UH Hilo seeking to build on record of inclusiveness

by Ken Hupp

As one of the nation’s most diverse campuses, the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo has come to be regarded as an institution that is welcoming to members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer+ (LGBTQ+) communities.

The University’s commitment to be inclusive and supportive of all individuals can be seen through various initiatives, which sometimes fly below the proverbial radar screen. They include the UH System’s Safe Zone Training offered through the UH Hilo Women’s Center to educate allies on how to be more sensitive to the needs of LGBTQ+ individuals. The University also offers LGBTQIA support groups through the Counseling Services Office and provides training for members of GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network).

UH Hilo was notably ahead of the curve on the issue of gender neutral bathrooms. When the UH System announced the establishment of such restroom facilities on the flagship Manoa campus and at other UH campuses, the public learned that the University had already quietly established more than

KTA Superstores: a business model of caring and service to our communities

KTA Superstores is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. Chairman and CEO Barry Taniguchi says they’ve lasted this many years because of their employees. I think it’s this feeling of ‘ohana and KTA’s dedication to caring for the communities they serve that has made them such a lasting and important business on Hawai‘i Island.

Some years back, researchers came up with the concept of “anchor organizations” that are considered foundations for community growth. They are generally non-profits, with the top anchors being higher education and medical facilities in most cities, especially those struggling with revitalization.

But anchor institutions can also include other long-standing institutions that operate from a foundational premise of caring for the communities they serve. Here on Hawai‘i Island, this includes long-standing banks, churches, community and commodity groups, museums and, I believe, our local supermarket chain, KTA Superstores.

These anchor institutions have a lot in common. They are businesses that have a stake in the health and wellbeing of our families and communities, have an economic impact, generate employment, have an identity that makes it improbable they will ever relocate, have highly skilled administrators and staff,
Inclusiveness
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20 such bathrooms of its own.
Perhaps the most high profile initiative has been the LGBTQ student organization “Pride Hilo,” established in 1991 as the Gay & Lesbian ‘Ohana.’ The group, comprised of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning/queer (LGBTIQ) students, staff, and faculty members and their friends and allies, was the first organized campus-based support network for the LGBTIQ people on the island of Hawai‘i.

Building on that solid body of work is the goal of Laura Sherwood, the inaugural coordinator of the University’s LG- BTQ+ Center. The Center, which recently opened its doors, is located in PB-9, Room 1. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from 7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Sherwood brings extensive ground-level experience to her position, having served as a volunteer at the Women’s Center for eight years where she assisted in developing a variety of programming educating the campus community on issues impacting women and gender equity. She also gained significant experience working with LGBTIQ+ youth in a previous role as a substance abuse counselor. She graduated with honors from UH Hilo with a BA in Communication and a Certificate in Women and Gender Studies, and later added a Master’s degree in Organizational Development through Antioch’s Leadership and Change program.

The Center will be the vehicle through which Sherwood aims to make the University an even more inclusive and supportive institution. Chancellor Don Straney underscored its importance in his keynote remarks to faculty, staff and students during a “National Coming Out Day” gathering held on the Campus Center Plaza last month.

Straney recalled his own experience as an undergraduate student at Michigan State University in the 1970s when the consequences for coming out could range from harassment to loss of employment. At the time, he believed he was the only gay person on campus --in part because the 40,000 student body university lacked a place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and/or questioning individuals to convene, access resources, or get help.

“The most important thing the Center does is it lets people know we’re here, and that LGBTQ+ students have a place to come to on campus, where they can meet and be linked up with various resources,” Straney said.

Like Straney, Sherwood hopes the Center’s presence will help increase the LGBTQ+ community’s visibility by providing a safe place on campus.

The actual size of that community is very much an open question. She notes there is a substantial population that is very openly out, but believes a large number remains in the closet out of fear.

Sherwood said the mission of the Center will be to promote a stronger, healthier and more equitable environment for the LGBTQ+ community and its allies. In addition to being an inclusive, safe space, she envisions it serving as an advocate for civil and human rights that embraces, promotes and supports cultural diversity, regardless of sexual identity or orientation.

