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Intern conducts research, identifies life’s goals

Last summer Ting-Ning Pao Fowers interned in the molecular medicine department of her native Taiwan’s National Cheng Kung Medical University.

“My internship broadened my knowledge and gave me a chance to do research beyond what I would ever get to do at school. It helped me see where I want to go, to set goals for my life,” says Fowers.

Expanding medical knowledge

As an intern her days in the lab often lasted from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. She analyzed data on the hepatitis B virus and was introduced to the emerging field of bioinformatics. “I was able to see and to really be a part of the medical research process. I want to be a researcher,” she says.

“I’m indeed very grateful for my internship and all those who helped me along the way,” she says.

Currently she is working on her senior research project with assistant professor Jean Engohang-ndong. “Rita is always ready to explore new approaches and tackle problems that arise from experimental procedures. She is very creative and will be an outstanding researcher if she decides to pursue that field,” he says.

Eventually—within 10 years—Fowers and her husband would like to settle in either Taiwan or China. “Taiwan and China both have developing biotechnology industries, and I’d like to be involved,” she says.

Appreciating BYU–Hawaii

About her time at Brigham Young University Hawaii Fowers says, “When I graduate next June, I will miss the people here—the relationships I have with friends, professors, and Church members and leaders. We are all working towards the same goal.”
The charted course

At Brigham Young University Hawaii we are directed by prophets to benefit students here and now and across the world for generations to come. In all that we do there is constant gratitude for our heritage and daily reminders of our destiny.

Aloha, and mahalo for all you do to exemplify the mission of BYU–Hawaii. Sister Wheelwright and I extend our love and warm regards to each of you as you extend the blessings of BYU–Hawaii to your homes and communities.

As you know, BYU–Hawaii’s mission is focused on two themes. First, we must educate for eternity, integrating the divine with the academic. And second, we must prepare leaders of character and integrity who can make a difference in their homes and communities and in building the kingdom throughout the world. Presidents’ Leadership Council Hawaii, BYU–Hawaii alumni, and other friends of the university make it possible for us to succeed in these goals.

Focusing on students

The young men and women who come to this campus are special. Training them to become leaders in the world and in the Church will require all those who work and serve here to model the qualities that the Lord would have His children learn. The faculty and staff must emulate the characteristics that we have been asked to develop in our students. And as special friends to the students and the university, you bring energy and resources to aid in this preparation. We all are engaged in a truly unique work that requires our most excellent efforts.

We are going through a major restructuring of both the university’s organization and our operational procedures. As we realign our organization and resources, we are striving to apply the wise counsel Elder M. Russell Ballard provided during our April PLC Hawaii meetings. He said: “It’s time . . . for there to be some changes—we have to move with a little more efficiency, a little more focus, a little more direction, and a little more courage” (“Toward Our Destiny,” PLC Hawaii meeting, April 7, 2008).

Our realignment will focus on these short-term objectives:

First, we must better prepare incoming students by working with mentors, advisors, and local priesthood leaders. Online classes should allow students to complete a degree in less than four years on campus, thus preserving resources, lowering costs, and extending the blessings of education to additional students.

Second, we must better equip our students for future careers through more effective use of internships and mentoring programs, as well as through campus and Polynesian Cultural Center employment that builds on students’ major classes.

Third, we must restructure university operations to serve more students with our existing resources.

From this school

Speaking of this great university, Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: “The best lies ahead! There will be even wider radiating effects which pulsate outward from this place as the Lord makes His facilitating moves on the checker board of the nations. . . . [Indeed] tens of thousands in the world who will never set foot on this campus will be blessed and served by the thousands who have been blessed to be here” (“This is a Special Institution,” Profiles Magazine, December 1994, 9–11).

May your lives be blessed as you continue to provide leadership and resources to the great work under way at Brigham Young University Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Steven C. Wheelwright, President
Brigham Young University Hawaii
“Real-world experience is the key to success for today’s university students,” says Kim Austin, Brigham Young University Hawaii’s director of Career Services.

In the 50-plus years of the university’s history, the concerted effort to academically and spiritually prepare students for success at home, wherever that may be, has come to be known as return-ability. And it has become clear that when students complete internships in their native countries, their return-ability increases.

**Interns get jobs**

“Internships break down barriers—students reconnect with family and culture, build networks with employers, and apply concepts learned in the classroom to the real world of work,” says Austin.

With added institutional emphasis and the generosity of supporters Gene and Allyson Yamagata and the Yamagata Foundation, the number of BYU–Hawaii interns has steadily increased over the past five years.

Last year 339 students filled academic internships in 42 countries. Projected over four years, this means that more than half of BYU–Hawaii students will intern—a truly remarkable figure.

Thus far in 2008 the university is on track to exceed last year’s number of student interns and the number of countries in which internships were filled. Among the many destinations for BYU–Hawaii interns this year were Costa Rica and Serbia—a first for both countries.

Austin notes that several recent studies, including one conducted by BYU–Hawaii, conclude that approximately three quarters of employers use internships as a pre-selection tool for hiring.

“What does this tell us? Internships are essential to getting a good job in today’s market,” she says.
Thailand native and BYU–Hawaii graduate Janjira Sirisarn (’04) has taken to heart President David O. McKay’s prophetic vision for BYU–Hawaii students to spread peace internationally. She is showing her gratitude to those who helped her as a student by serving both her country and BYU–Hawaii students.

