

Statement of Endeavors

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Introduction

In this statement, I provide an overview of my teaching, research, and service activities, focusing on my accomplishments since I was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in August 2021.¹ In so doing, I demonstrate that I have met the Criteria for Promotion to Professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH Mānoa).²

Teaching and mentorship

This section describes my instructional activities and mentorship of graduate students at UH Mānoa. As the Department of Linguistics only recently established an undergraduate major, I have taught linguistics courses and seminars at the graduate level, primarily for students in the Language Documentation and Conservation stream. The majority of these students come to UH Mānoa because they want to both conduct linguistic research and partner with communities whose languages are endangered. They are highly motivated and eager to start community-based language documentation as well as research on under-documented languages. I have therefore designed courses that weave together theory and practice, often providing students unique opportunities to collaborate with members of various speech communities or work with documentary materials. This approach is most clearly reflected in courses that I teach regularly, Techniques in Language Documentation (LING 710) and a two-semester sequence of field methods, Linguistic Field Methods (LING 690) and Advanced Linguistic Field Methods (LING 691).³

In advanced seminars, such as Grammar Writing (LING 750G) and Usage-Based Linguistics (LING 750G), I similarly designed these courses so that students engage with theoretical concepts by putting them into practice. In total, I have taught five different graduate courses

¹I was hired in August 2016 as an Assistant Professor in Linguistics (Language Documentation & Conservation).

²See p. 5 of Attachment 1 (https://www.hawaii.edu/policy/docs/temp/Attachment_1_NEW_Faculty_Classification_for_4-Year_Campuses_1.5.24_FINAL.pdf) to the University of Hawai'i Executive Policy 5.221.

³In 2025, we changed several course numbers and titles.

amounting to 45 credit hours.⁴ My approach to advising graduate students likewise provides students practical guidance and opportunities for research, language documentation, and community-based language work more generally.

Teaching philosophy

My philosophy of teaching and learning is shaped by my experiences teaching linguistics courses for over a decade and conducting collaborative field-based research with members of communities who speak endangered or otherwise non-dominant languages. Based on these experiences, I hold that learning is interactive, experiential, and cooperative, and that effective teaching is reflective and responsive to diverse learners. For graduate students in particular, I believe that my courses should prepare them professionally, whether that be carrying out community-based language documentation or some other type of linguistic research. Thus, it is important for me to provide students with opportunities to meaningfully engage with members of speech communities or work firsthand with documentary materials in my courses.

Active learning

Active learning is an essential component of each class I teach. I aim for students to interact with course materials, learn through hands-on activities, and work with each other and, in some cases, community members. In *Techniques in Language Documentation*, I teach students cutting-edge methodologies in digital language documentation: (i) creating high-quality audiovisual recordings of a variety of communicative events, (ii) transcribing, translating, and glossing these communicative events using specialized transcription systems and software, and (iii) preparing recordings, metadata, and annotations for long-term archiving and dissemination to members of the community. For each of these components, I provide students with the conceptual foundations, followed by collaborative, hands-on activities in which students put the knowledge they have gained into immediate practice. Lectures on the nature of sound, microphones, and audio recorders, specialized software for creating dictionaries, or the conceptual foundations of specialized transcription systems are followed by small-group activities that require students to make various audio recordings, construct a lexical database, or transcribe segments of conversations, respectively.

In field methods courses, students take the concepts and techniques they have learned in both language documentation and general linguistics courses to document and describe aspects of a language with which they are unfamiliar. They do so by working directly with a speaker of such a language. This person is referred to as a *language expert*. These courses require a different approach to teaching. I am much less of an instructor in the traditional sense and act more as a guide for students on their fieldwork journeys. The students already possess most of the tools needed for conducting modern linguistic fieldwork, but need coaching, encouragement, and

⁴These totals do not include individualized courses, such as Directed Research (LING 699) or Doctoral Dissertation Research (LING 800).

constructive feedback to fill in any gaps and use these tools successfully. Thus, I provide them a roadmap with clear milestones, a safe environment to ask questions and receive feedback, and mentorship that is tailored to each student. This enables students to plan, document, and reflect on each session with the language expert, develop relevant research questions, test hypotheses about the data that they are collecting, and produce research papers or community-oriented materials.

