

Ka Lono **Hanakahahi**

"News of People Working Together"

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO

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UH Hilo students making a difference at the legislature

by Ken Hupp

They are known around the State Capitol as "The Red Sea," named for the red polo shirts they wear during their trips to the legislature. And like the body of water that Moses parted in the story of the Ten Commandments, this red sea is proving to be a powerful wave as it moves through Hawai'i's halls of power.

"The Red Sea" is the UH Hilo student contingent that travels to the State Capitol each year to meet with lawmakers, testify before legislative committees and build support for various University initiatives. Combined with the efforts of the UH Hilo administration, faculty and community supporters, they've become a highly effective team that has helped to secure funding for a number of major projects and initiatives the past several years.

Last year, in collaboration with the administration and other supporters, they helped convince lawmakers to approve \$6.1 million in operating funds and the \$5 million needed to fund the balance of construction for the new Science and Technology Building. The year before, they helped secure \$3.7 million in operating funds and the initial \$20 million Science and Technology funding.

"It's been a very effective approach with our initiatives out of the student caucus, coupled with their overall support for University priorities and initiatives," said UH Hilo University Relations Director Gerald De Mello. "Ultimately, everything that is being sought over the years is fundamentally for student gain and enrichment, so who better to help us make our case to lawmakers?"

The roots of the UH Hilo Student Association (UHSA) Legislative Committee's activity trace back to the 2001-2002 school year when Louisa Pereira served as UHSA president. Pereira, known to students and close friends as "Auntie Luika," saw a need for active student participation in the legislative process, and began to implement and establish a program from the ground up. Though new to the process, they took an

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SPOTLIGHT

Gomes nurtures NHERC through infancy



Farrah-Marie K. Gomes

When the UH Hilo North Hawai'i Education and Research Center was looking for a director, they were hoping for candidates living in the community that the facility in the old Honoka'a Hospital serves — in the area between Laupahoehoe to Kohala and Kamuela to Waikoloa. In Farrah-Marie K. Gomes, they found someone with the right qualifications. The Paauilo native and Kamuela resident is a UH Hilo graduate with a masters degree in counseling psychology from Chaminade University. But more importantly, she believes in NHERC's mission, and has both the energy to implement it and the passion to sell it.

"I took the position when I was eight months pregnant; I think it was the hormones," she quipped. "And I think it's analogous. It was a new beginning for me in a career and a new beginning for me as a mother. I look at the changes both in the Center and in my son, Koa, who is just over a year old. Each is growing and both are turning out well."

NHERC, which is an outreach arm of the College of Continuing Education and Community Service, offers distance learning classes from both UH Hilo and Hawai'i Community College. Right now, the fledgling Center offers two courses for

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active, high profile role in lobbying for approval of funds for a Student Life and Events Center. And even though Pereira passed away shortly after graduating in 2002, the program has continued to grow and nurture.

"We're probably the only campus that has been able to sustain this level of student involvement," De Mello said. "I think that is in large part a testimonial to the power of Auntie Luika's vision and ideas."

De Mello also credits Dr. Alton Okinaka, associate professor of sociology, who helped foster the effort during the years he spent as Faculty Student Body Advisor, and the members of the Big Island legislative delegation who have encouraged and supported the practice. Okinaka said the legislative involvement was only one aspect of Pereira's overall vision of what student government should be.

"She believed student government needed to act like a governmental body, by becoming involved in the political process and policy making," Okinaka explained. "What's easily overlooked is that she was equally committed to the concept that student government should work with the administration, which led her to seek out committed students to serve on all the major committees. As a result, their vision became very forward looking and everything was done with an eye toward the future."

The students will typically visit the State Capitol four to five times a year in groups of four to six. On opening day, their numbers run as high as 12. They usually arrive at the Capitol around 7:30 a.m. and begin their meetings as early as 8:00 a.m. While the meetings can last anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes, hearings can go on long into the night. One such hearing last year lasted until 11:00 p.m.

Among the students actively involved this year are UHHSA President Kainoa Kaumeheiwa-Rego and Treasurer Kehau Cortez-Camero. Although neither expected to find themselves holding court with or lobbying legislators when they enrolled at UH Hilo, both say the experience has been invaluable.