Bringing education home
After completing a mission to Bangkok, Thailand, Sirisarn worked for LDS Church Employment Resource Services in Thailand, where she taught job seekers essential job skills. While serving in this capacity, Elder Stanley Tak Chung Wan (’79) gave her the idea to start a business. With his help, Sirisarn and fellow BYU–Hawaii alumna Opatagon Kaneeworn, both with political science degrees, founded EduSquare Language Center—an organization that teaches English to Thailanders. The task of starting and running the company seemed daunting for Sirisarn and Kaneeworn, who have no business backgrounds. However, with faith and help from others, the pair now runs a successful organization.

Sirisarn learned the importance of serving her country through her BYU–Hawaii education and her internship in Thailand, which was funded by the Yamagata Foundation Asia and Pacific Internship Fund, and EduSquare has received BYU–Hawaii interns, also sponsored by the Yamagata fund.

Fulfilling prophecy
Now the international alumni chapter chair in Thailand for BYU’s Provo and Hawaii campuses, Sirisarn encourages students to return to their native countries: “There are so many opportunities waiting for BYU–Hawaii graduates at home. I have no doubt that if we follow President McKay’s counsel we will be a good influence to others.”

She credits her BYU–Hawaii experiences for giving her the education she needed to make a difference in Thailand. “BYU–Hawaii prepared me to become a more capable instrument in the hands of the Lord in serving His children in Thailand,” she says. “I am grateful for the Lord, the Church, and BYU–Hawaii for all of my wonderful blessings.”

Thank you, Gene and Allyson Yamagata
Since 2003 Gene and Allyson Yamagata have provided funding through their foundation for more than 740 students to fulfill internships in their native countries. “No one has done more for internships at BYU–Hawaii than Brother and Sister Yamagata. If it weren’t for them, we wouldn’t have the success with the program that we have,” says President Steven C. Wheelwright.

Gene and Allyson Yamagata and officers of the Yamagata Foundation were on campus in June to meet with and hear reports from student interns. Gene Yamagata and John Nitta, president of the Yamagata Foundation, spoke to students. Brother Yamagata is pictured, center right, shaking hands with some of this year’s interns. Foundation vice president, Kent Nitta, is on the right.
As Than Lim grew up in a small, poverty-ridden town in Cambodia, he witnessed hunger and very meager living conditions. Being exposed to hardships gave him a strong desire to get an education and break the cycle of poverty.

“I left my family for a while to go to high school in the city,” Lim says. “It was hard for me to leave, but I knew that I had to get more education if I ever wanted to really help them.” During his junior year a friend invited him to a free English lesson being given at a church. Lim jumped at the opportunity to study English, and he began attending the class.

The teachers were a missionary couple from America. Soon Lim’s curiosity and enthusiasm led him to seek out what these missionaries believed. “There was something special about them, and I wanted to learn more about their church,” he says. “I took the discussions and felt a lot of love. It was different, but I liked it. I wanted to be baptized.” Lim was 19 years old when he became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “One thing that I really liked about the Church was that it encouraged me to keep seeking an education,” he says.

After receiving his high school diploma, Lim was excited when he learned about BYU–Hawaii. The missionaries helped him apply, and he was accepted. Lim is now a senior at BYU–Hawaii studying information systems.

This summer Lim filled an internship with a Web development company in North Carolina. “The work was hard,” he says. He learned a programming language and used Web-page creation software. He wrote proposals and even helped to develop a Web site for a restaurant. “I learned that writing a real proposal is more complicated than writing a proposal for class,” he says. “This encourages me to study harder at school so that I can be more prepared to work after graduation.”

He knows he has to work hard in order help his family: “If I can provide the opportunity for my family’s upcoming generation to get an education, then I will have been successful,” he says.

Being the only Latter-day Saint in his family and the only one blessed to pursue an education, he is prepared to fulfill his dreams. “Through my education I want to help my family be able to enjoy life. I want them to not have to worry about things like where they will get their food and water. When they don’t have to worry about these simple things, they will really be able to live,” he says.
We try our hardest, and we take calculated risks," says Jeremi Brewer, a 2008 Brigham Young University Hawaii alumnus who, with his wife, won the grand prize and $5,000 seed money in this year’s Willes Center for International Entrepreneurship Business Plan Competition.

Jeremi and his wife, Rebecca, graduated in June with 4.0 GPAs, bachelor’s degrees in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), and minors in Spanish. Since graduating, they have used their contest winnings to aid in their purchase of a school in Mexico City, Mexico, where they will teach English.

Working for success
Of her time in Laie, Rebecca says: "BYU–Hawaii is a wonderful university, and we received exceptional, well-rounded educations. We owe much to our wonderful BYU–Hawaii mentors—Stephen and Bette Gibson, Linda Harris, and Robin and Jennie Porter. We feel as if the Lord has blessed and guided us all the way."

Both Jeremi and Rebecca have been admitted into the Hispanic studies doctoral program at Texas A&M and will begin this fall. "The near future will be an extremely stressful and exciting time as we travel back and forth between Texas and Mexico, but we are achieving our dreams," says Jeremi.

