Alumni Feature—
Shirley Dellinger

The Wai‘anae Coast on the island of O‘ahu has an incredibly gritty and rugged landscape; intense amounts of sunshine bake the land brown most of the year and the area is framed by the expanse of blue ocean that runs along its edge and the limitless sky up above. At the far western end of this coastline, in Makaha, whose place name means “fierce,” is the childhood home of 2011 University of Hawai‘i at Hilo alumna Shirley Dellinger.

“I grew up with the same friends from elementary through high school; local culture, chop suey, you name it we had it. It was a very tight knit community,” said Shirley.

When sitting with Shirley in her office at Hospice of Hilo there is a calmness that surrounds her presence. Her face lights up with a sincere smile and the tone of her voice is relaxed as it blankets you in a comforting embrace. Her eyes tell the story that reflects the place where she grew up, Makaha; wide and expansive like the ocean and sky that frames the area and deep with the wisdom of someone who has been through the fires of life. From the Old French, “fiers,” meaning brave, there is an intensity and grit in Shirley Dellinger that uplifts and inspires.

“My father, bless his heart, worked hard all his life. He dropped out of school at 16 to support his single mom and family. My mom married my dad when she was 19 and was a homemaker all her life. There were seven of us children, one passed at a young age, and so there were six of us surviving,” said Shirley.

Shortly after graduating high school, Shirley married and started her own family. Her husband at that time struggled with drug addiction and his family suffered along with him. “He’d be doing well for a while, have a job and then he would come home drunk one night and it would be back to the same old pattern. It affected his ability to hold down a steady job. He entered rehab twice in our 17 years of marriage.
getting her two-year degree from HawCC, she and her family returned home from a birthday party to find their home completely ransacked. Thinking they had been burglarized, she called the police only to find the police had raided their home on suspicion of drug possession. Both Shirley and her husband were to turn themselves in. She had no idea that her husband was suspected for marijuana growing on an adjacent lot. Bowed with anger and confusion, yet with a deep and abiding faith she prayed, asking desperately why, what and how could this have happened to her. Ashamed and deeply hurt she began to research what she wanted to talk to her Accounting professor, Joel Peralto. “Shirley sit down,” he said, “we all know you, it doesn’t matter that it’s in the paper, we all know it’s true. You’re one of our best students. You need to stay in school. You can’t quit. I’m not going to let you quit. I don’t care what, you come to class.” Shirley listened and found the strength to continue school. She was subsequently cleared of all charges several months later. At the outward ceremony two months after her conversation with Perlato, Shirley recalled, “I had won so many scholarships that when they had the award ceremony, they kept calling my name. I would stand up and then sit down and then stand up again. They told me I might as well just stay up there. I was blushing red.”

In 1997, Shirley graduated from HawCC with highest honors and a 4.0 GPA in Accounting. During her last semester at HawCC, Shirley was hired part-time by a local CPA office to earn her practicum. Jennifer L. Gossert CPA, ended up keeping her on after graduation for three-and-a-half years. Shirley simultaneously transferred to UH Hilo as a full-time student while working part-time in the CPA office. The intent was to complete a business degree with a concentration in accounting. Things got worse on the homestretch and Shirley found herself a single parent since her husband had unexpectedly moved to Maui leaving her to support the children on the Big Island. By 2000, it became clear to Shirley that she needed to find full-time work. “I reluctantly withdrew from school and took on a full-time bookkeeping position with Hospice of Hilo in order to support my family.” Sadly, after 17 years of marriage Shirley’s relationship ended in a divorce and a new journey had begun.

At the end of 2002 she met Randy Dellingler. “I didn’t think I would remarry. I unexpectedly met the man I am with now and it is like night and day. He’s the day and the past is the night. We got married in 2003. We just knew that’s what we wanted. We ended up having two more children and that was something that wasn’t in the plan either. It was like starting all over again. He’s a gentleman always, supportive, always there for me. We’re now busy and exciting. We’re growing the business.” Shirley graduated with honors in 2011. Just before graduating, Bernice mourned the passing of her Controller position at Hospice of Hilo. “Hospice of Hilo supported me through this process,” said Shirley. “When asked what he was like graduating with her bachelor’s degree Shirley gives her the Controller position at Hospice of Hilo. “Hospice of Hilo supported me through this process,” said Shirley. “When asked what he was like graduating with her bachelor’s degree Shirley gives

more than me graduating was the thrill of having my dad, my mom and youngest brother there. My dad came down and congratulated me and let me know how proud they are of me. Randy has always been by my side through. Even Dad who is usually the one who says, ‘ok let’s go home,’ said, ‘ok let’s go eat.’ I cherish that experience.”

