Joining UH Hilo is culmination of life’s work for Platz, Chang

by Ken Hupp

The New Year marked a new beginning at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo as Chancellor Don Straney officially welcomed two new administrators to the University ‘ohana. Ka Lono Hanakahi offers this spotlight on the newest members of our administrative team.

Dr. Matt Platz joined UH Hilo on January 2 as Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Platz earned a B.S. in Chemistry from the State University of New York at Albany and a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Yale. He most recently served as the Distinguished University Professor of Chemistry at Ohio State University and Director of the Division of Chemistry at the National Science Foundation.

Jerry Chang joined UH Hilo on January 11 as Director of University Relations, succeeding Gerald De Mello who retired on December 31, 2012 after 21 years. Chang was born in Hilo, earned a B.A. in Sociology from UH Hilo in 1978 and spent more than 20 years representing East Hawai‘i in the State Legislature.

Upon assuming their new duties, both discussed their goals and objectives for the University:

What led you to seek the position you currently hold at UH Hilo?

MP: It has been our dream to live and work in Hawai‘i since 1995, when my wife Joan, our three children and I came to Honolulu for a meeting of the world’s chemists. During our visit we traveled to Hawai‘i Island and instantly fell in love with the island’s beauty,

Veterans to Farmers Program

by Chancellor Don Straney

I recently attended graduation ceremonies for the first cohort of the Veterans to Farmers pilot training program. Fourteen graduates received their training certificates in Waimea on January 5 at an event attended by family, friends, and Hawai‘i Island and state dignitaries, including representatives, senators, Mayor Billy Kenoi and Governor Neil Abercrombie.

The Veterans to Farmers training program is a community-based pilot initiative that will soon evolve into a new UH Hilo Certificate in Agriculture program designed solely for U.S. military veterans. The program will provide a hands-on farming skills training curriculum, classroom-based business training, business start-up support, and health monitoring for veterans. Once the curriculum is formally approved by the Veterans Benefits Administration of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, the UH Hilo certificate program will be eligible for veterans to use their GI Bill education benefits. Local organizers are currently working with the VA on a start date of UH Hilo’s certificate program.

The State Department of Labor—and its director Dwight Takamine, in particular—has been instrumental in launching Hawai‘i’s Veterans to Farmers program. Partners in facilitating the program are Rivertop Energy Solutions (a project-planning firm run by David Ruf assisting with development of the initiative), Hawai‘i Community College, the State...
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weather, local culture and lifestyle. After saving up for nine
years, we bought a condo in Kailua-Kona in 2004 and since
then have spent every day allotted to us by Ohio State in Hawai‘i. So I jumped at the opportunity to seek the position
of Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. I believe this is the
perfect place for me to pursue my professional goal of transform-
ing higher education with an emphasis on sustainability. UH Hilo
has the advantage of being smaller and younger, relative
to my previous institution (Ohio State University), which allows it to be more agile in managing change than the
older and larger institutions. I also believe that Hawai‘i has the people and natural resources to become a model for
new paradigms in higher education.

JC: I attended UH Hilo in the 1970s after serving as an
Army Special Forces Medic and later as a Surgeon’s Assistant
in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I believed that Hilo could become a college town like Chapel Hill, with the University
of Hawai‘i at Hilo serving as an economic engine much like
the University of North Carolina. I began advocating for the
University as a student government leader, and continued as
a business and community leader as well as the district’s State
Representative for 24 years pushing for expanded UH Hilo
programs and Capital Improvement funding at the legislature.
I see this position as a natural progression of those efforts
that will allow me to continue supporting the administration,
faculty and staff to graduate our students, prepare them to
enter the workforce and improve their quality of life.

How do you view the role of UH Hilo as a member of				community it serves?
MP: In many ways UH Hilo is THE land grant institution
for Hawai‘i Island. We provide students with the education
to become the next generation of teachers, nurses, pharma-
cists and business leaders, and to matriculate to graduate
and professional education throughout the state, nation and
the world. Our faculty’s research develops best practices for
local agri-business, conservation, the wise use of our natural
resources, and for understanding and preserving our indig-
igenous heritage. I see the fortunes of UH Hilo and Hawai‘i Island as inseparable and that effective partnership will allow
all stakeholders to fulfill their aspirations.