“We have already started teaching, but this is not a get-rich-quick idea—our plan is to have the school be 100 percent functional within five years,” Jeremi says. He adds that they are interested in having BYU–Hawaii interns teach in their school as soon as possible. His advice for aspiring entrepreneurs is to “have patience.”

Changing the future
Jeremi and Rebecca plan to expand their operation into Mérida, the capital of Mexico’s state of Yucatán and the focus of their winning business plan. "Doing business in Mexico is something that only experience can teach," he says. "Their laws, permits, and other requirements are intricate—we are learning so much."

Sounding like one of the ambassadors of peace that President David O. McKay prophested would come from BYU–Hawaii, Rebecca concludes, “We are going to help change the future for thousands of students.”

Alumni demonstrate entrepreneurial spirit

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The 2008 BYU–Hawaii business plan competition grand prize seed money is awarded to Rebecca and Jeremi Brewer, behind check, and Leslie Thompson, left, by mentors Stephen and Bette Gibson, holding check.
"We are building on our heritage, focusing on our students, and better utilizing sacred resources," Brigham Young University Hawaii president Steven C. Wheelwright reported to faculty and staff during the university’s annual ohana meeting held on campus on August 20.

In his remarks the president outlined achievements of the past year as well as opportunities and goals for the upcoming year. "I would especially like to thank you for your desire to work, teach, and learn with inspiration," said Wheelwright, who has called the 2008–09 school year "make a difference year."

Wheelwright reemphasized that BYU–Hawaii’s mission is student-focused and said that current efforts are related to three imperatives given by the BYU–Hawaii Board of Trustees: to serve more students, to continue raising the quality of education at BYU–Hawaii, and to lower the cost per student to the Church and to the students.

The president reported on initiatives launched in the last year related to the three imperatives, including the invitation to start all meetings and classes with prayer, the efforts to upgrade students’ employment experiences on campus and at the Polynesian Cultural Center, the strengthening of the honor code and admissions standards, the planning of the new year-round calendar (begins in January 2009), the development of a long-range physical facilities plan for campus, and the work of the Design Team—a committee organized to evaluate and consider the university’s organizational design.

"Our charge from prophets and apostles is to bless the lives of our students and to prepare them for a great future," said President Wheelwright. "I’m grateful that we have the opportunity to follow our inspired leaders and to work together to carry out the mission of the university."

Announcing the new President’s Council

When the president organized the Design Team a year ago, he tasked it to identify essential university efforts and the organizational structure needed to support those efforts. Over a nine-month period, the team interviewed faculty and staff to evaluate the roles, functions, and processes necessary for continued progress.

One key recommendation of the team was to reconfigure the President’s Council—those who report directly to the president—and realign its responsibilities around core student needs.

The new President’s Council, announced in June, consists of Max Checketts, vice president for academics who oversees teaching, information technology, athletics, enrollment, the library, and continuing education; Michael B. Bliss, vice president for administrative services who directs human resources, financial services, physical facilities, the health center, campus safety, and purchasing; Debbie Hippolite Wright, vice president for student development and services who is responsible for student housing, food services, career and alumni services, counseling, and student leadership; and William G. Neal, assistant to the president who is responsible for university communications and assessment.

Making a difference for students

At the August 20 meeting President Wheelwright quoted Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve from an address he made to BYU–Hawaii supporters. Elder Ballard said the vision of BYU–Hawaii’s role in Asia and the Pacific "is far beyond what perhaps any of us will be able to see. . . . You need to start looking at these students who come from these far-off parts of the world, not as students but as Relief Society presidents, elder’s quorum
Steven C. Wheelwright, President
Brigham Young University Hawaii

Steven C. Wheelwright, the Edsel Bryant Ford Professor of Business Administration, emeritus at Harvard Business School, became the ninth president of Brigham Young University Hawaii on June 23, 2007. As president he reports to the commissioner of the Church Educational System, Elder Paul V. Johnson, and to the university’s board of trustees, which is chaired by President Thomas S. Monson of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Max Checketts, Vice President
Academics

Before coming to BYU–Hawaii earlier this year, Max Checketts had served in the same position at BYU–Idaho since July 2002. He had previously served there as assistant academic vice president for instruction and as chairman of the division of agriculture. He holds a doctorate from Utah State University in animal science with a minor in statistics. Checketts has also served as the chair of the Church Educational System Internship Committee and as a member of the Church Educational Shared Services Committee.

Michael Bliss, Vice President
Administrative Services

Michael Bliss has been in his current position at BYU–Hawaii since 2002. Prior to his service in Laie, he was managing director of auxiliary services at Brigham Young University in Provo for three years. Previously he implemented a $2-billion relocation-to-Utah project for Micron Construction and worked for other firms in Utah, North Carolina, and Texas. Bliss earned a bachelor’s degree in business management from BYU and did his MBA studies at the University of Alabama. He has also served as a business manager at Duke University.

Debbie Hippolite Wright, Vice President
Student Development and Services

Debbie Hippolite Wright earned a bachelor’s degree in social work from Brigham Young University Hawaii and a master of social work from BYU in Provo. She joined the BYU–Hawaii faculty in 1990 and served for 17 years as a professor of social work and for a time as department chair. While here she earned her doctorate in psychology from the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. Immediately before coming back to Laie, she was employed by LDS Social Services in West Valley City, Utah.

