As we continue to build on the foundation laid before us, both DNHH and NHCOE strategic plans include refocusing on the need to achieve more cultural resonance within all policies, programs, and services we offer. My career over the past 20 years coordinating culturally respective events, programs, activities, and curricula for multiple grass-root Hawaiian movements has taught me much about this subject, but nothing more important than the concept of Nā Pou Kihi (the corner posts). With direction from DNHH Chair Dr. Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula and NHCOE Director Dr. Winnie Lee, we will be implementing principles and framework of Nā Pou Kihi as a guide to achieving social and health equity for Kanaka ʻŌiwi. Like the corner posts of a solid house, each of these 4 concepts are essential to achieving well-being. When coupled with He Kukui Kiaʻi (guiding principles/values) we really begin to see this model come alive. To help us all better understand this guiding framework, each of the four Pou Kihi will be featured in upcoming newsletters!

Ke ʻAno Hawaiʻi o ka Nohona 
(The Hawaiian Way of Life) 
By Tiffnie Kakalia

Ke Ao ʻŌiwi: Indigenous Space
Ka Mālama ʻĀina: Environmental Stewardship
Ka ʻAi Pono: Healthy Consumption
Ka Wai Ola: Social Justice

Guiding Principles/Values
Kūlana: Rank/Authority
Kuleana: Responsibility
Kumuhana: Reason/Purpose

Together We Go Far
By Emma Singh

Finding a giant barrier in your path is no fun, but it’s a pretty potent way to test one’s strength and spirit. Last year, the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence (NHCOE)
Together... continued

faced one of its biggest challenges due to the sudden loss of a major federal grant. The hard part was knowing that there would be big program cutbacks - to the education, research and community partnership activities that help improve the health of all Native Hawaiians. Jobs at NHCOE were 'evaporating,' the whole situation felt slightly surreal, and wholly unexpected. Yet behind the scenes a new and defiant dynamic was in the air. Nobody gave voice to the idea of leaving NHCOE - or to leaving each other behind. We found that it was our shared commitment and passion to making the Native Hawaiian community healthier that kept us pushing forward.

Thus began the idea for an unwavering campaign of advocacy to help educate the Hawai’i State Legislature and other community leaders not only about the health and educational needs of Native Hawaiians, but also the importance of building a diverse workforce through exposure to and education of health fields. The perseverance of the centers leadership paid off, with the Legislature recently approving funding that provides NHCOE with a regular stream of funds to support our mission of promoting health, education and cultural opportunities for Native Hawaiians and other underserved minorities. JABSOM’s Dean, Dr. Jerris Hedges, also recognized the importance of the work being done, showing his support by approving the institutionalization of permanent NHCOE faculty and staff positions.

With a rejuvenated energy in the air this year we’ve acquired new grants and built new partnerships, reflected on former goals and rekindled past relationships. These changes did not happen overnight but instead occurred in a series of small, but workable steps. As we like to say around here: “If you want to go FAST go alone, if you want to go FAR, go TOGETHER.”

Where determination lives....new beginnings will bloom

By Sachi Kaulukukui

With the support of Kamehameha Schools, the James and Abigail Campbell Family Foundation, and the Pacific Links Hawai’i Foundation, Nānākuli Pathways to Health was launched in August 2013. NHCOE’s philosophy to “grow our own healers” is the driving force in this pilot program with Nānākuli High and Intermediate 7-12th graders, approximately 70% of whom are Native Hawaiian. Our partnership with Nānākuli teachers, administration, and community develops promising curricula through mentoring, ‘aina-based and culturally relevant strategies that will empower students into the healthcare field and promote healthy living for students and their ‘ohana. Ultimately, through these discoveries, students will recognize their kuleana (duty) to return to their community to serve and be role models for others. The Nānākuli Pathways to Health program successfully carried out a number of initiatives in their first year, with just a few that are highlighted here:

Healthy Keiki Can:
* 1st year JABSOM medical students visit ~120 Nānākuli High Health Academy students (visited monthly in small group settings) to teach a variety of health-related DOE curriculum, including: ethics in healthcare, clinical skills, and good hygiene. The medical students also provide mentoring, personal guidance and kōkua with college and financial aid applications.

Ku‘ao‘alo:
* 1st year JABSOM students mentor Nānākuli 7th and 8th grade AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) students, meeting monthly to discuss college and healthy living. Students and mentors further bond with each other through cultural field trips and service learning projects around O‘ahu including: Papahana Ku‘ao‘alo, Waimea Falls Park, and Bishop Museum.