In advanced seminars, I incorporate the same tenets of active learning in my teaching. In Grammar Writing (LING 750G), for example, I had students pick a “companion grammar” from a list of well-known reference grammars of non-dominant languages. Students used their companion grammar throughout the class, in reading responses as well as small-group and class discussions. The companion grammars allowed students to interact with the articles on grammar writing in a new way and led to lively discussions in class. In Usage-Based Linguistics (LING 750G), my co-instructor (Professor Shelece Easterday) and I created a series of collaborative assignments where students worked in small groups to analyze a corpus of an under-described language, addressing key topics in usage-based linguistics, such as frequency, phonetic variation, as well as collocations and construction types. Finally, Professionalism (LING 641) is a unique course that is collaborative by design. In this course, faculty, staff, and graduate students work together to organize the [International Conference on Language Documentation & Conservation](#). Each time I teach this class, students not only learn how to plan a large, international conference, but also learn about cutting-edge research and current themes in language documentation and conservation.

Reflective and responsive teaching

To teach these courses effectively, I continually reflect on my teaching and respond to student needs. These adjustments range from minor tweaks between class sessions to significant changes between semesters. With this mindset, I have improved each of my courses by designing activities, assignments, and feedback that accommodate students who have diverse backgrounds and different ways of learning. In Techniques in Language Documentation, students come with varying levels of experience with technology. I have developed course materials for students at different levels of technical knowledge, scaffolding them so that students who are not comfortable with technology are able to learn hardware and specialized software without anxiety. Furthermore, small group activities are designed to be cooperative, which allows students with more experience to help those with less. I have also been able to engage a broader range of students by using authentic documentation from a variety of languages in hands-on activities. Reflective and responsive teaching have led me to develop each of these strategies over time.

In field methods courses, students are responsible for planning and running sessions with the language expert. They outline what aspects of the language they will document, set up the equipment, and process the recordings after the session. Students learn a great deal through this process. As the instructor, I consistently reflect on how I can guide students best in

this process, balancing direct instruction and feedback with independent problem-solving and exploration. This takes a combination of patience and discretion, which I have developed over the past ten years. I have discovered that striking the right balance helps students avoid some of the pitfalls they may face during fieldwork and build confidence through solving difficult problems on their own. I have found that students who learn from their missteps or through challenging circumstances take more ownership over their learning, something that is in many ways more valuable than any technical skill I could teach them.

Subject Mastery

Subject mastery in the courses that I teach is multifaceted and involves (i) a command of the expanding body of literature in documentary and descriptive linguistics, Austronesian linguistics, and usage-based linguistics, (ii) technical know-how of recording equipment and software as well as data collection and curation processes, (iii) skills to produce clear descriptions of various aspects of the language and pose relevant research questions and answer them, and (iv) experience working with endangered language communities, collaborating with members of these communities, and producing appropriate language materials with and for them. The courses that I teach are built upon these experiences and areas of expertise, which I have developed (and continue to develop) in my own research through years of experience describing and documenting Austronesian languages.

In *Techniques in Language Documentation*, I draw extensively on my own documentation projects and teach students techniques that I developed myself (e.g., in video and audio recording, transcription practices). In *Field Methods*, I draw on my extensive experience in fieldwork, not only in planning, data collection, and analysis, but also navigating relationships with members of various speech communities. Thus, the knowledge and experience I bring to these classes come from the combination of being well-versed in the literature in several areas of linguistics and spending years carrying out fieldwork and community-based language documentation.

Teaching effectiveness

One important measure of the effectiveness of my teaching is the degree to which students are prepared to carry out community-based language documentation, fieldwork, and original linguistic research on under-described languages. I have seen evidence of this from graduate students who have taken my classes. Having completed *Techniques in Language Documentation*, students have demonstrated that they are able to carry out all of the technical aspects of a language documentation project, while understanding how to navigate the nuances of working with different communities and how to solve technical and practical issues as they arise. In Spring 2025, the entire class even researched the use of smartphones in language documentation and presented the paper virtually at the [Language Documentation & Archiving](#) conference.