JC: UH Hilo has and will continue to be the backbone
of our community in providing educational opportunities,
research, economic stimulus, cultural and community aware-
ness on current issues that affect our way of life, and through
our athletic programs, “home team” pride.

Where do you see potential for the University to build
on those areas where it is already established and where
it can break new ground?
MP: UH Hilo is home to world class scholars in the area
of indigenous languages with Ka Haka ʻUla O Keʻelikōlani,
which is a unique treasure and a point of Vulcan pride. The
College of Pharmacy is a huge success that is well on its way
to becoming one of the top 25 programs in the nation. And
I am very impressed with the quality of the Masters of Sci-
ence in Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental
Science (TCBES) that our faculty has built in such a short
period of time. They are well on their way to becoming a
distinguished doctoral program and a model for what could
become a new program in archaeology and anthropology.
I recently served as Director of Chemistry at the National
Science Foundation where “flat is the new normal” became
the popular catch phrase. With flat science budgets the best
case scenario for the next several years, it is going to be dif-
ficult to maintain, much less build, comprehensive research
portfolios at public institutions. That means that we need to
concentrate on a few areas where we can strategically invest
our resources and offer select, distinguished programs, which
I believe UH Hilo is very good at. One possibility would be
sustainability around the nexus of food, water and energy,
which could lead to local job creation, wise and sensitive
stewardship of our natural resources and the creation of new
national models.

JC: UH Hilo has established a solid base of unique, spe-
cialty programs that capitalize on the richness of our island
culture and the natural assets that make it a living, learning
laboratory. Where else can students access the world’s pre-
mier star gazing site of Mauna Kea to study astronomy, learn
the island’s geology by researching an active volcano, take
classes in marine science that explore the ocean year-round,
or engage in hands-on agricultural research that supports our
local farmers? Our College of Pharmacy offers the only fully
accredited program in the entire Pacific, and with comple-
tion of the College of Hawaiian Language building, Ka Haka ʻUla O Keʻelikōlani will attract even more students while
becoming a popular destination for intercultural festivals
and conferences. We have the potential to attract more in-
ternational students who are drawn here by these programs.
Their presence benefits our local students by exposing them
to numerous diverse cultures, helps subsidize tuition for our
resident students, and supports the business community
from their spending in our local economy. Completion of
the 300-bed University Village Phase I project will begin to
address the need for more housing on or near campus to
house additional students. Phase II will develop commercial
amenities like shops and restaurants to serve both our
students and the local community.

What are your short and long-term goals for the Uni-
versity?
MP: Those goals are well-articulated in the University’s
strategic plan. My job is to be a responsive member of the
team that implements this plan. Among the portions I find
especially compelling are improving retention and gradu-
ation rates, closing student achievement gaps, rebuilding the
faculty and offering compelling new programs.

JC: My first order of business is to work with our State
Senators and Representatives during this legislative session
to obtain funding for a building to house the College of Phar-
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macy. Although the initiative has the overwhelming support of the community, students, Board of Regents, Hawai‘i Island legislative delegation and Governor Abercrombie, we cannot take anything for granted and must do everything in our power to ensure this effort succeeds so that the College can maintain full accreditation. My long term goal is to support the Chancellor’s plan to establish programs in General Engineering, Physical Therapy, and Aviation training. We will also continue efforts to increase enrollment and expand our community, government, faculty, student and alumni outreach.

What do you see as the greatest obstacles and opportunities to achieving those goals?
MP: Change is difficult, especially in higher education. Donna Shalala served for eight years as Secretary of Health and Human services under President Clinton, as chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is currently president of the University of Miami. She has been quoted to the effect that it is much harder to run a university than a federal agency because university leaders can not lead by decree. Thus, UH Hilo must rally the community around the Strategic Plan.

