New Chancellor charting UH Hilo’s future one step at a time

by Ken Hupp

When UH Hilo launched a nationwide search for a Chancellor, the advertisement immediately caught the attention of Cal Poly Pomona’s Dean of Science. For Dr. Donald Straney, it was the opportunity to make a difference working in a place he’d come to know 20 years ago.

An evolutionary biologist by training, Straney received his Ph. D in zoology from the University of California-Berkeley. He earned an M.S. and B.S. in the same discipline from Michigan State, where he would spend 23 years as Zoology Department Chair and Assistant to the Provost for Faculty Development before moving to Cal Poly Pomona in 2002.

Straney began a series of winter visits to the Big Island during the mid 1980s to study first-hand many of the species and living organisms he taught about in his evolution classes, and at one point visited the campus. So he was interested when the chancellor position became available, but admits it was a specific part of the recruitment ad that clinched his decision to apply.

“When I read an ad about a quality university expressing a desire to grow in spite of the economy, I had to read it over a couple of times,” Straney said. “That’s an uncommon yet wise goal, because I think we can position ourselves to take advantage of the economic recovery when it arrives.”

Straney also cited UH Hilo’s direct impact on the community. He noted that Cal Poly Pomona’s enrollment of 20,000 students serving 12 million people in the Los Angeles Basin made it difficult to gauge the university’s impact.

“Here we have 4,000 students and serve approximately 180,000 people islandwide, so we know what our impact is,” Straney said.

Strategic planning at UH Hilo – the challenge ahead

by Chancellor Donald Straney

UH Hilo has embarked on a new round of strategic planning with a goal of having a draft plan by May 2011. As a chancellor just starting my tenure with UH Hilo, I’m particularly fortunate that the current plan expires this year, since it gives me an opportunity to work closely with you and with the community to re-envision our future and perhaps adjust our course.

Strategic planning is a serious undertaking — required by UH System policy and by our accrediting body — in which we take stock of our current situation and commit to our best guess for what our University could become and accomplish in the next five to ten years. The plan will clarify UH Hilo’s identity and key priorities and will form the basis of university planning and budgeting in all divisions and at all levels.

As chancellor, I don’t engage the energies of the campus lightly and will dedicate myself to implementing the plan we ultimately accept. In fact, the 2011-2012 campus budget will need to reflect the priorities of the new strategic plan.

Last April, the University started its “pre-planning” initiative, which was designed to gather evidence to inform development of the plan. The “pre-planning” initiative has two parts:

• A survey consultation on ‘What Matters at UH Hilo?’ The survey response was excellent with over 500 people responding. A summary report of the results is available at the strategic planning website (www.uhh.hawaii.edu/strategicplan).
Chancellor
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“The parents who enroll their children at UH Hilo, businesses that hire our graduates and those who support us with their time and hard-earned money can see first-hand how we are meeting the educational and economic needs of the community.”

Straney says a long-term vision for the campus will emerge from his talks with faculty, staff, students and community members familiar with UH Hilo’s long-term history and performance. In addition, the campus has begun work on a new strategic plan. He believes the simultaneous timing of these events works in the University’s favor.

“This was the perfect time to come,” Straney said. “I think the outcome of all these conversations will be a very clear definition of our vision and mission that will determine what this campus will look like in the next five to ten years.”

He specifically wants to know:
1) How do we enhance student’s success?
2) How are we meeting the educational needs of the entire island?
3) What are the priority directions for the campus to move in?

And what does he think about some of the current challenges, starting with the shortage of on-campus housing?

“When a successful program attracts people who don’t live in town, you have to squarely face the question of how many beds do you need and how do you get them?” Straney said. “We need to explore ways to finance building the residence halls we need.”

When it comes to meeting the University’s core educational responsibility, Straney feels UH Hilo needs to remain innovative by emphasizing its small classes, intense learning support programs and approaches that recognize the unique qualities of its student body.

“We’re an institution committed to access, so we have many first-generation students and an overall population that differs from the flagship university,” Straney said. “Yet we have a responsibility to graduate our students as employment-ready as the students who attend UH Manoa.”

On a related note, Straney is concerned about the growing length of time students are taking to earn their degrees, since each additional year is a strain on family resources and delays their entry into the professional work force. He wants to shorten that time frame to a period closer to four years and believes the key is greater focus on the front end of the educational process.

“I think we need to begin by helping freshmen understand the academic and social challenges they will face transitioning from high school to college so that they can have the most successful first year possible,” Straney explained. “Then we need to find out why some students stall in the process and devise appropriate remedies, which could be as simple as adding more on-campus jobs.”