In Field Methods, students consistently produce impressive documentation and develop original research that results in conference presentations or forms the basis of qualifying papers and even dissertations. Many students build upon their work in the class and establish relationships with the speech community through the language expert to continue fieldwork. As students were unable to travel for fieldwork during the pandemic, I began to work with members of the Micronesian diaspora, which have sizable communities on O‘ahu. Since then, field methods courses have worked with language experts of Woleaian, Palauan, and Kosraean. In each case, I have had more than one student continue fieldwork after the class, even traveling to Micronesia after travel restrictions had been lifted. Thus far, two students have written dissertations on Woleaian with several other students planning to write dissertations on Palauan and Kosraean. In recent years, I have also been able to incorporate a series of related initiatives into the field methods course, which has allowed students to interact with several members of the speech community. In Spring 2025, several graduate students and I organized the Palauan Language Forum where students in my field methods class and Palauan students at UH Mānoa met to discuss current language issues that the community is facing (e.g., language endangerment, orthography, and language use among the diaspora). In the 2025-26 academic year, field methods students provided training to three Kosraean students in the Micronesian Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship in Linguistics (MURAL) program that I began two years ago. They subsequently collaborated on transcribing and translating recordings with the MURAL students. See Documentation among Micronesian diaspora on O‘ahu section below for more details on these and other initiatives.

Advising and mentorship

I take a hands-on approach to student advising and mentorship to help students grow into independent, well-rounded scholars. I do so by involving them in research: providing graduate assistantships, bringing them on fieldwork, co-authoring presentations and publications, and/or leading community-based activities together. In each case, I find that students are most successful when I create space for open dialogue and foster a relationship built on mutual respect. This allows me to better understand each student and provide guidance that meets their needs.

I have chaired three dissertation committees (Khairunnisa 2022; Christina Truong 2024; Blaine Billings 2026) and co-chaired another (Jacob Hakim 2023). I am currently chairing one dissertation committee (Cedar Lay) to be defended in December 2026. I have worked closely with each of these students in different capacities: three of the students have worked as graduate assistants for NSF-sponsored language documentation projects, two of whom I brought on fieldwork to Sumatra, Indonesia. The collaboration on these projects involved close mentorship before, during, and after fieldwork, leading training workshops for Indonesian collaborators and members of several speech communities, curating and archiving recordings and their associated transcriptions and translations, holding official meetings with the community, analyzing and writing up results for research projects, among various other activities. I have co-authored extensively with these students presenting 20 papers and co-authoring seven publications. For

three of the publications, the student is the first author, and for three others, I invited the student to co-author the paper with me.

Over the past five years, I have served as a member of an additional 15 dissertation committees and as an official advisor to 11 PhD students and 9 MA students at UH Mānoa. I have also chaired six Qualifying Papers. Finally, I have served as an external reviewer for two other dissertations, one in New Zealand and the other in Australia.

Research activities

My scholarly endeavors are concerned with the documentation and description of Austronesian languages, addressing issues of theoretical import that inform usage-based approaches and are informed by documentary corpora of language-in-use. These endeavors are supported by the commitment of UH Mānoa to the Asia-Pacific region, which aligns with my focus on the languages of Island Southeast Asia and more recently the Pacific.

The sub-field of documentary linguistics has grown tremendously over the past three decades in response to calls from linguists to address the devastating impacts that globalization has had on linguistic diversity. These calls acknowledged the fact that many of the world's languages—typically spoken by marginalized communities—are no longer being learned, representing a significant loss of linguistic and cultural knowledge. Documentary linguists have recognized the need to create long-lasting records of the linguistic practices of these speech communities to preserve linguistic diversity with a focus on how such documentation forms the basis of critical resources for the community to reclaim and maintain or revitalize these practices. Given the close connection between communities, documentary linguists have highlighted the importance of employing reflexive practices that value the needs and desires of the people who use these languages, most often through the development of shared goals and close collaborations. Two decades after the Department of Linguistics at UH Mānoa decided to devote significant resources to address these critical issues, we are recognized as an international leader in language documentation and conservation, having successfully established a graduate program, an international conference, and a dedicated journal.

Within this context, my research in documentary linguistics contributes to the field of linguistics by (1) carrying out documentation projects in collaboration with members of speech communities in western Indonesia and Indonesian linguists, (2) establishing programs to document languages of Micronesia through training and capacity building efforts among diaspora communities on O'ahu, (3) leading efforts to document and describe aspects of Olelo Niihau, a variety of Hawaiian spoken by an isolated community in the far west of the archipelago, and (4) developing both conceptual foundations and practices in documentary linguistics through publications in several venues. Finally, my experience in developing curated documentary collections and utilizing them in linguistic research led to my involvement in related projects, most importantly co-editing *The Open Handbook of Linguistic Data Management*.