William Neal, Assistant to the President

Bill Neal is in his 25th year of affiliation with BYU–Hawaii. He earned a doctorate from Virginia Tech and was on the faculty at Utah State University for seven years. At BYU–Hawaii he has served as a faculty member, as department chair for information systems, and as dean of the School of Business. In addition to his administrative roles, Neal instructs one business communications class each semester and advises BYU–Hawaii’s chapter of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE).

In addition to President Wheelwright, Elder Paul V. Johnson, commissioner of the Church Educational System, and each member of the President’s Council spoke to the faculty, staff, missionaries, and volunteers gathered.

Elder Johnson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, said: “I’m grateful for each of you, for your dedication and service. There’s something special about Church Educational System people, and I love you. I love the missionaries and the volunteers who are dedicating their time and effort for these young people who come here—who are the future of the kingdom and the world.”

Vice President Checketts reported that a proposal to organize the university’s academic disciplines into four colleges was pending with the board. (Board approval was given on September 10, 2008.) Phillip MacArthur is dean of the College of Language, Culture, and Art; Jeff Burroughs is dean of the College of Math and Sciences; John Bailey is dean of the College of Human Development; and Clayton Hubner is dean of the College of Business, Computing, and Government.

Vice President Bliss pointed out that by employing students the university offers “training and work-related experiences that can be invaluable assets for students.”

Vice President Hippolite Wright noted that within her purview, internship, career, and alumni services have been merged into one department led by Kim Austin.

Assistant to the President Neal said that the result of efforts in his areas of responsibility will be more opportunities for meaningful student mentoring and more effective communications.
President Steven C. Wheelwright says BYU–Hawaii will increasingly use distance learning—also called distributed education—to cost-effectively extend the reach of the university and to prepare a new generation of students.

Beneficial to three groups

According to Wheelwright, there are three groups who benefit from distance-learning courses: “Our number-one priority with distance learning is to help incoming students be better prepared, especially where we have so many from diverse backgrounds.

“The second group is those who left their studies here for various reasons and want to complete degrees but aren’t able to be in our classrooms. We have approximately 9,000-plus of these alumni, and we would love to offer them the chance to complete their degrees.”

President Wheelwright says the third group to benefit from distance-learning courses will be the students currently on campus. “Our hope would be that over time every student would take a distance-learning course plus their regular classes on campus. This would increase the average course credits earned each semester, allowing us to use our resources much more effectively and enabling students to graduate sooner,” he says. “Even if a student saves only one semester on campus, it would allow us to fill that seat with a new student that much sooner.”

Starting today

“We have already identified a number of courses and developed a set of principles for all of the courses to meet,” Wheelwright says. “For example, we want to make sure all of them are legitimate university-level courses, that the credit hours match the amount of work to be done, and that they are, at a minimum, equivalent to taking a class on campus.

“Because English is not the native language of many students from our target area, we also want to make sure that the initial courses we develop are EIL [English as an International Language] oriented. That is, we want our courses to help students learn the English they need to be successful in all of our general education classes.

“It’s important to know these are not independent-study classes: Online delivery is the way to think of these classes that will be on a regular semester schedule.

There will be weekly assignments, mid-term exams, and finals—all of the things found in an on-campus class,” Wheelwright stresses.

“The distance-learning students will be expected to participate based on a model where they apply what they’re learning. Some of that participation will be with a faculty member, some on their own that they report back on, and some with other students.”

Distance learning in the future

President Wheelwright explains that in time “we will have weekly facilitated student groups in major cities in our target area. Every major city in our target area has enough single adults that, once courses are up and running, we could get students together with a facilitator. We also expect we’ll use adjunct faculty to assist with some of the teaching.

“We’re going to press forward with this initiative as fast as we think we can while maintaining our standards,” he says. “Obviously, there are a lot of other things going on at BYU–Hawaii at the moment, but we clearly have people interested and committed to doing this.

“Remember, our primary goal is better prepared students who can be successful in our learning environment. That’s why we’re doing this now.”
In order to meet the needs of the current and future student body, Brigham Young University Hawaii has received permission from its board of trustees to raise funds for new and improved playing fields.

The proposed new fields will occupy the same footprint at the back of campus as the existing soccer, baseball, and softball fields but will provide a safer, more useful place where academic classes, intramural games, Church activities, and university athletic events can take place.

This donor-funded project will significantly improve outdoor facilities on campus with the addition of lighted playing fields, an upgraded softball complex, a new multipurpose soccer field with artificial turf, and a six-lane track.
Beginning in January 2009 Brigham Young University Hawaii will follow a new year-round academic calendar that features shorter winter and fall semesters with longer class hours, three terms over spring and summer, and shorter breaks between semesters and terms. The new schedule will enable students taking full class loads to complete a bachelor’s degree in three years.

Adjusting schedules
Max L. Checketts, vice president for academics, explains, “The primary purpose of the new calendar is to have more of a year-round school process, which helps us serve more students at a reduced cost to both the Church and the students.”

He added that many universities across the country are following this trend and that the three terms in the new schedule are respectful of families and local public school system calendars.

“We are going to try to encourage most students to take the regular fall and winter semesters and then two of the terms, which is the equivalent of another semester. This should be especially attractive for the international students because most of them stay here during the spring and summer.”