The years of the great recession have been both hard and sobering, so it is unrealistic to believe that UH Hilo can survive and prosper with a business-as-usual approach. But I am an optimist by nature and believe that times of change present the greatest opportunities. Our relative youth and institutional size, plus the unique assets of Hawai‘i Island, provide us with numerous opportunities to lead change for the advantage of UH Hilo and the community we serve.

JC: I consider the legislative funding process to be the most difficult challenge. The process begins with the Higher Education Committees in the House and Senate, which considers each request and sets the priorities. Then you move on to the House Finance and Senate Ways and Means Committees, who together, make the final decision in the closing days of the session as they finish crafting the state’s budget. And lawmakers are keenly aware that launching a new program always includes additional start-up costs for faculty, classrooms, administrative offices and other expenses. But at the end of the day, UH Hilo’s success benefits the entire community and I feel fortunate and honored to be a part of that effort.

(Editor’s note: Ken Hupp is a public information officer.)

Annual Ocean Day is Feb 23 at Bayfront

The 6th annual UH Hilo Ocean Day Hawai‘i Mālama Kanaloa Festival will be held on Saturday, February 23, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Hilo Bayfront Beach Park.

Ocean Day is focused on increasing awareness of ocean and coastal issues such as conservation, sustainable use of resources and ocean safety through fun and interactive displays, activities and booths. The mission is to raise public awareness of the impact people have on the ocean environment, promote conservation of precious ocean and coastal resources in a culturally sensitive way, and communicate the outcomes of current ocean and coastal research, management and education efforts in Hawai‘i.


Family-friendly activities include fishing games, marine critter touch tanks, mask and puppet making, marine life block-printing, makahiki games, face painting, poi pounding, seed planting, and more. Enjoy live music by Kainani Kahaunaele, Lono Kanaka‘ole Trio, and hula by Ka ‘Umeke Kā’eo students.

The event is hosted by the UH Hilo Pacific Island Programs for Exploring Science in partnership with the County of Hawai‘i, EPSCoR Hawai‘i IMUA III, Hawai‘i Pacific Island Campus Compact, UH Hilo Campus & Community Service Program, UH Hilo Student Activities Council, and the University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant.

For more information, e-mail Ho’oululahui Perry at hperry@hawaii.edu or call JoAnne Riviera at 933-0706.

Ianuali Kaonohiokalanikoholua of Mālama ka ʻĀina Hana ka ʻĀina shows keiki at Ocean Day how to pound cooked kalo into thick poi.
**Hats off to...**

**Bryan Kim**, Professor, Psychology, co-authored two book chapters entitled “Ethnicity” and “Culturally Alert Counseling with East and Southeast Asian Americans,” which were published by Sage in *Culturally Alert Counseling: A Comprehensive Introduction*.


**Michael Marshall**, Professor, Art, was invited by the Hawai‘i Photo Shooters to speak at their January meeting. “On Photography: A Maker’s Reflection” touched upon several issues raised in a collection of essays published by Susan Sontag (1973) and provided a personal reflection on the influence of photography as an artistic medium.

**Jan Ray**, Assistant Professor, Education, co-presented three papers at the Hawai‘i International Conference on Education held on O‘ahu in January: “Educators’ Evaluation of the Ku ‘Aina Pa Learning Gardens Program,” “The Influence of Classroom-Based and Experiential Training on Teachers’ Attitudes Toward Sustainability Education,” and “Publish or Perish: A Case Study Investigating the Demands and Directions of Academic Writing.”


**Andre Bachmann**, Associate Professor, Pharmaceutical Sciences, has two last/corresponding co-author publications in press: “PRAF2 stimulates cell proliferation and migration and predicts poor prognosis in neuroblastoma,” and “DFMO/eflornithine inhibits migration and invasion downstream of MYCN and involves p27Kip1 activity in neuroblastoma,” *International Journal of Oncology*. He was also invited to present a neuroblastoma clinical trial research update at the Van Andel Research Institute and met with members of the pediatric oncology tumor board at DeVos Children’s Hospital in Grand Rapids, MI, last month.

**Leng Chee Chang**, Assistant Professor, Pharmaceutical Sciences, was the lead PI on an article she co-authored, “Biologically Active Withanolides from Withania coagulan,” published in the *Journal of Natural Products*, January 14.