"The experience has certainly given me more confidence because the legislature can be such an intimidating environment," Kaumeheiwa-Rego said. "Through it all, you learn a lot about your abilities and limitations, how to handle pressure, and how to adapt when the unexpected occurs."

Kaumeheiwa-Rego, who began visiting the legislature during the 2004 - 2005 school year, said that experience convinced her that students could have an important impact on

the legislative process and committed herself to serve as Chair of the UHHSA Legislative Committee the following year.

It was that year that Cortez-Camero got her first taste of things at the legislature, when she shadowed Kaumeheiwa-Rego in her capacity as UHHSA Senator for Ka Haka `Ula O Ke`elikolani College of Hawaiian Language. Although she paid her own way to travel to the Capitol during spring break, she admits that her first experience might have convinced others to give up.

"I cried the first day I was there," said Cortez-Camero in recalling that experience. "It was so complex that I felt at first like a deer in the headlights. But at the end of the meeting I told everybody that I hope I see you next year, and I've been going back ever since."

What convinced her was a belief that the role students are playing is making all the difference at the legislature and on campus.

"We can offer legislators a perspective that most others can't because we as students are the ones who

will directly benefit from what is being asked for," Cortez-Camero said. "At the same time, they understand that the initiatives we're promoting are not for us, but for future students and I think that has a significant impact on their decision making."

Those efforts were rewarded last November when the University community celebrated ground breaking for Phase I of the project that Pereira and a long line of past and present student leaders had lobbied long and hard for. De Mello said the role students played in securing funding for construction of the Student Life and Events Center was decisive.

"They advocated and communicated very effectively to the legislature a need, a resource that other campuses and even other high schools enjoyed on their respective campuses that was sorely lacking at UH Hilo," De Mello said. "That need was genuine and it resonated well at the Capitol."

The groundbreaking featured numerous student leaders and supporters who had played a role in bringing the project to fruition. For Kaumeheiwa-Rego, who presided over the event as UHHSA President, it was a milestone achievement.

"Any time you can complete something, it is rewarding," Kaumeheiwa-Rego said. "But this one was extra special because it represented the work that Auntie Luika began and was carried on to its successful conclusion by those who followed her."

This session, the UHHSA Legislative Committee will again play an active role as the University seeks funding for



Kehau (L) and Kainoa at UH Day 2007.

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Legislature

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two capital improvements considered critical to UH Hilo's continued growth and development. Topping the wish list is \$26 million for design and construction of a new Student Services Building to replace the current facility built over 25 years ago to house administrative offices. The new facility will accommodate the consolidation of important student services, which are currently scattered throughout the campus, while enabling the administrative offices to return. Also being sought is \$2.5 million for planning and design of a building to house classrooms, teaching laboratories, offices and other related spaces for the new College of Pharmacy.

"These are two really big needs for us if we are to take UH Hilo to the next level," De Mello said. "The Student Services Building is essential to meeting the growing needs of our students, and will improve retention and graduation rates. At the same time, students see the College of Pharmacy as an unspoken declaration of excellence at UH Hilo and a distinct cutting edge college that will be meeting a Statewide need."

UH Hilo may or may not win funding for these items this session. But one thing is certain: the experience Kaumeheiwa-Rego and Cortez-Camero have gained at the legislature has inspired them to set their sights in new directions.

"I originally wanted to become a lawyer," said Cortez-Camero, a political science major pursuing a minor in economics. "But after seeing how the administration works to get things done, I'd like to someday become Chancellor of UH Hilo."

Kaumeheiwa-Rego, a political science and communication major, with a minor in Hawaiian studies, who sits on the Governor's East Hawai'i Advisory Committee, has set her sights on the State Capitol.

"I'd like to be Governor some day," Kaumeheiwa-Rego said.

Lofty goals, to be certain. But given what UH Hilo's students have accomplished at the legislature, it may be unwise to bet against them. ☺

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

16th annual Hawaiian Family afFAIR honors Akaka

UH Hilo's Na Pua No'eau celebrates its 16th annual Hawaiian Family afFAIR on March 10 on the Campus Center Plaza. This year the Fair honors U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka with the theme, *E na'auao kakou i na alahale o na kupuna* (Let the paths of our ancestors enlighten us).

"Na Pua No'eau and its partners felt that Senator Akaka's work has provided a path, especially in education, for opportunities for enlightenment for our youth and their families," noted Dr. David Sing, director, Na Pua No'eau.