Lengthening classes
Checketts says that lengthening a normal campus class from 50 minutes to 60 minutes enables a semester to be shortened from 16 weeks to 14 weeks. “We think that in a 60-minute time frame we can use many different modes of instruction, and that will actually improve the quality of teaching.”

He adds that students must get accustomed to the new class starting times.

Faculty will also have to adjust: Current contracts typically call for them “to teach 30 credit hours per year,” explains Checketts. “Up to now they’ve been teaching 12 credits in the fall, 12 in the winter, and six in one of the terms.”

BYU–Hawaii has submitted a request to the board of trustees “to offer faculty an augmented contract for 36 hours, which would mean they teach fall, winter, and two terms, with one term off. It would accordingly include an increase in compensation,” Checketts says.

Looking forward
He acknowledges that there will likely be adjustments to make as the new calendar schedule comes into play. “I’m excited about the new academic calendar,” he says. “I think it’s essential in helping us meet some of our objectives. Along with that excitement comes the realization that there is a lot of work to do. I have experienced two such transitions at BYU–Idaho, and I know how much work is involved from the administrative, faculty, and student perspectives.”
Each new day at the Polynesian Cultural Center is a miracle—it is a place of institutional and individual miracles. Initially dubbed the “aloha experiment,” 45 years have proven that a lot of aloha and hard work radiate across miles and years. PCC changes the lives of those who work, study, and visit here.

In 1963 there was hardly an observer who thought that the new attraction on the North Shore would survive its first year—but it did. And today the Polynesian Cultural Center is (and has been since 1977) Hawaii’s top paid-admission visitor attraction. Guests from all over the world—more than 34 million of them since PCC first opened—come to be hosted and entertained by students who likewise come from all over the world.

To date nearly 17,000 BYU–Hawaii students have paid for educational expenses by working at PCC. Student employees have miraculous accounts of coming to Laie for schooling—and the students are working miracles in the lives of PCC guests.

PCC is a nonprofit organization that exists to provide educational support for deserving BYU–Hawaii students and to share the cultures of Polynesia. Donations to the center coupled with scholarships from BYU–Hawaii assist needy students. As guests interact with these wonderful students who are for the most part members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, they experience the gospel in action in the lives of the students and the workings of the center.

Often guests share the impact of their experience at PCC. One guest wrote: “I want you to know how impressed I was with PCC overall and with how mutually benefiting it is to everyone involved. The beautiful Polynesian culture is preserved, tourists get an awesome place to visit, BYU–Hawaii educational expenses are subsidized, and a lot of Asian and Polynesian students get a great education. It is inspiring to know that things like this are organized to do so much for so many. Specifically, our guide, Inoke, from the Fiji islands, impressed me. He knew so much and continued answering questions (in a very detailed and animated manner) well after the last 5:30 p.m. show was
Guests come to PCC from all over the world. They relish exploring villages, cultural demonstrations, the luau feast, and the spectacular evening show.

supposed to end. Also, the people on the tram ride to the temple were extremely friendly. Thank you for an awesome day.”

Consider also the miracle of the Asian Executive Management Program (AEM). For more than 25 years groups of influential officials from the People’s Republic of China have attended classes at Brigham Young University Hawaii and worked at PCC. Graduates of this program return to China having experienced the culture of Laie and interacted closely with members of the Church. Their relationship with PCC, BYU–Hawaii, and the Church has opened doors in China.

In 2007 BYU–Hawaii’s Concert Choir toured China, and AEM graduates assisted in making arrangements. “On tour we were delighted to reunite with our AEM alumni who welcomed and cared for our choir members and leaders with warm hearts of aloha,” says V. Napua Baker, PCC board member and recently retired BYU–Hawaii vice president of advancement.

One recent AEM participant wrote: “The people in Laie were very friendly and openhearted. This was the most impressive thing to me. Every day PCC shares the aloha spirit. That touched me deeply.”

The center has survived global economic downturns, world political turmoil, operational challenges, growth, and shifting tourism trends. But the word survival denotes “getting by,” and while there have been and are tough times, PCC is doing more than surviving—it is thriving. The unique relationship of PCC, BYU–Hawaii, students, and guests goes way beyond successful numbers; these institutions continue to radiate aloha and change the lives of all who come here.
Advancing the work

The Polynesian Cultural Center exists to assist Brigham Young University Hawaii in fulfilling its student-focused mission. Much of what PCC does to bless students is possible because of generous support provided by friends like you.

In the Aloha Center at Brigham Young University Hawaii is a display that depicts President David O. McKay’s prophetic vision of Laie—the temple, the university, and the Polynesian Cultural Center.

As we at PCC go about the business of maintaining and promoting the rich cultural heritage of Polynesia, we try to remember his and others’ visions of this special place.

We are so grateful that you understand, appreciate, and enable what has and continues to take place at PCC.

Benefiting from work

When thinking about students at PCC, most people immediately think about the performers in the villages, at the luau, and at the night show. Yet, we have students “performing” in over 50 different job classifications, many of which are directly related to their courses of study at BYU–Hawaii, including finance, accounting, management information systems, operations, and marketing.

Student employees also serve in supervisory positions, where they gain valuable experience overseeing the work of others.

PCC work experience builds stronger résumés and improves prospects for future employment.

