Aloha! The John A. Burns School of Medicine continues to make strides in research and community health while enhancing our leadership team, continuing a tradition of student achievement and growing philanthropic support. I wanted to bring you up to date on highlights from the past year and invite you to take part as we prepare for our 50th anniversary in 2015.

**LEADERSHIP**

Dr. Keawe’aimoku Kaholokula was promoted to Chair of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health in February 2011, in a ceremony in which The Queen’s Medical Center also pledged to add to its already generous support for the department. Dr. Kaholokula proudly noted, “JABSOM is the only medical school in the country with a clinical department dedicated to an indigenous people.”

Dr. Winona Mesiona Lee was promoted to serve as the Director and oversee the operations of two key diversity initiatives at JABSOM, the Imi Ho`ola Post-Baccalaureate Program and the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence.

Dr. Kenneth Nakamura is the new Chair of the Department of Pediatrics. Born on Maui and a graduate of Lahainaluna High School, Dr. Nakamura previously headed the Joint Neonatal Fellowship Program between Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children and Tripler Army Medical Center and serves as Chief Medical Officer of Kapi'olani Medical Specialists. He is President of the Hawai‘i Chapter of the Academy of Pediatrics.

Dr. Richard W. Smerz was promoted to Director of the Office of Student Affairs. An army veteran, Dr. Smerz’ specialties are hyperbaric and undersea medicine. He previously served as medical director of the John A. Burns School of Medicine’s Hyperbaric Treatment Center at Kuakini Medical Center for 10 years.

**RESEARCH**

Among research awards this past year, the medical school received a highly competitive $12.6 million grant for a sweeping project called R-MATRIX. Our UH researchers are teaming up with community groups, clinics and hospitals to improve the health of individuals in Hawai‘i who suffer higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, asthma, cancer and neurologic conditions such as dementia.

In November, 2010, ground was broken on JABSOM’s campus to begin building the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center. The opening is scheduled in 2013.

**ADDRESSING COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS**

An interventional trial targeting obesity is being conducted by The Center for Native and Pacific Health Disparities Research. The PILI ‘Ohana program is a partnership between 10 community-based organizations throughout the State of Hawai‘i and researchers from JABSOM’s Department of Native Hawaiian Health. Its aim is to integrate community wisdom and expertise with scientific methods to conduct research on health disparities, with a specific emphasis on obesity, in Native Pacific populations. The program uses community members to enroll subjects, teach healthy living, and collect data on the project.

**FACULTY EXCELLENCE**

Professor of Medicine John Melish and Assistant Professor of Tropical Medicine Abby Collier received 2011 Regents’ Medals for Excellence in Teaching. Health Sciences Library Director Virginia Tanji was elected Chair of the Board of Regents of the National Library of Medicine.
Student Achievement

Once again, 100% of our second-year students passed the US Medical Licensing Exam, Step 1. Our MS-2’s are on track to exceed the national average for seven years in a row (see chart), all while having a little fun by growing mustaches or auctioning off the opportunity to throw pies at faculty to raise money for charity.

![Graph showing JABSOM average vs. national average](image)

### Philanthropy

JABSOM had a very successful year supporting treatment and research of heart disease. A Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship Program was created, guided by Dr. Robert Hong. A $1 million anonymous gift endowed the Director of the Center for Cardiovascular Research, Dr. Ralph Shohet.

In addition, The Queen’s Medical Center renewed its support of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health with a $2 million multi-year grant to help the Department continue fulfilling its mission to be a center of excellence in education, research and quality health care practices. This latest funding follows Queen’s $5 million investment from 2002 thru 2010 to help create the department.

JABSOM also received vital support from ClinicalLaboratoriesofHawaii, LLP and Diagnostic Laboratory Services, Inc. to fund a faculty position for our Medical Technology Program so that students could again be admitted into the baccalaureate degree program, thereby helping to train the next generation of clinical laboratory professionals.

In the coming year, we will focus efforts on garnering private support to expand our rural and neighbor island clinical training opportunities for medical students and residents. Such support will help us “grow our own physicians” in those areas most affected by the physician shortage and will also enable us to gradually grow our class size.

### Countdown to our 50th Anniversary

2015 will mark the 50th anniversary of JABSOM’s founding. With that in mind, we have formed the JABSOM 5-0 Planning Committee to help us determine how we will highlight key milestones in our medical school’s history, celebrate our 50th Anniversary, and set the stage for the next half-century. Dr. Carla Nip-Sakamoto, JABSOM MD Class of 1988, and a dermatologist in private practice in Honolulu, has agreed to chair this committee. I invite you to join us in these preparations and look forward to your involvement.