In addition to the documentation of Austronesian languages, I have published extensively on a variety of areal phenomena of typological and theoretical interest. Many of these publications are directly informed by the documentation of language use, particularly of Nasal and Besemah, addressing argument structure, among other topics. Other publications on Austronesian languages demonstrate the expertise that I have developed in the languages of western Indonesia, particularly the Malayic languages and the languages of Sumatra.

Language documentation projects

I have led several efforts to document the linguistic practices of speech communities in western Indonesia and more recently in the Pacific. To support these projects, I have been the PI or co-PI on three senior research grants from the National Science Foundation and a research grant from the Hawai'i State Charter School Commission. In total, these grants amount to over \$1.1 million, \$479,534 of which was awarded since tenure and promotion.

Language documentation in western Indonesia

The documentation projects that I have led in western Indonesia have developed over the past two decades. I have partnered with Indonesian linguists and each of the Nasal, Besemah, and Baduy speech communities to document these languages. Archive collections for these projects have been created at the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC) and the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR). A central goal in all three projects is to create multipurpose records of the linguistic practices of these speech communities for diverse users, including but not limited to members of the community, linguists, and scholars from other disciplines. This documentation, including audiovisual recordings, transcriptions, translations, and various types of additional annotations, aims to serve as the basis for published descriptive materials, including a dictionary, as well as articles on various aspects of these languages. The value of this documentation has been recognized by the Linguistics Society of America in the Statement on Evaluation of Language Documentation for Hiring, Tenure, and Promotion.⁵

Documentation with the Nasal speech community. The project, “Investigating Language Use in a Multilingual Speech Community” ([NSF BCS 1911641](#)), aims to document the linguistic practices of the Nasal speech community, which represents an especially complex sociolinguistic situation in three villages in Bengkulu province in Sumatra, Indonesia. This speech community is multilingual where Nasal [glottocode: nasa1239], an endangered Sumatran language with little existing documentation, is used in everyday interactions alongside Malayic languages, Semende, a dialect of South Barisan Malay [glottocode: cent2053] and Kaur [glottocode: kaur1269]. Due to its level of endangerment, severe lack of documentation and linguistic description, as well

⁵<https://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/statement-evaluation-language-documentation-hiring-tenure-and-promotion>

as sociocultural, historical, and typological interest, Nasal has been the primary focus in this documentation project.

In an effort to produce comprehensive documentation with significant outputs for the Nasal community, I led a multinational team comprising community members, graduate students, and Indonesian linguists to carry out this project. This team, which we refer to as the *Tim Dokumentasi Baso Nasal* ‘The Nasal Language Documentation Team’, has produced over 450 hours of audiovisual documentation of Nasal, including everyday conversations, important cultural events, formal meetings, semantic domain discussion sessions, as well as lexical, phonological, and grammatical elicitation sessions. Over 75 hours of this documentation has been transcribed and translated, amounting to a corpus of just under 500,000 words.⁶

As a part of this project, I closely mentored two PhD students, Jacob Hakim and Blaine Billings. I recruited both students to join this community-based language documentation project, brought them to Sumatra, mentored them through the many facets of fieldwork, and co-authored several presentations and publications with them. Together with Dr. Yanti at Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia, we provided extensive language documentation training and support to two members of the speech community, Johan Safri and Wawan Sahrozi, who learned to audio and video record speech events, transcribe, translate, and gloss these recordings in ELAN and Fieldworks Language Explorer (FLEX). As a team, we coordinated our efforts with leaders in the Nasal community and organized formal and informal meetings with members of the community and local governmental officials to make important decisions on the documentation of Nasal and especially the Nasal-Indonesian-English dictionary.

The documentation we produced formed the basis of two UH Mānoa dissertations on Nasal, a number of presentations and publications, as well as a Nasal-Indonesian-English dictionary, which is currently being compiled. Jacob Hakim’s dissertation, *A prosodic description of Nasal: Investigating stress and intonation in an endangered Sumatran language* (co-chaired with Professor Amy Schafer), produced the first-ever description of Nasal prosody based on specialized elicitation of different stress and intonational patterns. Blaine Billings’ dissertation, *Documentary lexicography: A case study of building a Nasal dictionary*, described the process of developing a dictionary in close collaboration with the speech community. The dissertation includes a lexical database that links each entry to the archived recordings of everyday conversations and semantic domain discussion sessions.⁷ Both dissertations demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between documentation and scholarship, where the research questions both shaped and were shaped by the documentation.

