



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**Senator J. Kalani English
Statement
Center for Pacific Island Studies
60th Anniversary
25 February 2010**

Our lives rest upon our sense of place. The place where our roots dig down, and our limbs reach up. Where the road from our past links to the path toward our future. The fulcrum upon which we balance our treasured experiences and our dearest dreams.

I am proud to be here today because part of my sense of place rests at the Center for Pacific Island Studies. I stand among those who have had the opportunity to study here, to benefit from the mission of the Center, and to carry those teachings and experiences forward into everything I have tried to accomplish since.

My place is the Pacific, and my dreams are for unity and prosperity for all of our brethren throughout Oceania. I was fortunate to have those values instilled in me by my kupuna and others who helped shape my early life. But it was here at the Center that I was free to work with others who shared my passions and guided my work.

I was relatively young when I came here. I admit that I didn't feel particularly young at the time, because I think we always feel ready for whatever challenges we encounter. But in retrospect, I had a lot to learn and I needed a place where I could stiffen my bones for the opportunities to come.

What I found here was a program that not only focused on the Pacific Islands and issues of concern to Pacific Islanders, but did so in an open, multi-disciplinary way. All of us who have traveled the Pacific—whether for academic purposes or simply because we love the places and the people—have seen the rich diversity of the area’s cultures and inhabitants. Such a place called for an educational approach that was equally diverse. That matching of people, place, and philosophy provided me with endless support and opportunity. I cannot say enough to express my gratitude to the Center for giving me so much that sits at the foundation of what I do today.

Today, as a state senator and as president of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures, addressing issues of importance to the Pacific region is a daily occurrence, and those concerns run the gamut from economic development to health to governance and cultural preservation. I do not think I would have been successful in analyzing and responding to those concerns if it had not been for the rich, multi-disciplinary education I received here.

Over the past 60 years, I cannot imagine the number of lives changed and vital initiatives supported—directly and indirectly—by the work that the Center has done.

Our lives rest on a sense of place. For all of us who call the Pacific region home, and who wish the best for the future of our special part of the world, Sixty years of history and effort has made the Center for Pacific Island Studies our place. Our future will grow from here. And I offer my dearest hope that it is a very long—and very prosperous—future indeed.