History

The IKE AO PONO program was piloted in 2001 with 6 students and became established as a permanent program in 2004 with 66 students. The primary mission of the program is threefold:

- To improve the health and healthcare of Hawaii and the Pacific through effective and culturally sensitive care.
- To increase the number of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander nurses in Hawaii.
- To provide young Hawaiians with positive role models.

With these ideals in mind, IKE AO PONO strives to encourage the enrollment and successful graduation of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students to the nursing profession from the UH Manoa Nursing Program.

As of 2019, IKE AO PONO has successfully graduated more than 409 Native nurses from the baccalaureate, graduate, and doctoral programs and will reach the graduation of 500 Native nurses in the next few years.