At the outset of the project, the Nasal speech community expressed interest in a trilingual Nasal-Indonesian-English dictionary, and Blaine Billings in his dissertation made significant progress

⁶There is an additional 15 hours of Kaur, six hours of which has been transcribed and translated, amounting to over 30,000 words, and 6 hours of Semende conversation, which has been fully transcribed amounting to approximately 40,000 words.

⁷Semantic domain discussion sessions are interactional recordings where three or four Nasal participants are given prompts to discuss particular semantic domains with the goal of producing and defining lexical items for the dictionary.

on it. At present, the dictionary contains over 2,000 headwords with complete definitions and an additional 8,000 headwords that are linked to the documentary corpus. The team is now working together to write definitions for the dictionary and complete a sketch grammar that will appear as a part of the front matter.⁸ We plan to publish the dictionary in mid-2028.

Documentation with the Besemah speech community. Besemah [glottocode: cent2053] is a variety of South Barisan Malay spoken by just over 330,000 people in the highlands of southwest Sumatra. I began to document and describe the language nearly two decades ago, and I have since continued to expand and enrich this documentation with my longtime Besemah collaborator, Hendi Feriza. Over the past seven years, this collaborative effort has supported and been supported by the documentation of the multilingual practices in the Nasal speech community because one of the languages spoken in the community is closely related to Besemah.

Mr. Feriza has continued to receive training, and together we have significantly increased the amount of documentation that has been transcribed, translated and glossed. At present, the collection at PARADISEC contains 250 hours of documentation, including recordings of narratives, conversations, transcription sessions, elicitation of phonological, lexical, and morphosyntactic features of the language. While the majority of the recordings were created prior to 2021, the corpus, primarily narratives and conversations, has grown from approximately 60,000 words in 2021 to over 250,000 words in the past five years. With the assistance of several graduate students at UH Mānoa, Mr. Feriza and I are also compiling a volume of Besemah folktales, known as *Andai-andai*, which I recorded from 2008 to 2014.

Documentation with the Baduy speech community. The Baduy Dalam [glottocode: badu1237] represent a remarkable community in West Java who prioritize harmony between nature and reverence for their ancestors. These beliefs have left them isolated both culturally and linguistically for approximately five centuries. They speak a language related to Sundanese that is nonetheless mutually unintelligible with other varieties.

Under the title “Documenting the endangered Indonesian language of the Baduy Dalam” (NSF BCS 1562130), this documentation project is one that I was asked to take over when Professor William Davies (University of Iowa) unexpectedly passed away in August 2017. Because of my commitment to the Nasal speech community, I invited Dr. Michael Ewing (University of Melbourne) to join the project, and together as co-PIs, we brought this project to completion. Dr. Jill Beckman, the chair of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Iowa at the time, took over as PI in order to facilitate the grant from the University of Iowa.

Through partnerships with a team of linguists from Indonesian Education University, led by Dr. Eri Kurniawan, a former student of Professor Davies, we archived an audiovisual collection of stories, poems, and descriptions of daily life in Baduy Dalam. These speech events were

⁸Members of the Nasal speech community have asked that the dictionary not be made publicly available until it has been fully published and distributed to the community. However, they have given me permission to share an online version of the dictionary to a limited number of people, which is found at <https://www.basonasal.org>. Login information was provided by the Department Chair, Professor Amy Schafer.

transcribed, translated, and glossed. In total, the corpus is just under 40,000 words. I led the efforts to curate the existing documentation for archiving and develop text and lexical databases with the help of a dedicated Graduate Assistant (Christina Truong). The full archival collection is available at PARADISEC.

Language documentation in the Pacific

The projects focusing on languages of the Pacific have only begun within the last three years with an emphasis on making connections, building trust, and fostering relationships. Each project takes a different approach that aims to address the specific needs of the communities and objectives of the funding.

