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## The Education of Filipinos in Hawai'i

Amefil R. Agbayani

By the close of the 20th century, one-third of the school children and college age population in the United States is expected to be non-White ethnic/racial minorities (African American, Asian American, Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander). Filipinos are one of the fastest growing Asian American groups in the nation. In Hawai'i, Filipinos are a significant proportion of the population and are among the socioeconomically disadvantaged ethnic minorities. The experience of Filipinos with educational institutions impacts the Filipino community as well as educational policy, programs and research. This paper will present an overview of the experiences, problems and challenges facing Filipinos in Hawai'i and the responses of the major educational institutions to Filipinos.

### Filipinos in the USA and Hawai'i

In 1990, there were 1.4 million Filipinos in the United States. This represents more than an 80 percent increase since 1980. Most of the increase is accounted for by immigration—about 50,000 Filipinos immigrate to the United States annually. Nearly half of the new immigrants settle in California and one-tenth in Hawai'i. The 1990 U.S. census data show that the 168,700 Filipinos are the third largest ethnic group in Hawai'i: Whites (33%), Japanese (22%), Filipinos (15%), Hawaiians (13%), Chinese (6%), other Asians and Pacific Islanders (6%), African Americans (3%), and Others (2%) (U.S. Bureau of Census 1992). Because of a difference in the definition of Hawaiians and Part-Hawaiians, Hawai'i state data identify Filipinos as the fourth largest group (11%) following Hawaiians and Part-Hawaiians (19%). As a group, Filipinos are a young population and one of the fastest growing in Hawai'i due to a high birth rate and continuing high immigration from the Philippines.

In the continental United States, Filipinos generally compare quite favorably to other Asian American groups and to Whites in socioeconomic status and educational level. However, Filipinos in Hawai'i are not as well off and have lower educational achievement compared to those in other parts of the United States. Recent immigrant Filipinos generally earn less than Hawai'i born Filipinos (almost one-half of the Filipino community in Hawai'i is foreign-born). Filipinos have the highest percentage of workers employed at the lowest end of the occupational scale as farm and nonfarm laborers and the lowest percentage of workers employed at the uppermost end of the occupational scale

as professionals, managers, and proprietors of the five major ethnic groups in Hawai'i. The disadvantaged status of Filipinos can be traced to their subordinate position as immigrant laborers since they first arrived in 1906 to work on the sugar plantations (which was the dominant industry until the 1960s) and as service workers in today's economy (the tourist industry is currently the dominant industry).

#### **Education of Filipinos in Hawai'i: Prior to 1959 (Statehood)**

The following conditions color the early educational experience of Filipinos in Hawai'i: 1) uneducated Filipinos were recruited to Hawai'i; 2) they were the most recent immigrant arrivals; 3) they occupied the lowest plantation jobs vacated by earlier immigrant Chinese and Japanese who moved into urban jobs; 4) the unbalanced sex ratio—average of 5 males to 1 female—retarded the growth of Hawai'i-born children; 5) most of the Filipinos eventually wanted to return to the Philippines and did not consider Hawai'i their home; and 6) racist attitudes were held towards Filipinos (and other non-Whites). By 1932, 35,000 or 70 percent of the plantation work force was Filipino. There was a belief that plantation workers and their children did not need an education because it would draw them away from plantation work, and less education was effective in maintaining the low status of Filipinos. Territorial Governor Farrington wanted children to value manual labor, particularly agriculture which was the "source of prosperity in the Territory." He also suggested the creation of a domestic service department in the public schools to encourage more Filipinos to become domestic servants. Stanley Porteus, a prominent psychologist in the 1920s, wrote many racist studies about Japanese, Filipino and other non-White groups in Hawai'i that reinforced racist ideology and gave credibility to the argument that Filipinos need not be educated (Porteus and Babcock 1926: 70):

It is our opinion that no matter what labels of citizenship we may put on these people they remain Filipinos, and it will take much more than a knowledge of the three Rs to make them Americans. To make the system of schooling too over-scholastic might be worse than no benefit at all. The surest way to make a malcontent is to educate him either above his intelligence or his opportunities.