Along with honoring Akaka, the Fair will provide information on education, health, and social services to Hawai'i's families. There will be children's games, a healthy baby contest, family photos, and live entertainment throughout the day.

For more information, call x47678. ☺

UH Hilo Library's renovation update

The Edwin H. Mookini Library is currently undergoing an extensive renovation to improve air quality in the building, remove asbestos from floor tiles, replace carpet and reconfigure some staff offices. The construction, which is taking place one floor at a time, is expected to be complete in June 2008. The Library will remain open during its regular hours during the renovation.

UH Hilo maintains a current collection of federal government documents to serve both the UH Hilo community and the island of Hawai'i. Most of the Library's older federal documents have been transferred to UH Manoa's Hamilton Library government documents collection to replenish some of the materials lost in the flood on October 30, 2004.

The Library has boxed a portion of its journal collection and is storing it for the duration of the renovation, and is also planning to box a small portion of the book collection. Also boxed are all but the most essential federal documents for this period. Circulation history was used as a criterion for choosing which materials to box. Essential, non-circulating materials, such as the U.S. Code, will be available for the duration of the renovation.

Librarians are available during regular service hours to help patrons use government publications, including the many publications on the Web. In addition, the Library has a close relationship with the regional depository at UH Manoa and will request materials from that collection via interlibrary loan. The regional depository has agreed to process interlibrary loan requests from UH Hilo within two working days.

The UH Hilo community and the general public will continue to be informed of the renovation as it progresses. ☺

Kathy Collins opens UH Hilo's National Women's History Month



Maui actress, comedian, and story teller Kathy Collins will be the opening performer at UH Hilo's 2007 National Women's History Month Celebration, scheduled for Thursday, March 1, at 7:00 p.m. in Campus Center 301. The program is free and open to the public.

Collins is co-founder of Mana'o Radio/KEAO-LP (91.5 FM), a non-commercial, non-profit radio station. Although acting is her passion, Collins saw radio as the most effective medium for her artistic expression.

"When I graduated from high school in the mid-1970s, stage or screen roles for 5-foot tall Asian women were few and far between," Collins explained. "On the radio, I can play any role I want."

Collins' media credentials are lengthy and impressive. In addition to running a radio station, reporting news on both radio and television, and being a voice-over artist for national and international accounts, she has created an alter ego character, "Tita," featured regularly at O'ahu's annual Talk Story Festival and at local schools and community events.

Through Tita, Collins shares Hawaiian legends and spreads the word of "pidgin pride." Her first CD release, entitled "Tita Out," won the 2005 Hawai'i Music Award for Comedy Album of the Year.

For more information, contact the UH Hilo Women's Center at x47306 or online at uhhwomen@hawaii.edu. ☎

Ka Lono Hanakahi is published by the Office of University Relations on the first of the month during the academic year for faculty and staff of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. News and submissions are welcome. Deadlines are on the fifteenth of each month for the following first of the month publication. Contact Alyson Kakugawa-Leong, Director of Media Relations, Beaumont Cottage, (808) 974-7642 or email alyson@hawaii.edu. ☎



Application deadline extended for PIPES program

UH Hilo's Pacific Internship Programs for Exploring Science (PIPES) has extended its 2007 application deadline to March 5, 2007. Under-represented minorities, particularly native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, *kama'aina*, and first-generation college students majoring in science, agriculture, geography, and/or Hawaiian Studies, and who are dedicated to Hawai'i's natural resources, are encouraged to apply.

The PIPES programs offer undergraduate student internships that focus on environmental issues, ranging from scientific research to resource management to environmental education. The programs include the University of Hawai'i Hawaiian Internship Program (UH-HIP), the Research Experience for Undergraduates Program (REU), and the Micronesia and American Samoan Student Internship Program (MASSIP).

PIPES facilitates the unified organization of UH-HIP, REU, and MASSIP during the summer to maximize the experience for students. The internships are structured into a ten-week program consisting of a four-day orientation and constant mentoring to enhance the projects undertaken by the students. In addition to making lifelong friendships and developing an important network of professional contacts, students experience significant cultural and political aspects of environmentalism in Hawai'i.

Application packets are available online at <http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/uhintern> or by contacting the PIPES office at uhintern@hawaii.edu x30705. ☎

Hats off to...



