At any given time, at any one of the University of Hawai‘i Community Colleges’ seven campuses, there is likely to be some sort of international exchange going on. Whether it is Japanese students on a month-long educational visit, or Chinese teachers learning American teaching methods, or UHCC professors visiting Pacific Islands, or an international symposium on diversity, the level of international activity continues to grow.

At first glance, this might seem contrary to the UH Community Colleges’ primary mission. After all, the UHCCs are dedicated to providing quality, accessible higher education for Hawai‘i’s people. So why do professors trot student groups across the globe and invite international visitors to the UHCC campuses?

For starters, international activities enhance the colleges’ abilities to provide relevant and meaningful educational experiences for students. In this respect, it’s a perfect fit.

More than 54 formal international agreements exist between the UH Community Colleges and other international educational institutions. Activities generated by these exchanges take place throughout the year and encompass a wide range of interests and audiences. This past summer, while 14 Kapi‘olani CC students were learning Japanese at Kinran College in Osaka, there were 26 visiting students from the Okinawa Prefectural College of Nursing taking English as a Second Language (ESL) and learning medical terminology at Kaua‘i CC. At the same time, Windward CC Assistant Professor Fred Kalani Meinecke was in New Zealand giving a lecture at the University Wakatani, Japanese cosmetologists from the GENIC Corporation were in session at Honolulu CC, and students from Hong Kong’s Sacred Heart Canossian College were learning about Hawaiian culture at Leeward Community College.

Here and abroad, UH Community College students benefit from the intercultural interaction, educational diversity and global perspective.
The value of our international work

I doubt anyone would deny that students benefit from the increased cultural awareness and the global understanding that develop through involvement in international activities. These are important benefits that, alone, make our international efforts worthwhile. But there are other powerful reasons for the UHCCs to promote and sustain international activities.

When we share the knowledge, the open doors of education and the unique teaching and learning models of the community colleges with our international partners, they are often overwhelmed with the sense of democracy, opportunity and humanitarianism that our colleges represent. They are impressed with the learning-centered, open dialogue and interaction between student and teacher. They are amazed that our education system allows a single mother in her thirties or a former prison inmate to have the same opportunity to receive an education as the traditional “straight A” high school graduate.

They ponder our willingness to tolerate student tardiness and absence while we offer such a high level of student services like daycare and tuition assistance.

We learn from them as well. Their commitment to their chosen profession and concern for their students’ success are awe inspiring. Some of the economic and governmental barriers they overcome to bring quality education to their students make us realize that anything is possible. They bring different perspectives and values about the importance and role of education in society.

Our students who venture to other Pacific and Asian shores return with a heightened eagerness to learn. They are often compelled to become more involved in global issues. They also learn to appreciate their heritage and what it means to be Hawaiian, American or other nationality.

Helen Keller said almost 100 years ago: “The highest result of education is tolerance.” Sharing education with international visitors helps all of us to see that there are many ways to view the world. As educators involved in opening international doors and promoting understanding across cultures, we give our students hope for a peaceful, tolerant world.

P.S. We are now in the midst of our strategic planning process. For the benefit of our students, faculty and staff, please take the time to read the draft of the update and voice your opinions, concerns and suggestions.

Joyce S. Tsunoda
Senior Vice President, UH and Chancellor for Community Colleges

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KAP CC SERVICE LEARNING PRESENTATIONS SELECTED

Two presentations by Kapiʻolani CC faculty have been selected for the Western Region Campus Compact Consortium at its 5th Annual Continuums of Service Conference in Oregon, April 17-20. Phoenix Lundstrom’s presentation, “Leading By Example,” will feature two students, Kehaulani Spencer-Boyd, who began her commitment to Kapiʻolani CC as an AmeriCorps volunteer, and Bart Wilson, who is eligible for President Bush’s Student Service Award. Tanya Renner’s presentation, “Coming Together Through Assessment,” features eight UH systemwide Service-Learning coordinators, including Tanya and Ulla Hasager, Kapiʻolani CC lecturer in anthropology.

UHCC FACULTY TRI-UMPHS

Congratulations to Sally Hall, assistant professor in language Arts at Honolulu CC and Peggy Regentine, computer science professor at Windward CC. Both have proven that they are skilled in the classroom and out on the rough terrain. The two UHCC instructors competed in the AARP’s Tri-Umph! Classic at Schofield Barracks, a triathlon designed for athletes of every level who are over the age of 50. Regentine took on the solo challenge, while Hall joined her sisters in the relay competition. Regentine finished first for the women at 1:13.56. She has been competing in races and triathlons for more than 20 years and has completed the Ironman on the Big Island twice. Hall and her sisters also came in first, with Hall completing the mountain bike portion of the triathlon.

