ALOHA MAI KĀKOU,

Last year had been far from anticipated. The pandemic, political and social unrest, and economic recession have impacted everyone’s lives. Please know that the medical school and its affiliated practice plan, University Health Partners of Hawai‘i (UHP), have been working on many levels to sustain our excellent programs and help Hawai‘i through the difficulties of this COVID-19 era. Although space and time does not permit me to mention all the things that our wonderful faculty, staff, and students have done this year for UH and Hawai‘i, I will mention some of the highlights made possible by our ‘ohana, below.

- Provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to first responders, primary care practices/clinics, and nursing home facilities
- Implemented extensive adjustments to our facilities operations in order to keep everyone safe while maintaining essential services available for students, administrators, educators and researchers
- Introduced various adjustments to the delivery of our curricula in a very fluid manner while keeping all programs operational
- Provided extensive support for the Hawai‘i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) in its efforts to interface with community practitioners and support services
- Established a certified COVID-19 testing facility to support the needs of the City/County of Honolulu
- Adjusted graduate medical education and clinical learning in synchronization with the health systems’ fluid operational adjustments to COVID-19
- Supported the UH leadership in the opening of the fall term with policy advice related to COVID-19 and students/employees on campus
- Brought over $5M in research grants, targeting COVID-19 testing and treatment of our most vulnerable populations, to Hawai‘i
- Continued work on a novel heat-stable vaccine for COVID-19 that will be needed in the tropics
- Assisted with the logistics of vaccination for first responders and assisted with preparations for the state’s mass vaccination centers when the COVID-19 vaccine became available in Hawai‘i

Again, I cannot acknowledge all of the great things that our school and practice plan ‘ohana have been doing but this list gives you a good idea of some of the work - in addition to the continuation of all the standard activities that must be done to maintain any institution operational and our programs accredited. I am incredibly proud of our ‘ohana and what their selfless work has provided already for the people of Hawai‘i. Mahalo nui loa to all of you who have assisted through your personal sacrifices, whether it be through contributions to our University of Hawai‘i Foundation (UHF) or volunteer work. May 2021 bring more aloha to us all.

Jerris R. Hedges, MD, MS, MMM
Professor & Dean
Barry & Virginia Weinman - Endowed Chair
John A. Burns School of Medicine
University of Hawai‘i - Mānoa
New lab provides free COVID-19 tests for the underserved

THE TROPICAL MEDICINE CLINICAL LABORATORY (TMCL) based at JABSOM has conducted COVID-19 tests by appointment only from the UH Clinics at Kaka’ako since mid-October. TMCL will augment O‘ahu’s capacity to provide testing for houseless and uninsured individuals who face unique barriers to testing for the virus that causes COVID-19. The new lab is being supported with up to $3.9 million in CARES funds from the City and County of Honolulu. These funds served as foundational support to establish the lab and will support capacity at the lab to process up to 100,000 COVID-19 tests annually.

Operating out of JABSOM’s Department of Tropical Medicine, Medical Microbiology and Pharmacology led by Dr. Vivek Nerurkar, the TMCL also leads research efforts to develop innovative approaches for less invasive and more cost effective COVID-19 testing. UH Mānoa Associate Professor of Oceanography Dr. Rosie Alegado is the community liaison lead for the lab. The TMCL collaborates with community health centers across O‘ahu to process tests for underserved, uninsured and frontline workers who may require multiple tests for safety at their workplace.

Sewing face masks to fight the pandemic

AS THE UNITED STATES FACED ITS FIRST WAVE of COVID-19 cases earlier in the year, it also faced a growing shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) needed for healthcare workers. JABSOM and the UH Mānoa Department of Theatre and Dance collaborated to sew homemade fabric masks in response to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s guidance that fabric masks are a crisis response option when other PPE has been exhausted.

JABSOM Associate Professor Dr. Angel Yanagihara and UH Mānoa Assistant Professor of Costume Design and Technology Maile Speetjens, both seamstresses, developed two types of masks. Through donations made to the UH Foundation, the department of theatre and dance purchased sewing machines for students, allowing them to sew from home. The first batch of cloth masks were distributed through UHP, the medical school’s faculty practice plan. Priority was given to healthcare workers in primary care and emergency care specialties, who provide first contact care for the majority of patients. Former Hawai‘i First Lady Vicky Cayetano offered complimentary cleaning of the masks prior to distribution through her company, United Laundry Services, Inc.

Online COVID-19 screening tool

A NOVEL ONLINE SCREENING TOOL for COVID-19 directly connects patients to providers via telemedicine. Hawai‘i UTelHealth was developed in April by UH JABSOM in collaboration with the Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center in the UH College of Social Sciences. Other partners include UHP and the Hawai‘i Department of Health.

“We are partnering with Hawai‘i providers from all islands to bring this service to patients across the state,” said Dr. Kelley Withy, director of the JABSOM Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center. The telemedicine service is staffed by both volunteers and paid providers from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, seven days a week and can connect anyone to a telehealth provider in as quickly as two minutes.
Geriatric Medicine department work to keep seniors safe

OBSERVING THE RATE AT WHICH COVID-19 HAS AFFLICTED THE GLOBE Dr. Patricia Blanchette, founder of the UH Mānoa JABSOM Department of Geriatric Medicine, sensed that COVID-19 could sweep through Hawai`i’s senior facilities if there was any hesitation in executing protective measures. JABSOM and UHP geriatricians serve as medical and associate directors at 13 nursing and senior care facilities as well as two hospices throughout the state. They worked diligently to ensure the safety of its senior residents.

“I recommended in early March (2020) that these medical facilities close to family, casual visitors, and volunteers. Also, at entry, the nursing facility should screen employees, doctors, nurse practitioners, and therapists before allowing them into the facility. We recommended wearing masks, taking everyone’s temperature at the door and not allowing anyone to enter if they had traveled out of state over the past 14 days or had symptoms known to be associated with COVID-19,” Dr. Blanchette said. “This was the imposition of an early quarantine to protect seniors and healthstaff.”

UHP MI-Home Program extended

THE UHP WOMEN’S HEALTH SPECIALISTS WERE AWARDED a $100,000 grant to support prenatal and postnatal care from the Omidyar ‘Ohana Fund, a donor-advised fund at the Hawai`i Community Foundation. This grant supports the Midwifery Integration Home Visitation Program (MI-Home), a gateway for mothers who may have social or financial barriers to receive the care they need. The program offers transportation to doctor visits, covers prescribed medicine for those uninsured and underinsured as well as supplies family planning, well-woman visits, prenatal and postpartum care. In operation since July 2019, the program was originally funded from by the AlohaCare Waiwai Ola grant and was slated to end in September 2020 but the Omidyar ‘Ohana fund has extended the program to May 2021.

DID YOU KNOW? 45 of the 65 graduating JABSOM MDs in the 2020 Match will stay close to home, beginning their next phase of training in Hawai`i or on the West Coast.
Notable faculty rise to the occasion during the COVID crisis

“While there are many at JABSOM who have battled with COVID-19 in various ways, some are pressed into service because of their expertise in public health, infectious diseases and emergency care.

**DR. STEVEN HANKINS** (JABSOM MD 2001), family medicine physician and former residency program director in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health is on the Hawai‘i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) COVID-19 Emergency Response Team as the lead of the Public Health and Medical Services State Emergency Support Function (ESF-8), one of many groupings of agencies from the state, private and non-profit sectors that may be mobilized in a statewide crisis and work in tandem with the Hawai‘i Department of Health (DOH). He also plays a critical role with the COVID-19 vaccine implementation and serves as the co-chair of the DOH COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Advisory Working Group.

**DR. ELIZABETH “LIBBY” CHAR** (JABSOM MD 1991), assistant clinical professor of surgery and an emergency physician, was appointed by Gov. David Ige to serve as director of the Hawai‘i Department of Health (DOH) in September 2020, just as the COVID-19 crisis had seen another surge. She has a wealth of clinical and administrative experience, previously serving as the State of Hawai‘i EMS district medical director and has expertise in training EMS providers.