In the area of program development, there is growing interest in establishing a baccalaureate degree in engineering to meet the island’s need for more technical programs. UH Hilo already has a pre-engineering program and Straney is awaiting the findings of a faculty group considering various ideas and proposals making their way through the curriculum review process.

“We have numerous opportunities for students in areas like information technology, mechanical categories like instrumentation, and especially technical aspects of agriculture that are needed on the island,” Straney said. “There are also various technical programs we are ideally suited for due to our location and resources. So when the need from the island and the faculty ideas come together, we’ll see just what type of initiatives we’ll be interested in pursuing.”

Straney describes himself as a “student” when it comes to the issue of managing Mauna Kea, and believes there is no place in the world where the challenges of culture and technology are more obvious. He has visited the summit twice with members of the local community and with the Mauna Kea Management Board to gain a first-hand understanding of how others view the issues. He readily admits that there is much to learn.

“There are no easy answers for how science and culture interface,” Straney explained. “This isn’t something I’m going to learn from a book, but from people and direct experience, so I expect to be a student for some time to come.”

That approach reflects his overall philosophy on working with host cultures in the pursuit of science. He believes UH Hilo is blessed with a number of opportunities in this area.

“People who share a long-term history and relationship with this island know a lot about what is here, what it can be used for and how to maintain the balance that keeps the island healthy,” Straney said. “Those of us who have arrived more recently benefit when we learn those long standing practices and work together to deepen that understanding. But there must be an emphasis on the respectful nature of that relationship.”

As he reflects on the challenges and contemplates the future, Straney says the University is fortunate because UH Hilo is in charge of its own destiny. He says the University begins the task of charting its future from a position of strength because much of the groundwork has already been laid.

“UH Hilo has a reputation for being an inventive and well-run institution where things are moving as they should be without a lot of things that need fixing, and everything I have seen since my arrival confirms that account,” Straney said. “That’s a testament to former Chancellor Rose Tseng’s vision as well as the faculty and staff who made it a reality.”

(Editor’s note: Ken Hupp is a public information officer.)
UH Hilo faculty awarded $700,000 NSF grant

A trio of UH Hilo educators recently received a National Science Foundation grant to promote development of secondary mathematics teachers.

“Hawai‘i Noyce Teacher Scholarship” (HINTS) is funded through the Robert Noyce Scholarship Program. The five-year award totaling $769,711 took effect September 1, 2010.

“This award is a significant windfall for UH Hilo as well as our local intermediate schools and high schools,” said Associate Education Professor and Principal Investigator Diane Barrett. “HINTS not only strives to train quality mathematics teachers, but it also provides them with materials and support. As a result, we are hoping that this program and its scholarship opportunities will encourage more students to consider a career in the teaching profession, especially in the much needed area of mathematics.”

HINTS provides three-year scholarships and education technology to 10 UH Hilo undergraduates preparing to become secondary mathematics teachers while establishing a robust support structure of ongoing professional development and collaboration in mathematics education. Among the unique features of the program is its focus on designing and implementing pedagogical models to meet the specific needs relating to Hawai‘i’s vast cultural and economic diversity.

“The HINTS project is very exciting as it is the first NSF Noyce Grant funded in Hawai‘i so we will be blazing new ground working with the Hawai‘i Department of Education and community colleges on the islands of Hawai‘i, Maui, Molokai and Lanai,” said Darius Kalvaitis, assistant education professor and co-principal investigator.

“This collaboration among the participating institutions is critical to the success of this project,” said fellow Co-Principal Investigator and Assistant Mathematics Professor Roberto Pelayo. “Involvement of so many crucial educational partners will allow us to construct and maintain a robust source of future highly qualified master teachers.”

Official Vulcan logo wear now at Hilo Hattie

The UH Hilo Office of Intercollegiate Athletics scored a major marketing coup last month when Hilo Hattie — The Store of Hawai‘i started carrying the officially licensed new Vulcan logo wear.

“Currently the gear is only being sold at the Hilo store, but expansion is planned to Kona and then a review to see if it is viable at the other locations,” said Dexter Irvin, UH Hilo athletic director. “There is a special section that is very visible in the store.”

Irvin and baseball coach Joey Estrella, who doubles as assistant A.D. for community engagement, got the ball rolling by talking to Lei Kaneshiro, manager at Hilo Hattie’s Prince Kuhio Plaza store. Irvin finalized the agreement, which also includes manufacturing, with Mark Storfer, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Pomare, Ltd., Hilo Hattie’s parent company.