KAUAI CC DEAN WINS BIG IN SMALL WORLD

Kauaʻi CC Dean of Students Earl Nishiguchi’s photographs won two awards in the annual Nikon International Small World Competition, which is dedicated to furthering excellence in photomicrography. His photograph of a sundew (7th place) made the cover of Nikon’s full-color calendar, and his photograph of fruit fly sperm (13th place) graced the month of April. Nishiguchi used his son’s 7th grade microscope and camera to take the photos in their “kitchen laboratory.” Nishiguchi’s photos will travel with the 18 other winners to various museums and science centers throughout the United States.

HON CC PROFESSOR’S TEXT IN SECOND EDITION


HON CC INSTRUCTOR TO BECOME TV PERSONALITY

KITV news has invited Honolulu CC’s Wayne Lewis to host the weekly Computer Talk segment on the morning news. Lewis will tape eight shows at a time, and they will be broadcast weekly on the station’s “Good Morning Hawai‘i” show.

LEEWARD CC CHEF HONORED BY HONOLULU MAGAZINE

Fern Tomisato of Leeward CC has been selected as the “Educator of the Year” by Honolulu Magazine for its Hale Aina Awards. There was a recognition ceremony for the selected restaurants and individuals on February 24 at the Kahala Mandarin Oriental Hotel and a write-up appears in the March edition of Honolulu Magazine.
tives that international activities provide. Our international visitors interact with students, visit our communities, learn about Hawai‘i lifestyles and return home with rich stories of Hawai‘i’s beauty and aloha spirit.

The UHCCs are not alone in their efforts to attract and develop international education partners. Since 1993, international enrollment at two-year institutions has jumped almost 50 percent, compared to an overall growth in international enrollment of 21 percent across all institutional types. This year, Associate Degree institutions enrolled over 91,000 international students.

Although the UHCCs are not in the top ten for the number of students served, the quality of our international educational effort has already been recognized. The American Council on Education and the Carnegie Corporation recently selected Kapi‘olani CC as one of eight colleges and universities to participate in their “Promising Practices: Institutional Models of Comprehensive Internationalization” project. This honor challenges the UHCCs to provide students, faculty, staff and administrators with the skills necessary, not only to survive, but to thrive in a rapidly evolving global community and culture.

The UHCCs’ international programs also support workforce development in the state and Pacific region. The Japan Aviation Academy sent 16 students to Honolulu CC this past summer to learn English as a Second Language and aviation English. Another agreement in this area was also signed with Chengdu Aeronautic Vocational and Technical College. These are some of the steps Honolulu CC is taking to achieve its larger goal of bringing regional aviation training to Hawai‘i.

Across the UHCC system, culinary arts, information technology, health and other program areas are also being nurtured for similar objectives.

The Pacific Center for Advanced Technology Training (PCATT), a consortium of the UHCC campuses, is quickly becoming a regional center for training in Cisco, Microsoft and other high-tech training programs.

As with all international activities, the benefits are multi-faceted. Through a partnership with the Aprica Childcare Institute in Japan, the UH Community Colleges are planning the second annual Summer Childcare Institute for June 24-26 at the East-West Center.

Bringing Hawai‘i’s knowledge and expertise in this area together with Japan and Hawai‘i’s leading childcare experts is helping to build Hawai‘i’s reputation for culturally diverse, globally-minded, holistic child care. The Institute raises the level of the UHCCs’ Early Childhood Education programs. It also brings international attention and visitors to the state, creating awareness and contributing to Hawai‘i’s economy.

In a recent report, Leon Richards, UHCC executive director for international education, estimated that the integrated international education and globalization activities of the UHCCs generated $3,634,804 for fiscal year 2000-2001.

The UHCCs would like to see this figure double—or triple. International students not only contribute to the colleges they attend, but to the state economy as a whole.

The Institute of International Education’s Open Doors Report for 2001 shows that California, which hosted 74,281 international students, estimated they contributed over $1.5 billion to that state’s economy last year.