Her priorities for now include establishing connections with faculty and the community to encourage peer support groups and ensure the facility’s sustainability. She is also working to identify and access funding for an LBGTQ+ resource library that will offer tangible resources to students and faculty. The latter will be especially helpful as Sherwood goes about facilitating events to bring about and increase awareness of LGBTQ+ issues.

“We’re looking at events which we can organize with existing campus organizations to inspire allies to show their support, which will help break the stigmatization and isolation that many LGBTQ+ people face,” Sherwood said.

Those events will include bringing in a slew of guest speakers, including a community speaker on November 17 in observance of Transgender Awareness Week. All these initiatives represent a more high-profile approach to making the University even more supportive and welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community -- something Straney admitted during his talk that he couldn’t foresee when looking back on his days as a student.

“I could never have imagined back then when a university president could just fire someone for being gay that I would be standing before you today as an openly gay man and a Chancellor,” Straney said. “Because of that, I can’t help but wonder what kind of Universe you will be living in years from now.”

Given the progress over the past 40 years, a Universe where terms like “in the closet” and “coming out” are no longer relevant may not be out of the question.

(Ken Hupp is a public information officer.)

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Dining - continued on page 3.
Farrah-Marie Gomes has been appointed the University’s new permanent vice chancellor for student affairs following the UH Board of Regents meeting held October 20 on O’ahu. Her appointment is effective December 1, 2016.

Gomes currently serves as interim associate vice president for student affairs for the UH System, a position she has held since April 1, 2016. Prior to that, she served as founding director of the North Hawai‘i Education and Research Center since its inception in 2006, and from 2011-2016, also served as interim dean of the College of Continuing Education and Community Service. She is active in numerous university and community committees.

Gomes received her B.A. in psychology and sociology from UH Hilo in 1998, Masters in counseling psychology from Chaminade University in Honolulu in 2000, and a Ph.D. in educational studies with a specialization in educational leadership and higher education from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln in 2016.

“Farrah is a dynamic leader who has effectively served our students and community in numerous administrative roles,” Chancellor Don Straney said. “She also possesses tremendous energy, vision and a special capacity to connect with various constituencies, which will help the Division of Student Affairs serve the needs of our students.”

Gomes succeeds Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Gail Makuakane-Lundin, who returns to the position of Executive Assistant to the Chancellor.

“We all deeply appreciate the outstanding and tireless job Gail has done as interim vice chancellor for student affairs,” Straney said. “I now look forward to her putting those same unique skills and versatility to work again as a member of my executive team.”
UH Hilo appointment of administrators

UH Hilo Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Matthew Platz announced last month the appointment of two deanship positions following the UH Board of Regents meeting held October 20 on O‘ahu.

Dr. Bruce Mathews has been appointed permanent dean of the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resource Management. He previously served as acting dean from January – July 2012, then interim dean to present.

A 1986 graduate of UH Hilo, Mathews joined the University in 1993 as a Temporary Assistant Professor of Soils & Agronomy and became a tenure-track assistant professor two years later. His areas of research include plant nutrient cycling and soil fertility as affected by environmental conditions and crop management, assessment of the impact of agricultural and forestry production practices on soil, coastal wetlands, and surface waters, and the development of environmentally sound and economically viable nutrient management practices for pastures, forests, and field crops in the tropics.

He received an M.S. in agronomy from Louisiana State University and a Ph.D. in agronomy & soils from the University of Florida.

“As a graduate, faculty member and most recently interim dean, Bruce has unrivaled knowledge of this College, its mission, and its potential,” said Chancellor Don Straney. “I can think of no one else who better understands our responsibility to the community and the entire state of Hawai‘i than Bruce Mathews.”

Dr. Drew Martin serves as interim dean of the College of Business and Education. He joined UH Hilo in August 2004 and most recently served as professor of marketing. He has over 25 years of higher education teaching experience that spans three countries. Currently, he is also an affiliate faculty member of Daito Bunka University’s (Japan) Business Research Institute and the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa’s Center for Japanese Studies.