Robert Fox

Robert Fox, Professor, Physics, had his poster paper, "PISCES: Hawai'i Facility for Simulation and Training," accepted for presentation at the 38th annual meeting of the Lunar and Planetary Science on March 13, 2007 in League City, TX. PISCES, which stands for the Pacific International Space Center for Exploration Systems, is a project sponsored by the Japanese-U.S. Science, Technology and Space Applications Program, the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, and the UH Hilo Department of Physics and Astronomy. The paper was co-authored with Frank Schowengerdt, affiliate professor of physics and astronomy.



Nina Buchanan

Nina Buchanan, Professor, Education, and **Robert Fox**, have been invited by Deirbhile Nic Craith, senior official for Education and Professional Development of the Irish National Teachers Organization, to address a meeting of their organization in Dublin this month on an "Overview of the Education System in Hawai'i."



Ken Staton

Ken Staton, Associate Professor, Music, is orchestra contractor for the Hawai'i Opera Theatre's Maui production of *Madame Butterfly* on March 17 and 18. Staton is taking 20 players from the Big Island to Maui where they will join musicians from O'ahu and Maui as the pit orchestra for Puccini's famous opera.



Bryan Kim

Bryan Kim, Associate Professor, Psychology, co-authored an article, "Successful and Unsuccessful Multicultural Supervisory Behaviors: A Delphi Poll," that was published in the January 2007 issue of the *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, which is a journal of the American Counseling Association.



Harald Barkhoff

Harald Barkhoff, Assistant Professor, Health and Physical Education, accepted an invitation to serve on the editorial board of *Refed*, the Brazilian journal of physical education, sport, leisure, and dance. He also had his paper, "CAMI - Computer Assisted Mobile Interview: A Pilot Study of Three Elite Athletes in Artistic Roller and Figure Skating" published in *Refed*. The article is co-authored with H. Hochwald (Univ. of Stuttgart) and M. Germone, a former undergraduate student at UH Hilo.



Walter Dudley

Walter Dudley, Professor, Oceanography, has been invited to create a tsunami education museum for Kerala State, India, and a tsunami research and education exhibit for the new science building at Mahatma Gandhi University, where he also served as keynote speaker at a conference on disaster management held for secondary school teachers. Dudley recently gave tsunami disaster mitigation presentations in Kerala State and completed interviewing 21 survivors of the December 26, 2004 tsunami. The interviews will be used as part of the curriculum materials for the International Tsunami Training Institute being established at the University of Washington, as part of a future exhibit at the Pacific Tsunami Museum, and as part of the tsunami education exhibits now being planned for India. The project was funded by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as part of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System initiative.



Wayne Miyamoto

Wayne Miyamoto, Professor, Art, is participating in the 2007 *North American Print Biennial* presented by the Boston Printmakers Association at the 808 Gallery at Boston University.



Patti Urso

Hats off

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Kathy Commendador



Jennifer Richardson



Jerry Calton



Jean Ippolito

The exhibition was curated by Judy Hecker of the Museum of Modern Art, New York City and highlights the 60th anniversary celebration of the Boston Printmakers.

Patti Urso, Assistant Professor, Nursing, has been invited to present a poster – Smoking Cessation in the Workplace: A model for a rural setting – at the 4th Asian American Pacific Islander National Association Conference, UC San Francisco, March 30 and April 1.

Kathy Commendador, Assistant Professor, Nursing, had “The relationship between female self-esteem, decision-making and contraceptive behavior” published in *American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*.

Jennifer Richardson, Assistant Professor, English, will present “Colbert, Comedy, and the Commander in Chief: Reading the Rhetorics of Stephen Colbert’s White House Correspondents Dinner Speech” at the 2007 Conference on College Composition and Communication, New York, NY, on March 22. The CCCC Convention annually draws college faculty members worldwide to hear award-winning keynote speakers, attend presentations by colleagues on the latest innovations in education, and to network.

Jerry Calton, Professor, Management, will make two presentations at the upcoming meeting of the International Association for Business & Society in Florence, Italy, held May 31-June 3. One presentation will be in a symposium on “Decentered Stakeholder Theory: Toward a Research Agenda” and the other will be in a workshop, “Learning to Teach Ethics from the Heart: Connecting with Students through Dialogue and Reflection.”



