

I am currently on sabbatical at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa (UHM). UHM is a state university and the flagship campus of University of Hawai'i system. It is located in beautiful Manoa Valley (picture 1), only a short distance away from Waikiki.



UHM has 14 colleges and schools, and a lot of wonderful facilities including one of the largest research libraries in the United States, numerous research centers, a fitness center, and cafeterias with a large variety of choices. So in a way, UHM is like a self-sustained town. They even sell fresh produce for a reasonable price on campus (picture 2).

The buildings spread out on a huge piece of land. This is surprising considering its close proximity to the busy downtown



area of Honolulu. Thankfully, throughout the campus, there is an abundance of green, which provides students with plenty of places to relax even on a hot summer day (picture 3).

Approximately 20,000

students are enrolled in UHM. Of the 20,000, about 15,000 are undergraduates, which is comparable to those studying on the main campus at Kindai. What makes UHM different from Kindai is that their students come from various ethnic backgrounds (41 percent Asian, 24 percent Caucasian, 16 percent Native Hawaiian). In addition, unlike many American universities where the majority of students are Caucasian, Asian students form the largest ethnic group at UHM.

I belong to the department of second language studies as a visiting scholar. This is a field in which we research second or foreign language use and learning from educational, linguistic and psychological perspectives. Although the faculty offices are located in Moore Hall, and many of the classes meet there (picture 3), my office is in a separate building (picture 4). Cultural diversity of UHM is especially stimulating for me as a researcher because one of my research interests is exploring



psychological differences among second/foreign



language learners from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

UHM offers a wide range of workshops, presentations, and events in addition to regular classes. Many of those are so inspiring that they give me new research ideas. As a matter of fact, as a result of attending an interesting presentation, I ended up writing a paper on a topic that I would never have thought about otherwise. I also have opportunities to meet international scholars from all over the world. Exchanging ideas with those great scholars makes my research life here even more fruitful.