Martin received a B.A. and an MBA in business administration from Pacific Lutheran University, and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa.

His intellectual contributions include extensive research on consumer behavior. He has published 65 research papers and book chapters.

“Drew is an intellectual heavyweight with an extensive professional background in business, government and academia,” Platz said. “His extensive research and publications have earned him international acclaim and numerous invitations to speak with emerging scholars on how to get their research published in leading academic journals.”

Nominations accepted for 2017 Excellence in Teaching Awards

UH Hilo and the UH System annually honor excellent teachers who are nominated by their colleagues and students with the following three awards:

The Board of Regents (BOR) Award for Excellence in Teaching is presented annually to a UH Hilo full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member.

The Chancellor’s Award for Teaching Excellence is presented annually to a UH Hilo Instructor or Lecturer faculty member.

The Frances Davis Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching is presented annually to a UH Hilo Instructor or Assistant Professor faculty member.

For more information on the teaching awards, criteria and nomination form go to: http://hilo.hawaii.edu/uhh/vcaa/ExcellenceTeachingAwards.php. Faculty may win each award only once in their career. Past winners are also listed on that website.

Nominations will be accepted until February 1, 2017 and must be submitted electronically to vcaa@hawaii.edu. Please indicate “Teaching Award” and the name of the nominee in the subject line when you submit your application.

Save The Date for DADS!

The UH Hilo Alumni and Friends Association invites faculty and staff to its 17th Annual Distinguished Alumni and Distinguished Service Awards Banquet, set for Saturday, February 25, 2017, at 5 p.m. in the Campus Center Dining Room.

The event will honor award recipients and offer a silent auction to raise scholarship funds. Ticket information and additional details to follow.

Call 932-7672 with any questions.
Hats off to...

Todd Belt, Professor, Political Science, was invited to give a presentation on “Comedy from the 2016 Election” on October 21 at Emerson College in Boston, MA.

Randy Hirokawa, Professor, Communication and Faculty Athletics Representative, participated in the ninth NCAA Division II FAR Fellows Institute at the NCAA National Office in Indianapolis, IN, September 30 – October 2. He was among 23 faculty representatives selected nationwide. The event covered leadership and collaboration skills, the role of the Faculty Athletics Representative in communication among campus constituencies, and protection of student-athlete welfare.

Chris Frueh, Professor, Psychology, was senior author on “Emotion dysregulation as a cross-cutting target for inpatient psychiatric intervention.” Journal of Affective Disorders 2016; 206:224-231.

Dianqing Sun, Associate Professor, Pharmaceutical Sciences, was corresponding author on “Synthesis and antibacterial evaluation of macrocyclic diarylheptanoid derivatives,” Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters and “Synthesis, evaluation, and CoMFA study of fluoroquinolone derivatives as bacterial topoisomerase IA inhibitors,” European Journal of Medicinal Chemistry. He was also invited to give seminars in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Florida International University in September.

Adopt-A-Beehive with Alan Wong Program showcases at the 2016 Taste of the Hawaiian Range

The highly successful partnership between celebrity Chef Alan Wong and UH Hilo was one of the most popular educational displays at the 2016 Taste of the Hawaiian Range that was held on September 9 at the Waikoloa Hilton. This year the Adopt-A-Beehive with Alan Wong program, which supports the beekeeping students at UH Hilo, highlighted comb honey from the UH Hilo farm in Panaewa and provided informational materials on the importance of honey bees for local food security through honey products and pollination. The program, in its sixth year, has provided scholarship money for beekeeping students, resources such as bee suits and equipment for the farm’s bee hives that are used by students for hands-on learning, and works with commercial farmers to promote community relationships and outreach learning.

Beekeeping technician Cheryl Yara (left) and Ph.D. Pharmaceutical Sciences student Lissa Tsutsumi set up the comb honey display.
Study: pharmacists can save millions by reducing medication-related mishaps among elderly

When pharmacists are part of a patient’s transition from hospital to home, research in Hawai‘i shows medication-related emergencies decrease among those age 65 and older, saving millions more than the cost of the pharmacists annually.