The issue is much more complex than just bringing in people and making a profit, however. International visitors will come only if the UHCCs have solid relationships with...
Following a visit to Thailand by UHCC Chancellor Joyce Tsunoda and Honolulu CC’s Beng Poh Yoshikawa last year, the UH Community Colleges organized a Thai-US Forum in Hawaii in consultation with Virginia Loo Farris, US Embassy, Thailand, and Allen Cissell, US Department of Education. The Thai delegation consisted of high-level officials from Thailand’s Ministry of Education (MOE). The US delegates were from Community Colleges for International Development, the Stanley Foundation, the State Department of Education, City College of San Francisco, North Carolina Community College system, Crowder College, Oakton Community College and Eastern Iowa Community College.

The forum successfully concluded with both parties committed to forming a partnership to work toward the establishment of a community college system in Thailand. Much has happened since that forum. The MOE has established and staffed a project office and selected ten provinces where community colleges are to be established.

In November, representatives from Crowder College and Eastern Iowa Community College joined Beng Poh Yoshikawa in Thailand to explore funding sources, consult with the MOE and conduct training.

The team’s visit was supported by a grant that Yoshikawa received from the US Embassy in Thailand. The visit has further advanced the partnership between the Thai Ministry and the US consortium of community colleges. At the closing reception, Deputy Minister of Education, Dr. Sirikorn Maneerin, recalled with appreciation “Dr. Tsunoda’s leadership and the aloha spirit” as rationale to continue the Thai-US partnership.

PCATT Director Don Bourassa and Honolulu CC’s Beng Poh Yoshikawa saw evidence of the UHCCs’ success in this area earlier this year when visiting China with the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism’s “Mission to China.” While there, they met up with some of the Chinese teachers from Guangshou who had taken part in a training program at Honolulu CC late last year. Yoshikawa reported, “Five of them have been promoted since their training, and all of them have positive remembrances of their experiences here.” That is the foundation for growing solid partnerships for the future.

Student leaders shape UHCC future

Students leaders—ASUH officials and other campus leaders (shown herewith Chancellor Tsunoda) — spent a day at the UHCC Chancellor’s Office in January to talk about issues of importance to student learning and success. From articulation to day care, the discussions with various UH administrators was used in he UHCCs strategic planning process. Student leaders were also invited to take part in the Excellence in Education Conference on March 1 at Leeward Community College, where the UHCC Strategic Plan will also be discussed.

Allen Bradley donates to Hon CC

Honolulu CC’s programmable logic controller lab received $16,000 worth of equipment from Berkley Engineering and Allen-Bradley, a division of Rockwell Automation. The donated small logic controllers will help students design circuits, understand motor controls and troubleshoot automated systems. At the presentation were Alan Uyehara, Hon CC dean; Chris Caldeira, Berkley Engineering; Paul Steiner, Rockwell Automation; Thomas Mikulski, Hon CC; Richard Rubi, Rockwell Automation; and Christin Walsh, Berkley Engineering.

Prof examines hidden emotions

Associate Professor of Sociology Noelie Rodriguez has published a text in the prestigious Sage Publisher’s Qualitative Research Methods Series entitled Systematic Self-Observation, co-authored with Dr. Alan Ryave. The book gives researchers in psychology, communications, anthropology, and sociology with clear and practical instructions for generating self-observed data on hidden and private realms of experience. The book includes studies that Rodriguez and Ryave generated using the Systematic Self-Observation method, including studies of envy, withheld compliments, the micro-politics of telling secrets, and the lies that are told in everyday life.

Rodriguez reports, “As we worked on these research projects, it occurred to us that we had actually hammered out a new research method that opens up the whole domain of hidden, private, and personal experience for rigorous study.” Although much of the work on the book was completed during Rodriguez’s sabbatical in 1998-99, she has been working with the method for 14 years. She is currently working on a study of the micro-politics of withholding complaints.

Strategic Planning Process: Plug in, Get Involved, Make a Difference

Are you aware that the strategic planning process, university-wide, has been placed on an accelerated schedule?

President Dobelle wants this to be an inclusive and transparent process. This is an opportunity for you to have your say about the future of our university.

Give your input about the future of the open-door community colleges, what it means to be part of a system of differentiated yet integrated campuses; and most importantly, expand your vision and commitment as an educator in an egalitarian society.

Go to the UHCC Web site, www.hawaii.edu/ccc, and read the Draft Strategic Plan. The PDF document lists more than 20 colleagues from the planning committee who are eager to listen to your comments, hear your suggestions and address your concerns.