**DR. LEE BUENCONSEJO-LUM** (JABSOM MD 1994), associate dean for academic affairs, designated institutional official, and professor of family medicine and community health has also been a key member of the HI-EMA ESF-8, with additional service to the Community Care and Outreach group and the working group on the home-based care of COVID patients. She serves on the state’s COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Planning Committee and many vaccine workgroups.

**DR. KELLEY WITHY** (JABSOM PhD 2007), director of the JABSOM Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center and professor of family medicine and community health, also serves the HI-EMA ESF-8, communicating with physicians about safe practices and available resources, facilitating personal protective equipment distribution to various healthcare providers, schools, small businesses, childcare centers and non-profit institutions across the state. In collaboration with the Hawai‘i Center for Nursing, she was vital in launching a Hawai‘i Healthcare Workforce Provider Surge Capacity Workgroup.

**DR. STEVEN HANKINS**

**DR. ELIZABETH “LIBBY” CHAR**

**DR. LEE BUENCONSEJO-LUM**

**DR. KELLEY WITHY**
DR. SANDRA CHANG, professor of Tropical Medicine, Medical Microbiology and Pharmacology, also serves as co-chair of the DOH COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Advisory Working Group. This group reviews vaccine safety and efficacy data and provides recommendations to DOH Director Dr. Char regarding COVID-19 vaccine implementation. She and her team also provided training to the contact tracers that have been instrumental in helping to mitigate further spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

DR. JOSEPH KEAWE‘AIMOKU KAHOLOKULA, chair of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) co-leads the Hawai‘i NHPI COVID-19 Response, Recovery and Resilience (R3) Team, joining nationwide efforts to protect the NHPI communities. The R3 is a larger team made up of many other NHPI-serving organizations such as Papa Ola Lokahi, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, We Are Oceania and community health centers including Waimānalo Health Center and Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center.

DR. NEAL PALAFOX, (JABSOM MD 1980), professor of family medicine and community health, also serves on the NHPI COVID-19 Response, Recovery and Resilience Team and HIEMA ESF-8 as part of the Community Care & Outreach Team. In addition, he works with two other COVID-19 response teams focused on Pacific Islanders. He says JABSOM functions as an intermediary to find out what barriers the NHPI communities are facing and relay the messages back to the local healthcare system so that together they can find solutions to help the vulnerable populations.

In addition, a UH-led study reports that the highest rate of COVID-19 positive cases (in several U.S. states, including Hawai‘i) is found in Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) ethnic groups. JABSOM worked directly with these communities to learn why they are the hardest hit and discovered that they are facing language, economic, healthcare access and cultural barriers when it comes to COVID-19 mitigation.
Annual March Against Domestic Violence takes a virtual route

Although the Annual Men’s March Against Domestic Violence typically draws thousands who walk together through the streets of downtown Honolulu with colorful signs and chants for change that echo around Iolani Palace, this was the first time in 26 years that these streets remained empty. More than ever, the call to end domestic violence needed amplification as shelter-in-place mandates meant to curb the spread of the ongoing pandemic contributed to an alarming rise in domestic violence and abuse cases.

Throughout October 2020, the UH medical school encouraged everyone to join in the fight to end domestic violence. To amplify this message, JABSOM’s Domestic Violence Awareness Committee, in collaboration with JABSOM Event Management Services, produced two videos that featured JABSOM students, faculty and staff, UH Mānoa administrators and local celebrities including Ben Vegas, Billy V, Augie T and Josh Tatofi. Among several other activities, they also coordinated a Zoom background design contest and the top three designs were made available to the public to further promote domestic violence awareness throughout the month of October. In addition, the JABSOM Office of Communications, Media and Government Affairs produced a public service announcement with several UH Mānoa deans that aired during a 30-minute KHON2 News special on domestic violence. WATCH THE VIDEOS: HTTPS://JABSOM.HAWAII.EDU/MENSMARCH2020
A YOUNG MEDICAL DOCTOR FROM JAPAN LEARNED TO IMPROVE HIS LIFESAVING SKILLS at the UH medical school in February 2020, through a cultural exchange program created after the Ehime Maru tragedy 19 years ago. He was only eight years old when the USS Greeneville, an American Navy submarine, unexpectedly surfaced off the shores of Kaka‘ako and sank the Ehime Maru, a fishing boat from Uwajima Fisheries High School in Japan. Nine students and teachers died in the collision, including the father of Dr. Yusuke Tominaga’s friend. Dr. Tominaga is among a group of young MDs in the first medical cultural exchange connected to the “sister city” friendship program created between Honolulu and Uwajima after the tragedy.

At JABSOM they trained in the SimTiki, which provided intensive, emergency room-style practice with both human patient volunteers and high-fidelity patient simulators – a method of training different from the way Japanese doctors are taught. Both Director of Global Health and International Medicine Dr. Gregory Maskarinec and Dr. Akiyoshi Ogimoto, Uwajima City Hospital program director, pledged to continue the medical cultural exchange every year, however the pandemic put a hitch in these plans in February 2021.

A TEAM OF HAWAI‘I RESEARCHERS LED BY THE UH MEDICAL SCHOOL HOPE TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO SHAKA to remind people to wear their mask correctly in public. Point your index finger up and down towards your own mask then throw a shaka.

“Always follow this by giving a shaka right away,” said Kasey Tamamoto, JABSOM MD 2023 candidate and lead author of a July 2020 study focused on public compliance using face masks in Honolulu.

The JABSOM medical student says the follow-up shaka is important because she and her colleagues intend the gesture to be friendly and non-confrontational. Their study, published in the Hawai‘i Journal of Health & Social Welfare in September, showed that 88% of people observed in downtown Honolulu were wearing face masks correctly, compared with just 66% of people in Waikiki. Tamamoto’s co-authors include JABSOM MD 2023 candidate Nikki Rousslang, as well as Drs. Hyeong Jun Ahn, professor of quantitative health science, Heidi Better, a pharmacist and Robert Hong, professor of medicine.
In this issue of Science Matters, we highlight the achievements of two exceptional researchers at the University of Hawai‘i Medical School. Victor Andrew Stenger, PhD, and Wei-Kung Wang, MD, ScD, have been awarded National Institutes of Health (NIH) R01 grants, which are highly competitive and among the most rigorously reviewed across the country.

Victor Andrew Stenger, PhD, professor of medicine and director of the UH/QMC Magnetic Resonance Imaging Center, received $321,125 towards his project on “radial echo volumar imaging.” He hopes to develop a new magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) methodology that could potentially cut down the scanning procedure time in half.

For the past 19 years, Professor Wei-Kung Wang, MD, ScD, has studied pathogenesis and antibody response following dengue virus infections and facilitated the development of vaccines and serodiagnosis. Dr. Wang received $155,458 for his project, “Multiplex serodiagnostic assays for pathogenic arboviruses in Brazil.”

“Each new R01 is a reason for celebration at our university. Only the best of the best in the country get them. These faculty have competed against faculty at Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Harvard, and other prestigious institutions,” said Dr. Rachel Boulay, JABSOM Associate Director for Research.

Instead of a nearly two-hour procedure, an MRI could be completed in less than an hour. This proposed technology can also be run on any scanner without the need for extra hardware or expense.

For the past 19 years, Professor Wei-Kung Wang, MD, ScD, has studied pathogenesis and antibody response following dengue virus infections and facilitated the development of vaccines and serodiagnosis. Dr. Wang received $155,458 for his project, “Multiplex serodiagnostic assays for pathogenic arboviruses in Brazil.”