Angela Lee Duckworth, University of Pennsylvania Associate Professor of Psychology and Ted Talk speaker said this about the importance of grit, “Grit is passion and perseverance for long term goals. Grit is sticking with your future day in and day out, not just for the week, not for the month, but for years; and working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it’s a marathon and not a sprint.”

It took 17 years since beginning Leeward Community College to get her Bachelor’s degree, double majoring, in Business Administration and Accounting. “As long as you have your mind set and in your heart you know what you want to do, then you’ll do it. If you really don’t want to do it and you’re doing it for someone else you’re not going to get through it.” My best advice would be to take it one day at a time. Set your goals high, keep your faith, and never give up. Shirley has been recently promoted to Director of Operations at Hospice of Hilo and is finishing her Master’s Degree in Human Resource Management through the Chamber of Commerce of Business at UH Mānoa with expected graduation this December. Shirley may no longer live in Makaha, but the intensity, the passion and the grit of her childhood home remains in her heart.

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Chancellor's Message

Chancellor Donald Straney

Mahalo, forward to hearing from you.

I hope you’ve been staying connected to your alma mater through the many portals offered through the UH Hilo Alumni & Friends Association. Being a part of the association is a great way to show your support and stay connected to UH Hilo. The association offers members exclusive benefits such as invitations to social events, networking opportunities, and discounts to a number of services. To join, please sign up online at uhalumni.org or call the UH Hilo Marketing & Alumni Office at 974-7501.

Looking for ways to network and get involved?
Show your support for UH Hilo by volunteering! Help is needed at various fun alumni events!

We are also looking for committee members with new ideas to help plan alumni events throughout the year!

Please call (808) 974-7501 or e-mail alumni@hawaii.edu for more information and to sign-up!

University Village Phase 1 Now Open

University Village Phase 1 — Prior to the start of the new school year new student-housing complex, Hale Alahonua, which means, “the breeze upon which the fragrance of earth is carried,” was dedicated. The new residential complex spans 105,505 square-feet and features approximately 300 units within a trio of three-story residential wings, along with a large, spacious common area and two exterior courtyards. It is the first student housing units built on campus since 1989.

Alumni Check-In — Where are they now?

Jonatha Giddens

Since graduating from the UH Hilo Marine Science and Anthropology programs in 2010, Jonatha continued on with her graduate research and education in Hawai‘i. Jonatha completed UH Hilo’s tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Science program with her Master’s degree in 2012, and has since moved to O’ahu to continue her research as a PhD candidate in the Fisheries Ecology Research Lab of UH Mānoa. Jonatha is a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow, and she has been working in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy Hawai‘i Marine Program on coral reef ecosystem research and restoration projects. Jonatha aims to continue working with local conservation organizations and local communities to manage and care for Hawai‘i’s marine ecosystems.

Lanelle Yamane

Since graduating from UH Hilo, Lanelle obtained a Master of Science degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, National Certified Counselor, and Licensed Mental Health Counselor. For the past seven years she has worked in the public and private sector providing vocational rehabilitation services to assist individuals with disabilities find, obtain, and maintain suitable employment. Lanelle currently specializes in providing vocational rehabilitation services in the State of Hawai‘i worker’s compensation system. She is an active board member of the Hawai‘i Rehabilitation Counseling Association and a member of the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association and International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals. She is also a contracted vocational expert with the Social Security Administration. She is still on the Big Island and feels fortunate to have been able to be educated, live, and work in the community in which she grew up.

Niniau Kawaihāe Simmons

When UH Hilo alumna and Harry S Truman Scholar, Niniau Kawaihāe Simmons, graduated in 2001, she knew she would pursue a career in public service. Niniau is currently serving in the Office of the Chairman at the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands on O‘ahu. She previously served as Deputy Director for Housing and Community Development on Hawai‘i Island.