Many classes at BYU–Hawaii provide opportunities for entrepreneurial thinking and action. Some require students to start and operate a business, and students in these classes can choose to partner with PCC. We treat their efforts like any other business; students must perform to established vendor standards.

Other classes allow students to participate in consulting, market research, human resources, and process-improvement efforts.

Whatever their roles or job responsibilities are at PCC, each student can apply the theories, concepts, and principles learned in the classroom, and all gain valuable real-life experience.

Educating for eternity

Together with BYU–Hawaii, our efforts are dedicated to assisting each student in becoming whole and complete. We are partners with BYU–Hawaii in its mission to educate for eternity. This means focusing not just on students’ temporal development but, even more important, on their spiritual growth.

Our work is about developing leadership and management skills, as well as interpersonal and communication skills. It is about developing people of character and integrity, who are the literal fulfillment of President McKay’s prophecies.

Our work is, and ever will be, about following the Spirit of God that directs this work.

How blessed PCC is to be involved in this work with men and women of vision and integrity like you.

I salute you for your faith, friendship, and support and pray for the Lord to bless you and your families as we continue to nurture future leaders together.

Mahalo,

Von D. Orgill, President
Polynesian Cultural Center

President Von D. Orgill
Teaching hula to speakers of other languages

Growing up in New Zealand, Danielle Huysmans always hoped to attend BYU–Hawaii. In 2005 that dream became a reality, and today Huysmans is a senior preparing to graduate with a degree in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL).

Huysmans’ decision to major in TESOL was influenced by her work at the Polynesian Cultural Center, where she has worked in the Hawaiian Village for more than two years. She teaches hula, gives poi demonstrations, and performs in the dance shows. Through her work, Huysmans shares the Hawaiian culture with people from all over the world.

“I think that interacting with a lot of people and finding it hard to interact with people who can’t speak English influenced me. I wanted to teach, I wanted to travel, and I wanted to communicate with people, so I decided on TESOL,” says Huysmans.

She particularly enjoys teaching hula because it is such an enduring legacy and visitors are eager to learn it. “There are people who are on their honeymoons from India, and we get lots of Japanese people who come through, and they always want to learn the hula. I get to try and teach them, and I test out my English teaching skills too. We get to share each other’s cultures,” Huysmans says.

“Also, it’s kind of an escape. It’s fun because you get to work with everyone at school and you get to meet people from all over; it is pretty awesome,” she says.

Attending BYU–Hawaii is possible for Huysmans thanks to the scholarships and financial aid she has received.

“I just received a university scholarship for this semester and next semester, and I’m really grateful because it’s my senior year, and I’m kind of struggling to buy books. Plus, for my major, we’re going to go to New York for a convention, and if I didn’t have that scholarship, I could not have that experience,” Huysmans says.

Huysmans says she is excited to go to the convention to meet others from around the world and to have opportunities to discuss TESOL with those already in the field.

After graduation Huysmans wants to teach English in Japan or Korea. She hopes that the network she has been building, both through the university and through her campus ward, will help her find a teaching job in Asia.
The 57-foot canoe Iosepa was commissioned and built in 2001 with a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and other donors under the direction of master carvers Kawika Eskaran and Sione Tui’one Pulotu. Volunteers from the community, including Brigham Young University Hawaii students, participated in Iosepa's construction. Work on the housing structure, halau wa’a, began in November 2007, with chair of the PCC Board of Directors Mark H. Willes and board member Ira A. Fulton as primary benefactors of the project.

**BYU–Hawaii’s sailing classroom**

As the centerpiece of BYU–Hawaii’s Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian Language and Cultural Studies, Iosepa is a sailing classroom that teaches students how to navigate the vast ocean. Onboard, students learn to appreciate the skill and wisdom of ancient Polynesian voyagers.

“Unlike most other contemporary canoes, which are built out of fiberglass with modern technology, Iosepa is hand-carved out of dakua wood from Fiji,” says PCC president Von Orgill.

“We are excited to share Iosepa and the Polynesian voyaging story with the rest of the world. This will be the first time many of our visitors will see up close an authentic voyaging canoe. When it is not on the ocean, the canoe will be housed in Halau Wa’a O Iosepa, allowing guests to view and appreciate it,” says Orgill.

At Halau Wa’a O Iosepa, daily interactive activities such as learning to navigate using a star compass, knot tying, and voyage preparation provide insight into Polynesian voyaging. In addition to educational displays and exhibits, a cultural presentation illustrates the Polynesian migration story, and a guided walking tour around Iosepa further educates visitors on its purpose, construction, and symbolism.

The management of the halau wa’a will be a cooperative effort between PCC and BYU–Hawaii’s Hawaiian studies program. Reflecting on the unifying effect of Halau Wa’a O Iosepa, Orgill noted, “Iosepa’s spirit is very strong—it not only connects BYU–Hawaii with PCC but also unites the entire Hawaiian community and residents of Laie.”

**Coming home**

At dedicatory services for the halau wa’a, Mark Willes said of his family’s visits to PCC: “When we walk onto the grounds of the Polynesian Cultural Center, we feel like we have come home. We feel like we have come back to our family. We feel healed and strengthened by the spirit that is here. We’ve also come to love Iosepa and now this halau wa’a where it will be housed.” Willes continued: “Everybody who comes will learn something different . . . as they experience this place and what takes place here. It is my hope and prayer that all of us who come will seek wisdom and understanding and find rest.”