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Department of Agriculture, the Department of Hawaiian Homelands, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Mealani Research Station, the Pu’ukapu Agricultural Community Facility, Native Hawaiian leaders and organizations, several community-based groups, Wow Farm and other local farmers in Waimea on Hawai’i Island. UH Hilo faculty provided technical assistance in the pilot training program.

A key goal of the UH Hilo certificate program will be to enable veterans to develop the necessary skills to farm while also addressing the difficulties many face in transitioning back to civilian life after military service. Completion of the certificate program can enable veterans to create new farm businesses, and to meet the requirements to acquire the leases and loans needed to start a farm. Some participants who complete the certificate program will be ready to pursue a bachelor’s degree at UH Hilo in addition to becoming farmers.

A key component of the UH Hilo certificate program is that it will be flexible. If a veteran wants to focus on raising cattle, his or her curriculum could be adjusted to give the student the proper education to meet those business goals.

There will be seven baccalaureate-level courses required, including Value Added Ag Products or Man’s Food, Agro-Environmental Chemistry, Sustainable Agriculture, Student Managed Farm Enterprise Project or Directed Work Experience Program, Farm Management, Farm Power, and Principles of Horticulture. Flexibility will be built into the program for substitutions; for example, if a student wants to focus on raising cattle, his or her curriculum could be adjusted to give the student the proper education to meet those business goals.

The Veterans to Farmers program is good for veterans and good for the state. Farmers will play a crucial role in the future economic stability of our island and our state as we move toward food security. The U.S. Veterans Benefits Administration wants to see veterans earn advanced degrees to open up opportunities that allow for full participation in society. The Veterans to Farmers program gives veterans the education they need to create their own small businesses on their own farms; it gives them work in which to thrive while supporting their families. I see great potential for this program to grow and expand throughout our island and state.

Aloha,

Donald O. Shemy
‘Imiloa’s 3D Planetarium series takes viewers inside Maunakea observatories

‘Imiloa Astronomy Center’s co-produced 3D planetarium series, Awesome Light Trilogy, is now distributed in eight countries and translated in six languages.

“Audiences feel as if they are standing inside the observatories of Maunakea and could reach out and touch the telescopes. It is the closest thing to being an astronomer working on the mountain,” explained Shawn Laatsch, ‘Imiloa’s planetarium manager who led the film crew and directed the productions.

Awesome Light 1: Big Mirrors on the Mountain gives audiences insight into the latest discoveries taking place on Maunakea and explores the largest optical and infrared observatories on the mountain. It looks at the Subaru Telescope, which studies distant solar systems, stars and planets that may be similar to our own. Viewers also go inside Gemini Observatory, which has watched the death of a star in a far-off galaxy to understand how the universe seeds elements that form the building blocks of all matter, see how Keck Observatory has allowed us to probe the black hole at the center of our Milky Way Galaxy, and learn about the Legacy Survey at CFHT, which has mapped thousands of galaxies to better understand how structure in the universe was created.

Awesome Light 2: Seeing the Invisible takes the audience to Maunakea and the radio and submillimeter observatories located there. Viewers see the remnants of a comet collision with Jupiter using the Smithsonian Submillimeter Array, fly into the heart of the Milky Way Galaxy and see gas flows from James Clerk Maxwell Telescope, study star formation in the famous Whirlpool Galaxy from Caltech Submillimeter Observatory, and explore the largest black hole and jet in the universe with the Very Long Baseline array.

Awesome Light 3: Chasing Celestial Mysteries examines how near-Earth asteroids are explored with the NASA IRTF, discover how supernovae detected by UH88 teaches us about the size and age of our universe, view the Milky Way in a new way with the UKIRT, and hear the personal stories of discovery and inspiration from Hawaiian students using the UH Hilo Hōkū Kea telescope.

Distribution of this series includes: Athens, Greece; Anchorage, Alaska; Young Harris, Georgia; New Delhi, India; Warsaw, Poland; Padova, Italy; La Coupole, France; Bishop Museum, Hawai’i; Curitiba, Brazil; Perth, Australia; Morehead, Kentucky and T.C. Hooper, South Carolina.