Documentation among Micronesian diaspora on O’ahu. Since the establishment of the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) beginning in the 1980s, people from various Micronesian countries have migrated to Hawai’i in relatively large numbers in search of healthcare, employment, and education. Yet the Micronesian diaspora face many challenges, including unemployment and housing insecurity, which are often the result of widespread discrimination and other barriers to accessing essential services. When these issues peaked during the pandemic, I set out to establish relationships with members of the Micronesian diaspora in Hawai’i. Recognizing the enormous need for language work as well as the new restrictions on travel for students conducting fieldwork, I began to work with speakers of Micronesian languages in my field methods courses, and in collaboration with linguistics faculty and graduate students, we offered language documentation workshops to the broader Micronesian community through the Language Documentation Training Center (LDTC). These initiatives led to a large-scale project, “Documenting endangered languages through training and capacity building among diaspora communities” (NSF BCS [2421485](#)), of which I am the PI.

This project aims to document and describe a diverse group of Micronesian languages spoken by diaspora communities in Hawai’i. It is a collaborative effort involving four other UH Mānoa linguistics faculty (Professors Gary Holton, Shelece Easterday, Andrew Cheng, Leah Pappas), numerous linguistics graduate students, and organizations serving Pacific Island communities, such as the [Pacific Islands Development Program](#) at the East-West Center and the [Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant Resource Center](#). Our emphasis is on training and capacity building for members of Micronesian communities in Hawai’i and for linguistics graduate students. Thus, members of the faculty work closely with graduate students to provide training to members of the Micronesian diaspora. These efforts are most evident in the Micronesian Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship in Linguistics (MURAL), workshops through LDTC, and a recent collaboration with members of the Chuukese diaspora on O’ahu.

MURAL has run for the past two academic years with six undergraduate students from Palau, the Marshall Islands, and Kosrae. In this program students receive training in language documentation and linguistics, creating their own documentation of the language as well as a

culminating project.⁹ Under my guidance, LDTC has offered a number of different workshops to members from at least 10 different Micronesian speech communities. Most recently, LDTC has offered workshops for the Marshallese and Chuukese communities through steering committees hosted by Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant Resource Center. These workshops led to a partnership that I developed with the Chuukese Steering Committee to document three Eastern Chuukic languages spoken among the diaspora: Chuukese [glottocode: chu1238], Mortlockese [glottocode: mort1237], and Puluwatese [glottocode: pulu1242]. Over the next several years, we plan to continue the documentation of Eastern Chuukic languages, solidify MURAL as a permanent program for undergraduate research, and strengthen partnerships with Chuukese and Marshallese steering committees.

Report on Olelo Niihau and preliminary documentation. Niihau is the westernmost of the eight main Hawaiian islands. With a unique history of isolation, the people of the island of Niihau have maintained active use of their language without any interruption in intergenerational transmission, which is unfortunately not witnessed among the other varieties of Hawaiian. Thus, the Niihau language, known as *Olelo Niihau* or *Olelo Kanaka*, is a wellspring of important linguistic and cultural knowledge for Hawai‘i. The persistence of Olelo Niihau has meant that the language maintains a number of features not present in other varieties of Hawaiian. However, the same isolation that protected the language for generations means that there has been relatively little documentation of the language and fewer linguistic descriptions of it. Other than impressionistic observations, it is unclear how different Olelo Niihau is compared to other, better-documented varieties of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i spoken throughout the islands. With rapid changes in the Niihau community that have led many of them to move off of the island of Niihau, it is unclear how vital Olelo Niihau is and to what extent the language is changing as a result of contact with English and potentially other varieties of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i.

To address these questions, I joined a colleague from linguistics (Professor William O’Grady) and Hawaiian language experts (Dr. Keao NeSmith, Professor Kuuipolani Kanahele Wong), the latter of whom is a member of the Niihau speech community, to write a report for the Hawai‘i State Legislature. The report contains (i) a summary of previous research on Olelo Niihau, (ii) descriptions of key aspects of the language’s phonology and grammar, (iii) results of a sociolinguistic survey of language use, language attitudes, and intergenerational transmission, and (iv) preliminary results of a pilot study of intelligibility with another variety of Hawaiian. In the end, the report provides recommendations for the state to support members of the Niihau community in maintaining this important language. I continue to work with members of the research team to describe other aspects of the language and members of the community to formulate a plan to create documentation and other language materials for the purpose of revitalization.

