



HAWAI'I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER

WHY ATTEND UH MANOA?

TOP TEN REASONS TO CONSIDER A FOUR YEAR RESEARCH CAMPUS

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Background: Why Go To College?

The Hawai'i legislature regularly struggles with the distribution of funds and programs throughout the University of Hawai'i system – including its community colleges, four-year undergraduate campuses, and its most consequential and expensive unit: The University of Hawai'i at Manoa – a four year graduate research university.

Both nationally and locally, public dialogue about the value of attending college often emphasizes the burden of college debt, and future earnings. A number of economic oriented web sites boast of the value in these terms.

<https://www.moneycrashers.com/reasons-why-should-go-to-college/>

<https://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/loans/student-loans/10-surprising-reasons-college/>

40 REASONS TO ATTEND COLLEGE

Another much broader list covers more traditional as well as current, personal development advantages:

<https://www.getdegrees.com/edecisions/40-reasons-to-go-to-college>

“1. A Better Paying Job

Among the most obvious of reasons - college graduates, on average, make more than those who only completed high school. If there was a "Top One Reason to Go to College" list, this would probably be it. But we are much more comprehensive than that here.

2. Meet Your Employer's Expectations

As the job market gets saturated with graduates, more and more open positions are asking for degrees. You practically need a degree to be a fry cook these days. Why get stuck on the short end of that curve?

3. Meet Your Mom's Expectations

You know your mom wants you to go to college. She'll be so proud of you! (Or your dad. Or your grandparents, aunts, cats. You will make somebody so proud!)

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4. Be More Qualified For Your Field...

Lots of jobs require the kind of specialized training that only a college program can give, from vocational programs to doctorates. Whether you want to be the best doctor in the hospital or the best nurse in...well, the same hospital, a degree can help get you there.

5...Or Branch Out into Other Fields

Just because you decided to major in "Best Doctor in the Hospital" in college, that doesn't chain you to one profession for the rest of your life. Having a degree can open up opportunities to hundreds of related (and not-so-related) fields.

6. A More Secure Future

Statistics show that people with higher levels of education tend to have better job security, so stay ahead of the unemployment curve! (At least until you overeducate and overspecialize yourself to the point of being unhireable again.)

7. A Better Lifestyle

Even if your pantry is nothing but ramen as far as your flashlight can reach, rest easy in the knowledge that - once the money from your Better Paying Job (see #1) starts rolling in - it will be nothing but nouveau Asian fusion cuisine for you. The best ramen money can buy.

8. Improve Your Confidence

Take a speech class, even if it isn't required for your major. Better yet, take Intro to Theatre Acting. In ten short weeks you will be able get up in front of thirty of your bored peers and perform a five-minute monologue without violent stomach protests, and you will have made fear your lapdog.

9. Improve Your Social Skills

Nothing short of public transit pushes people from different backgrounds into uncomfortable and unavoidable social situations quite like college. Instead of cringing and withdrawing, try striking up the odd friendly conversation with your classmates. You might be surprised at what you learn, to say nothing of the broad spectrum of friends you might make.

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10. Improve Your Discipline

It takes great discipline to study properly, avoiding procrastination and preparing adequate notes and study aids each week. It also takes great discipline to distill months of knowledge into a single cram weekend, ending in an energy-drink-fueled dissociative fugue of standardized testing. Pick your study kung fu style, and take it to your maximum potential.

11. Improve Your Network

College has a lot to do with networking, use those new Improved Social Skills to expand your web of connections. From study groups and internship leads to ladies and dealers of ill repute, you never know where a new thread of friendship will eventually take you. Why miss out by never getting started?

12. Learn From Masters of your Field

Sure, many things learned in college can be learned at the library. What you miss out on, however, is someone to put those texts in context. Professors are hired because they're at the top of their area of expertise. Of course they won't all be goldmines, but when you find one, latch on. You'll learn more than you'll find in any book. (Except, perhaps, the one your professor eventually publishes.)

13. Express Your Thoughts More Clearly

Take a writing class, even if it isn't required for your major. See if a grammar and stylistics course is offered. Your typing program's Grammar Check function is far from failsafe, and your manager at Future High Paying Job will appreciate an employee who can express himself in reports without sounding like a walking text message.

14. Increase Your Understanding of the World

You probably will be required to take a history or humanities class, so don't worry about trying to find one. Fight the urge to nap - it'll pay itself back in dividends when you actually understand something about how the world works, what's happening with it today, and its ramifications beyond your neighborhood's bumper gas prices.

15. Show Off Your Commitment and Perseverance

Steely-eyed determination is quite the admirable trait in our society, and what shows more commitment to a cause than sticking through a quest for knowledge for the better part of a decade? You will be up to your ears in admirers. Enough said.