Although they came as early as 1906, Filipinos did not participate in Hawai'i educational institutions in a significant way until the 1940s and 1950s. In 1920, Filipinos had the smallest percentage of 16 and 17 year olds enrolled in school: Filipino (18%), Caucasian (64%), Part-Hawaiian and Hawaiian (56%), and Japanese (35%). Although they represented 12 percent of the population in 1940, less than one-half of one percent of students in the prestigious English Standard

schools were of Filipino ancestry. Caucasians represented 46 percent of the children in those schools and 23 percent of the population in 1940. By 1950, Filipinos had 80 percent of their 16 and 17 year old children enrolled in school. World War II and statehood in 1959 had a positive impact on increasing the participation of Filipino children in the public schools. The newly elected Democrats in the State Legislature expanded public education.

Few Filipinos entered the University of Hawai'i during this period. For example, Alfred Laureta who had a distinguished career as a lawyer and federal judge, noted that he had only five Filipino classmates at the university in the 1940s.

#### **Education of Filipinos: 1965 to 1990**

While other ethnic groups in Hawai'i have been able to use educational attainment as a means for upward social mobility, Filipinos historically have not found the educational system to work to their advantage. The 1980 census showed that Filipinos had the lowest median number of years of schooling completed among the major ethnic groups: Whites (13.3), Chinese (12.8), Japanese (12.6), and Filipinos (12.1). The wide disparity in educational achievement between Filipinos and other ethnic groups is made more apparent if the percentage of persons (25 years and over) who have a bachelor's degree or higher is considered: Whites (31%), Chinese (30%), Japanese (25%), Filipinos (12%), and Hawaiians (9%) (U.S. Bureau of Census 1993). However, the percentage of persons (18 to 24 years old) enrolled in college shows some improvement among Filipinos: Chinese (54%), Japanese (52%), Filipinos (31%), Hawaiians (22%), and Whites (21%).

By the 1990s, Filipinos have become one of the largest ethnic groups among public school children: Hawaiians (24%), Filipinos (18%), Whites (18%), Japanese (13%), and Chinese (3%) (Hawai'i Department of Education 1994). However, Filipinos comprise only 5 percent of public school teachers and staff in contrast to the much higher proportion of Japanese (59%), Whites (16%), Chinese (8%), and Hawaiians (7%). Filipinos also are underrepresented in the University of Hawai'i system, particularly at the main UH Mānoa campus (10%).

#### **Filipinos in Hawai'i Educational Institutions**

The historical and current level of Filipino educational participation and achievement given above is disturbing. But even more disturbing to observers

are the various reasons given by some educators, policymakers and researchers as to why Filipinos are not achieving in educational institutions in Hawai'i. The rest of the paper will discuss educational programs and explanations for the educational underachievement of Filipinos. The examples presented will illustrate how educational institutions in Hawai'i have responded to the needs of Filipinos in ways that have not benefited them or the institutions themselves. The first example deals with efforts of the public schools to educate recently arrived Filipino immigrant children. The second concerns the efforts of the University of Hawai'i to increase the participation of Filipino students.

Despite research theories in education stressing that educational achievement is the result of complex interactions between the student and the institution as well as between the student and societal structures, most studies and educational programs focus on the student and characteristics of the student that lead to success. As noted by Smith (1989: 7), "This issue is most important, because the definition of a problem can dramatically affect the solutions sought, which has particular implications for the education of minorities, where too often failure has been focused on the student and the students' background ... Framing the questions in this way deemphasizes organizational issues and organizational change." There are numerous ways to describe a phenomenon or situation or problem. How a situation is described or a problem defined is linked to who is viewing the problem and the values held by the observer. The person whose definition is accepted and acted upon has power. The major consequence of possessing the power to label persons or groups as "problems" is that the burden for adjusting is placed on the one without power. It is usually the individual rather than the institution that is asked to change or make accommodations, particularly if the student is from a less advantaged group or minority.