“Since Hilo Hattie’s new sister company, Royal Hawaiian Creations, is one of the premier apparel manufacturers in Hawai‘i, it was a natural partnership for us to produce the logo wear for the University and sell it at our Prince Kuhio Plaza Hilo Hattie store,” Storfer said. “Hilo Hattie is extremely pleased to be a part of this exciting program to rejuvenate the UH Hilo Vulcan brand and to be a part of the local Hilo community in support of this program. Hilo Hattie will be ‘The Official Provider of Hawaiian Fashions for UH Hilo Athletic Department’ for the next two school years.

“As part of our commitment to the UH Hilo Athletic program, Hilo Hattie has agreed to outfit Athletic personnel and coaches with Hilo Hattie aloha apparel during all games, sporting events or events promoting UH Hilo Athletics for volleyball, cross country, golf, tennis, basketball, soccer and other UH Hilo-sanctioned sporting events. We will also be...”
Hats off to...

Kirsten Mollegaard, Assistant Professor, English, presented her paper, “No Country for Soft Men: Cinema, Literature, and the Construction of Gender in the Landscapes of the American West” at the 4th Christina Conference on Gender Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Adam Pack, Associate Professor, Psychology & Biology, was re-appointed as Research Chair of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council” over the summer.

Bryan Kim, Professor, Psychology, was awarded the Fellow status by the Asian American Psychological Association at its 2010 convention in San Diego.

Kenith Simmons, Professor, English, has her poems, “The Ocean Offers Dharma,” “Ohia,” “Kona Bali Kai,” and “Learning to Mourn” in the next issue of The Chaminade Literary Review.

Jean Ippolito, Associate Professor, Art, presented her paper, “Parody and Appropriation: European Traditions in the Digital Media Art of China” at the International Arts in Society Conference in Sydney, Australia, in July. She also spent two summer months in China on an RCUH Research Relations grant where she visited historic sites with John Cheng and the China Culture Study Tour, and also taught English as a volunteer in a rural high school in Zhejiang province.

Tracy Wiegner, Associate Professor, Marine Science, recently had two papers published with two of her former graduate students from the TCBES program: “Potential effects of an invasive nitrogen-fixing tree on a Hawaiian stream food web,” Pacific Science 64(3): 367-379. Trisha Atwood is first author and paper is based on her senior thesis work in 2006; and “Surface water metabolism potential in a tropical estuary, Hilo Bay, USA, during storm and non-storm conditions,” Estuaries and Coasts. Lucas Mead is first author and paper is based on his Master’s thesis.

Terrance Jalbert, Professor, Finance, recently had his co-authored paper, “Measuring the Impact of Reserve Requirement Changes Using Interest Rate Spreads,” accepted for publication in Latin American Business Review.


Syed Rahman, Assistant Professor, Computer Science & Engineering, co-authored a peer reviewed IEEE proceeding on “Design Constructs of a Knowledge Machine” published in the 2010 IEEE International Conference on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics (SM’2010), to be held next month in Istanbul, Turkey.


Bill Heacox, Professor, Astronomy, was selected by NASA to chair a grant proposal review panel, The Astrophysical Data Analysis Program, which will award roughly $4 million to research proposals submitted by 40 astronomers nationwide. This is the third such panel that Heacox has served on.
Hats off
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Faith Mishina, Assistant Professor, Spanish, presented her research paper, “Politics, Identity and Colonial Aftermath: Garcia Marquez’s Use of Strategic Design to Break down the Polarization” at The Eighth International Conference on the New Directions of the Humanities at UCLA in July. Her paper has been accepted in the peer review journal, The International Journal of the Humanities.

Gene Johnson, Assistant Professor, Accounting, was awarded a $3990 scholarship for a faculty and student to attend the 4th Annual Lean Accounting Summit Faculty-Student Scholarship Program in Las Vegas this month to learn more about Lean Accounting concepts for curriculum development and research purposes.


$810K faculty bequest supports Art and English

A gift of $810,000 was made to the Art and English Departments from the estate of the late Howard and Yoneko Droste, long-time Hilo faculty members. Howard Droste joined the UH Hilo Branch campus in 1957 as an art instructor, became an associate professor in 1970 and remained in that position until his retirement in 1982, passing away in November 2005 at the age of 84. Yoneko Yamanoha Droste joined the UH Hilo Branch campus as an English instructor in 1959, became an associate professor in 1974, and taught writing and literature until her retirement in 1979. She died in November 1996 at the age of 78. (Photo courtesy of the Droste Estate.)