“CDC researchers have previously estimated that across the US adverse drug events cause nearly 100,000 emergency hospitalizations annually among patients who are 65 and older,” said Karen L. Pellegrin, director of continuing education/strategic planning for the UH Hilo Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy. “We designed and implemented a pharmacist intervention to change those numbers here in Hawai‘i and the results are in. The medication-related hospitalization rate among older adults decreased by more than a third and the estimated annual cost of avoided admissions was over $6 million compared to the cost of the pharmacists, which was less than $2 million.”

Pellegrin is the principal investigator for the Pharm2Pharm program, a $14.3 million federally funded health care innovation designed to give pharmacists a more integrated and proactive role in overseeing high-risk patients’ medication routines. Researchers evaluated the association between the Pharm2Pharm intervention and the costs of medication-related hospitalization among older adults over a period of two years.

Findings are detailed in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, a peer-reviewed source for health care professionals in geriatric medicine and gerontology.

The study examined the pharmacist intervention at six nonfederal, general, acute care hospitals with 50 or more beds in 2013 and 2014, including the four largest hospitals in Hawai‘i’s three rural counties (Maui, Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i) and two hospitals in Honolulu County. The other five hospitals on O‘ahu were tracked as a comparison group. Hawai‘i Health Information Corporation (HHIC), the private nonprofit corporation that maintains the only all-payer hospital database in the state, provided the medication-related admission rate per 1,000 admissions of individuals aged 65 and older by quarter for each hospital from 2010 through 2014.

During the two-year implementation period, more than 2,000 high-risk inpatients were enrolled in Pharm2Pharm at the intervention hospitals. Of those enrolled, 62 percent were aged 65 and older. Based on a statistical model, the rate of medication-related hospitalizations in individuals aged 65 and older was 36 percent lower in the intervention hospitals by the last quarter of 2014 than in the nonintervention hospitals.

This research is important in part, Pellegrin said, because community pharmacists who dispense prescription medications typically have little access to clinical information about the patients, limiting their ability to identify and resolve drug therapy problems.

“Karen put together a program that confirms that pharmacist are underused and underappreciated in our current healthcare system. I applaud her research, management and development skills that helped to show positive outcomes when pharmacists work directly with patients and their doctors outside of the dispensing functions,” said Les Krenk, co-author of the publication, founding officer of the Hawai‘i Community Pharmacist Association, and owner of the first community pharmacy to participate in the Pharm2Pharm model.

Further research is needed in larger, more-urban hospitals, to determine whether similar results would be achieved.

The paper was authored by Pellegrin, Krenk, Sheena Jolson Oakes, community consulting pharmacist, Maui Clinic Pharmacy. Anita Ciarleglio, assistant specialist, DKICP, Dr. Joanne Lynn, director of the Center for Elder Care and Advanced Illness at Altarum Institute, Dr. Terry McInnis, president and founder, Blue Thorn Inc., Dr. Alistair W. Bairos, general surgeon, Kona Community Hospital, Hawai‘i Health Systems Corporation, Lara Gomez, director of clinical education, DKICP, Captain Mercedes Benitez McCrary, United States Public Health Service at the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, Alexandra L. Hanlon, research professor of biostatistics, School of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania, and Jill Miyamura, vice president and COO, Hawai‘i Health Information Corporation.

The project described is supported by Funding Opportunity CMS-1C1–12–0001 from CMS Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department of Health and Human Services or any of its agencies.
Everyone is invited to the grand opening of the North Hawai‘i Education and Research Center’s long-term exhibition, Historic Honoka‘a, on Friday, November 18 at 5 pm at the NHERC Heritage Center in Honoka‘a. There will also be live music and pupus.

Historic Honoka‘a explores the various ethnic groups that came to work on plantations and the unique cultural contributions they made to local society. There are also sections of the exhibition that focus on Native Hawaiian history, the evolution of Honoka‘a, plantation healthcare, and various wahi pana (sacred places) in North Hamakua.