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Dr. Eric Shibuya, Assistant Professor in Regional Studies at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, was recently named a Pacific Century Fellow for 2001-2002, identifying him as a “future leader” in Hawai’i. He is also a former Fulbright Fellow, a former instructor in both the Political Science Department and the Center for Applied Studies in American Ethnicity at Colorado State University, and a former Leeward Community College student.

Born and raised in Waipahu, Dr. Shibuya attended Lanakila Baptist Academy. When he graduated in 1985, he didn’t immediately consider attending a community college. He explains, “I graduated from a small high school and actually went to a university on the mainland for one year. Even though that university was a “small” one—5,000 students—I was lost on campus. I wasn’t prepared for that kind of situation.”

Upon his return to Hawai’i, Shibuya enrolled at Leeward CC and soon found he was in an environment where he could flourish.

“I served on the LCC Student Senate, which gave me an insight and sparked my interest in politics,” Shibuya said. “Some of my best experiences at LCC were at the Leeward Community College Theatre. That place was magic. Kathleen Cabral, Don Ranney, and Barbara Donios were like family and inspired dedication and loyalty along with fun. Being around such talented people really inspired my love for the theatre and reinforced my self-confidence.”

Once he found the right starting point, Shibuya was off to attain some impressive goals. After receiving his Associate in Arts degree at Leeward, he went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, a master’s in political science from the University of Oklahoma, and his doctorate in political science from Colorado State University.

One of the most important things he discovered along the way was the value of lifelong learning. “If I can give one piece of advice to today’s students, it would be to never stop learning, and love what you do. Love to read, love to understand. Education, which is different than “getting a degree,” isn’t about the teacher, it’s about the student. Education is self-starting and self-inspired. Good teachers can help with that, but students need to know that real learning begins with them and their desire.”

Today, as an instructor at the College of Security Studies at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), Shibuya teaches a course in Pacific Islands Development and Security, gives lectures on small states in the international system and environmental aspects of security. He is also developing research projects on eco-tourism projects and fisheries management in the Pacific and continues his research on the international politics of climate change and the activities of the Alliance of Small Island States.

APCSS is a regional study, conference, and research center with a non-war-fighting mission to enhance cooperation and build relationships through mutual understanding and study of comprehensive security issues among military and civilian representatives of the United States and other Asia-Pacific nations. Dr. Shibuya joined the College of Security Studies in August 2000.

In some ways, he is far removed from his roots at Leeward CC, but Shibuya says a strong connection is still there. “I wouldn’t trade the time at Leeward for anything. That time set a foundation for how I work, what I do, how I teach. After UH, I left for the mainland again, but older, more mature and armed with the tools I needed to succeed.”
When Amber Botz graduated from Pāhoa High School two years ago, she was, by her own admission, “an ordinary high school student, speaking pidgin and dancing hula.” When she returned recently to make a presentation as a Women in Technology (WIT) program assistant, her former teachers couldn’t believe how much she had matured and how poised she had become.

Botz, a 2001 Maui Community College Office Administration & Technology graduate was born and raised in rural Pāhoa, Hawai‘i, an area with water catchment systems, no cable TV, and a telephone system that consisted of shared party lines. She now works in an environment surrounded by technology.

When Botz began a search for college options, she felt the mainland and O‘ahu were too big, Kaua‘i too small—but Maui seemed just right. She began her college career at Maui CC and soon decided on the career-focused Office Administration & Technology (OAT) degree.

“The OAT teachers are really supportive, and just awesome,” says Botz. “They provide insight into what employers want and prepare you for the workforce.”

A key component of the OAT program is an internship requirement that offers students on-the-job experience and an opportunity to put their training into practice. Botz spent a semester as a receptionist interning at the Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB) and learned about its programs and operations.

The internship led to a job offer as a program assistant with MEDB’s Women in Technology (WIT) project. The grant-funded program, the first workforce development project of its kind, supports and encourages high school and college women in math, science, engineering, and technology education and careers. The rural-based project began operations on Maui in 2000 and has since expanded its services to the Big Island and Kaua‘i.

“The WIT project showed me that there are no limits to women seeking employment in science, technology or other male-dominated fields,” said Botz.

Botz is already looking into a bachelor of arts degree in business administration from the University of Hawai‘i—West O‘ahu, Maui Outreach program.

“I struggled the first year at Maui CC,” says Botz, “there was no family and no support structure, but I told myself that I had one purpose for being there, and that helped me to continue on with my education.”