Roberta Jones



Ron Gordon



Joan Thompson

Jean Ippolito, Assistant Professor, Art, was asked to design the cover of the April issue of *Leonardo: Journal of Art, Science and Technology* in order to showcase the interactive installation work of Yoichiro Kawaguchi, an artist featured in her article, “From the Avant-garde: Re-Conceptualizing Cultural Influences in the Digital Media Art of Japan.” Ippolito’s article will also appear in this issue.

Roberta Jones, Assistant Professor, Accounting, had her manuscript, “Internal Controls: Lessons to be Learned from Fire” accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue of *International Journal of Services and Standards*. It was co-written with Ken Griggs. Additionally, “FASB 117 Software: Sophisticated and Easy to Use” has been accepted for publication in *Journal of Accountancy*.

Ron Gordon, Professor, Communication, had his paper, “Communication, Dialogue, and Transformation” published in the Winter 2006 issue of *Human Communication*. He also participated on a panel on “The Limits of Western Communication Theory” at a conference held at the Center for Korean Studies at UH Manoa in January. Along with **Yoshitaka Miike**, Assistant Professor, Communication, he also organized two sessions at that conference, honoring the lifetime contributions of intercultural communication pioneers Don Klopff of UHM and Satoshi Ishii of Dokkyo University.

Joan Thompson, Assistant Professor, Nursing, recently reviewed Chapter 11 of *Maternal-Child Nursing: Caring for Mothers, Children and Families Across Care Settings*, published by FA Davis CO. ☺

Distinguished Lecture Series on Marine Debris in the Pacific to be offered in the fall

by Margaret Shiba

Thanks to a \$30,000 grant from the Will J. Reid Foundation, the Marine Science Department will be exploring a new interdisciplinary curriculum focus next fall: marine debris pollution. UH Hilo will host a Distinguished Lecture Series on Marine Debris in the Pacific during the Fall 2007 semester, inviting a series of eight guest lecturers to campus to explore the multiple dimensions of this critical problem.

The lecture series will be offered as an upper-division elective (MARE 494) within the undergraduate marine science curriculum and the graduate-level Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Science program. Guest lecturers will come from a diverse range of U.S. and overseas academic institutions, and in addition to lecturing on campus, each will also be asked to make public presentations in East and West Hawai'i, including outreach to local K-12 schools. To ensure broader dissemination of the content of the lecture series, UH Hilo will compile and publish a set of proceedings after the conclusion of the project.

Marine debris is a global environmental problem, the dimensions of which have only recently begun to be fully recognized. Each year marine debris injures and kills countless numbers of marine mammals and birds, adversely impacts

marine ecosystems and human health, and threatens navigation safety and shipping and coastal industries. Non-biodegradable plastics make up the overwhelming majority of marine debris, and the deleterious effects of this debris extend far beyond ingestion and entanglement by marine species to include the accumulation and transport of toxic chemicals and persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Captain Charles Reid Moore notes that "plastic debris in the ocean is like CO₂ in the atmosphere, we're on an upward trajectory. We can measure and monitor its increase so that we can know if and when our efforts to reverse the trend succeed."

The issue of marine debris pollution has particular relevance to Hawai'i, which is made up of 132 islands, reefs, and shoals. Hawai'i's location close to the center of a system of currents--the North Pacific subtropical gyre--makes our beaches and coastal waters a vast dumping ground for plastic and other types of garbage from both Asia and North America, as well as from seagoing vessels. It is estimated that more than 50 tons of marine debris washes ashore annually in Hawai'i.

UHHilo's strong programs in the natural sciences, coupled with our commitment to maximizing the educational value of our physical environment, give us a special opportunity to become a center for teaching and research on marine debris pollution.

For more information on the new Distinguished Lecture Series in Marine Debris in the Pacific, contact Professor Karla McDermid at x33906. ☎

(Editor's note: Margaret Shiba is director of development.)



***Aesop's Fables and Carnival of Animals* this month**

The UH Hilo Performing Arts Center presents *Aesop's Fables and Carnival of Animals* on Friday, March 23 at 7:30 p.m., and Saturday, March 24 at 2 p.m.