⁹One student, for example, created a rhyming dictionary in Kosraean, highlighting both minimal pairs and homophones. Another student explored language ideologies of less fluent Palauan speakers in the diaspora.

Documentary linguistics and related research

The language documentation projects described above have inspired publications that contribute to the field of documentary linguistics. First, I have two single-authored peer-reviewed chapters that are set to be published in 2026 in edited volumes. These contributions focus on developing the conceptual foundations of and methodologies for documentary linguistics. One chapter will appear in a volume on documenting interaction wherein my contribution details a methodology that I created to provide rich annotations necessary for accessing the documentation of everyday conversations. Another chapter appears in a volume that focuses on language documentation in Indonesia. Drawing on the documentation of Nasal and Besemah, I explore the challenges and prospects of documenting multilingualism and diglossia in this chapter. Second, I have co-authored several conference proceedings with graduate students on computational approaches to transcription. Using archival collections of Nasal and Besemah, we develop Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) models to help ease the transcription bottleneck. In this series of papers, we demonstrate that, even without pristine documentation, ASR models are able to significantly increase the speed of transcription. This is important given the large amounts of untranscribed documentation that both projects have amassed. In addition to these publications, I have been invited to give talks on issues in documentary linguistics in six different venues, ranging from international conferences to dedicated workshops to department colloquia.

My research in documentary linguistics, especially in creating, maintaining, and disseminating curated datasets, led to several efforts to develop practices of reproducible research in linguistics. These efforts culminated in *The Open Handbook of Linguistic Data Management* published by MIT Press in 2022. It was edited with three other colleagues (Professor Andrea Berez-Kroeker, Dr. Eve Koller, Dr. Lauren Collister) and contains 56 chapters with 96 different contributors. Part 1 of the handbook provides the foundations of data management from reproducible research to ethical considerations to data citation and archiving. Part 2, then, builds on this foundation by providing practical guidance through 43 Data Management Use Cases that represent nearly all subfields of linguistics. A review of the handbook in *Glossa* highlights the scope and importance of this work.¹⁰

Austronesian linguistics

I have an active research program that focuses on Austronesian languages, spanning several sub-fields of linguistics. Since tenure and promotion, I have published two articles in peer-reviewed journals and nine peer-reviewed book chapters on Austronesian languages with two additional book chapters awaiting publication. The vast majority of these publications were co-authored with graduate students whom I was advising. I have also been invited to present this research at workshops, symposia, and international conferences, most notably as a keynote

¹⁰Smith, Alexander D., (2022) A review of *The Open Handbook of Linguistic Data Management*. 2021. Edited by Andrea L. Berez-Kroeker, Bradley McDonnell, Eve Koller, and Lauren B. Collister. Cambridge: MIT Press. ISBN 97802262045261 i–xiv. 671pp, *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 7(1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/glossa.9261>

speaker for the [International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics](#) and the upcoming [International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics](#) in 2027. I was also invited to consult with colleagues as a visiting researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in 2024 and separately at the University of Cologne in 2025 on projects centering on issues in Austronesian linguistics.

My publications in Austronesian linguistics describe various aspects of these languages and address different issues of typological and theoretical importance. The most prominent area of my research focuses on argument structure, on how verbal arguments are manipulated with voice morphology, added with causative and applicative morphology, and realized in language use. I published three co-authored cross-linguistic studies on symmetrical voice and applicative constructions and two single-authored publications that address controversies surrounding voice and grammatical relations in Besemah. In each of these papers, I, along with my co-authors, address controversial issues in Austronesian linguistics. For example, in the book chapter, “What is a passive in Besemah?”, I question previous analyses of apparent passive constructions in a number of western Indonesian languages. Based on a documentary corpus of Besemah conversation, I demonstrate that it is untenable to draw a distinction between passive and so-called undergoer-oriented transitive constructions.

Two other co-authored chapters similarly draw on documentary corpora of Nasal and Besemah, but address the nature of hesitant interjections (like *uh* or *umm* in English) and placeholders (like *whatchamacallit* in English). In these papers, we show that previously held definitions that separate hesitant and placeholder functions in better-described languages are not found in Besemah or Nasal, and yet speakers of these languages utilize hesitatives and placeholders without any issue.