The usual definition of problems facing minority students and the types of solutions or recommended programs are oftentimes based on the value of conformity to a dominant middle class American culture rather than one that values cultural and language diversity. Chaenofsky (1971: 15) has asked,

Why do our schools thus continue to be the agents of degradation and shame for so many of our youngsters who are made acutely aware of the differences from the "norm?" This ideological commitment and its application to the schools is particularly destructive for children of ethnic minorities who represent an enormously diverse American culture.

### **Filipino Immigrant Children in Hawai'i Public Schools**

There were two significant impacts of the 1965 amendments to U.S. immigration law: a total increase of immigrants and an increase in the proportion

of Asian immigrants to the United States. Hawai'i has been receiving annually about 4,000 immigrants from the Philippines since the late 1960s. This has resulted in a sizeable number of children enrolled in the public schools whose native language is not English. The largest number of these students speak a Philippine language: Ilokano (32%), Tagalog (7%), Samoan (16%), Korean (6%), and Vietnamese (6%).

The Hawai'i Department of Education issued a report identifying four major problems facing Filipino immigrant school children:

1. English language deficiencies;
2. Difficulty in socializing with local students;
3. Lack of relevant schooling in their native country;
4. Difficulty in understanding the value system of American society.

The above "problems" can be viewed differently and can be rephrased in the following way:

1. Lack of appreciation of the language of the immigrant child or lack of teaching staff who understand the child's language;
2. Difficulty of local students in socializing with immigrant children;
3. Lack of relevant curriculum appropriate to the school attended by the immigrant student;
4. Difficulty in understanding the value system of the immigrant child.

In this example, the Department of Education is asking the immigrant student to "fit in" or "adapt" to the institution. The types of programs that place most of the burden of adjusting on the immigrant student are those that provide orientation to the American school system and teaching English using English as a second language approach. A change in focus or a change in the description of the "problem" would change the clientele and the programs. For example, if the Hawai'i born child or English only speaking teacher were seen as significantly contributing to the problem (and the solution), then appropriate programs would include orientation activities or courses for local students and teachers on the history, culture, language and contribution of immigrant Filipinos to Hawai'i and hiring bilingual teachers who speak the language of the Filipino child and who are familiar with the culture of the child. Clearly, the new immigrant student must make some changes, but the focus on the child is unbalanced and overly demanding. Both the educational institution and students (both Hawai'i born and immigrant) must work in partnership.

### Filipinos at the University of Hawai'i

Like ethnic minorities in the continental U.S., Filipinos are better represented at the two-year community colleges (20%) than they are at the major baccalaureate and graduate degree granting campus, UH Mānoa. Although Filipinos continue to be underrepresented at Mānoa when compared to their public school enrollment (18%), there has been an impressive increase over the years from 3 percent in 1977 to 10 percent in 1995 (Institutional Research Office 1995: 13). Filipinos represent 12 percent of the undergraduate and 4 percent of the graduate students at UH Mānoa.

A recent study by Jon Okamura documented the comparatively lower educational status and achievement of UH Mānoa Filipino students, both first time freshmen and community college transfers. He found that compared to other students, "Filipinos tend to earn lower grades, have a higher attrition rate from UH Mānoa, 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" (Okamura 1991: 125). Unlike most studies that focus on individual student characteristics, Okamura's study does not define the student as the problem. Filipino freshmen have the highest high school grade point average of all entering freshmen at UH Mānoa, although they have the lowest SAT scores. There is good evidence that high school grade point average may be a more significant criterion for admission to the University than SAT scores because the latter do not appear to be a valid predictor of grades or graduation from Mānoa. If high school grades were given more weight in admissions to UH Mānoa, more Filipinos would be able to enter and would probably graduate. As noted by Okamura (1991: 126),

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 to the University ... 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 the cumulative academic qualifications or intelligence of individual Filipino students.