The UH Hilo Acting Troupe, under the direction of Professor Jackie Pualani Johnson, has taken the fables and re-scripted them into vignettes that bring the humor and wisdom to new light. The UHHilo Dance Ensemble, choreographed by Celeste Staton, will bring to life "The Carnival of Animals," a classical musical standard by Camille Saint-Saens, with classical ballet, modern and jazz dance. The production will showcase scenery and lighting designed by Patrick Kelly and costumes created by Margie Lee.

Tickets are reserved seating and range from \$10-\$12 with discounts available to qualified persons and children. The Box Office is open Monday - Friday from 2-6pm on school days. Call x47310 or order online at artscenter.uhh.hawaii.edu. ☎

Descendance at UH Hilo March 15

Descendance, a world class traditional and contemporary dance company from Australia, will perform on the Campus Center Plaza on Thursday, March 15, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. The troupe will perform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dances. The event is free and open to the public.

Descendance has performed across Europe and Asia. They have participated in major world events such as the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and the opening ceremony of the Rugby Union World Cup in 2003. Descendance also won the World Dance and Peace Prize at the first cultural-style Olympics in 2004, which was hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Seoul, South Korea. For more about Descendance visit www.descendance.com.au.

Students are also welcome to join Descendance in a discussion about their culture and indigenous people's issues from 1:15 to 2 p.m. in UCB 127. For more information contact Gail Makuakane-Lundin at gailml@hawaii.edu or Tandy Awaya at paac@paachawaii.org.

The performance and cultural discussion is sponsored by Hawaiian Airlines, Pacific and Asian Affairs Council, UH Hilo Kipuka Native Hawaiian Student Center, Center for Global Education and Exchange, Student Activities Council, Hawai'i Community College Ke Po'ohala Center and the Associated Students of University of Hawai'i-Hawai'i Community College. 🍷



Spotlight

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credit, Psychology 100 and Philosophy 100, and an expanding menu of noncredit courses.

"Our primary goal is increasing access to higher ed opportunities," Gomes said. "In the meantime, we know that everybody out there is not only looking for credit classes. And until we can generate that base of continuous students to make the offering of credit classes profitable, we're offering noncredit classes, which have been wonderful.

"Right now, we have full classes in conversational Portuguese and Hawaiian language. This is something the community has really taken an interest in. They love it. We've had genealogy classes where we've had senior citizens and working folks who take advantage of these classes at night."

Gomes looks forward to the day that NHERC will be able to offer more credit courses and become a credible starting point for students seeking college degrees.

"Most credit offerings, initially, are going to be general ed requirements," she said. "So anybody, from any major, can take them and they'll qualify for a humanities credit or a social science credit, or whatever it is. The key right now is how we market this — getting the word out to people and making sure that they know about us and that they know what opportunities are available for them for credit, noncredit and the more fun stuff.

"In a nutshell, the Center meets community needs in a number of different areas, such as those seeking education for credit and those seeking education for lifelong learning, for intellectual stimulation, for recreational purposes. By recreation, I mean hiking classes, mah jong, ballroom dancing — that was another hit — and they're asking for more of those kinds of classes."

While the course offerings available to the 19,000 residents in NHERC's service area are being updated and expanded, the Center is already providing computer and Internet access to the community-at-large.

"We have a computer lab with 14 computer stations and we make that available to the community," Gomes explained. "(People) can come in for \$1 a day, \$5 for a month or \$30 for a year, which is less than what it costs for a month of personal high-speed Internet access at home. A lot of people out there live off the grid, so (personal computing at home) is not even an option for them. Who knew we would be opening our computer lab to the public? Not something UH Hilo could do, but for us, the lab would sit vacant most of the time, so why not offer it to the community? In the meantime, when we get to the point that we have so many computer classes or so many students who need to write papers, then we revise our procedures. But there's no sense in having our computers sit vacant when so many in the community don't have access or can only use the computers in the public library for an hour at a time. We also have wireless Internet access, so people who do have laptops can bring them."

Another community service NHERC has provided is shelter for those who were displaced when Hale Ho'ola Hamakua, a neighboring long-term care facility, suffered severe structural damage in the earthquakes of October 15, 2006.