PCC was founded in 1963 as a non-profit organization. As such, 100 percent of PCC’s revenue is used for daily operations and to support the education of BYU–Hawaii students.
Halau Wa’a O Iosepa in the renovated PCC Hawaii village was built entirely with donated funds. The structure enables PCC to showcase BYU–Hawaii’s magnificent canoe, Iosepa.
New department focuses on career development and alumni relations

To better assist students in preparing to succeed after their time at Brigham Young University Hawaii and enable alumni to play a greater role in mentoring current and future students, the university has created the new Department for Career and Alumni Services. The new department reports through recently named vice president Debbie Hippolite Wright (’79).

“As we move forward with the new organization, I say kia ora and aloha nui,” says Hippolite Wright. “As a proud ‘golden’ alumna of BYU–Hawaii, I’m very passionate about this place and its visionary destiny. My life has been intertwined with BYU–Hawaii since I was 16 years old.”

Stepping it up
Hippolite Wright served on the BYU–Hawaii Department of Social Work faculty for 17 years. Of her return to Laie, she says: “I feel even more excited now because I see grander plans for the development of the alumni and how they can directly benefit our current students.

“We’ve been challenged to step it up, to matriculate more well-trained men and women of integrity, so we need to get even better at what we’ve been doing for years. One critical piece of raising the bar in this process is to rely more on our alumni to contribute to the students not only financially but also as mentors and guides.

“Our alumni excel at forming relationships. We’re professional people. We’re well liked in our communities and are aware of our surroundings,” she said. “We are now asked to step it up and find ways to fund, mentor, and assist new and current students and to help recent graduates enter their chosen professions.”

Organizing anew
The Department for Career and Alumni Services is led by Kimbrelyn Austin. Former executive director of the alumni association Rowena Reid (’76) is the new department’s career counselor.

Says Hippolite Wright: “Kim and her folks have some wonderful plans. Alumni services on campus are not going to diminish. We’re going to change how we do things, but the result will be to reach out more broadly and more often to our alumni across the world. We invite all alumni to be more involved in helping extend the blessings of BYU–Hawaii to the world.”

Austin, who has been with BYU–Hawaii since 2003, explains that the newly named Department for Career and Alumni Services is a combination of the former offices of student employment, academic internships, career services, and alumni relations. Under her direction, the department now focuses on career development; experiential education, including student employment and internships; and alumni and employer relations.

Alumni and Career Services will inform, connect, and involve alumni, students, and friends of BYU–Hawaii in building relationship and providing lifelong support to the university and to each other. Austin says, “We will be the gateway through which alumni connect with each other, with BYU–Hawaii, and with students currently enrolled in the university.”

The department also will develop an alumni organization that is always accessible to alumni, an open global access to core services, an open forum for the alumni voice to be heard, and an online network to link alumni with each other and with BYU–Hawaii students for mentoring and career development. These efforts will assist in reinforcing BYU–Hawaii connections around the globe.

Naming the team
Leialoha Pakalani, the newly named assistant director for Career and Alumni Services, is responsible for alumni and employer relations. She plans to develop stronger connec-
tions among alumni and currently enrolled students and will oversee the online networking and mentoring programs.

The rest of the new team includes Phyllis Peters, office manager, who has new responsibilities as liaison for chapter management and as coordinator for events and programs, such as the graduation banquet; graduate cap and gown orders; chapter chair conference; selection process for the Genuine Gold Alumni Awards; distribution of the newsletter, magazine, and direct mailings; and the alumni database maintenance. Corbin Thomander, systems administrator, will oversee technology tools utilized in the department, including the YCareers information system, the alumni database, and the online social-networking tool.

In addition, two new Church-service volunteer couples will join the Career and Alumni Services team as alumni relations representatives. The couples will also assist in contacting alumni, updating information, and providing programs and services to help alumni connect with current on-campus students, interns, and recent graduates. One couple, John and Jolynn Burr, arrived in mid-October. Jim and Bonnie Pollock will arrive in early January 2009. Both couples have extensive professional and international experience.

**Prepping for the future**

President Steven C. Wheelwright outlined the new department’s charge saying: “Our goal is to build a lasting connection with our alumni. We recognize that our alumni are among our greatest assets, and we rely on them to help advance our mission. We have an amazing constituency that includes alumni, donors, and friends. This group is helping our students prepare for their future roles. If you’re looking to engage, this is part of a wonderful opportunity. Some people provide money for programs and scholarships; others give mentoring and support for internships. Everyone needs to contribute in order for us to fulfill the prophetic vision of this unique place.”

**Readying to serve you**

Austin says, “We want to provide ways for our alumni to stay connected with each other, with the university, and with our current students and allow them to group not only by geography but by interests as well.”

The vision for Career and Alumni Services is becoming clearer as the new department works to create an interactive, personalized online experience that encourages engagement and interaction for alumni and students.
CCH alumni reunion held on campus

More than 100 Church College of Hawaii (CCH) alumni reunited on campus July 24–27, bringing with them an abundance of aloha and Seasider spirit.

Eric Southon ('61), who attended the reunion, said of early students like himself: “Most of us came here out of obscurity. We left here with new hopes and dreams of a future for ourselves and for the families we would raise. We left a legacy here for the thousands who would follow.” Southon was one of the earliest Samoan students to attend CCH, and he now lives in Hawaii, where he is serving as a bishop. “This has been a wonderful, wonderful weekend,” he said.

