese (74% vs. 55%). These findings suggest that high school grade point average may be a more significant criterion for admission to the University than SAT scores. It was shown above that SAT scores do not appear to be a valid predictor of academic performance in college. That is, a substantial majority of All FTF students who had SAT verbal scores of less than 430, the minimum standard for admission to the University, are quite capable of satisfactory academic achievement as evident from their college GPAs. It also was established that the SAT verbal and combined scores of FTF students do not discriminate significantly between graduates and nongraduates of UH Manoa, and therefore their relative salience as admission criteria should be reassessed. The significance of SAT scores as admission criteria is particularly relevant to Filipinos given their tendency to have lower scores than other ethnic groups and the detrimental effects of the interpretation of such scores on Filipino entry into the University (see Cablas article in this volume).

Thus, Filipino representation and educational status in the University are primarily a reflection of institutional constraints, if not institutional discrimination, against their access, persistence and graduation rather than of the cumulative academic qualifications or intelligence of individual Filipino students. These constraints restrict Filipino access to higher education even prior to entry into the University as evident in their SAT scores and the importance attributed to them as admission criteria. The relatively lower SAT scores of Filipino students are an indication that they are educationally disadvantaged by and therefore do not benefit equally from the public school system in Hawai'i rather

than that they lack the necessary academic skills and aptitude for college studies. The lower levels of educational achievement and graduation of Filipinos from the University also are largely attributable to institutional obstacles rather than to their academic deficiencies. These barriers include the limited number of Filipino faculty and students at UH Manoa, cultural differences in behavioral norms and values and thus in teaching and learning styles between faculty and students, and students' perceptions of prejudice and discrimination on the part of faculty and the administration. Other obstacles that have been identified as hindering Filipino access to higher education include financial difficulties, inaccurate measures of academic ability, the underpreparation of high school and community college students, and articulation problems in the transfer process from the community colleges (Agbayani and Takeuchi 1987: 7-9; UH Task Force on Filipinos 1988: 28-29). For example, in terms of financial barriers, even though the University has relatively low tuition fees compared to other public supported universities, a survey of 1985 UH Manoa freshmen found that 66 percent of Filipinos and 52 percent of Native Hawaiians were "much" concerned about their finances in college compared to only 35 percent of Japanese students (Takeuchi 1988: 40).

It was noted above that Filipino females outnumbered their male counterparts among FTF students and graduates and CCT graduates of UH Manoa. This gender pattern also prevailed among Native Hawaiian, Japanese and All FTF students. The greater representation of women among students and graduates of the University also can be explained by structural factors instead of by differences in academic abilities and aptitude between males and females. It has been argued that, given the considerable employment opportunities in Hawai'i for Japanese men that are not necessarily dependent on higher education, they may not have to obtain a college degree as much as Japanese women (Takeuchi 1988: 22). The latter, however, may perceive that they need to have a degree in order to compete effectively in the male dominated employment market. In contrast, males of subordinate groups, such as Filipinos and Native Hawaiians, may receive little or no encouragement to enter the professions or management, and this may deter their achievement in school and aspirations for college (Takeuchi 1988: 22). Filipino and Native Hawaiian females, on the other hand, have higher graduation rates than their respective male counterparts because they may expect greater benefits from a college education and may perceive greater occupational opportunities within a larger structural context in which Filipinos and Native Hawaiians are substantially underrepresented in the higher status occupations.

Ultimately, the structural constraints that restrict Filipino educational status and achievement at the University derive their force from the stratification by

ethnicity inherent in the wider Hawai'i society (Okamura 1990). The lower educational status of Filipinos in the University is a direct reflection of their subordinate socioeconomic status in the larger ethnic stratification order. While the educational system in Hawai'i, including both private and publicly supported schools and universities, can be viewed ideally as providing a means for upward social mobility, it is apparent that it also serves to reinforce the stratification order by limiting the access of Filipinos and other minority groups to higher education and thus to higher occupational and income statuses. Conversely, the educational system appears to prepare the socioeconomically dominant groups, such as Japanese, Chinese and Whites, for professional, managerial and other high status occupations denied to the subordinate groups.

### Conclusion

Despite the generally discouraging analysis of Filipino educational status and achievement presented above, it is more than likely that Filipinos will increase their absolute and relative representation at the University of Hawai'i and in higher education in general in the immediate future. This trend has been progressively apparent for over the past decade as Filipino students have steadily gained in numbers and proportion at UH Manoa from 616 (2.9%) in 1977 to 1,488 (7.9%) in 1990 (OIRA 1985b: 13; IRO 1991: 13). Filipinos have been increasing their representation at UH Manoa by about 0.5 percent annually for the past several years, despite the institutional obstacles discussed above that limit their access and persistence in the University. To some extent, this relative increase can be attributed to the declining enrollment of other ethnic groups, particularly Japanese, such that UH Manoa enrollment has decreased since 1983. Nonetheless, Filipinos have had a 31 percent gain at the University since 1986, the largest by far of Hawai'i's ethnic groups (IRO 1991: 16). This trend clearly demonstrates that substantial numbers of Filipino students would like to study at the University of Hawai'i if only greater and more equitable educational opportunities are made available to them.

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