The University of Hawai‘i at Manoa Women's Campus Club can be a big help to campus groups and organizations seeking extra funding for special projects. The club, which has been giving out financial grants to groups and organizations throughout the UH system for almost 40 years, is currently accepting applications for its 2005 grant distribution.

The UH Women’s Campus Club was founded in 1920 by the wives of UH professors. It functions as a social club and as a non-profit beneficiary for UH organizations.

"We want to better the experience of everyone in the UH community," says Dr. Jacqueline Maly, the club's current treasurer and former president.

The club began fulfilling their mission with the opening of its thrift store at UH Manoa nearly 40 years ago. The thrift store, located behind the Biomedical Sciences Building at the mauka end of East-West Road, is a paradise for the penny-pinching college student, with low prices on everything from houseware and clothing to Halloween and Christmas decor. The thrift shop is also the driving force behind the club's yearly grant giveaways. "Every penny (earned from the thrift shop) goes to grants," says Maly.

In 2004, sales from the thrift store totaled about $21,500. That revenue allowed the club to endow grants to nine UH organizations. Grant recipients included the UHM Art Department, which received $2,488 for a photo slide scanner, and the UHM Center for Biographical Research, which was granted $2,435 to revamp its student, faculty and visitor center.

The UHM Department of Botany was also among the club's grant recipients in 2004, receiving $850 to acquire a camcorder tape editor. Kennedy Theater at UHM and Paiku Theatre at Windward Community College received a combined grant of $9,120 -- the largest of the club's 2004 grants -- to acquire ticketing system software to unify the ticket systems of all O'ahu UH system campuses.

Maly hopes more groups and organizations across the UH system will take up the grants offered by the Women's Campus Club. "We like to have lots of grant proposals," she says. "That way, we can select the best projects."

While not all groups can be given the full grant amount they request, the club does give away partial
grants, with suggestions on how the group can raise the rest of the funds needed.

The club also makes money via its Exchange newsletter, which runs ad listings of housing and rentals. But the revenue it generates goes entirely to paying the thrift store's overhead bill. Keeping thrift store sales brisk is key to keeping grants continually available.

The club's grants have already done wonders to better the UH community. Maly was told by the UH Foundation, which manages the club's grants, that the club has already given away over $0.25 million in grant money since the opening of the thrift shop.

"When we take a look at what we have done on campus, it really is spectacular," says Maly.

Groups and organizations interested in applying for a grant can pick up proposal forms at the University Relations Office at Bachman Annex 2. Applications are due by Nov. 19. Grants for 2005 will be announced in February.

The Women's Campus Club thrift shop is open on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., on Thursdays from noon to 3 p.m, and whenever volunteers are available.