Another prominent area of my research is on the languages spoken in and around Sumatra, Indonesia. I published one co-authored article that establishes the Sumatran subgroup, a group of at least 14 languages spoken on Sumatra and its Barrier Islands, based on a number of shared innovations. This article builds upon earlier proposals that have shown genetic affiliations among a smaller subset of these languages. Most notably, our paper provides evidence that Enggano (perhaps the most aberrant Austronesian language) and Nasal are Sumatran languages. I have also published two co-authored chapters on languages of this region in the *Oxford University Press Guide to the Malayo-Polynesian languages of Southeast Asia* and have an additional chapter in the forthcoming de Gruyter volume, *Languages and Linguistics of Island Southeast Asia and the Pacific*.

Finally, I have several burgeoning areas of research on Micronesian languages, including phonetic studies of Woleaian and Palauan that we have presented at several international conferences, as well as studies of prosody in Olelo Niihau, for which we are collecting data.

Service activities

My professional service activities demonstrate my commitment to the field of linguistics and marginalized speech communities in Hawai'i and Indonesia. I have been actively involved in numerous service activities both inside and outside of the university. I highlight some of these activities below.

Conference organization

Since tenure and promotion in 2021, I have organized three conferences and two symposia, all of which received support from the National Science Foundation. I was a co-chair of the *International Conference on Language Documentation & Conservation* (ICLDC) for [ICLDC 7](#) in 2021 and [ICLDC 9](#) in 2025. This biennial conference is considered by many to be among the most important conferences for the fields of language documentation and language revitalization. In 2021, we had to pivot from an in-person meeting with over 400 participants to a virtual conference that attracted over 1,000 participants from around the world. Then, in 2025, based on feedback from participants, we brought the conference back to an in-person event.

I was also the co-organizer for [three meetings on Southeast Asian linguistics](#), which included the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society (SEALS), the International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics (ISMIL), and the International Symposium on the Language of Java (ISLOJ). This weeklong event was cancelled due to the pandemic, and the events were rescheduled. I eventually served as a co-organizer for [SEALS 31](#) in 2022, and the local organizer for [ISMIL 26](#) and [ISLOJ 9](#) in 2023.

Editorial service

I have been actively involved in editorial service over the past five years. I have served in various editorial roles for the journal *Language Documentation & Conservation* (Book Review Editor 2017-22, Technology Editor 2022-23). In 2023, I became Associate Editor, taking on a larger role with the journal. I have also served on the editorial board for two open-access journals, the *Journal of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society (JSEALS)* and *NUSA: Linguistic studies of languages in and around Indonesia*, and two book series, *Oceanic Linguistics Special Publications* and *PALI Language Texts*.

Reviewing

Since 2021, I have reviewed one book manuscript for *Language Documentation & Description*, 15 articles for 12 different journals, ranging from *Oceanic Linguistics* and *Linguistic Typology* to *Phonology* and the *International Journal of American Linguistics*. I have also reviewed grant applications for the Endangered Language Documentation Programme. Finally, I have been a conference abstract reviewer for the International Conference of the Association of Linguistic

Typology, Workshop on the Use of Computational Methods in the Study of Endangered Languages (ComputEL), and the International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics.

Service to the Department and University

In the Department of Linguistics, I regularly serve on the following committees: the Department Personnel Committee, the Admissions Committee, the Drechsel-Hubbard Endowed Fellowship for Indigenous Language-Culture Research Selection Committee, and the Robert Blust Memorial Endowment Selection Committee. Additionally, I chaired the ad-hoc Criteria and Procedures Policy Committee, in which we drafted the department's new criteria and procedures documents.

I also serve as the Faculty Advisor to the Language Documentation Training Center (LDTC) and the Austronesian Circle. The Austronesian Circle is a monthly reading group where students and faculty read and discuss papers focused on Austronesian languages. With graduate students from the Austronesian Circle, I co-organized a one-day *Workshop on Austronesian Languages and Culture* in 2024 for students and faculty at UH Mānoa. In addition to the LDTC workshops offered to members of the Micronesian community, I have established the Kaipuleohone-LDTC Ongoing (KaLO) Archiving Project with colleague Professor Leah Pappas and graduate students to archive legacy materials. We are currently archiving a collection of fieldnotes and other materials on Rejang entrusted to me by Dr. Richard McGinn's family.

At the university level, I have served as a member of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board since 2023. I also served on the Application Committee for the Tria Kerkvliet Southeast Asia Studies Graduate Fellowship.