Vulcan logo wear
Continued from page 3

assisting the school with game site sales of logo wear on game days,” he added.

Kaneshiro said an entire wall of the store is devoted to Vulcan logo wear, with prominent signage visible throughout the store. She said Vulcan logo wear is already drawing interest, most notably from tourists off the weekly cruise ships.

Storfer added that Vulcan logo wear is also available on the Hilo Hattie website at www.hilohattie.com. Merchandise includes t-shirts, hats, sweatshirts, hoodies and golf shirts, and other items.

A kick-off was held August 30 to coincide with “Meet the Vulcans” night at the PKP Hilo Hattie store. The event also served as a major kickoff for the new UH Hilo booster club, called the Vulcan Athletic Club.

Irvin thanked Storfer, Kaneshiro, Estrella and all involved for their roles in making Hilo Hattie a partner as well as a corporate sponsor of Vulcan Athletics.

“Putting together deals with officially licensed projects is never quick, but many people have worked hard to bring this to fruition,” he said. “Development of the new logos was the first step in the process and we have had great response from all over the state and the country.”
Successful installation of UH Hilo’s astronomical observatory

UH Hilo’s new $600,000 instructional telescope has been successfully installed in the Hōkū Ke’a observatory building on Mauna Kea.

The first observations of astronomical objects were conducted by observatory director David James, principal investigator Bill Heacox and astronomy technician Jay Slivkoff. The telescope was pointed first at the star Arcturus, known in Polynesian navigation as Hoku Le’a, the Star of Gladness. Hoku Le’a is the brightest star to pass directly over Hawai’i and was a principal guide to Polynesian voyages sailing north from the Marquesas and Tuamotu Islands.

Further observations, including those with actual research instruments, will be conducted later this fall. When completely operational, it will be the world’s only research-grade astronomical observatory operated by an undergraduate college at a major observatory site, and will allow UH Hilo to expand its astronomy program to one of international distinction.

The performing arts on center stage

by Michael Pankowski

As the new academic year gets underway, UH Hilo, HawCC, and local community members alike can look forward to another diverse collection of events put on by performers from around the world. Lee Dombroski, the UH Hilo Performing Arts Center (PAC) manager, has once again worked closely with a statewide consortium to bring to campus everything from the southern hybrid music of The Redstick Ramblers to the magical stage production of Imago Theatre’s ZooZoo.

The PAC does more than just solicit talent from outside of Hawai’i. It will also play host to local entertainment put on by students and staff with The Folks You Meet in Longs, and the Hawai’i Concert Society will hold all of its concerts at the PAC for classical music lovers.

The Performing Arts Center schedule of events for 2010-2011 include:

• Red Stick Ramblers – September 11, 7:30 pm
• Larry Carlton Trio – September 26, 7:30 pm
• Patrick Ball: Modern Day Bard – October 21, 7:30 pm
• Folks You Meet In Longs – November 4, 5, 6, 7:30 pm; November 7, 2:00 pm
• UH Hilo Choral Concert – November 13, 7:30 pm
• UH Hilo One Act Festival – November 19 to 23
• UH Hilo Instrumental Ensemble Concert – December 2, 7:30 pm
• Great Leaps – December 8 and 9, 7:30 pm
• Holiday Card to Hilo – December 12, 2:00 pm
• Battlefield Band – January 29, 7:30 pm
• Imago Theatre’s ZooZoo – February 12, 7:30 pm
• Vagina Monologues – February 18, 7:30 pm
• PHILADANCO’s By Way of the Funk – February 26, 7:30 pm
• 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee – April 8, 9 and 15, 16, 7:30 pm; April 17, 2:00 pm
• UH Hilo Shakespeare Performances – April 21, 7:30 pm
• UH Hilo Instrument Ensemble Concert – April 29, 7:30 pm
• Great Leaps – May 4 and 5, 7:30 pm
• UH Hilo Choral Concert – May 7, 7:30 pm

The PAC is also pleased to announce the expansion of its season by two performances over last year as Dombroski and Company continue their tradition of reciprocation to a very generous community. Great Leaps, a dance concert presented as a culmination of the Performing Arts Department, has expanded to two nights per semester. Dombroski attributes this to a public that not only recognizes the value of eclectic entertainment, but one that can also be characterized as appreciative and exuberant.

To ensure continued affordable good times for fans, PAC relies on ticket sales, donations, business sponsors, and program memberships. Applause! is one such program that interested patrons can become a member of by choosing a membership level defined by varying monetary donations. The Name a Seat! campaign offers a personalized nameplate permanently affixed to the armrest of new seats.