Continuing the vision
At the opening session alumnus Riley Moffat ('72) spoke on the history of education in Laie. The Church College of Hawaii was founded in Laie in 1955 by President David O. McKay of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1954 President McKay asked Rueben D. Law to be the school’s first president and instructed him to have the school functioning as soon as possible.

It was at the groundbreaking in 1955 that President McKay made his prophetic and oft-quoted statement: “From this school will go men and women whose influence will be felt for good toward the establishment of peace internationally.”

In the dedicatory prayer that day, he said, “This college, and this temple and this town of Laie will become a missionary factor influencing not thousands, not tens of thousands, but millions of people.”

Moffat concluded: “CCH opened in the fall of 1955 in temporary buildings as a two-year college with 20 faculty and staff and 153 students. [By 1963] Laie had been transformed from a little plantation village to a college town with a major tourist attraction. The stage was now set for prophecy to be fulfilled. May we continue that vision.”

Celebrating with aloha
In 1974 McKay’s successor, President Spencer W. Kimball, changed the name of the school to Brigham Young University Hawaii. “CCH is in the shadows of everything that happens at BYU–Hawaii,” says Gary Wong ('60), who chairs the BYU–Hawaii alumni constituent group known as the CCHers, which includes all CCH students and graduates. Wong helped to organize the reunion, and at the closing session he shared his love for his fellow alumni and the school that unites them.

During the reunion there were receptions, banquets, lectures, workshops, a talent show, and a testimony meeting. The group also visited the Polynesian Cultural Center, hosted a golf tournament, and participated in the Laie Days celebration.

Governor of American Samoa thanks BYU–Hawaii
On May 2, a BYU–Hawaii delegation met with American Samoa governor Togiola Tulafono at his office in Pago Pago. Pictured left to right are chapter chair Miki Semo, Governor Tulafono, President Steven C. Wheelwright, Margaret Wheelwright, and Alumni Association president Arapata Meha ('83). (Photo courtesy of American Samoa Government)

During the visit Governor Tulafono thanked BYU–Hawaii for “offering the territory’s young people the opportunity for an education as well as developing them into leaders to return and serve our island home.”
**Recent grad, aspirant lawyer makes a case for BYU–Hawaii**

As a young man Fulisia Saleuesile (’08), the oldest of seven brothers, worried his parents—he seemed to have no direction and no future. Then he became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and shortly thereafter, encouraged to by his mother, he applied and came to Brigham Young University Hawaii for winter semester 2006.

“There is no question that this is a spiritual place; you see and feel it everywhere,” he says.

Last summer Saleuesile was the first non-law school student and the first BYU–Hawaii student to intern in the Samoa Attorney General’s Office. “Everything I learned at BYU–Hawaii before going to Samoa was really useful for me,” he says. In Samoa, Saleuesile worked closely with attorneys in the civil section of the AG’s office and helped research several cases that went to court. His main project was to assist Livingston Armytage, a consultant hired to prepare the first-ever law and justice plan for Samoa.

**Repaying a debt of gratitude**

Saleuesile, who comes from Samoa, graduated from BYU–Hawaii in June 2008 with a bachelor of arts degree in political science. “Faafetai tele lava (thank you very much),” he says to supporters who made his education and internship possible. “I just can’t believe what your help has done for me.”

He remains in Laie studying for the law school admission test and volunteering as a performer in the night show at the Polynesian Cultural Center. “Working at PCC helped me get through school, so right now I’m dancing for free; it’s one way to pay back kindness,” he says.

**Remembering BYU–Hawaii**

After law school Saleuesile plans to work as an attorney in Samoa, where he will be involved in civic and community affairs; he is even considering public office. “My life is all about my family and Samoa,” he says.

When asked what he will most remember about his time as a student at BYU–Hawaii, he says, “Just one thing—it changed my life.”

**ALUMNUS PROFILE**

Recent alumnus Fulisia Saleuesile interned in the Samoa Attorney General’s Office and says it was a great experience.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- PCC Halloween celebration: Oct. 2008
- Christmas in Polynesia: Dec. 2008
- Year-round academic calendar begins: Jan. 2009
- Genuine Gold devotional: Feb. 12, 2009
- Alumni chapter chair conference: Feb. 12–13, 2009
- PCC World Fireknife Championship: May 2009

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*Presidents’ Report* is published by LDS Philanthropies in conjunction with Brigham Young University Hawaii and the Polynesian Cultural Center. LDS Philanthropies, a department of the Office of the Presiding Bishopric of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is responsible for encouraging, correlating, and acknowledging all donations to BYU–Hawaii and PCC. To donate to either institution, or for more information, visit www.ldsp.org or call 800-525-8074.
This community demonstrates aspects of neighborly love that someday we will all need to adopt. Wherever we come from, however we speak, whatever our history, whatever our heritage, whatever our language, whatever our education, whatever our hopes and our dreams, we eventually must learn how to live together as children of God. I know this seems extravagant, but more and more, not less and less, in this big wide Church and world in which we live, Laie is going to be a symbol of what we are trying to be as brothers and sisters in the gospel.

— Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
June 23, 2002