Blake Parsons

Blake Parsons recently joined Becker Communications, Inc. (BCI), a public relations firm in Honolulu, as an Account Coordinator, where he works with corporate and trade association clients. At BCI, he specializes in media relations and community outreach. Before joining BCI, Blake worked on the Communications Team for a major U.S. Senate campaign in Hawai‘i. Previously, he lived and worked in Washington, D.C., completing internships with two government relations firms, an internship with the nation’s leading U.S. Senate campaign fundraiser, and a temporary appointment at the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.

Blake currently lives in Kaimuki, is on the board of the Hawai‘i Young Republicans and an active member of the Hawai‘i Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals.

Welcome to Hale ‘Alahonua

UH Hilo Alumni & Friends Association Board Members

Officers
Jennifer Zelko-Schlacter (’00)
President
Brooks Bancroft (’99)
Vice President
Jim Kelly
Treasurer
Michelle Araki (’97)
Secretary
Carol VanCamp
Past President

Adams Agtarap (’95)
Lee Barnett-Dombroski
Howard Hijashi (’74)
Ka’iu Kimura (’00 & ’09)
Tom Raffipiy (’91)
Audrey Takamine (’02)
Sandy Tokuda (’71)

Yu Yok Peearing (’85)

Past President

Executive Officer
The name of the workshop, “Dream Big and Take Action,” towards achieving their dreams. Hilo and encouraged students to set their goals and take steps. The workshop highlighted the programs and opportunities at UH Hilo in an effort to promote higher education. The UH Hilo team's focus was to bring together educators from colleges throughout the state and high school students in an effort to promote higher education. The UH Hilo team’s workshop highlighted the programs and opportunities at UH Hilo and encouraged students to set their goals and take steps towards achieving their dreams.

The name of the workshop, “Dream Big and Take Action,” seems to reflect the overall vibrancy seen in the Samoan Community throughout the UH Hilo Campus. According to Hamilton, “Understanding one’s culture is an important aspect of developing a positive self identity. Many local Samoans are often disconnected with their cultural roots (language, customs, etc.) and are sometimes marginalized by their peers, as well as authority figures because of negative stereotypes toward Samoans. Learning about their culture can help young Samoans develop a sense of pride, and being exposed to positive role models can help motivate them to reach for higher aspirations and achieve higher goals.”

Hamilton is also the advisor for Tupulaga o Samoa mo a Taeao (TOS) Samoan Club at UH Hilo. The club has approximately 60 members and has developed an outstanding reputation with the university through numerous community service projects. The students have served as “ambassadors” for the university. The club has gained notoriety and their services have been requested by many UH Hilo and affiliated community groups, including the Mayor’s office for Hawaii’s County, UH Hilo Multicultural Student Services Office, UH Hilo Pacific Islanders Student Center, Housing Office, College of Agriculture, and many more. “The visibility of the Samoan Club in various campus and community events sends a very positive and powerful message, especially to the Samoan community, that Samoans have a place in higher education and the culture can be a source of empowerment and unity,” said Hamilton. The club members have served as role models for other Samoans and Pacific Islanders, and have been involved in activities that are concerned with improving access to higher education.

Many local Samoans are among the most underrepresented in higher education in the state. But the efforts of Ginger Hamilton and the Minority Access & Achievement Program to improve access to higher education have shown strong evidence of future leadership potential. In January of this year, Hamilton led a group on a recruitment trip to Samoa. The group included Hamilton and three recent UH Hilo Graduates, Gwendonly Gilreheth (UH Hilo-2012), Eden Brown (UH Hilo-2011) and Salillo Kaisa (UH Hilo-2012). “The purpose of the trip was to recruit students from the high schools and community college in this region and to establish, maintain and network with UH Hilo alumni from the region. Thirty-four attended the alumni gathering and it was multi-generational. They were all so excited to get together,” said Hamilton.