Dombroski’s positive outlook makes it easy to believe that this year’s great collection of acts are yet another chapter in the best-selling biography of UH Hilo’s Performing Arts Center.

For ticket information, visit www.artscenter.uhh.hawaii.edu or call x47310.

(Editor’s note: Michael Pankowski is a student intern with the Office of Media Relations majoring in English.)
Strategic Plan
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• A ‘listening tour’ designed as a means for people to give their views on UH Hilo in a face-to-face setting. Meetings with over 20 different groups from across and beyond campus are now being held and will continue until the end of October. Summary meeting notes are being posted on the strategic planning website on a regular basis. Once all are completed, a report will be produced that draws together common themes and issues raised across all meetings.

Many thanks to all of you who have participated in these activities thus far.

Nominations sought for UH Hilo Distinguished Alumni & Service Awards

The UH Hilo Alumni and Friends Association is currently accepting nominations for its 2011 Distinguished Alumni & Service Awards. The deadline is September 30.

Honorees will be recognized at the 11th Annual Distinguished Alumni & Services Awards banquet scheduled for February 25, 2011.

Nomination forms are available at the UH Hilo Alumni Office or online at www.uhh.hawaii.edu/alumni.

For more information, call x47501.

2nd Annual Best Bowl Cook-Off is Sept 15!

Faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in the Second Annual Best Bowl Cook-Off, scheduled for Wednesday, September 15, 11 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. at the Student Life Center.

Tasters will vote for their favorite Best Bowl dish to decide whose will be crowned “Best Bowl 2010.” The winner receives a one-year membership to the Student Life Center, Best Bowl Award for office display, their photo on the Best Bowl Hall of Champions Web page, and the all important admiration of their peers.

Everyone who attends the cook-off (tasters and cooks) receives a punch card for five free visits to the Student Life Center.

For more information, including cook-off rules, visit http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/studentaffairs.scbc/index.php.

Instructional Skills Workshop for faculty on tap

Seven UH Hilo faculty and staff received training in June to become facilitators for faculty interested in sharpening their teaching skills.

CAS Associate Dean Cam Muir organized the intensive week-long workshop, which was taught by two trainers from the Instructional Skills Workshop, an international consortium of university instructors that has provided faculty training for the past 30 years. Muir said he was introduced to the ISW while in graduate school.

“The ISW provides pedagogical theory and opportunity for focused practice with instructional skills,” Muir said. “My incentive for creating the program was to fill a need for faculty development. The irony of university teaching is that new faculty are expected to ‘know’ how to teach as a result of getting a PhD, but the reality is that few of us were afforded the opportunity to specifically learn how to teach.”

In addition to Muir, the newly trained facilitators are: Cheryl Ramos, Psychology; Amelia Shapiro, Academic Affairs; Emalani Case, Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikolani; Kelly Burke, CoBE; Maria Haws CAFNRM; and Myhraliza Aala, Student Affairs.

The newly trained facilitators will start holding workshops on campus this winter.

“Our facilitators learned how to run an ISW and we are presently planning our first ISW for the inter-term break in January,” Muir said. “Our ISW program will be open for all interested faculty with an emphasis to ensuring access to interested new and pre-tenure faculty.”

Cam Muir

Work on actually developing the 2010-2018 Strategic Plan will start this fall. I anticipate forming the Strategic Planning Committee in September. The committee will collaborate with colleges and units, consult on key issues, and develop and distribute draft versions.

I hope you all will stay involved in the process and look forward to working with you on this important and challenging initiative.

For further information, or if you have any questions, visit: www.uhh.hawaii.edu/strategicplan. Or contact Siân Millard, strategic planning coordinator, at uhhplan@hawaii.edu or x33297.
Campus Events

September

1  Focus on UH Hilo, 8 p.m., Channel 55

3  Last day to completely withdraw from classes without owing tuition

6  Holiday: Labor Day

10 Final deadline to apply for Fall 2010 Graduation
   Last day to exercise Credit/No Credit option
   Last day to submit Auditors Form

11 Red Stick Ramblers, 7:30 p.m., PAC, Admission

13 Last day to drop classes without “W”
   Last day to receive 50% refund of tuition for complete withdrawals
   No refunds issued after this date

15 2nd Annual Best Bowl Cook-Off, 11 a.m., Student Life Center
    Focus on UH Hilo, 8 p.m., Channel 55

26 Larry Carlton Trio, 7:30 p.m., PAC, Admission