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16. Start a Tradition!

Hesitant because no one else in your family has gone to college? Don't be nervous, be the first! At worst, they say, "what, you think you're better than us?" (Answer: Yes, yes you are) At best, they admire your courage and fortitude and give you lots of sweet graduation gifts. Either way, who comes out on top? You!

17. Find Your Direction

Hesitant, then, because you don't know what kind of career you want and thusly couldn't possibly pick a major? Here's a secret: you're not alone. Truthfully, lots of college graduates don't even know exactly what they want to do when they finish college. That said, with so many options to look into, college is a good place to explore and start getting some idea of what it is that you might like to do.

18. Choose From Many Paths

Four-year liberal arts colleges just aren't your thing? Contrary to what your guidance counselor may have told you, it doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. You have different needs or a different learning style, and there are tons of programs that could better suit you. Community college, vocational schools, online programs, a combination of two or several - there's a plan for everyone, and your options are limitless.

19. Your Options are Limitless

(As Long as You Don't Limit Your Options) Here is another misconception: that if you haven't heard of a college, it's probably not very good and not worth looking into. Most colleges haven't heard of you yet, either - should they not give you a chance because your reputation doesn't precede you? Try looking into some smaller schools - what they lack in star power, they usually make up for in unique, hands-on experiences.

20. Take Classes in Your Pajamas

If you go the online school route, you can essentially come to class in your pajamas while chomping down a bowl of Froot Loops.

21. Go to Class in Your Pajamas

Honestly, even if you go to a physical college, you can still show up in your pajamas with half a breakfast burrito hanging out of your mouth, and no one will bat an eye as long as you

contribute positively to the class and do well on your assignments. I fail to see any downside here.

22. Never Wake Up Before Noon

Okay that may be an exaggeration, but gone are the high school days of principals shooing you to class with a bullhorn at 7:30 in the morning. Speaking of which, never schedule a class before 8AM unless you know you're a morning person. Your brain will thank you later. (As will your legs when you're not running a mile across campus every other day because you woke up ten minutes before start time.)

23. Your Weekend Starts on Wednesday

The beauty of scheduling your own classes goes beyond later start times - learn the art and pounce on your earliest class registration dates like a cheetah on the hunt, and you too can cram all of your classes into two or three days, freeing up your precious time for more important things. (This season of Ultimate Frisbee will be epic, am I right guys?)

24. Take Advantage of a Fine Library System

Public libraries pale in comparison to college libraries. Heck, public libraries cry themselves to sleep at night, just wishing they were college libraries. If you're the reading type, pick a section and watch yourself get lost for hours in the best way possible.

25. "Take Advantage" of a Fine Library System

A blazing internet connection, a stellar selection of obscure movies and magazines, a great meeting place with comfy chairs for you and your friends to study or just hide out and chat (at reasonable volumes) - even if you're not a reading type, you can still appreciate your school's library for its many other gifts.

26. Live Healthy at the School Gym

Most college campuses have gyms that you can use for free with your school ID. How great is that? Gyms are wildly expensive in the real world, so you'd better get that Grecian physique while you can (because once you graduate, the only thing Greek about your figure will be all the gyros and Ouzo you consumed last night).

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27. Go Greek

If it's your thing, you can always parlay that new Grecian Physique into a spot in the fraternity or sorority of your choice. They aren't all about partying and brutal hazing techniques - quite a few are dedicated to academia, social causes, and charity work. Of course, if bros and beer bongs are more your speed, the old standards never die.

28. Join Some Clubs

It's good to have hobbies to break up the monotony of study, and college is a veritable cornucopia of extracurricular special interests. Write for your school newspaper, take up a sport, go on outings with a movie club, or have mock medieval battles with the SCA. Not only will you have a legitimate excuse to ward off the bumper-fest of chapter reading for a night, but you're a tad more likely to make lasting friends in a club you enjoy than in your TA section for Calculus.

29. Take Fun Electives

Classes aren't all about General Ed - sure, you sort of need them, but if you don't diversify you will burn out and hate life within minutes, so feel free to balance out the necessary with a bit of frivolity. In college, you can take everything from Introductory Guitar to An Oral History of Reggae, and let no one say you're wasting your time. That's the power of knowledge.

30. Learn a Dead Language

Do it. Where else but college will you have the chance to obtain a document declaring you "Proficient in Ancient Latin?" Sure, your friends are all learning Spanish for a semester abroad in Ibiza, but will they have the power to impress their friends and family by translating ancient maps, mythology, and the backs of coins? (Not to mention giving yourself a rudimentary understanding of almost every language in Europe.)