The cultural connections carry over onto the UH Hilo Campus with groups like the TOS Samoan Club and their deep sense of pride for the Samoan culture, perpetuating values which include the importance of family and taking care of one another, and their willingness to share knowledge of their rich heritage which includes songs, dances, and “Fa’a Samoa,” literally, the Samoan Way. The club has approximately 80 members and has developed an outstanding reputation with the university through numerous community service projects. The students have served as “ambassadors” for the university. The club has gained notoriety and their services have been requested by many UH Hilo and affiliated community groups, including the Mayor’s office for Hawaii’s County, UH Hilo Multicultural Student Services Office, UH Hilo Pacific Islanders Student Center, Housing Office, College of Agriculture, and many more. “The visibility of the Samoan Club in various campus and community events sends a very positive and powerful message, especially to the Samoan community, that Samoans have a place in higher education and the culture can be a source of empowerment and unity,” said Hamilton. The club members have served as role models for other Samoans and Pacific Islanders, and have been involved in activities that are concerned with improving access to higher education.

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**ASCC**
- Matesina Aseta-Willis; former Transfer Counselor, current Director of Foundation
- Emma Pula; Administrative Assistant
- Kuki Tuiaosopo; Faculty

**Tafuna H.S.**
- Fa’atela Teolilo; Vice Principal
- Telesia Maatigai; Counselor
- Eileen Isotio; Teacher

**Leone H.S.**
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- Donnal Salave’a; Vice Principal
- Roxanne Stava-Salave’a; Counselor

**Nuuuli Voc Tech H.S.**
- Rosie Ah Chee; Teacher

**Samoana H.S.**
- Penelelie Mareko; Teacher
- Po’oiga Tafa; Teacher

The Frederic Duclos Barstow Scholarship Fund supports students of American Samoan ancestry pursuing a major in math and/or science and demonstrates financial need. This scholarship was established in 2007 and since then 16 students have received the award, eleven have graduated and the other 5 are currently enrolled. The objective of this scholarship is to encourage students to return to American Samoa and contribute to the work force.

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Cultural Connections

At the 4th Annual Samoa Ala Mai Conference at UH Mānoa, nine students from UH Hilo along with Ginger Hamilton, UH Hilo Director for the Minority Access & Achievement Program presented a workshop entitled “Dream Big and Take Action.” The focus of the conference was to bring together educators from colleges throughout the state and high school students in an effort to promote higher education. The UH Hilo team’s workshop highlighted the programs and opportunities at UH Hilo and encouraged students to set their goals and take steps towards achieving their dreams.

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Research Corner — Exciting and Innovative

As a part of the first group of students to be accepted into the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy’s Ph.D. program in the fall of 2011, Nalini V. S. Yadav has been conducting novel research on the biological processes that contribute to breast cancer.

The doctorate in Pharmaceutical Sciences program is unique in that it is the only Pharmaceutical Ph.D. program offered by the University of Hawai‘i. One of the highly qualified students selected for the program, Nalini Yadav has a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Bachelor of Art in Mathematics from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. She also attained a Master of Science degree in Biotechnology from Fort Valley State University in Fort Valley, Georgia.

No stranger to research, Nalini has previously participated in scientific studies on bacterial meningitis as well as HIV vaccines. At the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo under the guidance of Dr. Aaron Jacobs and Dr. Linda Connelly, Nalini is conducting innovative research exploring the relationship between obesity and breast cancer. The goal of her work is to better understand why obese women with breast cancer have a worse prognosis than women who are a healthy weight. It is now recognized that multiple cell types within the microenvironment surrounding tumors can contribute to tumor growth and spread. With this in mind, Nalini’s research examines the interactions between adipocytes (fat cells) and macrophages (immune cells), which are both present in increased quantities in the breast of obese women. Her project investigates how the signaling between these cell types could influence the adjacent breast tumor, leading to development and spread to other tissues within the body. The ultimate goal of Nalini’s research is to identify novel pathways that could be blocked in order to prevent breast cancer spread in obese women.

After receiving her Ph.D., Nalini is planning to begin her career in pharmaceutical sciences focusing on the mechanisms and uses of natural medicines. Nalini has grown up using natural medicines that work and have been passed down through traditional, cultural knowledge. Nalini aspires to validate traditional medicinal knowledge with scientific research. It is this spirit of innovation that the College of Pharmacy is fostering by offering its Ph.D. program in the Pharmaceutical Sciences with focus on discovery and development of natural products. To find out more about The Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo visit http://pharmacy.uhh.hawaii.edu/.