"Our building, for being over 50 years old, held up very well, unlike Hale Ho'ola," Gomes noted. "Our building shifted a little bit and we had minor damage, but nothing to the point to where we couldn't occupy it. And so they moved the residents of Hale Ho'ola down to our facility. It's lucky that we have that conference room that can handle over 140 people because we have residents now living in there. But other than that, we held up well, building-wise and the community also looked at us for offering space. We had FEMA training there. We had State Civil Defense people from O'ahu come over and do presentations for them. We were there to provide space when people needed it after the earthquake."

The North Hilo and Hamakua Coasts are in a period of transition, trying to redefine themselves as both communities after the fall of King Sugar in the early- to mid-1990s. Many now work in the luxury resorts that dot the Kohala Coast. NHERC is looking to play a major role in the reeducation of a community to adapt to major changes in economics and lifestyles.

"We're coming from an area where sugar plantations were the primary industry," Gomes said. "I remember my brother, when he was growing up, said 'I'm going to be a cane truck driver when I grow up.' And it was the most exciting thing to him. Now he works on a ranch, which is not too far from being a cane truck driver. But we still have students whose aspirations in life aren't very high. And I don't know if it's because, as adults in the community, we don't expect very much out of them. But I think the community has been slow to change what we expect from our youth. So if we don't come in and give them other options, then they become stagnant and turn to other things, maybe things that are self-destructive or at least unproductive. And we can take a leading role in changing our expectations of our young people and what they aspire to be in life."

Many of NHERC's current offerings are open to students of the high schools in the North Hawai'i area. Gomes believes that for those who take advantage of those opportunities, other educational doors will open.

"I'm glad we have the University's presence in the community because now we have an influence on the high school students here," she said. "Hilo High or Waiakea High School students who are so inclined and motivated can take classes at UH Hilo or HawCC. They can drive a few minutes across town or, in some cases, walk across the street to take a class. But for Honoka'a students, Laupahoehoe students, Kohala students, that reality is so far away for them. But now, we're trying to close that gap for them.

"What we are trying to do for people already in the workforce who may have put off the idea of ever being able to go to school and getting a degree or finishing up their degree is restoring their belief in themselves and the system by showing them that their dreams really aren't so far away," she added. "In one way or another, this Center is able to contribute to improving the quality of life for so many people in the North Hawai'i region, young and old alike. It is for this reason and so many countless others that I take great pride in being able to represent the University through the Center, and the added bonus is that everyone in my hometown and neighboring communities benefits from our existence." 



Campus Events

March

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|---|---|
| <p>1 Vulcan baseball vs. Patten Univ, 6 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission
Kathy Collins, 7 p.m., CC 301</p> <p>2 Last day to withdraw from courses with "W"
Vulcan baseball vs. Grand Canyon Univ, 6 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission</p> <p>3 Vulcan women's basketball vs. Chaminade Univ, Noon, Civic, Admission
Vulcan baseball vs. Grand Canyon Univ, 1 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission
Vulcan men's basketball vs. Chaminade Univ, 2:30 p.m., Civic, Admission</p> <p>3, 4 Vulcan softball vs. Grand Canyon Univ, Noon, UH Hilo Field</p> <p>6 Vulcan baseball vs. Chicago State Univ, 6 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission</p> <p>7 Vulcan baseball vs. Chicago State Univ, 3 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission</p> <p>8 Vulcan baseball vs. Chicago State Univ, 6 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission</p> <p>9, 10 Vulcan softball vs. Notre Dame deNamur Univ, Noon, UH Hilo Field</p> | <p>10 16th annual Hawaiian Family afFAIR, CC Plaza</p> <p>13, 14 Vulcan baseball vs. Univ of Arizona, 6 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission</p> <p>15 Descendance, 11:30 a.m., CC Plaza</p> <p>20, 21 Vulcan baseball vs. Bradley Univ, 6 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission</p> <p>22 Vulcan baseball vs. Bradley Univ, 3 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission</p> <p>23 Aesop's Fables, 7:30 p.m., PAC, Admission</p> <p>24 Aesop's Fables, 2 p.m., PAC, Admission</p> <p>26 Holiday: Prince Kuhio Day</p> <p>26-30 Spring Recess</p> <p>27 Last day to apply for credit-by-exam for spring "I" removal deadline: student to instructor</p> <p>27, 28 Vulcan baseball vs. Air Force Academy, 6 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission</p> <p>30 Vulcan baseball vs. Air Force Academy, 3 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission </p> |
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