31. Discuss Lofty Subjects Pretentiously... With Authority!

What are your thoughts on Quentin Tarantino's use of pastiche and blank parody within his oeuvre? How about the disintegration of classical syntax in postmodern literature? Foucault's power/knowledge model in regards to the underlying structures of relationships? "Who cares," you say? Everyone cares. A relevant degree is your license to a lengthy opinion, and when you're in college the whole world is your captive audience. Take advantage of it.

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32. Impress Your Friends With a Double Major

Oh sure, you could just be satisfied with the BA in Comparative Literature. But it's the parallel BS in Archeology that really ties it all together, don't you think?

33. Do Something After Retirement

So, you think you're think you're too old for college? No such thing. Just because you're not some spry young thing in a freshman beanie, it doesn't mean you're too old to learn. People are living longer and longer these days, and you need something more than endless bridge games and backyard gardening to keep your mind sharp. Why not a class or two?

34. Continued Support Via Alumni Programs

Colleges don't just throw you out to the wolves upon graduation - to the contrary, most offer alumni clubs with special benefits and ways to connect with your peers and professors long after you've flipped your mortarboard tassel. (And even if you don't think you want this, rest assured that they will find you and call you anyway every month just to see if you've changed your mind.)

35. Continued Support Via FaceBook

Cheaper than the Alumni Association - find your old college chums and poke them. Lacking in benefits and reduced-rate travel options, but makes up for it in Scrabulous.

36. It's Not as Expensive as You Think

Not every school charges Harvard prices. State colleges, for instance, are shockingly reasonable (as long as you're a resident of that state) and a fair portion are just as good - if not better - than private institutions. Even if you do end up at an Ivy League, however, need-based grants and loans and scholarships abound if you're willing to do a little paperwork. FAFSA, son!

37. Independence!

Need an excuse to move out? The delicate scent of Chee-tos littering your room getting a little stale? Moving out "to reinvent yourself in the city" may be troublesome to your parents, but tell them you're going to college and they'll practically pack your boxes for you.

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38. Reinvent Yourself in a New City!

Feeling stifled? Parents or friends or PTA co-members just not understanding? With all of its new opportunities and potential interests, college means the freedom to shed your old skin and blossom into the brain surgeon/master thespian/art school hipster you were always meant to be.

39. Create Lasting Memories

Be it academic achievements or that one time you and your roommates totally went out for a chili dog run at IAM and ate yourselves senseless while watching reruns of Dawson's Creek - if you don't end up saying "those may have been the best years of my life," then your post-grad life must be epic.

40. You Will Never Be This Experimental or Reckless Again

Not without having to give some serious explanations, anyway. College is a magical time, and it usually only happens once. Take advantage of it."

This list of forty is at the heart of the debate in today's Hawai'i Legislature. They are asking the question: Why not go to a cheaper, more local community college than the higher tuition University of at Manoa – a four year research institute?

Hawai'i's Community College System is affordable and offers cutting edge technical programs that do not require a four-year degree. Community colleges tend to be strong on vocational programs, and are spread throughout the state – increasing the opportunities to stay at home and hold down a part time job. For most of our rural residents, especially on the Neighbor Islands, the community college, and its non-research extension – four year undergraduate campuses such as UH Hilo and UH West Oahu – are great opportunities, and often more intimate. A well planned academic path can be to attend the community college and then transfer to a four year campus. (Unfortunately, the data is not encouraging on how often students take this option.)

There is a debate over whether it is wise or affordable to extend the needs-oriented potentially free tuition Promise programs operating in the community colleges to four year campuses – particularly UH Manoa. This is a worthy discussion, particularly when in its early stages it is difficult to know if the students who have met all the reporting, documenting, and financial needs requirements would have gone to school anyway.

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TOP TEN REASONS TO GO TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MANOA

So that the value of a four year research campus is not lost in today's economically oriented discussion, it is worth a closer look at why even for an undergraduate University of Hawai'i at Manoa offers a more intense, higher and deeper level of intellectual and personal development.

1. Contact with International and National Cutting Edge Scholars and Researchers

Nowhere else in our system is a student more likely to encounter leaders in their fields of knowledge, widely published, hot speakers nationally and internationally. If it is science, they often have high quality laboratories that smaller campuses cannot afford. These academic and research elites are often involved in the doctoral committees for PhD students, which means the entire level of graduate school excellence is uplifted.

2. Contact with International and National Young Scholars and Role Models

In the 1970s, the University of Hawai'i Manoa hired an amazing group of young grad students to serve as Teaching Assistants for World Civilization courses, which were required. At that time, the TAs included many who were Viet Nam vets, some of who served in intelligence in Southeast Asia. There were also a fairly large number of former Peace Corps Volunteers. In general, these were people who had real world experience, were mature and seasoned young adults. They came in direct contact with UH freshmen serving as extension of the Professors – conducting some classes and discussion groups, meeting directly with students, and even contributing to grading exams. In other words, our youth were exposed to role models who not only knew the materials, but in their own lives demonstrated a passion for learning, research, and contributing to the creation of knowledge. This was true of many departments.