### The University's Response to Access and Achievement of Filipinos

Richardson and Skinner (1991) have argued that, "To meet participation and graduation goals for these groups, institutions must adapt their environments to

accommodate greater diversity without relinquishing their commitment to high standards of achievement for all students." They suggest that institutions do this by moving through three stages "along a continuum that stretches from the pre-civil rights era into the present." The three stages are "reactive," "strategic" and "adaptive." A prior stage or response moves the institution to the next stage. Most of the programs and policies at earlier stages continue to be relevant and complementary. The reactive stage is typically an institution's initial response to pressure for affirmative action in which it tries to increase the number of students from ethnic and racial minorities severely underrepresented in the student body. The strategies used are recruitment, financial aid, and special admission procedures. The usual result of efforts to obtain diversity and "proportional enrollment" is usually disappointing because some minority students do not meet the institution's academic standards and generally do not result in "proportional graduation."

As the effects of the reactive responses on student achievement become evident, universities develop outreach, transition, and academic support strategies intended to assist a more diverse student population meet their expectations that are based on the students they traditionally have served. These strategies, especially as they become more systematic and better coordinated, distinguish the adaptive stage. The emphasis is on changing students, and most of the interventions are implemented by student affairs staff. The priority in the adaptive stage is on assessment, learning assistance, and curriculum renewal. Faculty participate in this stage to change educational practices, curriculum content, and instructional practices to make them reflect the students being served.

Daryl Smith (1989) also identified three types of institutional responses to diversity and quality. The first focuses on "student assistance" where universities recruit minority students and provide them with tutorial services and financial aid. He notes that, "Fundamentally it is a 'deficit' approach to diversity in that it attempts to improve success by providing the student with support and resources" (Smith 1989). The second type of response is called "institutional accommodation" which still focuses on the "special needs" of students but adds programs and makes modest changes to remove barriers to success, e.g., establishing ethnic support centers. The third phase or response is to build on the institution's capacity to organize for diversity. This means fundamental changes that result in diversity among faculty and staff and in mission and values, quality of interaction on campus, commitment to educate students for living in a pluralistic campus and world, and broadening the concept of quality so that it does not conflict with diversity and equity.

Richard Richardson, Jr. and Elizabeth Fisk Skinner in *Achieving Quality and Diversity* (1991) and Daryl Smith in *The Challenge of Diversity* (1989) have provided two similar and compatible typologies of university responses to a culturally diverse student body and to the twin goals of excellence and equity. The typologies will be used to describe and assess the responses of the University of Hawai'i to the Filipino community's educational needs and aspirations.

*Prior to 1970: No Response by UH Mānoa*

Very few Filipinos enrolled at the University of Hawai'i before 1970. Even as late as 1977 Filipinos were less than 3 percent of the students. There was no major official statement that any ethnic group was underrepresented. The few Hawai'i born Filipinos met all entrance requirements, and no special programs were provided for them. Many of the Filipinos in graduate school were international students supported by the East-West Center, a new federal institution established to bring American and Asian students together to personally experience cross-cultural contacts, to encourage Americans to study Asia, and to train Asian graduate students. There may have been one or two tenured Filipino faculty in agriculture. A few Tagalog courses were taught by temporary instructors or graduate students.

*1970s: Community Colleges Established for Open Access*

The University of Hawai'i was concerned that, as the only institution of public higher education in the state, it should be accessible to more people. A recommendation was made to establish two-year community colleges that would be geographically dispersed, "open admission" institutions. The UH community college system had minimal academic requirements and very low tuition. Although not specifically identified as a means of recruiting ethnic groups underrepresented at UH Mānoa, the community colleges actually enroll a high proportion of Filipino students. At some campuses situated near Filipino communities the percentage of Filipino students is very high (e.g., Kaua'i campus, 30%). The large proportion of Filipinos and other minorities in the community colleges is similar to the experience of minorities in the continental U.S. where the problem of access and participation is primary, but where aspirations for further education often are not met. Nationally and in Hawai'i, only a small percentage of community college students transfer and graduate with a baccalaureate degree. During the 1970s transfer and articulation of courses between the community colleges and UH Mānoa were not addressed, and relatively few Filipinos transferred from the community colleges.

