



January 15, 2025

To: Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board

From: Lois A. Yamauchi, PhD
Professor and Chair, Educational Psychology

Madiha Jamil, PhD
Assistant Professor, Coordinator of the School Counseling Program

Judy Daniels, EdD
Professor and Director of the Rehabilitation Counseling Program

Re: Testimony in opposition to NBI 24-21

Meetings: January 17, 2025 HTSB Education Committee Meeting, Agenda item III d (NBI 24-21, UHM School Counseling Program Review) and General Business Meeting, Agenda item III f (NBI 24-21, UHM School Counseling Program Review)

We are writing as representatives of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's School Counseling Program to **oppose New Business Item 24-21 (NBI 24-21)** to not approve the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's (UH Mānoa) School Counseling Program for initial P12 licensure. NBI 24-21 does not accurately describe our program and our responses to program reviewers' requests. In this testimony, we explain these misrepresentations, ask for changes to the NBI to correct inaccuracies, and ask for your no vote on NBI 24-21. Below are our seven points of clarification.

1. **NBI 24-21 inaccurately states that "The UHM School Counseling faculty decided not to revise the program, citing academic freedom, and would like their future faculty to make revisions."**
 - a. At the November 25, 2024 meeting with the Review Committee and the HTSB Executive Director **no one asked the University of Hawai'i Mānoa School Counseling team to revise the program.** No revisions were requested then or afterwards.
 - b. Dr. Yamauchi never stated that academic freedom was a reason why we would not revise our program. Revisions had not been requested.
 - c. To be accurate, Dr. Yamauchi explained that academic freedom allows faculty to adjust instructional activities stated on a syllabus template to meet course objectives. Academic freedom is granted in the majority of universities nationally and is used by faculty to modify activities to meet specific learner needs. Dr. Yamauchi also stated that course assignments and assessments are

different from program assessments. Program assessments in the University of Hawai‘i Mānoa School Counseling are standardized and uniformly administered. Program assessments have been provided in the application.

- d. The issue raised in this point is one example of many inaccuracies in NBI 24-21. During the November 25th meeting one of the reviewers admitted that she had not read all of the documents that we provided. This raises serious concerns about the thoroughness and accuracy of the review process.
- e. **Request:** We request the removal of the statement in the NBI 24-21 “The UHM School Counseling faculty decided not to revise the program, citing academic freedom, and would like their future faculty to make revisions.” The program faculty has always been willing to make any necessary changes; however, no additional revisions were requested after final responses to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board Program Review Commentary on November 26, 2024.

2. The University of Hawai‘i Mānoa School Counseling team has been responsive to the program review committee’s requests for evidence showing that the program meets HAR §8-54-19(1-5) Standards.

- a. HAR §8-54-19(1-5) states that the program must provide evidence that students will meet performance standards, including the 10 School Counseling standards and professional and ethical dispositions.
- b. As evidence, we provided syllabi for all courses and sample assignments, assessments, and evaluations. There are examples of how the program demonstrates that it meets the performance standards (p. 31 of the application, course syllabus found in Section 4, and Syllabi for all coursework), ethical disposition (p. 29 of application, Section 6 Professional Disposition) and evaluations (Section 5, Clinical Experience Handbook, p. 57).
- c. The program has consistently responded to requests for revisions, demonstrating exemplary engagement throughout the review process, maintaining consistent communication and timely responses. Our willingness to make changes began with our initial program application on August 27, 2024 and continued through the November 25th meeting.
- d. For example, on October 2024, we responded to the Review Committee’s requests for additional material and submitted 18 comprehensive assessment rubrics that demonstrated **evidence showing that the program meets HAR §8-54-19(1-5) Standards (see Section 4, Rubrics)**. At the November 25, 2024 meeting, we responded to all questions asked by the Review Committee, followed by detailed written responses to remaining inquiries on November 26, 2024. **No additional material or modifications were requested related to how the program meets the HAR §8-54-19(1-5) Standards.**

3. **NBI 24-21 inaccurately states that there are "No face-to-face courses for the entire two-year program."**

- a. **The University of Hawai'i Mānoa School Counseling Program has been approved by the University of Hawai'i as a hybrid program.**
- b. The University of Hawai'i (2025) defines a hybrid program as "a program of study consisting of a mix of credit-bearing program requirements that include both online and in-person activities. In person activities may take place on a UH campus or at a designated location."
- c. **The University of Hawai'i Mānoa School Counseling Program includes 700 hours of supervised in person and in the field experiences, including 100 hours of practicum and 600 hours of internship in school settings.**
- d. During these field experiences, candidates engage in-person and directly with licensed school counselors, students, school communities, and when needed or requested, professors will meet in person and provide supervision.
- e. These supervised hours facilitate hands-on application of counseling techniques and development of professional competencies.
- f. Our program design ensures that while coursework may be delivered online synchronously for accessibility, students receive extensive face-to-face professional preparation through their fieldwork experiences. **The program also features two mandatory in-person intensives--one at program entry and another at completion.**
- g. The HTSB has approved a similar hybrid school counseling program at Chaminade University, where students take their practicum and internship courses in person and in school settings, and students do not have to come to campus for other classes.
- h. **There is a shortage of qualified P-12 school counselors statewide**, with approximately 50 counselors in the public schools who do not have a school counseling license. **A statewide hybrid program makes the program accessible to students in rural areas and on the neighbor islands who are not able to come to Honolulu for counselor preparation.**
- i. If we want our counselor workforce to reflect the student populations they serve, we need to be accessible to these potential candidates. Research indicates students from underrepresented groups, including ethnically diverse and low-income candidates, tend to enroll in hybrid and online counselor preparation programs. When counselors come from similar backgrounds as the students they serve, they tend to be more successful in their work.
- j. **Request:** The NBI statement "No face-to-face courses for the entire two-year program" be changed to: "Practicum and internship courses provide face-to-face interaction, supervision, and field-based experiences. In addition, the program has two required in person intensive day-long opportunities for students to interact with professors, classmates, and other relevant professionals. The program is designed to promote programmatic accessibility through courses that are delivered synchronously online."

