Washington State University

College of Education, Sport and Human Sciences

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Will defend their dissertation on

Date: April 20, 2026
Time: 9:00 A.M.

Pullman Campus – Cleveland Hall, Room 353

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend

Title:

STEM IDENTITY OF PACIFIC ISLANDER UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN GUÅHAN (GUAM, USA)

Chair: Olusola Adesope

Abstract:

STEM identity, its development, and how it relates to interest, motivation, academic performance, and persistence within STEM fields has gained more scholarly attention within the past decade. Studies suggest that the more one identifies and feels accepted by others as a STEM person, the greater the likelihood they pursue and persist in STEM. However, studies have also found that women and students of underrepresented minorities (URM) tend to have significantly lower STEM identity. This discrepancy is largely attributed to their historic lack of representation within STEM, as well as from other sociocultural, socioeconomic, and systemic challenges they disproportionally face. Moreover, there is notably less discourse that examines and accounts for students who identify as Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (NHPI), one of the most underrepresented groups in STEM. NHPI often experience the greatest barriers to higher education and STEM careers compared to other URM, yet they are greatly overlooked and unaccounted for in STEM research. Utilizing a multi-method design, the following study examines STEM identity within a largely NHPI student population.143 undergraduate students in the Pacific Island of Guam, USA, were surveyed, and ten survey participants were interviewed. This study was designed utilizing a previously validated model for STEM identity. Quantitative and qualitative study findings, implications, limitations, and future directions are discussed.