His research is a response to the critical need for highly sensitive and specific serodiagnostic tests to discriminate infections by pathogenic arboviruses in places like Brazil, where multiple flaviviruses, including Zika, dengue, West Nile and yellow fever viruses are endemic.
Researchers aid in COVID-19 vaccine development

As the COVID-19 pandemic was gaining traction across the world, Dr. Axel Lehrer and his team of scientists in the Department of Tropical Medicine, Medical Microbiology and Pharmacology, in collaboration with Soligenix, Inc., sprung into action to develop a vaccine. Previously, the Lehrer Laboratory, Soligenix, Inc., and Hawai‘i Biotech, Inc., demonstrated the feasibility of creating a thermostable Ebola virus and multivalent filovirus vaccines. Using this same technology platform, they were able to quickly produce a vaccine for the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2. The intended vaccine shows great promise, demonstrating rapid immunity to the novel coronavirus in pre-clinical trials as early as seven days after the first vaccination. Watch the video: HTTPS://YOUTUBE/F2GXU86KPWW

The prospect of a science lab in Hawai‘i helping develop a vaccine amid the COVID-19 pandemic is a testament to the importance of local research.

~ JABSOM Dean Jerris Hedges

Novel youth cancer-screening tool

Scientists at UH Mānoa have discovered a novel method of diagnosing non-Hodgkin lymphoma, which originates in the lymphatic system, the body’s disease-fighting network, and is usually diagnosed through invasive surgical or needle biopsies or removal of living tissue for examination. This study has the potential to change that paradigm, suggesting the use of Raman spectroscopy as an initial step to determine if and when a biopsy would be necessary. JABSOM researcher and pediatrician Dr. Bruce Shiramizu said this would allow the use of a hand-held probe as a diagnostic tool for real-time assessment of a mass that might be a tumor. The project is supported by the St. Baldrick’s Foundation, the largest private funder of childhood cancer research grants, through multiple grants totaling $113,000.
Telmisartan as an effective therapy for COVID-19?

COULD TELMISARTAN, A MEDICATION FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, BE USED TO PREVENT SEVERE LUNG AND HEART SYMPTOMS in a newly-diagnosed COVID-19 patient? Dr. Cecilia Shikuma, professor of medicine, is testing the hypothesis that much of the lung and heart complications caused by COVID-19 is due to the virus’ ability to disrupt the delicate balance in the body’s hormone system that regulates blood pressure and fluid balance. In hopes of finding a treatment for COVID-19, Dr. Shikuma leads the ongoing study— the state’s first outpatient COVID-19 clinical trial.

Videos of kūpuna create legacy of end-of-life messages

“I KUA NA‘U, LET ME CARRY OUT YOUR LAST WISHES,” is a new five-year research program funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) through the National Institute of Nursing Research to enhance Advanced Care Planning (ACP) for Native Hawaiian elders (kūpuna) and their families and caregivers. The research program will use innovative video technology to improve the process of ACP through the incorporation of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) cultural values, personal beliefs and preferences of future medical care.

The scientific leadership team includes Drs. Marjorie Mau (JABSOM Department of Native Hawaiian Health), Michael Paasche-Orlow (Boston Medical Center) and Angelo Volandes (Harvard School of Medicine). Community partners who will co-lead this project are Kula no nā Po‘e Hawai‘i (Native Hawaiian homestead of Papakōlea), Lunalilo Home, ‘Aahului o nā Kauka (Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians) and The Queen’s Medical Center in North Hawai‘i and Punchbowl.
NIH award directed at Hawai‘i’s vulnerable communities

NATIVE HAWAIIANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS (NHPI) RANK among the highest ethnic groups disproportionately burdened by SARS-CoV-2 in the US, compounded by long-standing disparities in pre-existing conditions that subject them to increased risk of COVID-19 related mortality.

Part of a Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) initiative funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a two-year $4.5 million grant awarded to UH Mānoa and the Accountable Healthcare Alliance of Rural Oahu (AHARO) is being used to close these gaps. The project “Community-Driven Approach to Mitigate COVID-19 Disparities in Hawai‘i’s Vulnerable Populations,” is a supplement award to the NIH-funded Ola HAWAII grant led by JABSOM Dean Hedges and Noreen Mokuau, former Dean of the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, that brings together a novel, multidisciplinary team of scientists across UH with community healthcare and K-12 school partners.

The RADx team consists of JABSOM faculty Drs. May Okihiro (Pediatrics and Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center), Alika Maunakea (Anatomy, Biochemistry, and Physiology) and Marjorie Mau (Native Hawaiian Health). Also part of the team are UH faculty members Drs. Ruben Juarez (Economics and UHERO) in the College of Social Sciences and Pauline Chinn (Curriculum Studies) in the College of Education.

Forming the Pacific Alliance Against COVID-19 (PAAC), this team will lead the community partnership with the non-profit AHARO that includes five federally qualified health centers (FQHCs): Hawai‘i’s largest FQHC, the Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC), Waimānalo Health Center on O‘ahu, the Bay Clinic Inc., and Hamakua-Kohala Health Center on Hawai‘i Island, and the Moloka‘i Community Health Center.

Collectively, PAAC will expand on community-based SARS-CoV-2 testing, education and healthcare with a focus on areas where many NHPI reside. A “schools as assets” model will be created to actively mitigate COVID-19, where scientifically-informed yet historically and culturally-compatible curriculum will empower students and families in vulnerable communities to engage in COVID-19 prevention, increase SARS-CoV-2 testing, reduce infections and contribute to mitigating the pandemic.

“ As a Native Hawaiian born and raised in Wai‘anae, I am particularly humbled to be part of the PAAC in assisting community-led efforts to eliminate COVID-19 by combining my expertise in biomedical sciences with cultural knowledge, practices, and connectedness of my hometown. ”

~ Dr. Maunakea
First virtual Match Day

THE LONG HOURS AND HIGH STRESS while completing rotations and applying to residency programs during the fourth year of medical school usually culminates with the MD class reuniting in the same room after spending months apart, and together, learning where they’ll spend the next few years of their lives training as new specialty doctors. But the momentous Match Day was canceled in 2020 amid daily-changing CDC safety guidelines due to the ongoing pandemic. This was the first major JABSOM event that had to be modified due to COVID-19 safety concerns and one that was met with grace by the graduating MD class, who celebrated at home with their families. Even during this critical time in healthcare, the JABSOM MD Class of 2020 yearned to join their colleagues as physicians.

“Seeing everyone working on the front lines right now, all the doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals—it just encourages us (medical students) and confirms that we made the right decision by joining this profession,” said Class President Dr. Joseph Go. “It readies us for when we actually begin our residency in July and we’ll be on the front lines of it all.”

At the UH medical school, 65 members of the graduating class matched into 12 different medical specialties in 19 different states including Hawai‘i and one in Canada. More than half of the students are new doctors who provide the first contact for the majority of patients, including specialties with significant shortages (these include internal medicine, family medicine, emergency medicine, pediatrics and OB/GYN). By far those who matched into training programs on the mainland stuck as close to home as possible, matching into one of the 19 accredited Graduate Medical Education programs offered at UH or into programs along the West Coast, including California, Oregon and Washington.
Creating bilingual educational videos

AN ANNUAL ACTIVITY FOR FIRST YEAR JABSOM STUDENTS is a service-learning workday at Papahana Kuaola in Kāne‘ohe involving health education lessons designed for Ke Kula ʻo Samuel M. Kamakau, a Hawaiian Language immersion public charter school. The MD 2023 candidates originally planned their visit to Kamakau for April 2020, but by then, COVID-19 necessitated a state-wide shut down.

The nine students enrolled in the course, Kamuela Andrade, Abigail Bautista, Alyssa Becker, Amelia Hummel, James DeJesus IV, Elliot Koshi, Jason Lee, Jenna Maligro and Trevor McCracken, came up with the idea of making educational videos for the students that address issues pertaining to the pandemic. They created videos in both English and Hawaiian for four different topics: General Overview of COVID-19, Proper Handwashing, Masking and Social Distancing, and Staying Active at Home, an exercise video that includes a yoga session.