For more information about the Women in Technology project, visit the Web at www.hightechmaui.com/womenintech.
Honolulu CC professors address the “1.5 generation”

Since the late eighties, an increasing number of U.S. high school graduates who are non-native English speaking (NNS) immigrants have been entering college writing classes. Unlike newly-arrived immigrants, they are entirely fluent in listening/speaking skills, but, despite extensive high school training in English, they sadly lack other necessary linguistic skills to succeed in courses with native English speaking classmates. While they do not fit into mainstream English courses, neither do they fit into English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

These students have been characterized as the “1.5 Generation” because their experiences and traits fall somewhere in between those of the first- and second-generation immigrants. Currently, it is estimated that at least 25 percent of all non-native English speaking students at Honolulu Community College are members of the “1.5 generation.” Three Honolulu CC professors—Gary James, Muriel Fujii and Chuck Whitley—decided it was time to address the needs of Hawai‘i’s “1.5 Generation.”

According to Professor James, this project aims to create a permanent reading/writing course at the pre-English 22 level to accommodate these students. The three faculty members were awarded an EIF grant, “Teaching Writing to US-Educated Learners of ESL” to create a permanent specialized writing/grammar course at the pre-English 22 level. Through their research and collaboration, they hope to successfully accommodate the needs of this ever-growing population.

Hawai‘i senate recognizes Kapi‘olani CC

In February, Norman Sakamoto (center with Kap CC provost John Morton), chair of the education committee, Hawai‘i State Senate, presented a Certificate of Recognition to Kapi‘olani Community College, honoring the college and its efforts in developing high quality undergraduate, technical and occupational learning opportunities for students. The presentation set the stage for the winter meeting of 16 national leadership institutions engaged in the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ initiative, “Greater Expectations in Undergraduate Education as America Goes to College.” Kapi‘olani CC is one of these leadership institutions, and hosted the winter meeting.

UHCCs reap HBEA Awards

The Hawai‘i Business Education Association (HBEA) honored individuals for their contributions to business education at the 32nd annual HBEA State Conference in January.

Derek Kurisu, Executive Vice President of Perishable Operations at KTA Super Stores in Hilo, Hawai‘i, was honored for his Outstanding Contribution to Business Education. Kurisu has assisted with promotions for several area high schools and is active in the Tech-Prep initiatives, working with the Department of Education and University of Hawai‘i Community Colleges.

Ellen Nagaue, professor at the Employment Training Center for the past 28 years, was honored with the 2002 HBEA Post-Secondary Educator of the Year Award. Geraldine Kabei, professor and coordinator for continuing education and training at ETC, was honored with the 2002 HBEA Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding Contribution to Business Education by an Administrator.

Douglas Dykstra, Acting Dean of Instruction at Leeward CC, was also honored with the 2002 HBEA Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding Contribution to Business Education by an Administrator.
Two young Nobel prize nominees, Juan Elias Uribe and Farlis Carlis, visited Hawai‘i to speak face to face with students in forums and also to conduct nonviolence workshops at Maui CC, Kapi‘olani CC and other venues.

They presented the video, “The Power of Peace, Children and Youth Initiative for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence” and proceeded to answer questions about their background and the peace movement. Farlis and other children decided to stand up for her rights and, most importantly, the rights of others in Colombia.

Joshua Cooper of Maui CC coordinated the visits to the UHCC campuses. The two guests were sponsored by a grant from the Department of Education. The two peer peacemakers talked of the levels of violence they have endured and told how they are committed to nonviolent social change. As Juan Elias spoke to a teary crowd, “Forgiveness is the essence of living. We must move beyond fear. You can do anything you want. All you have to do is believe.”

Juan has been an active peer for peace even before his father and cousin were gunned down two weeks before his 15th birthday. Juan and Farlis have both been child mayors and teach peace in schools across Colombia.

Enrollment up at all campuses

Preliminary figures show an enrollment increase for all the UHCC campuses for spring 2002 when compared with the spring 2001 semester. UHCC Chancellor Joyce Tsunoda was pleased with the numbers and said, “I would like to recognize the efforts of the faculty, staff and administrators of each community college. Their collaborative efforts in enrollment management and added services have improved access for students.”

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<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Spring 2001 Headcount</th>
<th>Spring 2002 Headcount</th>
<th>Change in Headcount</th>
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</table>

Comparisons are against 2001 Fifth Day Enrollments (not Census enrollments)
Congratulations to Kapi‘olani CC journalism student Kawehi Haug. Kawehi’s recent first-person article about going to Afghanistan as a nurse was submitted to U-Wire, a network of national college student news services which selects and compiles submissions for use by college newspapers nationwide. U-Wire sent Haug’s story out to the rest of the country.

