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MULTIPLE GENERATIONS OF HAWAIIANS BEGIN DRAFTING GOVERNING DOCUMENT
Native Hawaiian 'Aha participants move forward at a good pace in week three of the convention.

HONOLULU, Hawai'i — February 18, 2016 – Over 110 participants ranging in age from their 20's to 90's, are making history setting a pathway for advancing the self-governance of the Native Hawaiian people.

The Native Hawaiian Governance 'Aha ended week three of the four-week long historic convention on a high note, with actual language being drafted for the governing document(s). On Tuesday, the body agreed to form five governance-document provision committees: Preamble, Rights, Executive Authorities, Legislative Authorities, and Judicial Authorities. These committees deliberated over the essential elements deemed critical for inclusion in the Native Hawaiian governing document(s).

Rigorous discussion took place in committees where participants brought their diverse viewpoints, ideologies, and aspirations for the government to the table. There was also an inherent attention to what will make the document(s) clearly Hawaiian. O'ahu Participant Matthew Ka'aihue shared that, "For me, structurally, even though it looks like something we are ma'a to in this kind of society, the kūkākūkā is really what makes it a Hawaiian process. Getting insights from the kupuna, aunties and uncles and really trying to tie that into how we make this work in a way that's best for our people, I think that's what is really important."

Matthew, currently pursuing his joint JD/MBA degree, represents a younger generation of Native Hawaiians in the 'Aha who contribute a new energy, passion and perspective to the work at hand. Matthew and his colleagues are mindful however that there is much to learn from those in the room who have been working at this for the last 30-40 years, some alongside their very own 'ohana. "There are a lot of people that have been around in the communities," explained participant Claire Hughes of O'ahu who went on to say, "Then there's some brand new folks I haven't seen before. I have heard their names though because their parents and grandparents have been involved. Their involvement represents folks who have a long reputation for serving the community."

This multi-generational group is now putting pen to paper. In addition to the substantive committees, a drafting committee was formed to take the major concepts deemed priorities by the other committees and fashion actual language from that for the governing document(s). All but one committee forwarded the initial product of their discussion to the drafting committee Thursday evening. The drafting committee then spent all day Friday writing the initial components of the governing document the body may put forth for ratification by the Native Hawaiian people by the end of next week.

Access to 'Ōlelo Coverage: For the 'ohana and kaiāulu that are interested in following along, the plenary sessions are being broadcast on 'Ōlelo channels as well as livestreamed. They will also be available on demand within 48 hours of the event. For details, visit olelo.org

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