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“Thank you so much for doing this! Carlthan is on the special COVID team at his hospital (and will be in the ICU next) and Laura has been working in the ICU, which is almost exclusively ventilated COVID patients. Any encouragement would be much appreciated.”

~ Drs. Carlthan and Laura (Kurata) Ling (JABSOM MDs 2019)
Livestreaming the MD 2020 Convocation Ceremony

JABSOM’S MD CLASS OF 2020 CREATED A VERY THOUGHTFUL AND INCLUSIVE PROGRAM to make up for the graduation ceremony that did not happen, thanks to COVID-19. Local media, JABSOM faculty, alumni, and the general public were welcome to observe the virtual convocation livestream on May 17.

“It is important to us that our classmates, our families and friends, as well as JABSOM faculty, be included in some way for convocation,” said Class President Dr. Joseph Go. “We tried our best to ensure that the traditional parts of convocation, especially a way to highlight each individual in the class, are preserved while still abiding by social distancing guidelines through the creative use of technology.”

WATCH THE VIDEO: HTTPS://YOUTUBE/GSXJTC5LPLKI

Medical students build playground for homeless keiki

AFTER COMPLETING THEIR FINAL EXAMS IN DECEMBER 2019, medical students took on the role of Christmas elves, trading in their books for hammers and drills to build a swing set with an eight-foot slide and rock wall ladder for the Family Assessment Center in Kaka’ako. The students were part of the JABSOM Homeless Outreach and Medical Education (HOME) Project, which provides health services to the homeless in mobile clinics at nine different shelter locations, several days a week. The playground was donated by Blake Shavers, a supporter of the HOME Project.

WATCH THE VIDEO: HTTPS://YOUTUBE/LPR9NICLEMA
**STUDENT LIFE**

**Tuition Cost**

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**Cost of Living Index**

- **National Average**: $100
- **Hawai‘i - Highest in Nation**: 196.3

*Composite cost of living index. 2020 Quarter 3, MERIC*

**Scholarship Dollars Awarded**

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**Median Education Debt of Indebted Graduates**

- **JABSOM**: $238,616
- **National**: $200,000

**49% of JABSOM students are on scholarships**

**$16,945**

*average scholarship dollars awarded*
A PHYSICIAN-SCIENTIST IS A DOCTOR WHO DEVOTES REGULAR COMPONENTS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL EFFORT SEEKING NEW KNOWLEDGE about health, disease, or delivery of patient care through research. While all physicians receive training in medical science, physician-scientists are those who are trained to conduct independent scientific investigation in any setting. A physician scientist’s in-depth clinical knowledge of human health and disease, combined with skills in scientific investigation and analysis, make them uniquely resourceful.

“They have a special type of synergistic training that allows them to identify and investigate the most clinically important questions using the tools of basic science,” said Professor of Medicine Dr. Ralph Shohet, director of the JABSOM Cardiovascular Center for Research. This well-positions them to obtain federal funding for their research, which benefits the school and strengthens its biomedical community. Most importantly, “they are well equipped to drive a research effort that will lead to a better understanding of disease and therefore, improved treatment,” Dr. Shohet said.

Today, aspiring physician-scientists seem to be a rare breed. The NIH working group has concluded that the nation is failing to adequately renew and advance this workforce, as too few young physicians are attracted into scientific research or – if attracted—find necessary support or guidance lacking at key stages of their professional development. On the flip side, JABSOM seems to be gaining an uptick of medical students with a penchant for research. Meet some of them, below:

TREVOR TORIGOE, 2024 MD-PhD candidate, entered the MD Class of 2020 with six years of graduate school research under his belt. He earned a BS in biological sciences from Carnegie Mellon University before obtaining his MS in developmental and reproductive biology from UH Mānoa in 2017. His current research focuses on the gene FOXO3, associated with human longevity.

BRITTANY SATO, 2022 MD candidate, earned a BS in biochemistry from the University of Evansville, Indiana, before obtaining a PhD in cell and molecular biology from UH Mānoa in 2013. The Nanakuli native and ‘Imi Hoʻola graduate worked as a post-doctoral fellow at Chaminade University studying the role of the amnion in preterm, premature rupture of the fetal membranes.

SHERI HIROI DUBAY, 2023 MD candidate, obtained a BS in psychology and PhD in neuroscience from the University of Washington in Seattle. At Arizona State University, the neuroscientist and associate professor focused on the link between hormones and the brain serotonin system to understand why women are more vulnerable to anxiety and depression than men.

JIAMING XUE, 2023 MD candidate, earned both a BS in biology and a PhD in cell and molecular biology from UH Mānoa. He recently found that asbestos can cause cell transformation through activating HMGB1-mediated autophagy, a normal physiological process in the body that deals with the destruction of cells. He also found that Clomipramine, a commonly used FDA-approved antidepressant, has the potential to inhibit initiation of cancer formation in human cells.
Students launch podcast

JABSOM MD CLASS OF 2023 STUDENTS ARE EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY to stay connected with their peers and to fill the gap created by a cancellation of hands-on clinical training at JABSOM’s partner training hospitals and medical centers. Despite having no prior podcasting experience, Rylie Wada, Royce Kwon and Enze Ma welcomed the challenge with enthusiasm and became the podcasting trio of “Docs Talk Story.” Twice a month, they share the unique stories of local physicians in hopes of inspiring listeners while helping students navigate the wide range of medical specialties. LISTEN AT: SITES.GOOGLE.COM/HAWAI.EDU/DOCSTALKSTORY

Virtual socials to prevent social isolation

IT’S BEEN NEARLY A YEAR SINCE HAWAI’I ENTERED ITS FIRST STATEWIDE LOCKDOWN in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the idea of a stay-at-home order was still new to most of us. However, back in March, the JABSOM MD Class of 2020 already recognized the importance of staying connected during periods of social distancing. They hosted “quarantine socials,” where many were happy to see their classmates’ smiling faces albeit through a small box on their computer screens. Some of the activities included group cooking demonstrations, watching movies at the same time, guided yoga, poker, trivia and arts and crafts.
STUDENT LIFE

White Coats for Black Lives

THE GOLD HUMANISM HONOR SOCIETY HAWAI‘I CHAPTER
PRESIDENT LUCIA AMORE and her fellow JABSOM classmates met in the school’s courtyard at sunset one June evening to make a social and political statement of support as White Coats for Black Lives. The social unrest triggered by deaths of Black people by police inspired Amore and her classmates. The concern of Amore and her classmates did not go unnoticed, as Dean Hedges with JABSOM leadership held an open forum with the JABSOM ‘ohana to discuss racism in America as a health issue.

YANDZPFBTS

CLASS OF 2022 STUDENTS TAKE A STAND AGAINST RACISM WITH THE HASHTAG #WHITECOATS4BLACKLIVES

Face shields

IN MARCH 2020, UNWILLING TO SIT BACK IN THE FACE OF A PANDEMIC, JABSOM medical students assembled face shields using foam boards, elastic bands and sheets of plastic. They also sought donations in the form of personal protective equipment from community businesses and organizations who might have the equipment but were not open for business during the statewide lockdown. They assembled and distributed more than 2,500 shields.

With planned giving, you can provide long-lasting support for JABSOM and our future healthcare providers, while enjoying financial benefits.

Our team can help you support your area of passion through wills, trusts and life income gifts

For a free confidential conversation and to learn more: University of Hawai‘i Foundation Office of Estate & Gift Planning 808.376.7874 giftplanning@uhfoundation.org www.UHFLegacyGift.org
$1.56M gift to help tackle Hawai‘i’s
doctor shortage

By Margot Schrire, UH Foundation

INSPRED BY THE SUCCESS OF THEIR $1 MILLION DONATION IN 2006 ESTABLISHING THE BARRY AND VIRGINIA WEINMAN FELLOWSHIP to fund 10 medical students’ educations, renowned philanthropists Barry and Virginia Weinman recently donated $1.56 million. This new gift will fund 10 full-tuition scholarships at the UH medical school. The Weinmans, in partnership with The Queen’s Health Systems and Hawai‘i Pacific Health, are also currently supporting 23 JABSOM students on full scholarship.

