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**Maunakea Scholars and Mānoa Academy Team Up
to Prepare the Next Generation of Astronomers in Hawai'i**

Hawai'i students receive world-class STEM learning opportunity through pilot program in partnership with University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for the first time

HILO, HAWAII – Maunakea Observatories today announced that its signature educational program, Maunakea Scholars, is collaborating with Mānoa Academy, an initiative aimed at increasing success in higher education through dual-credit opportunities for high school students at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. This new partnership extends Maunakea Scholars' reach into higher education, allowing Hawai'i's aspiring young astronomers on Hawai'i Island to receive college credit while taking an introductory-level class in astronomy that helps students develop their observing proposals for the Maunakea Scholars program.

"Our mission is to prepare Hawai'i's youth for their future beyond graduation by offering authentic learning opportunities," said Mary Beth Laychak, Canada-France-Hawai'i Telescope outreach program manager. "We're cultivating student scientists who will become the next generation of local engineers, technicians and astronomers who will operate and perform research with the Maunakea Observatories in the years to come."

The Mānoa Academy course will give students from Waiakea and Honoka'a High Schools access to some of the best scientific resources in Hawai'i, as part of the pilot program in the Spring 2019 semester, commencing today. In conjunction with the class, experts and mentors from the Maunakea Observatories will guide students through the research process, helping them gain practical experience in astronomy through the Maunakea Scholars program.

"Hawai'i is home to the best astronomical research and the observatories provide opportunities for our students to find quality STEM jobs at home," said Kelcy Koga, principal at Waiakea High School. "Being accepted into the Mānoa Academy program is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will give our students a jumpstart on college and helps put them on a path to their future careers."

The Maunakea Scholars program has grown steadily since its inception in 2015, this year expanding to 12 partner high schools representing every major Hawaiian island. Launched by Maunakea Observatories with the mission to bring Hawai'i's youth into the astronomical community, it leverages the facilities, telescopes and professionals who work at the observatories on Hawai'i Island to directly support the educational advancement of local students.

“Our partnership with Mānoa Academy allows us to make a greater impact on students who are enthusiastic about STEM,” said Laychak. “Following the spring semester, we are eager to grow our number of partner high schools and champion a new generation of aspiring astronomers.”

Mānoa Academy, which is administered through the College of Social Sciences at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, allows eligible juniors and seniors the opportunity to take college-level courses and earn both college and high school credit simultaneously. Accepted Mānoa Academy students receive provisional admission to UH Mānoa. “We are thrilled to partner with Maunakea Scholars and have enjoyed the process of developing an online pilot to serve students at Waiakea and Honoka‘a High Schools,” said Wendi Vincent, Mānoa Academy Director. “We look forward to expanding this pilot in future semesters and advancing Academy offerings statewide.”

This first-of-its-kind partnership between the Maunakea Scholars program and the University of Hawai‘i’s Mānoa Academy is providing high school students with real-life STEM learning experiences beyond the classroom with the most scientifically productive telescopes in the world. Pairing collegiate-level learning with research opportunities for high school students, this partnership creates pathways from high school to college for students. It is among the many workforce development programs the Maunakea Observatories support.

For more information about these educational opportunities for students, visit [Mānoa Academy in the High School](#) and [Maunakea Scholars](#).

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About the Maunakea Observatories

The Maunakea Observatories are a collaboration of independent institutions with telescopes located on Maunakea on the island of Hawai‘i. Together, the Observatories make Maunakea the most scientifically productive site for astronomy world-wide. The Maunakea Observatories include: Caltech Submillimeter Observatory, Canada-France-Hawai‘i Telescope, Gemini International Observatory, James Clerk Maxwell Telescope (EAO), NASA Infrared Telescope Facility, Subaru Telescope, Submillimeter Array, United Kingdom Infrared Telescope, University of Hawai‘i Hilo Educational Telescope, University of Hawai‘i 2.2 Meter Telescope, Very Long Baseline Array and W. M. Keck Observatory (Keck I and Keck II).