Masters Project Proposal:

**Building Leadership and Entrepreneurial Capacity for a Sustainable Hawaii**

By Linda Lewandowski

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Duke Environmental Leadership Masters of Environmental Management

Proposal Approved By:



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**Building Leadership and Entrepreneurial Capacity for a Sustainable Hawaii**

**Introduction**

In 2008 the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative (HCEI) was launched in partnership with the US Department of Energy (Hawaii DBEDT, 2008) to transform Hawaii’s fossil fuel energy backbone to 70% from clean indigenous sources by 2030. This energy transformation holds the potential to spawn an economic shift away from a tourism dominated economy towards a knowledge-based high tech economy which will demand a more skilled and technical work force.

The current availability of highly skilled people is inadequate to meet growing demand. Furthermore, the K through 12 curricula are not structured to develop leaders and entrepreneurs who will successfully guide Hawaii’s efforts towards a more sustainable way of life.

Planet Pioneers is an organization designed to bring together a network of innovative thinkers, practitioners and entrepreneurs for the sole purpose of building sustainability leadership and entrepreneurship capacity in K12 students in Hawaii who will be needed to successfully lead Hawaii through the transformation of its energy infrastructure and economy.

Planet Pioneers exists to transfer experiential knowledge and leadership principles that will provide mentorship as well as inspire our next generation of youth to innovate and lead the journey to transform Hawaii. The organization will also strive to increase awareness of sustainability and cultivate a collaborative exchange with local community residents, industry, government, academia and other stakeholders working towards a sustainable future.

To achieve mission success, Planet Pioneers, in cooperation with key partners, plans to undertake a transformational approach to design strategies and develop programs that build the capacity in local communities and individuals to innovate and lead Hawaii towards a sustainable future. Project partners anticipate engaging stakeholders in the development of a comprehensive sustainability leadership program that better integrates disparate efforts to transform Hawaii’s energy and economic infrastructure. This will necessitate collaborative planning and engagement across partners and should be framed by a thorough understanding of community concerns and perspectives. Diligence spent in the design and planning phase will decrease execution risk and provide for greater buy in of all concerned. A stakeholder analysis will provide the foundation for this understanding, and inform the development of strategies to ensure stakeholder support of and involvement in the PP program lifecycle.

Planet Pioneers is currently an approved project of the North Kohala Community Resource Center that is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) entity providing local support and bridging to funding and education for projects that benefit **North Kohala.** During this first year as a pilot project, PP plans to incorporate as a 501(c) (3) Benefit Corporation. Planet Pioneers began startup activities in January, 2011.

**Objectives**

1. Identify stakeholder knowledge, skills and motivations for supporting PP mission that will inform PP partnership and program designs.
2. Document and analyze the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of local community residents and other stakeholders as they pertain to the vision of a sustainable Hawaii.

**Methods**

The main thrust of my MP will be to determine the design of the partnership and program model needed to accomplish the Planet Pioneer mission (i.e. Planet Pioneers exists to build sustainability leadership and entrepreneurship capacity in K12 students in Hawaii).

I propose to undertake formal research regarding:

1) How to engage and identify Hawaii business leaders, local community members, politicians, other not-for-profit organizations, parents, students and educators and other stakeholders with the requisite knowledge needed;

3) Analysis of one or two Hawaii-based youth leadership organizations

4) How to design the best partnership model for PP to achieve its mission.

5) Analysis of other organizational models to distill potential form and function insights for PP

Topics of interest may include: Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative; sustainability planning; knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of cultural, social and economic value and benefits of PP; goals of and/or perceived need for innovation; as well as potential stakeholder conflict(s) that may arise from management and community engagement efforts.

Research will consist of interviews and analysis of partners and community stakeholders. The interview design will be informed by reviewing literature for ethnographic research designs (Bernard, 2002). The interviews will consist of open ended questions of topics. Ethnographic techniques will be utilized for participatory research (Bernard, 2000).

**Expected Results**

* Gather data on the knowledge, skills, motivations, attitudes and perceptions of local community residents and other stakeholders as they pertain to the vision of a sustainable Hawaii and for supporting the Planet Pioneer (PP) mission.
* List of stakeholders and knowledge and skill contributions for a sustainable leadership program
* Summary of interview data analysis
* Stakeholder analysis matrix identifying prioritized stakeholder value and partnership motivation
* Design of a program and partnership model for Planet Pioneers

**Format of Report**

A written report will be produced for distribution to relevant government officials, policymakers, project partners and other interested community stakeholders. The report outline will include: 1) the research question [What is the design of the partnership and program model needed to accomplish the Planet Pioneer mission?]; 2) why it is important; 3) general introduction of sustainable development and clean energy in Hawaii; 4) background, to include genesis of the idea and evolution over time; 5)documentation of the PP startup process to date; 6) identification of relevant organizations and ethnography; 7) results of interviews; 8) design of PP partnership and program model.

**Literary Citations**

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**Source and Amount of Support**

Time off from my employer to cover island hops to Oahu and outer islands to conduct interviews. Estimate $5,000 needed for approximately ten 1-2 day trips. Potential sources have not been identified so an efficient and effective approach has been conceived to conduct self-funded research.

**Faculty Advisor**

Michael Orbach, Ph.D, Professor of Practice, Director, Duke Marine Laboratory

**Other Resources**

Chris Wedding, Ph.D, applied research and green development, Duke University

Don Wells, leadership and business consultant, Duke University

Bill Wiecking, Ph.D, physicist, Director, Hawaii Preparatory Academy Energy Lab

Deborah Winter, Ph.D, social psychologist, co-founder, Sustainable Kohala

Elizabeth Cole, Ph.D, Hawaii sustainability, Deputy Director, The Kohala Center