*1970s: Mānoa Reactive Response*

The primary minority student recruitment effort of the University of Hawai'i was the College Opportunities Program (COP) which had the objective of recruiting socioeconomically disadvantaged and academically at risk students. This program is the closest effort at recruiting ethnic minorities at UH and represents the University's reactive stage response. The students in this special program do not meet entrance requirements but, with careful screening for potential, tutorials and other support, many of them have been able to maintain their enrollment and graduate from Mānoa. Although not specified as a target group for recruitment, many COP students were and still are Filipino and Hawaiian.

The first major institutional response of the University relating to Filipinos was initiated in 1972 by a group of Philippine born graduate students, non-Filipino and Filipino faculty, Hawai'i born Filipino undergraduate students, and a Filipino government official working with immigrant communities. They organized a group to assist recently arrived immigrant children from the Philippines and called themselves "Operation Manong" (OM), a term to symbolize respect (*manong*, an Ilokano kinship term of respect used to refer to an older brother, was used in a derogatory manner at that time). The group received funds from a church and a major federal grant.

During the first decade of OM, its primary activity was to send UH students to work as bilingual tutors in Hawai'i public schools to assist recently arrived immigrant children from the Philippines, Korea, Samoa and other countries. During the early part of OM's history, although there were very few Filipino students at Mānoa, little attention was directed to recruiting Filipinos to the University because the immediate community concern was to assist the large number of immigrant students who were arriving after the passage of the 1965 immigration amendments. These students were experiencing major difficulties (teachers were not prepared to teach non-native English speakers, and Hawai'i born and immigrant Filipinos had many conflicts). Possibly OM helped in retaining Filipino students at UH Mānoa because its activities provided a supportive environment and developed a strong connection to Filipino culture and ethnic identity. Although not a program objective at the time, Operation Manong students recruited and encouraged Filipinos to aspire for higher education by their presence as tutors and role models to immigrant children in the schools.

The Ethnic Studies Program was established at UH Mānoa in 1970 and was heavily influenced by the Black student movement on the continental U.S.

Among the courses offered were Japanese in Hawai'i, Filipinos in Hawai'i, and Hawaiians. This program was primarily initiated by Hawai'i born students who believed that the Mānoa curriculum ignored their history and contributions to Hawai'i. Filipino students supported the program and enrolled in Ethnic Studies courses.

There were already programs for Chinese, Japanese and Korean studies at the University when the Philippine Studies Program was started in 1975. The initiative came from the State Legislature which asked for a feasibility study to establish such a program. The most developed courses at that time were Ilokano and Tagalog language courses. The University and the state of Hawai'i had already decided to have Asian Studies as an area of emphasis and excellence.

#### *1980s: Mānoa Strategic Response*

Gradually, Operation Manong expanded its focus and initiated studies and activities to recruit and support more Filipino students at UH Mānoa. In 1985, the State Legislature provided permanent positions and mandated OM to conduct programs and services for socioeconomically disadvantaged students to facilitate equal access to Mānoa. In 1988, the OM staff of two positions and its budget increased by over 100 percent, and so it increased its efforts to recruit and graduate students. By the end of the 1980s, OM had developed a comprehensive and systematic effort that provided educational services at all levels of the educational "pipeline": elementary, intermediate, high school, community college, undergraduate and graduate for Filipinos (and other minority students). The level requiring more work and attention is graduate education where only 4 percent of Mānoa students are Filipino.

Philippine Studies was also more integrated into the UH resource system as the University reorganized its various Asian Studies programs. The Center for Philippine Studies is one of nine such centers of the School for Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific Studies. While courses at UH Mānoa are offered by various departments, the faculty and students interested in Philippine Studies coordinate and cooperate on many programs and activities (e.g., a community play, seminars by visiting faculty from the Philippines). Although more faculty positions are needed (e.g., no permanent faculty member teaches Philippine history), faculty with Philippine or Filipino American interests (both Filipino and non-Filipino) are generally well established. The Center for Philippine Studies has developed a strong academic reputation and has an exchange agreement with the University of the Philippines to facilitate visits by faculty and students.