Kapi‘olani CC’s Linda Kodama and Mary Beard helped Kapi‘olani CC get selected as one of 18 institutions (65 applicants) for a project called “Preparing Tomorrow’s Science & Math Teachers: The Community College Response.” The project is sponsored by Phi Theta Kappa, funded by the National Science Foundation, and conducted in cooperation with the American Association of Community Colleges. Also on the team is Joel Weiner from UH Mānoa’s College of Education. The team will be funded to attend Phi Theta Kappa’s National Teacher Preparation Conference in New Orleans in March.

First graders in five classes at Aliamanu Elementary School got a taste of college recently when Michael Moser, Leeward CC Upward Bound Math/Science Program Director, and Kakkala Mohanan, LCC Assistant Professor in Astronomy and Geology, brought interactive science activities to their classrooms.

Using animated models and astronomical equipment, Dr. Mohanan explained the phenomenon of day and night, while Michael Moser demonstrated principles of work with robotics.

This was the second year Aliamanu first graders experienced this unique curricular enrichment. Last year, Leeward CC Electronic Technician Dale Hood brought large levers and pulleys to teach about basic mechanical principles.

The Leeward-Aliamanu connection began when teachers from the school, impressed with the interactive activities showcased at the annual LCC Family Fun and Craft Fair, asked if the exhibits could travel. And so, the engaging "road show" was born! Leeward CC has been pleased to deliver this instruction to Aliamanu’s first graders. After all, it’s never too early for students to think about college!

Faculty selected for math and science

The second annual Women’s Rights are Human Rights Conference, March 7, Maui CC. The keynote speaker is Cheri Honkala, director of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union. For information, call Joshua Cooper at 984-3281.

Kapi‘olani CC’s 14th annual International Festival, March 18 - 21, three days of international arts, entertainment and enlightenment.

The 2nd Annual Ecological Ethics/Activism/Justice Earth Summit, April 22 and 23, Maui CC. The focus will be the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development. For information, call Joshua Cooper at 984-3281.

3rd Annual Native Hawaiian Education Association Convention, March 26 - 28, Leeward CC. Open to all - Native Hawaiian educators/practitioners and educators of Native Hawaiian students. For information Yvonne Yamashita at 956-8204.

Easter Eggstravaganza, March 23, Windward CC, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. A free, community-wide spring festival featuring Melveen Leed, Ilona Irvine, Soulfree, food booths, and an egg hunt. Starr 101.9 and DJs Hudson and Scothy B. will help host the festivities. Tours, Imaginarium shows and more. Sponsored by WCC’s student senate.
Curtis Lea loves to cook. So you could say he’s in the right place as a second-year student in the Culinary Arts Program at the Hospitality Training Institute (HTI) of the Hawai‘i Community College in Kealakekua. On a recent Thursday, Lea was in the kitchen at Hawai‘i CC, putting slices of pineapple on tropical tarts.

It’s an easy enough thing to do. But for Lea it’s a bit harder. That’s because Lea has a mechanical prosthesis on his left arm, replacing the natural arm he lost some years ago. The prosthesis is old and doesn’t fit well, so, Lea says “It slows me down. I don’t have confidence in grabbing things.”

Lea may be technically “handicapped,” but that hasn’t dampened his desire to succeed; like the other students in the program, he shares the same rigorous food preparation curriculum and classes and has his sights set on becoming a chef. He’s already had on-the-job training at a number of restaurants in Kona, including Huggo’s on the Rocks, where he currently works preparing appetizers.

Although the enthusiastic Lea has “faced some challenges” due to his prosthetic arm, things may change soon. The Culinary Arts Program Gourmet Club, made up of about 28 students in the HTI program, has been working to raise $6,000 so Lea can get a new and better functioning prosthesis.

The Club voted some months back to use the funds they make from their catering jobs and other cooking events for Lea’s new prosthetic arm. So far, they’ve raised about half of the money and they’re confident they’ll reach their goal soon.

“It’s just wonderful the support I’ve had from the college,” says Lea. “I’ve had help and compassion from all my teachers.” Chef Paul Heerlein, who directs the Culinary Arts Program, says Lea “always goes the extra mile,” adding, “He inspires me on a daily basis.”

The Culinary Arts program is the first formal food preparation training for Curtis Lea who, at 41 years of age, is one of the older students in the program. “I really love this,” he says, “This is just an awesome place for the culinary arts.”