1st Annual Community Health Fair:
* Working with their JABSOM mentors, the high school students prepared, organized and executed a community health fair for their 7th and 8th grade counterparts. The students showcased their knowledge gained throughout the year with demonstrations and posters, sharing things like healthy eating practices, awareness of diseases in our population, and how past history has affected our current health.
Honoring the Past, Preparing for the Future

By Kawika Mortensen, MD

To reaffirm our collective commitment to the restoration of Native Hawaiian Health and to honor those who have made great contributions to this effort, an Ahu Ola (shrine) was recently built within the JABSOM Māla Lā‘au Lapa‘au (healing garden). Traditionally defined as a mound, altar, or shrine, this Ahu was constructed entirely of pōhaku (stone) gathered from across the world by family and friends of the department, each holding the mana of its birthplace and person who chose it. Built to serve as a point of contemplation and reflection, this Ahu serves as a reminder of our duty to continue fighting for optimal health and well-being for the individual Hawaiian and the collective lāhui (nation) as a whole. Its intent is for students, faculty, staff, and guests who visit to reflect and become re-inspired on their own personal path to health and wellness, while helping facilitate the health and well-being of others.

- Mahalo e Ke Akua -

E lawe i ke aʻo a mālama, a e ʻoi mau ka naʻauao
He who takes his teachings and applies them increases his knowledge

By Kawika Mortensen, MD

Congratulations to our new kauka ʻopio (young doctors), Native Hawaiian students Akolea Ioane, Sara Kuʻulei Miles, and Kenneth Ortiz. Honoring tradition, their recent graduation from JABSOM was celebrated at the 4th annual Kīhei Ceremony. Like the white coat which physicians wear, the kihei (ceremonial cloak) is a symbol of duty, virtue, teamwork and dedication. Receiving it serves as a reminder of the kuleana (responsibility) each wearer bears. All three kauka personally hand made their kihei utilizing traditional tools and techniques, choosing patterns and symbols intended to tell the story of each individual’s voyage toward healing. As a mentor to all three students, Dr. Winona Lee has watched these kauka ʻopio grow up, “You have knowledge, you have values from your family, you have what we have tried to impart on you as your kumu, and now you have a kuleana to carry that out. To honor your family, honor those who came before you, and to do service for the people of Hawai‘i and the Pacific.”

- I mua e nā kauka ʻopio! -
Travels from Across the Globe...
By Dillon Kāpena Tacdol

Aloha! My name is Dillon Kāpena Tacdol and I am a junior biology major attending the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. Over this past summer, I was given a wonderful opportunity by the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence (NHCOE) to attend the Summer Medical and Dental Education Program (SMDEP) at the University of California at Los Angeles. SMDEP’s mission is to serve as a model learning community in which we got to examine a variety of healthcare issues affecting medically underserved communities through problem-based learning cases, lectures, clinical experiences, small-group discussions, and a research project! I’m so grateful and learned so much over the 6 week program!

The most important knowledge that I received while attending the program was about health disparities. I felt that this issue was crucial as there are many people in Hawai‘i, especially Hawaiians that do not have health care due to a shortage in primary care physicians. As a student aspiring to become a doctor in Hawai‘i, learning about health disparities provided me inspiration and a constant reminder of how much we need local physicians. I am grateful to NHCOE for helping me attend the UCLA SMDEP program which broadened my knowledge and prepared me greatly for medical school. I would like to specifically thank Dr. Winona Lee, Dr. Gregory Maskarinec, Kim Yamauchi, Dr. Jonathan Awaya, Rachel Loo, and Terre Hawkins for helping me with my educational endeavors.

The First Members of JABSOM’s MD Class of 2018
By Kawika Mortensen, MD

The ‘Imi Ho‘ola Post-baccalaureate program has played a major role in making medical careers possible for disadvantaged and underrepresented students for over 40 years. ‘Imi Ho‘oala (those who seek to heal) is a challenging 12-month program in the Department of Native Hawaiian Health designed to provide educational opportunities to students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are deemed capable of succeeding in medical school and have demonstrated a commitment to serve in areas of need in Hawai‘i and the Pacific. Each school year, up to 12 students are selected to participate in this program and upon successful completion they matriculate into JABSOM’s MD program. The program is especially committed to building the workforce of diverse physicians for rural communities in Hawai‘i and the Pacific, and its record in that area is exceptional. At least 80% of the doctors trained through the ‘Imi program are practicing medicine in under-served neighborhoods in Hawai‘i where they are needed most.

Congratulations to our newest graduates, pictured from left to right holding their JABSOM acceptance letters: Jalkennen Joseph (Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia); Matthew Kawahara (Honolulu, O‘ahu); Joel Sabugo (Waialua, O‘ahu); Gabriel Lapid (Barrigada, Guam); Leimomi Kanagusuku (Wa‘ianae, O‘ahu); Arcelita Imasa (Luzon, Philippines); Chad Imanaka (Hilo, Hawai‘i) and Alister Tang (Honolulu, O‘ahu).