The University's response in the 1980s could be considered a "strategic response." Efforts were more organized to support Filipino students in recruitment, persistence and graduation as described in a comprehensive report in 1988, *Pamantasan*. Other UH campuses actively cooperated and benefited from their participation in the preparation of the *Pamantasan* report. The special programs, Operation Manong, Ethnic Studies, and Philippine Studies, survived during budget cuts and competing priorities in the 1980s.

#### *The 1990s and Beyond: Mānoa Adaptive Response*

Although the University of Hawai'i is far from being an institution that focuses on the special needs of individuals and groups as well as on the needs of all students and all faculty, many programs and policies are in place in the 1990s to build its "capacity to *organize for diversity*." As a conclusion to this description of the University's responses over the decades, the following is a description and assessment of ongoing efforts and plans for the 1990s and beyond.

Among the final acts of former UH President Albert J. Simone was the creation of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Commission on Diversity in 1992. This Commission promises to be the vehicle to support a comprehensive adaptive response to the aspirations of many groups that feel excluded and marginalized on campus. The Commission consists of faculty, administrators, clerical staff, administrative, professional and technical staff, and graduate and undergraduate students. Most of the major ethnic groups are represented (African American, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Japanese, Latino, and White), various religious groups (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish), men and women, gays and heterosexuals, and persons with disabilities. The Commission intends to study and celebrate diversity and reduce bigotry and prejudice at Mānoa. Areas to be addressed include the curriculum and teaching, hiring and promotion of faculty and staff, student recruitment and retention, and the campus climate. Part of the credibility of the Commission depends on the individuals who have been appointed as members and whether or not the campus sees them as dedicated, fair and accessible. Two of the twelve members are Filipino, and its success will depend heavily on continuing leadership and support from the University President, cooperation from special university networks (e.g., Commission on the Status of Women, newly formed Gay and Lesbian Task Force), and assistance from academic, administrative support, and student services programs (e.g., deans, equal employment office, minority student programs).

**Student Enrollment and Graduation Programs.** With respect to Filipino student representation, there has been a substantial increase of 17 percent since

1991 at UH Mānoa (IRO 1991: 15). In some ways, student programs have been the most successful component of UH Mānoa's response because of expanded resources and the high level of administrative support by the Vice President for Student Affairs. The areas that need attention in the 1990s are: preparation and support for more students to enter graduate school; encouraging more students to enter the teaching field as well as the sciences; and improving the undergraduate graduation and community college transfer rates. A new program, the Hawai'i Opportunity Program in Education (HOPE), a future oriented, bold and comprehensive recruitment and retention effort, was established in 1990 through the leadership of the Governor and the State Legislature. HOPE's goal is to encourage elementary school students from ethnic groups underrepresented at Mānoa to succeed in school and to enroll in college by providing financial assistance.

**Faculty and Staff Affirmative Action in Recruitment and Promotion.** Filipinos represent about one percent of the tenured/tenurable faculty at Mānoa and are also underrepresented among clerical staff and administrators. Programs to encourage more Filipinos to enter graduate school and the academic profession are not adequate at this time. Additional faculty positions may increase the number of Filipinos if the curriculum relating to Filipinos and the Philippines is expanded.

**Mission and Values.** In 1991, the governing board of the University of Hawai'i adopted a Master Plan to guide the direction and growth of the University in the 1990s. This plan and a proposed "Strategic Plan" specifically identify diversity and student access and success as priorities of the University. Many speeches of the University President and important national education associations (e.g., American Council on Education, the State Higher Education Executive Officers) reaffirm the responsibility of institutions of higher education to link improvement in the quality of education with the success of minority students.

**Campus Climate.** Ethnic competition and conflict exist in every society and on most campuses. Increasing minority faculty and staff as well as supporting the interests of underrepresented groups frequently result in changes in intergroup power relations and encourage competition for resources. Universities have to establish policies and programs that reduce tension and bigotry and celebrate the positive aspects of diversity. At this time, no major specific conflicts involving Filipinos at Mānoa have emerged, although Filipino faculty and students have been involved in some campus climate issues.