Come help celebrate the opening of this exhibit and honor all the volunteers, donors, and staff who made this exhibit possible, including award-winning NHERC Heritage Center Coordinator Momi Naughton, Ph.D. On October 5, in the County of Hawai‘i Council Chambers, Naughton was formally recognized by the Council for her extensive work in the field of Historic Preservation including her creation of several heritage centers in Hamakua and North Hawai‘i, and her instrumental role as founding coordinator of the Heritage Center at NHERC.
UH Hilo CREST program receives fourth year of funding

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has released $1 million from the Centers for Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST) program to fund the fourth year of a climate change research project being undertaken by the UH Hilo Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Science (TCBES) Program. The funding is part of a second $5 million grant representing Phase II funding, approved in 2014, and will cover research activities in the 2017-2018 school year.

The UH Hilo CREST project, “Understanding Biotic Response to Environmental Change in Tropical Ecosystems Through a Place-Based Context,” is comprised of three research teams led by Dr. Patrick Hart, a professor in the Department of Biology. Each team is a diverse, inter-disciplinary unit that includes several post-doctoral researchers as well as laboratory and field technicians, graduate and undergraduate students.

The Organismal Responses to Environmental Change (OREC) Team, led by Assistant Biology Professor Dr. Jolene Sutton, is examining the short- and long-term responses of key organisms to a range of environmental conditions and incorporates their findings into models of landscape-level response to climate change. Their research utilizes the institution’s Core Genetics, Spatial Data Analysis, and Analytical Labs.

Marine Science Professor Dr. Misaki Takabayashi heads up the Dynamic Interactions of Symbioses and Environment (DISE) Team. DISE members are investigating the functions of symbiotic organisms in taro, ha`ole koa and coral, which are among the many Hawaiian plants and animals that live with symbiotic organisms. Their study aims to create a better understanding of the important role symbionts play in the health and physiology of host organisms.

The Behavioral Response to Environmental Change (BREC) Team, led by Hart, is analyzing the role of anthropogenic change and population decline on social behavior in animals. The group has established a Listening Observatory for Hawaiian Ecosystems (LOHE) Bioacoustics Lab at UH Hilo to provide support for faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates working in the bioacoustics field.

“The CREST: TCBES project engages our students in challenging field and laboratory research, which they will present at both local and national scientific conferences,” Hart said. “By developing this new generation of scientists and professionals, the TCBES program is earning a reputation as a center for excellence in research and training for Hawai‘i and the Pacific region.”

Professional development funds available

The Chancellor’s Professional Development Committee is opening up a third round of applications to award funds for professional development opportunities in Academic Year 2016-2017. The deadline for applications is Friday, November 4 at 4 pm.

The application form, rubric and guidelines are available at http://hilo.hawaii.edu/pro_development/committee.

The purpose of the Chancellor’s Professional Development Fund is to provide opportunities for continued professional growth and development for faculty and staff, with a special emphasis on development that will have far-reaching impacts on our campus.

Applications may be emailed to uhhilopd@hawaii.edu or dropped off at Human Resources, Auxiliary Services Building, Suite 106, to the attention of Kalei Rapoza, PDC chair.

Questions regarding the Professional Development Fund and its events can be directed to uhhilopd@hawaii.edu.

University Relations’ Brown Bag is Nov 17: AED training

The University community is invited to the next University Relations’ Brown Bag, scheduled for Thursday, November 17, noon – 1 p.m., in UCB 127.

Come and learn about the Be a Lifesaver Hawai‘i program, an awareness campaign surrounding cardiac arrest. Learn the difference between a heart attack and a sudden cardiac arrest and what you can do about both. Participants will learn how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) by Dr. Karen Rayos, resident physician, and Lisa Rantz, executive director of the Hilo Medical Center Foundation.

For questions, call University Relations at 932-7337 or 932-7670.
# UH Hilo Briefs

## November

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