“We are honored to be able to assist in helping local students become medical doctors, which will help strengthen the medical profession in Hawai‘i,” said Virginia Weinman. “There is an ongoing shortage of doctors in Hawai‘i and our contribution is a tool to help address this issue by recruiting and retaining future physicians.”

Weinman added, “With rising tuition and other costs, medical students can be facing a huge burden of debt upon graduation. They then encounter skyrocketing malpractice insurance premiums in many needed specialties. This encourages them to leave Hawai‘i or practice in fields based on economic realities, rather than the community’s needs.”

JABSOM Dean Jerris Hedges, Barry and Virginia Weinman Endowed Chair, said, “The path to becoming a physician is arduous. The personal investment of time and resources is significant. Providing aspiring public school students from Hawai‘i with financial support through these Weinman Scholarships represents a major commitment to easing the path to and through medical school.”

Since 2001, Barry and Virginia Weinman have personally invested more than $11 million to support UH. This includes support for the UH Cancer Center, the Shidler College of Business and UH Mānoa Athletics.

“We are so grateful to the Weinmans for their deep commitment to the people of Hawai‘i,” said UH Vice President of Advancement and UH Foundation CEO Tim Dolan. “The Weinmans are incredibly generous, strategic philanthropic leaders who understand that UH is an economic driver integral to a healthy Hawai‘i. With every gift to our university, their impressive legacy of ensuring our future wellness grows.”
Alumna awarded first McCorriston Professorship

**IN FEBRUARY 2020 DR. BLISS KANESHIRO (JABSOM MD 2001) WAS NAMED THE INAUGURAL RECIPIENT** of the Colin C. McCorriston, MD Endowed Professorship in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Women’s Health. The late Dr. McCorriston, professor and physician, delivered more than 10,000 babies into the world and influenced generations of Hawai’i doctors who learned from him.

Division Chief of Family Planning Dr. Kaneshiro expresses her gratitude. “I want to convey my commitment to being a good steward of the fund and honoring Dr. McCorriston as I learn more about him and his influence.”

**WATCH THE VIDEO:** HTTPS://YOUTUBE/PLROJGPO4G4

Dr. Kosasa provides generous gift to the Department of OB-GYN

**DR. THOMAS KOSASA, A PROFESSOR EMERITUS,** who was mentored by the late Dr. McCorriston, had established the endowed professorship alongside the McCorriston family. On the same day as Dr. Kaneshiro’s endowment, Dr. Kosasa gave an additional $500,000 gift to support the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Women’s Health.

**Will J. Henderson’s Aloha Fund**

**THE LATE WILL HENDERSON,** who spent 26 years as president and president emeritus of The Queen’s Medical Center (1960-1986) established the Will J. Henderson Aloha Fund at the UH Mānoa medical school to support every third-year medical student. The earnings generated by this generous endowment perpetually helps all third-year medical students in pursuing their dreams of becoming physicians. In 2020-21, the Henderson Aloha Fund provided every JABSOM third-year MD student with $800 in tuition assistance.
Healthcare systems provide full-tuition MD scholarships

HAWAI`I’S HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS HAVE AWARDED over $1.35M in four-year, full-tuition scholarships to medical students in the MD Class of 2024—Hawai`i Pacific Health (HPH) awarded five, The Queen’s Health Systems (QHS) provided three and Adventist Health Castle awarded one. HPH and QHS have supported full-tuition scholarships for students since 2018 while this was the first year for AH Castle.

Militani native and first-year medical student Lauren Mooney, an HPH full-tuition scholarship recipient, was elated to learn that local healthcare systems are investing back into the community, providing opportunities for future doctors.

“I want to thank them (HPH) for believing in me,” Mooney said. “This scholarship has given me the confidence to pursue medicine without fearing the financial burden of this educational path… I am humbled by their generosity and hope I can one day make them proud.”

First-year medical student Piueti Maka of Ewa Beach, graduate of the UH ‘Imi Ho`o la Post-Baccalaureate Program, is grateful to have received a full-tuition scholarship from QHS.

“As a Tongan and with such few Polynesians in medicine, it is such a dream and blessing to be in medical school and also be supported by QHS,” Maka said. “This journey in medicine is not easy but QHS has definitely given me the opportunity to succeed. I hope that I can be a living model of their values and mission.”

Ophthalmology Division fund raises over $100K

IN THE FIRST YEAR OF HIS NEW LEADERSHIP ROLE, newly appointed JABSOM Chief of the Division of Ophthalmology Dr. Gregg Kokame created the Ophthalmology Scholarly Activity Fund to support ophthalmology research, and training, while allowing more educational opportunities for faculty and students.

“I hope that one day the Division of Ophthalmology will expand to the scale that it can become its own department” says Dr. Kokame. The new fund has quickly garnered donor support from the public and the Hawai`i ophthalmology community, with over 15 local ophthalmologists financially contributing to grow the field and support future training here in Hawai`i. 
New addition to med school curriculum: Learning Communities

IN RESPONSE TO THE ONGOING PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE IN HAWAI‘I, JABSOM has increased class sizes to accommodate more trainees, and launched its learning communities program, an emerging trend in medical education.

The program began in July 2020 with enthusiastic financial backing from donors in the healthcare community. Hawai‘i Medical Service Association, UHA Health Insurance, Hawai‘i Pacific Health, and JABSOM Dean’s Advisory Council members Mike Gold and Virginia Weinman (along with husband Barry Weinman), are among the JABSOM Learning Communities program’s generous supporters.

“The solution to the shortage is not simply training more physicians,” says Dr. Jerris Hedges, JABSOM Dean, and Barry and Virginia Weinman Endowed Chair. “We must train them differently, helping them to adopt a new skill set better suited for the future of medical practice in Hawai‘i.”

JABSOM learning communities are small groups of medical students in different stages of their education, blending first-year students with second-, third-, and fourth-year students. This allows Hawai‘i’s future physicians to form connections with students graduating ahead of them, and following them as well. Faculty advisors are role models in communication, empathy and patient interactions, staying with their learning communities from year to year, so students learn with them throughout their four years of medical training.

The learning communities provide a safe environment in which medical students may practice and make mistakes. In this setting, students learn relationship-based skills, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, conflict resolution, organizational influence, and team leadership.

“If medical students simply adopt technological practices without building physician-patient and physician-community connectivity, we will only see more distancing and dissatisfaction,” says Dean Hedges. “This major change in teaching, in conjunction with the expansion of our curriculum, anticipates these practice changes, sustaining the human connectivity we all need.”

Lakshmi Devi and Devraj Sharma Endowed Chair

DR. MARK HIRAOKA, (JABSOM MD 1997), UHP OB-GYN residency program director was named the Lakshmi Devi and Devraj Sharma Endowed Chair. This is the second endowed chair by Dr. Santosh Sharma, professor emeritus, who retired in 2005 but continues to make generous contributions to the department. This endowment expands the existing programs to help homeless, pregnant and poor immigrant patients, to help people with addictions and extend the medical school’s reach to the neighbor islands.

DRS. MARK HIRAOKA AND SANTOSH SHARMA ON MARCH 4, 2020
Freeman Foundation provides debt relief

THE FREEMAN FOUNDATION was established in 1993 through the bequest and in memory of businessman and benefactor Mansfield Freeman, who had a career in international insurance and finance. In the fall of 2019, the UH Foundation and JABSOM submitted a proposal to The Freeman Foundation for a two-year pilot program rewarding committed JABSOM graduates with a one-time $40,000 award applied to qualified medical school student loans. In an effort to address the physician shortage in Hawai‘i, the awardee must agree to practice medicine in Hawai‘i for two years following their core residency training.

The Freeman Foundation awarded JABSOM/UHF with a $240,000 grant, allowing for six awards to be made over academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The Freeman Foundation values residents who have made training in and serving the people of Hawai‘i a priority.