For more information, visit www.imiloahawaii.org.

International Nights is Feb 22, 23

The UH Hilo International Student Association presents International Nights on Friday and Saturday, February 22 & 23 at 7:30 pm in the Performing Arts Center. This year’s show feature performances from Samoa, India, the Philippines, Micronesia, Japan, Tahiti, Korea, Palau, the Marshall Islands, Europe, Tonga, East Timor, China, and the United States.

Tickets are $10 for General admission and $5 for Students, Children, and Seniors and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Center Box Office from 9-1 pm, Tuesday through Friday, or at the door. As the shows typically sell out, it is recommended that tickets be purchased in advance.

For ticket information, call the Performing Arts Center Box Office at 974-7310.
Dr. William H. Wilson, a professor with Ka Haka ʻUla O Keʻelikolani College of Hawaiian Language, has discovered evidence that the ancestors of East Polynesians, including Hawaiians, once lived on remote Polynesian Outlier atolls.

Wilson has published a study of 73 unique linguistic changes distinctive of East Polynesian languages and the languages of these Outliers. The article, entitled, “Whence The East Polynesians?” is in the December 2012 issue of Oceanic Linguistics (http://uhpjournals.wordpress.com/2013/01/03/oceanic-linguistics-vol-51-no-2-2012/).

“Anthropologists, archeologists and linguists have long assumed that the first settlers entered East Polynesia from Samoa,” Wilson noted. “The latest archeological research indicates the initial settlement took place as recently as a thousand years ago, which left many wondering why the East Polynesian and Samoan languages were so different. The associated cultures are also quite different, with ancient East Polynesian archeological sites exhibiting innovations in fishing technology that have long puzzled researchers.”

Wilson’s research found that the East Polynesian ancestors were separated far to the northwest of Samoa on Polynesian atolls for a considerable period before they entered East Polynesia, the huge geographic area containing Hawai‘i, Rapanui, and New Zealand. It was in these Polynesian atolls that many of the unique features differentiating East Polynesian languages and cultures from the Samoan language and culture developed.

Wilson said that early Polynesians first moved 2,000 miles west and north from Samoa to the tiny Central Northern Polynesian Outlier atolls off the coast of the Solomon Islands, of which the best known are Takuu and Luangiu (Ontong Java). Nearby atolls with languages only slightly more distantly related to Hawaiian and other East Polynesian languages are Sikaiana to the south and Kapingamarangi and Nukuoro to the north.

“The peoples of these atolls have highly developed traditions of navigation,” Wilson said. “They are also more dependent on fishing for survival than the people of the high islands of Samoa which, unlike atolls, have extensive agricultural lands. Ancient East Polynesian innovations in navigation and fishing methods developed first in these atolls.”

Wilson’s linguistic evidence linking East Polynesian languages with those of the Central Northern Outlier atolls includes words known to many in Hawai‘i. One is a change from an earlier term kiu for a bird with a curved beak. In the Outliers and early East Polynesia, this became kiwi, which then developed into the Hawaiian bird name ʻiʻiwi. The same term spread to New Zealand to name an endemic bird there known as the kiwi.

Wilson listed 51 unique words and 22 grammatical similarities whose development is shared by the Central Northern Outlier and East Polynesian languages. Wilson traced all of the unique words and grammatical features back to an ancient Central Northern Outlier ancestral language that gave birth to Proto East Polynesian, the unifying ancestor of Hawaiian, Tahitian, Marquesan, Rapanui, and Māori.
Campus Events

**February**

8, 9  Pacific Islander Higher Education Conference, CC

18  Holiday: President’s Day

21  UH Board of Regents’ meeting, 9 a.m., UCB 127

22  13th Annual UH Hilo Distinguished Alumni Awards Banquet, 5 p.m., CC DiningRoom

22, 23  UH Hilo International Nights, 7:30 p.m., PAC, Admission

23  “Seeking New Planets and New Life” talk by Olivier Guyon, 7 p.m., UCB 100