**Educating for Diversity: Curriculum and Instructional Practices.** The curriculum at UH Mānoa has a number of non-Western oriented courses and components. The foreign language graduation requirement for undergraduates is very helpful because a number of Mānoa students choose to study a Philippine language (more would do so if introductory courses were available on other UH campuses). With the exception of courses identified by the Center for Philippine Studies, very few courses include the Philippines or Filipino Americans. Although most Filipinos would not expect to have a single course devoted entirely to Filipinos in Hawai'i/U.S., many would consider that a comprehensive course on Hawaii's ethnic groups would be appropriate as a required course for all students and that a history course on Asia should provide significant attention to the Philippines. The University should offer a curriculum that includes Filipinos and the Philippines for Filipino and other students who want to be well educated. At least two community colleges have expressed interest in having additional courses on the Philippines offered.

### Conclusion

There is much more that the University of Hawai'i must do if it is to improve the total educational experience for all students and faculty and if it is to meet the interrelated goals of excellence and diversity. It is possible for institutions of higher education to increase their "capacity to organize for diversity." Those interested in promoting a multicultural perspective in the curriculum and affirmative access for faculty and students have a challenging agenda for the 1990s. Filipino and non-Filipino faculty and staff at UH Mānoa have to work cooperatively to address these issues or face the problem of having a significant proportion of Hawaii's people uneducated and alienated. Although affirmative action policies and programs have been weakened in the 1990s by some recent court decisions in various parts of the United States, UH officials have joined with other national and local educators and policymakers to affirm that an ethnically diverse campus can be justified not only on moral grounds but also because it can improve the quality of education and is an economic necessity. Hawaii's Filipinos cannot fully contribute their talents to the University, the state, and the rest of the nation unless they are welcomed and included as full participants at the University of Hawai'i.

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## Philippine Languages in Hawai'i: Vehicles of Cultural Survival

Teresita V. Ramos

### Linguistic Background

The Philippines is a Southeast Asian country of some 7,000 islands and islets off the southeast coast of mainland China. It is populated by about 60 million Filipinos. It is said that there are as many as 300 languages and dialects in these islands which belong to the Malayo-Polynesian family of languages.

One of the factors that complicates the language situation in the Philippines is diversity. Linguists say there are 75 to 150 native languages spoken by Filipinos. The latest estimate is 109 languages, or 110 if Chavacano is included (McFarland 1994: 83). Although these languages are in some ways grammatically and lexically similar, they are mutually unintelligible. Furthermore, each of the major languages has several dialects that differ, especially at the phonological and lexical levels. Depending on their region of origin, Filipino immigrants will speak at least one dialect of one of these mutually unintelligible languages.

On the basis of a probable 75 mother tongues according to Weber (1989), six are classified as major languages (the percentages indicating the number of native speakers of each language): Tagalog (25%), Cebuano (24%), Ilocano (9%), Hiligaynon (9%), Bicol (6%), Waray (5%), and others (22%). Because of immigration, these major languages as well as Pampango and Pangasinan are represented in Hawai'i, with Ilokano having the most number of native speakers.

Following the mandate of the 1935 Constitution, President Manuel Quezon proclaimed Tagalog as the basis of the national language in 1937. To free the Tagalog-based national language from its ethnic ties and therefore to facilitate its acceptance, Tagalog was renamed **Pilipino** in 1959. However, the 1973 Constitution rescinded the choice of Tagalog (Pilipino) as the basis of the national language (Gonzales 1977). Pilipino was established as one of the two official languages of the Philippines under the 1973 Constitution—the other being English. The 1987 Constitution stipulates that the National Assembly is to take steps toward the formation of a genuine national language to be called **Filipino**, which will incorporate elements from the various Philippine languages. Philippine language experts predict, especially after the 1987 Constitutional deliberations, that Pilipino will be renamed Filipino characterized by an openness to borrowings from the other Philippine languages as well as from English, Spanish, and other foreign languages (Gonzales 1991: 126).