Three applicants were chosen by JABSOM for the 2020-2021 academic year: Drs. Kacie Fox, Daniel Hong, and Rachel Santiago.

Kacie Fox, MD, is a graduate of Punahou School and hails from O‘ahu’s west side. She attended Wheaton College where she completed her pre-med studies with a BS in Biochemistry and minor in General Education. Daniel Hong, MD, born and raised in Honolulu, graduated as valedictorian of McKinley High School. He attended UH Mānoa, graduated Summa Cum Laude with a BA in Biology and Anthropology. Rachel Santiago, MD, is interested in academic pediatrics and her goal is to practice in central or west O‘ahu, caring for the children in underserved populations. Dr. Santiago leads a team to improve interdisciplinary communication in accuracy of orders in a general pediatric clinic. This effort is trying to improve the handoff from physician to ancillary staff by changing the current electronic medical record ordering system in the clinic. These efforts have led to recommendations to provide a safer environment for children there.

Starting from the Inside Out

EACH FALL FOR THE PAST 13 YEARS, JABSOM faculty and staff demonstrate their commitment to the school and its missions by participating in an annual internal giving campaign. To date, we have raised over $5 million dollars to invest back into the projects and programs at the medical school. In the face of a difficult year for giving, with personal finances impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, the JABSOM ‘Ohana set a new record in 2020 of 421 donors. The amazing display of generosity totaled $501,965 benefitting 111 funds at JABSOM.
OB-GYN department awarded for collaborative research

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS (ACOG) recognized the UH Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Women’s Health with the 2019 Roy M. Pitkin Award for demonstrating excellence in research. Their work, “Effects of prophylactic oxytocin on bleeding outcomes in women undergoing dilation and evacuation: a randomized controlled trial,” was chosen for the prestigious publication, The Green Journal in May 2020. Collaborative partners included The Queen’s Medical Center, the UH Department of Biostatistics & Data Management, and the University of Washington.

Future MD recognized for HIV community work

KALEI HOSAKA, JABSON MD 2021 CANDIDATE, received the 2020 Excellence in Public Health Award from the U.S. Public Health Service Physician Professional Advisory Committee for his work with the HIV community. The award recognizes exemplary medical students who worked diligently to advance community health care awareness.

Hosaka, a Kaneohe native and graduate of Hawai’i Baptist Academy, interned in India with Shalom [AIDS] Delhi in a community health clinic that serves neglected HIV patients from the Delhi slums in 2015. At JABSOM, Hosaka focused on important HIV research and public health topics with the UH Hawai’i Center for AIDS. In January 2021 he began a year of research funded by the National Institutes of Health Fogarty Program in Tanzania that focuses on youth with HIV, their mental health and antiretroviral therapy resistance patterns.
Medical student invited to National Leadership Institute

ELISABETH ‘LIS’ SEAMON, AN ‘IMI HO’ÖLA POST-BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM GRADUATE and JABSOM MD 2021 candidate, was selected to participate as a member of the American Medical Association (AMA) Foundation Leadership Development Institute for demonstrating outstanding skills that make her a perfect candidate for further leadership development.

The Hawai‘i Baptist Academy alumna is the first in her family to earn a bachelor’s degree. As a child, Seamon said that pursuing graduate education seemed out of reach—“let alone a medical degree, no one I knew growing up did that.”

Today, Seamon aspires to become an OB-GYN and work in the neighbor islands among communities with high levels of health disparities. She says part of her mission is to encourage disadvantaged students in those areas to pursue medicine and become the next generation of rural doctors.

Accreditation renewed

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION AGENCY FOR CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES APPROVED a ten-year continuing accreditation to the Medical Laboratory Science Program (Medical Technology) at JABSOM. The decision was in part based on a site visit and a peer-review process in 2019 with Program Director Dick Y. Teshima, MPH, MT(ASCP).

JABSOM’s Medical Laboratory Science Program produces healthcare professionals capable of performing complex medical lab procedures that are necessary for a clinician to make appropriate and timely medical decisions for their patients. Federal rules require that medical laboratory scientists possess valid national certification and in Hawai‘i, a state licensure is also required.

Students usually first earn an associate degree as a medical lab technician from Kapi‘olani Community College or other community colleges with appropriate curriculum, before pursuing the final two years to become a medical lab scientist at JABSOM. A second-degree admission route is also available for those who possess a bachelor’s degree and the appropriate prerequisite preparations.
ACCOLADES

In Summer 2020, the American Lung Association (ALA) declared the color turquoise “in season” with its $25 million COVID-19 Action Initiative to fund research to find a cure for the coronavirus pandemic and to prevent future lung-related pandemics. The “I Wear Turquoise” campaign encouraged everyone to imagine a world free of lung disease, and raised awareness and funds to support research for better treatments and improve methods of early detection for lung disease. The ALA calls its Turquoise Ambassadors, committed to raising at least $2,500 toward the goal, key to the campaign’s success. This year JABSOM Dean Jerris Hedges was selected as one of the Turquoise Ambassadors.

Dean Hedges is ALA Turquoise Ambassador

John Melish honored with perpetual award

As a tribute to his gift as an amazing educator, the Hawai`i chapter of the American College of Physicians renamed its Excellence in Teaching Award to The Dr. John Melish Award. For 46 years Dr. Melish dedicated himself to the UH Department of Medicine. He held many titles — from lecturer to chief, assistant clinical professor to chairman, and he also worked in every JABSOM-associated clinic, including that of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Queen Emma Clinics. In addition, he had his own private practice. Many at JABSOM, especially the medical students past and present, recognize him as a great teacher and mentor. Dr. Melish was honored with a reception in the Cafe Waiola at JABSOM in November 2019.

World’s first accredited Simulation Center Fellowship Program

The JABSOM SimTiki Simulation Center made history in September 2020 by becoming the first simulation center in the world to earn fellowship program accreditation by the Society of Simulation in Healthcare. SimTiki first made headlines in 2015 as one of the first 10 centers in the nation accredited for the fields of teaching/education and research. In 2019 SimTiki achieved additional accreditation in the area of assessment. SimTiki has trained 28 international fellows. Graduates include physicians and nurses from Japan, Thailand and South Korea, who spend one to two years in a postgraduate program focused on the development of educator skills.
She has been called "the velvet hammer" for her strong and impactful leadership, delivered with genuine warmth and kindness. During her illustrious career, Dr. Patricia Lanoie Blanchette (JABSOM MD 1979) has guided JABSOM, UHP and the UH Cancer Center through challenges and successes. She retired at the end of September and was gifted a large metal print featuring a collage of JABSOM.

Dr. Blanchette is a product of both the UH system and the Ivy League. She earned an AA degree at Leeward Community College while raising three small children, a BA in Pre-Professional Studies at UH Mānoa, and earned concurrent MD and MPH degrees at JABSOM and the UH School of Public Health. She is a Distinguished Alumna of both UH Mānoa and Leeward Community College. After medical school, Dr. Blanchette completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at Dartmouth Medical School and a two-year fellowship in geriatric medicine at Harvard Medical School. She is board certified in internal medicine and geriatric medicine. Dr. Blanchette returned to Hawai‘i in 1984 as the first fellowship-trained geriatrician in the state. She founded JABSOM’s Department of Geriatric Medicine and has received many well-earned community awards for her outstanding service to Hawai‘i.

A former CEO of its UHP, Dr. Blanchette recently served as chief medical officer while serving as interim associate dean for clinical affairs at the UH medical school. Before that, she also served as interim associate director for administration at the UH Cancer Center. Among a long list of accomplishments, Dr. Blanchette has said that one of her best titles in Hawai‘i is “Billy’s mom.”

“Since my first day as a medical student in 1974 I have known that JABSOM is a special place.”

~ Dr. Blanchette

Her youngest son is Bill Blanchette, former WAC Most Valuable Player and UH All-American as pitcher and first baseman. “It’s the only thing that ever gave me a standing ovation,” she said with a smile.