Program Feature: TCBES – Shining in Hilo

UH Hilo’s Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Science Program (TCBES) is a unique gem that is giving students the opportunity to work in the most ideal conditions with some of the best and brightest minds in the world.

In their mission statement TCBES aims to provide graduate training in conservation biology and environmental science to people with baccalaureate degrees and others currently working in the field. The program utilizes the extraordinary biological, physical and cultural complexity on the Island of Hawai‘i as a focus of investigation and study. The program prepares students for technical positions and for entry into PhD programs in related fields. The program is also gearing up to have its own PhD program in the near future.

“Our program involves faculty from six different departments in the College of Arts and Sciences. So we have Biology, Marine Science, Geography, Anthropology, Geology, Chemistry as well as some people from the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resource Management (CAFNRM),” said Don Price, Director of the TCBES Graduate Program. The program has 30 faculty and 41 affiliated faculty members, mentoring 50 graduate students.

Students in the TCBES program have the benefit of working directly with federal agencies like the USGS, the National Park Service, Forest Service, the Department of Forestry and Wildlife, the USDA and the Division of Aquatic Resources.

“We have this incredible wealth of scientists that are often willing to serve on committees and help guide students that bring in all this extra expertise that really adds to the program. Because the Big Island attracts scientists from all over the world that sets us up really well for collaborations, they’re almost natural forming collaborations. Usually they want to connect with local scientists, it makes their research go better to have local contacts. Almost for every project we do we have a collaborator from an outside university, from the mainland or even from Europe in some cases,” said Patrick Hart Associate Professor of Biology and member of the TCBES Faculty.

The TCBES program recently gained control of a biological field station. “One really exciting direction is to expand courses from UH Hilo into both Hakalau Biological Field Station, there is also another field station at Laupāhoehoe Experimental Forest to increase the number of field base courses for the students, both undergraduates and graduates. I think that’s where you really learn is through these hands on experiential classes,” said Hart.

This year marked the 4th year that the program has had the UH Hilo TCBES Research Symposium. The event allows undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and agency personnel to present their scientific research in a friendly and professional atmosphere. There was a silent auction at this year’s event with funds going to educational outreach activities, next year’s research symposium and eventually a TCBES scholarship to support outstanding students in the program.

TCBES also works to bring science to the community with events like the Annual Ocean Day, the PRISM Program, which enhances the science education of local schools through a partnership with the Hawai‘i Department of Education, Whale Education Programs and Evening Wildlife Lecture Series.

From collecting and studying the songs of birds along the slopes of Mauna Kea to deeply understanding the life of phytoplankton in the vibrant blue ocean, TCBES faculty and students are making the life of the community richer by exploring the natural wonders of the Big Island. “This [the Big Island] is where everyone comes to study, this is the natural lab in Hawai‘i for environmental and for ecosystem level questions and it has been the natural lab for decades,” said Hart.

Don Price

Check out the TCBES video on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cFDkM2P5yA
10th Annual Golf Tournament
Saturday, October 26 at the Waikoloa Beach Course.

The Alumni and Friends Association is celebrating a decade of bringing the tournament to the community in support of the scholarship program that provides much-needed funds to deserving UH Hilo students. A Big Mahalo to our tournament sponsors.

Eagle Sponsor
First Hawaiian Bank
Birdie Sponsors
Merrill Lynch
Par Sponsors

Save the date for the annual Distinguished Alumni & Service Awards Banquet
Saturday, February 22, 2014

For more information: http://hilo.hawaii.edu/alumni/distinguished-alumni.php

For more information on our scholarships go to: http://hilo.hawaii.edu/alumni/scholarship.php

Christopher Yoakum

Christopher Yoakum is a graduate of Hilo High School and is enrolled in the Communications program at UH Hilo, with a minor in History. “The funds make my studies possible. Firstly, I can pay tuition fees and buy books. But equally important, the added funds give me more time and space to focus on studying rather than diverting useful energy trying to support myself financially while juggling classes. I intend to make a lasting impact with my intelligence, determination, and access to opportunities, to leave the world a better place than I found it. My education here at the University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo will aid in my ability to work towards this end and be an effective citizen of the world.” Following graduation, Yoakum intends to serve overseas as a teacher in the Peace Corps and pursue a graduate degree in journalism. His goal is to become a writer and foreign correspondent for a media agency. “Thank you for making my own education and life-goals within reach, and allowing me the opportunity to continue growing and realizing what I am capable of.”