4. **NBI 24-21 states, “The committee is concerned about how, after learning in an online program, the graduates will transition to an in-person situation, especially if they are hired at a school with only one or two School Counselors.”**
 - a. This concern overlooks the extensive field-based in person practical preparation our program provides.
 - b. Throughout their training, candidates complete 700 hours of supervised field experience in school settings, working directly with diverse student populations and school staff. These experiences are supervised in person by a school counselor in their school or complex. During practicum and internship, students actively participate in all aspects of school counseling, including individual and group counseling and collaboration with teachers and administrators.
 - c. Our program structures these in-person experiences to build professional confidence and competence with direct supervision.
 - d. Students learn to: (a) navigate school systems; (b) develop professional networks; and (c) handle the complex responsibilities of school counseling. They meet weekly to obtain supervision and feedback.
 - e. The combination of supervised practice, mentoring from experienced counselors and faculty, and gradual exposure to increasing professional responsibilities ensures our graduates are well-prepared for independent practice, even in settings with limited on-site counseling staff.
 - f. **Request:** Given the information provided in this testimony and in the proposal, we request that the statement: “The committee is concerned about how, after learning in an online program, the graduates will transition to an in-person situation, especially if they are hired at a school with only one or two School Counselors.” be removed from NBI 24-21.

5. **NBI 24-21 inaccurately states that "There was a lack of school-based activities in the program's first year."**
 - a. Our program systematically integrates school-based experiences throughout the first year of study. Students will engage in school site visits and observations, conduct professional interviews with practicing counselors, and participate in school-based events. They will develop and implement classroom guidance lessons while receiving supervision and feedback. An example of a classroom lesson focusing in school-based activities was submitted for KRS 600, a course taken in students' first year.
 - b. Within the first year and in the KRS 627 Career Development and Vocational Counseling course the program provides opportunities for engagement in career development activities and practical application of the ASCA National Model.
 - c. **Request:** Since there are examples of school-based activities in the first year, we request the following statement be deleted from NBI 24-21: “There was a lack of school-based activities in the program's first year.”

6. **NBI 24-21 states that “Professional Dispositions Assessment addresses important skills but is not specific to School Counseling Skills such as flexibility, empathy, or situational decision-making.”**

- a. University of Hawai‘i Mānoa School Counseling Program’s approach to professional dispositions assessment is both comprehensive and specifically tailored to school counseling competencies.
- b. The program's professional disposition assessment goes beyond traditional measures to evaluate not only technical skill competence, but also the development of culturally responsive counseling skills and dispositions essential for Hawai‘i's diverse student population. Our assessment framework integrates ASCA standards with culturally responsive practices, particularly incorporating Hawaiian values. Evidence of this can be found in Section 6, Professional Disposition.
- c. Through mock counseling sessions, students demonstrate and receive feedback on essential counseling skills including empathy, flexibility, and situational judgment. Evidence of counseling skills demonstration exercise can be found on the KRS 626 course syllabus.
- d. Each semester field supervisors, in conjunction with a UH Mānoa faculty member, conduct regular evaluations for practicum and internship experiences, assessing students' ability to apply not only skills but also counselor dispositions as exemplified in real-world contexts.
- e. Class activities such as case study analyses require students to demonstrate clinical reasoning and decision-making capabilities. Evidence of a case study assignment can be found in the KRS 606 syllabus.
- f. **Request:** As demonstrated above and in the materials submitted to the Review Committee, we provided examples of how skills such as flexibility, empathy, or situational decision-making are an integral part of the program and as such, we request that the statement, “Professional Dispositions Assessment addresses important skills but is not specific to School Counseling Skills such as flexibility, empathy, or situational decision-making.” be removed from NBI 24-21.

7. **NBI 24-21 states that "There are no written plans or evidence to support School Counseling graduates during their first year in the profession.”**

- a. For all of our preparation programs, the University of Hawai‘i College of Education partners closely with the Hawai‘i Department of Education to support our graduates as they begin their careers in public schools.
- b. The College of Education has a proven track-record of fostering lasting professional relationships between students and faculty that extend well beyond graduation.
- c. Through our cohort-based structure, candidates develop strong peer networks that provide mutual support throughout their careers.
- d. We will actively encourage students’ participation in the Hawai‘i School Counselor Association (HSCA), connecting graduates to a broader professional community and ongoing development opportunities.

- e. The combination of sustained faculty mentorship, cohort connections, and professional association involvement ensures our graduates have a robust support system as they advance in their careers.
- f. **Request:** Since this issue raises concerns that extend beyond the scope of initial licensure requirements, we request that the sentence “There are no written plans or evidence to support School Counseling graduates during their first year in the profession.” be deleted from NBI 24-21.

In conclusion, the UH Mānoa School Counseling hybrid program addresses the statewide shortage of qualified P-12 school counselors. It is similar in format to another hybrid program that the HTSB approved. The UH Mānoa School Counseling team has been responsive to HTSB requests for revisions and responses and particularly those that show that the program meets HAR §8-54-19(1-5) standards. NBI-24-21 does not accurately reflect the University of Hawai‘i Mānoa School Counseling program. **We strongly urge your opposition to this NBI.** Thank you for your time and consideration.