Her daughter is an OB-GYN physician whose sub-specialty is reproductive endocrinology at the University of Vermont and her oldest son is a teacher at Punahou School. In lieu of a retirement party, messages of gratitude to Dr. Blanchette were collected and made into a video. Watch the video: https://youtu.be/RDNA0HXI5XG

Lucy Wong leads Friends of the Medical School

Dr. Lucy Wong (JABSOM MD 1984) served as vice president of the JABSOM Friends of the Medical School (FOMS) from Dec. 2016-2019, before officially transitioning into the role of President. As a primary care physician, Dr. Wong is excited to work with the students and share her experiences in the field. She looks forward to contributing in support of their mission of being “FRIENDS to the medical school.” Dr. Wong succeeds past president, Dr. Jason Fleming (JABSOM MD 2002) emergency medicine physician and a medical director of an emergency department on O‘ahu. He continues to serve the FOMS on its board of directors.
Longtime Communications Director retires

KNOWN FOR BEING A HARD-HITTING INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER, Tina Shelton stepped into the role of communications director and headed the transformation of the Office of Communications into the medical school’s own multimedia news station, producing articles, videos, photos and social media content. In addition, she served as the legislative and government affairs coordinator. Shelton capitalized on her journalism experience from news stations KGMB, KITV and KHON, bringing JABSOM’s top news to international attention. After nearly 13 years, Shelton left “the best job she’s ever had.” She and her husband, Steve Beaudry, along with their fur-children, Trixie and Snoopes, relocated to Georgia to be near her older sister.

New Senior Lead HR Specialist

WITH MORE THAN 21 YEARS IN HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) under her belt, Kathy Matsumoto now leads the HR team at the UH medical school as the new senior lead HR specialist. She joined JABSOM as a student assistant in 1996. After receiving her BA in psychology from UHM in 1997, she began her professional career as an HR specialist at JABSOM, eventually working her way up to become a senior HR specialist and serving as interim senior lead specialist since June 2018.

New faces in Surgery

GREGG KOKAME, MD, MMM ASSUMES THE ROLE OF CHIEF OF THE DIVISION OF OPHTHALMOLOGY in the department of surgery at JABSOM. Before joining the UH medical school as clinical faculty in 1989, Dr. Kokame obtained his MD and completed his residency at the UCLA School of Medicine. He completed his retina fellowship training at the Bascom Palmer Eye institute at the University of Miami Health System, one of the nation’s top eye hospitals and training programs. Dr. Kokame succeeds Malcolm R. Ing, M.D., F.A.C.S, who came to JABSOM in 1968. Dr. Ing led the division for many years, bringing it to prominence in the local medical community and setting the stage for the program’s growth.

Chancellor Emeritus retires

AFTER A FULFILLING CAREER IN RESEARCH, MEDICINE AND UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION, Virginia Hinshaw, PhD retired in June after 13 years with UH Mānoa. The chancellor emeritus and professor in the department of tropical medicine, medical microbiology and pharmacology leaves behind the Dr. Rosita Leong Mini-Medical School on Healthy Aging, which she launched in 2014. The five-week program for seniors was one of several ways Dr. Hinshaw and JABSOM fulfilled a community need for an often sidelined segment of society.

DR. VIRGINIA HINSHAW

TINA SHELTON

DR. GREGG KOKAME

KATHY MATSUMOTO

DR. VIRGINIA HINSHAW

TINA SHELTON

Dr. Gregg Kokame

Dr. Virginia Hinshaw

Kathy Matsumoto

Chancellor Emeritus

New Senior Lead HR Specialist

New faces in Surgery

Longtime Communications Director retires
Skillful hands in both the OR and art studio

By Kapi’olani Ching, UH Foundation

IF YOU WERE TO WATCH NEW YORK-BASED NEUROSURGEON KATHRYN KO (JABSOM MD 1983) at work, you would likely notice the expert precision of her hands as she navigates the delicate anatomy of her patients. You might sense her acute concentration and ability to maintain focus while remaining attuned to her surroundings. You may even notice her mastery in handling surgical tools with both her left and right hand, a skill she developed while a medical student at JABSOM. These same skills are not limited to her work in the operating room—they carry over into the art studio.

A graduate of Kalani High School, Ko earned her bachelor of arts degree in zoology and her medical degree from UH Mānoa. She moved to New York for residency and became the first female JABSOM graduate to become a neurosurgeon. Today, she has more than 30 years of emergency surgery experience.

Around mid-career, Ko was serving as chief of neurosurgery at a level one trauma center in the Bronx when she began to feel that something was missing in her professional life. On a whim she took a few beginner’s courses in painting at a local YMCA and slowly realized her passion for art. She later went on to earn a master of fine arts degree in representational painting.

Ko’s ambidexterity also came about as a result of her coursework at JABSOM. To improve her concentration during the long and extensive lectures, she trained herself to write with her left hand—something that less than 1 percent of the population can do naturally. Looking back, she believes this skill may have been the key to unlocking her passion for art.

“I think my career became richer and more balanced after I went into art,” added Ko, “and I think a message to the younger generation is don’t be boxed in. In this short life, you shouldn’t leave any dream untried.”

‘97 Alum helps build med school at Washington State University

JOSHUA JACOBS, MD, FAAFP (JABSOM MD 1997) is now the inaugural chair of the department of medical education and clinical sciences at the Washington State University Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine. In Feb. 2020, Dr. Jacobs returned to JABSOM as plenary speaker at the Health Professions Education Conference held annually here. He spoke of how JABSOM contributed to his success in helping build a medical school.

Dr. Jacobs’ department directs the entire program leading to the MD degree with more than 800 faculty members from multiple disciplines and specialties, nurses, pharmacists, and other biomedical sciences. Teaching of the medical students spans Washington State in collaboration with more than 100 affiliate clinics and hospitals.

Born and raised in Kailua, O’ahu, Dr. Jacobs taught at JABSOM from 2000-2010. He then went to Singapore as a senior consultant in family medicine at the National University Hospital and assistant dean for education at the National University of Singapore. In Tokyo, Japan, he was a visiting research professor. He also was the inaugural editor for two international medical education journals based in the United Kingdom. Dr. Jacobs was a senior director at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) in Washington, DC, where he interacted regularly with other national organizations involved in the training and licensure of physicians in the United States. WATCH THE VIDEO: [HTTPS://YOUTUBE.COM/5SWDH322QMN]
NO INSTITUTION HAS PERFECTED HOW TO ACCOMMODATE DISABLED PERSONS, but the triumph of one researcher at JABSOM is a noteworthy celebration and a model of what is possible when institutions, faculty and a very special student unite. Jonathan Yap is making advances in science diversity as both a Native Hawaiian and quadriplegic scientist.

As a young child growing up in Wahiawa, Yap had always been intrigued by his science classes. However, while bodysurfing at Sandy Beach Park, treacherous waves came crashing, along with the prospect of a career in research. As a high school student, Yap was rendered without the use of his limbs and no manual dexterity.

“After getting hurt, in many ways I felt lost– it was confusing and trying to define how I would be able to have a journey that leads me to where I ultimately would like to be,” said Yap.

Nevertheless, he soldiered on and continued to follow his passion for science to UH Mānoa where he earned not one but three degrees– a bachelor’s in biology, a master’s in physiology and, most recently in May 2019, a PhD in cell and molecular biology.

“I’d always known that JABSOM is a quality institution,” Yap said. “I found the faculty to be consistently encouraging and eager to assist in the pursuit of my career goals.”

Nationally, there are only handfuls of disabled individuals who are able to earn a doctorate in the biomedical sciences. As a graduate student, Yap won national level funding for his career development and pursuit of his science, challenging institutes at the National Institutes of Health to accommodate funding for technical assistance to be his “hands” in the lab. Much of the additional federal support was matched by the Hawai‘i State Government and none of it would have been possible without UH JABSOM faculty advocating for these accommodations on his behalf.