Victoria Vrooman

Victoria Vrooman graduated from Waiakea High School and is pursuing her graduate degree in Counseling Psychology at UH Hilo. Her thesis compares the effects of domestic violence between individuals in local Hawaiian and European American cultures. “Receiving a scholarship opportunity will help me to achieve my goals of helping others and give back to the community. I currently volunteer my time with Na Pua No’eau, with hands-on activities to students in and outside the lab, exposing them to possible academic studies in the scientific and research fields at DKICOP. As the only Native Hawaiian currently in the PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences program I hope I can be an example to these students that anything is possible. His current research includes nanotechnology for the treatment of neuroblastoma and lung cancer; he hopes to use variations of this drug delivery method to potentially treat other diseases found within the State of Hawaiʻi.

Norine Fitzgerald

Norine Fitzgerald graduated from Aiea High School and is seeking a BBA degree in Business Administration. “I’m honored and grateful to receive such a generous scholarship, and it will certainly help substantially in my quest to educate students with special needs. I received the scholarship through the affiliation with my son, Sean, who is an alumnus of UHH. As a side note as to how UHH can be an awesome and essential stepping stone, Sean graduated from UHH last year with a BA in History and is starting his first semester at the Richardson School of Law at UH in August.” She intends to further her education at the University of Hawaiʻi at Manoa and become a special education teacher. “All of my future plans have been positively altered by the time spent at UHH. UHH has offered me so much, especially all of the valuable knowledge that I have gained there. To be an educated individual is ultimately the key to a bright and rewarding life.” When asked how she feels about the donors to the scholarship fund, Norine said, “The generosity of those who give so freely is a fine example of pure aloha. Thank you all for thinking of others. Please continue to give because it can make the difference for other UH Hilo students for potentially generations to come.” Her ultimate career goal is to be able to establish a social entrepreneurship venture, utilizing capitalism to help cure social problems.
In May of this year, University of Hawai‘i at Hilo’s four-member computer team, Team Poli‘ahu captured the U.S. National Title at Microsoft’s 11th Annual Imagine Cup. The team made up of Mike Purvis, Kayton Summers, Wallace Hamada, and Ryder Donahue went on to represent the United States at the Worldwide Finals in St. Petersburg, Russia in July.

The Microsoft Imagine Cup is considered the world’s premier student technology competition. The Imagine Cup invites all eligible students to use their imagination and passion to create a technology solution in one of the competition’s challenges. Over the past ten years, more than 1.65 million students from more than 190 countries have participated in the Imagine Cup.

According to Faculty Advisor, Assistant Professor Harry Keith Edwards, “I think the most memorable part of the event [the U.S. Championship] was on my shuttle ride back to the airport. A competitor from another team remarked that it was nice to see the UH-Hilo team win since our students were genuinely nice people. I think this speaks highly of our island and the type of student that UH-Hilo typically attracts.” Edwards goes on to say, “I have been a faculty member at UH-Hilo for about nine years. I think that one thing that sets us apart from larger schools is that there are great opportunities for collaboration here. Faculty and students frequently work together in small groups and in co-located spaces.”

Team Poli‘ahu’s winning project titled, “Help Me Help,” aids the community and emergency response personnel in disaster situations by allowing users to upload images of nearby hazards through the use of smart phones. In preparation for their trip to Russia the team spent about 20 hours on June 5th and June 6th working with representatives from Microsoft and members of the UH-Hilo community to prepare their stage speeches and booth presentations. “I’ve learned more about incidents like the Kiholo Bay earthquake of 2006, and that’s been insightful,” said Team Poli‘ahu member Mike Purvis.

Although Team Poli‘ahu did not capture top honors, competing on the world stage was a significant achievement. “It has been great to see UH Hilo students recognized as some of the best in the world,” said Edwards. “The U.S. national championship and our participation in the world finals demonstrate that students at UH Hilo receive a quality education and can compete with the best in the world.”

“It was daunting to be running against schools with much greater resources, in both technology and funding. I feel like we’re putting Hilo on the map, and it’s an honor to be a part of that,” said Purvis.