The TA experience of a research and graduate campus means that high school graduates come in contact with many who bring to the campus a broad range of perspectives, thoughts, experiences, and role models that were often not part of high school, or as prominent on a purely undergraduate or community college campus.

3. Contact with People from other Nations and Cultures

While the University of Hawai'i system is often praised for its diversity, this is mostly a result of the ethnic diversity of our overall population. When you ask about how many or what percentage was born in another county, the percentage is very low – and most of these are in the graduate programs. There is a value in attending a comfortable extension of high school.

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But there is also a *unique enrichment* in stretching one's experience with those who look, speak, behave, and think very differently. There is a value in a global perspective.

4. Leadership in Asia and The Pacific

Geographically and culturally, UH Manoa has many personal, academic and research related ties to Asia and the Pacific. UH Manoa still enjoys a healthy reputation in these regions. We are thought to have valuable insights to doing business through out the Pacific Rim. And we have many residents whose personal and professional ties give us an edge. The English as a Second Language programs at Manoa are among the best. The wide range of foreign language and the presence of the East West Center makes Manoa the most dynamic of Asia and Pacific affairs. The fact that Manoa is on Oahu also means it is closer to many military leaders who bring their own perspective to the State and to academic discourse. With the only School of Music, Ethnomusicology is yet another vibrant link to many of the nations and cultures that gave Hawai'i its immigrant roots.

5. Scientific Research Niches

Obviously, Hawai'i has an advantage in astronomy, due to the telescopes. Add to this volcanology, and the importance of a wide range of science and math offerings at Manoa that are essential complements to these programs. That volcanoes and tall mountains are located on another island does not mean that the academic infrastructure of such efforts can be easily decentralized. Manoa is still the hub.

6. The Opportunity to Enroll in a Wider Range of Courses.

Notwithstanding the excellent course offerings throughout the system, UH Manoa's menu of courses, majors, programs and experiences is far and above what smaller campuses can offer. If a student is searching for themselves and something to light their passion – Manoa may be the best place to be. You cannot know if you do not try or experiment.

7. The Close Proximity to Government

UH Manoa is a five minutes away from the centers of State and County government. For students who want to make a difference in this world, access to elected and appointed policy makers is front and center.

8. The College of Education

The UH Manoa College of Education is one of the nation's best. It draws on the many majors and disciplines available at Manoa for its students and their essential cluster of complementary courses. It is Hawai'i's only graduate school for masters and doctoral level pursuit of more knowledge in education, including educational policy. It's deans have always been important voices and leaders in K-Higher Education in Hawai'i. The College is also home to important research units, such as the Curriculum Research and Development Group, and the Center on

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Disability Studies. At one point these were the most successful units bringing in outside funding. Their work on how to best teach, what to teach, and how to deal with those with the greatest learning challenges improves schools throughout Hawai'i and the U.S. If education is your passion and your future profession, Manoa is a tremendous resource and experience.

9. The Policy Centers

UH Manoa is the center of analysis and policy advice for the State. In economics, public policy in general, aging, education, peace studies, family issues and other areas of importance to policy makers, these centers interact with many programs on campus, and generate important research and analysis for the Board of Regents, the Board of Education, and independent stakeholders and advocates. The faculty of Manoa often participates fully as Principal Investigators and research associates in the world of policy creation and evaluation.

10. The Life of The Mind

This goal is seldom in the forefront of college discussion. How often are students required to think deeply about what it is to think, to know, to be self aware, to be intellectually uncomfortable, or to experiment with completely different ideologies? How often are those who want change asked to develop their own theory of change in a democratic society?

Scientists tell us that the frontal lobe of the brain is not mature until our early twenties. This means that the importance of logic and reason often takes second place to emotions in middle and high school. Recent assertions of the manipulation of the adult population during the 2016 election suggest that a very substantial portion of adult citizens is not using reason, logic, analysis, or skepticism when on social media. Many have not fully developed the mental discipline to determine what is credible and what is propaganda.

This is not to say civic literacy does not exist at the community college or four-year undergraduate campuses. It is to say that the wide range of truly mentally challenging experiences are more likely to be found in campuses with the broadest range of courses, professors and their TAs. How many UH campuses would offer a course on the writings of Emmanuel Kant – in the history department? How many would challenge students to ponder how we know anything, and what knowing means?

If not in college? When? Where? Not all students will take advantage of these educational challenges, but if it is not on the buffet, it will not be on the plate.

IN CONCLUSION

The University Hawai'i System has many worthy parts, and efforts to pit one element or unit against another may not be in the best interest of our residents. UH Manoa deserves its due.

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