“Because of my complete reliance on my technicians to perform the manual requirements of experiments, I’ve developed a special bond with each of them that I value to this day,” Yap said about technicians Monica Montgomery, Whitney Regan, Jan Garo, Jason Irei and Max Bishop. As he continues his research at UH JABSOM, Jonathan Yap hopes to leave a mark in the scientific world and to inspire others like him.

“I really hope to contribute in the sense of diversity as I recognize that there aren’t very many disabled individuals that are represented in this field. I understand that it’s largely a function of the field, itself, being inherently hands-on that presents a number of challenges and I think the process of understanding and navigating those challenges has been quite a formative experience in my own life,” Yap said. WATCH THE VIDEO: HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/DVAJX0UEGTC
WE CAUGHT UP WITH FIVE ALUMNI to find out what happened after graduating from the UH medical school in 1970, which was then a two-year program of basic medical sciences.

“I have always been grateful for the opportunity to be a student of JABSOM...” said Barry Weled, MD. “I felt I received a superior education preparing me for the final two years at the University of Washington.”

Dr. Weled’s research includes acute respiratory failure, and organization and process of care in the ICU. A Society of Critical Care Medicine member, he was the lead author on best practice in mechanical ventilation in a 2015 journal article. COVID-19 prompted a new journal article he co-authored about reducing the need for mechanical ventilation by using face mask CPAP in COVID-19 patients.

Marianne Egeland Neifert, MD, MTS, began medical school with a five-month-old infant back when women comprised only 10% of medical schools nationwide. Being a young mother shaped the rest of her medical career as she co-founded the Denver Mothers Milk Bank, the Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition, and the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. Sought in all 50 states to educate medical students, hospital staff, and healthcare workers on Native Indian Reservations, she has written several Dr. Mom books, and contributes to the media as a breastfeeding and pediatric expert. She was also recently inducted into the Colorado Women’s Hall of Fame.

After JABSOM, Edward L. Bourke, Jr., MD, was certified in both internal medicine and gastroenterology, he began his practice at The Queen’s Professional Office Building in 1977 working at most of O‘ahu’s hospitals. He had a health scare a year after he closed his practice in 2005. Inspired toward a better lifestyle, Dr. Bourke now splits his time between Kailua, O‘ahu, and Mobile, Alabama, focusing on life and his 12 grandchildren ranging from 6 to 23 years.

“I must acknowledge that I have enjoyed being a physician and that my personal life has been rewarding and privileged,” Dr. Bourke reminisced. “The success I have enjoyed would not have been possible without the help of many people, including my parents, the Ko‘olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, and the State of Hawai‘i.”

Roland Tam, MD, a 1964 Kalani High School graduate went on to earned his medical degree from the University of Washington after JABSOM. He completed his straight surgery internship at Orange County Medical Center, and residencies at UC Irvine and Long Beach Veterans Administration Hospital and at UC San Francisco. He was certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology for head and neck surgery in 1977. Dr. Tam is affiliated with the Kapi‘olani Medical Center for Women & Children (KMCWC), Kuakini Medical Center and Adventist Health Castle.

“It has been gratifying. I don’t think I have any burnout,” Dr. Tam said. “I plan to continue serving my patients, as state-wide there is a shortage of physicians, particularly in my specialty.”

Bill Hagbom, MD, spent the summer of 1970 at Kapi‘olani Maternity and Gynecologic Hospital in the mornings learning sterile technique and how to tie knots and afternoons studying on the beach at Black Point for Part of the National Boards.

“A highlight was a three-month elective at Kaiser Honolulu, which was then located on Ala Moana right next to the Ilikai Hotel,” Dr. Hagbom said. “They put me up at the Ilikai Marina Tower, 12th floor facing the ocean. I could take call from the swimming pool at the Ilikai. Life was good!”

Dr. Hagbom retired leaving a practice consisting of five women, which he said was an appropriate evolution reflected in medical school enrollment and OB-GYN residences. He is an adult general practitioner at the San Francisco Volunteers in Medicine and helps low-income and uninsured patients from San Francisco and San Mateo. His free California Medical License states: ‘Volunteer Service — No payment for service allowed.’
Virtual CME focuses on impact of COVID-19 on Hawai‘i healthcare

Despite the lack of casinos and all you can eat buffets at the JABSOM Alumni Association’s first virtual Continuing Medical Education (CME) symposium in October, the group had a great time and earned CME credit. The original plan was to return to Las Vegas but virtual was the next best thing.

Over 100 participants attended “Perspectives on COVID-19 in Hawai‘i” on Zoom moderated by Dr. Ryon Nakasone (JABSOM MD 2006). JABSOM alumni including Drs. Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, Jordan Lee, Lauren Oshima, Lauren Okamoto, Anthony Guerrero and Mark Mugishii of HMSA discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the ICU, nursing homes, mental health, primary care, public health and the overall impact on healthcare in Hawai‘i.

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Humble surgeon, organ-transplant pioneer

LIVINGTON WONG, SURGEON AND ARCHITECT of Hawai‘i’s organ donation and transplant system passed away at age 90. He studied chemistry at UH Mānoa before earning his medical degree from Oregon Health Sciences School of Medicine. In 1965, Dr. Wong became the third Asian-American to graduate from the prestigious Massachusetts General Hospital Surgery Residency Program.

The next year, Dr. Wong returned home to Hawai‘i to join JABSOM as a clinical instructor in the department of surgery. Over the next decade, he rose through the academic ranks to become professor of surgery, vice chair, acting chair and interim chair. Truly a pioneer in kidney and bone marrow transplants in Hawai‘i, Dr. Wong founded Surgical Associates, Inc., the Hawai‘i Bone Marrow Donor Registry, as well as the statewide Emergency Management System. JABSOM Chair of the Department of Surgery Dr. Kenric Murayama recalls Dr. Wong as both a “surgeon’s surgeon” who provided mentorship, advice and support to many in the surgical community as well as a “surgeon-scientist” who understood the importance of scientific investigation and inquiry.

“Most of all, Dr. Wong loved what he did!” said Dr. Murayama. “We have lost a true giant in our medical community.”

Dr. Wong was the recipient of numerous awards including the A.H. Robins Outstanding Physician of the Year Award in 1978, Ten Who Made a Difference in Hawai‘i (awarded by the Honolulu Star-Bulletin) in 1990, the University of Hawai‘i Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award in 1998, and the Maryknoll School Distinguished Alumni Award in 1999. He was a member of the prestigious Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society and served as the President of the Pacific Coast Surgical Association from 2003 – 2004.

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DR. WALLACE CHUN (JABSOM 1969), psychiatrist for 40 years. At age 39, he entered medical school as a father with nine children and spent most of his medical career serving the federal government in a U.S. Army Hospital in Germany and the Honolulu Veterans Affairs.

DR. CALVIN SIA, UH clinical professor of pediatrics. He was a champion for children with special needs, abused children, and those children without access to medical care. He affected broad changes in both the national and international worlds of children’s medical and emergency care every decade since the 1960s.

DR. YUJEN EDWARD “TED” HSIA, UH professor emeritus of cell & molecular Biology and Pediatrics. Known as the “Father of Genetics” in Hawai‘i, he helped launch Hawai‘i Community Genetics, a clinical collaboration among Kapi‘olani Medical Center for Women & Children, the Department of Health and the UH medical school.

DR. RANDALL COVIN, pathologist, UH assistant clinical professor, director of the Blood Bank of Hawai‘i for 12 years and director of the American Red Cross in Portland, Oregon. He loved teaching and was known for being accessible, caring, and enthusiastic about the processes of blood banking and transfusions.

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DR. FRANK TABRAH, UH professor emeritus of physiology and community health. He developed the Pacific-wide preceptorship program for both physicians and physicians in training in Micronesia. He held multiple leadership positions at Straub Clinic and worked for over 30 years in pediatric, occupational and hyperbaric medicine.
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