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# IMPACT REPORT Q3

THIRD QUARTER



People,  
Place,  
Promise



**College of Tropical Agriculture  
and Human Resources**  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

*The founding college of the  
University of Hawai'i, established 1907*

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## THIRD QUARTER

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College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
**People, Place, Promise**



*“CTAHR not only brings global perspectives into the college community and curriculum; it prepares its graduates to contribute locally, nationally, and internationally as well.”*

### **Today, CTAHR...Tomorrow, the World!**

This is the theme of this quarter's *Impact Report*, which highlights the accomplishments of students and recent alumni who are using skills and perspectives gained at CTAHR to pursue some unexpected study and career paths, both in Hawai'i and around the world. A fashion design graduate partners with a UH art major to create a clothing line that has high-style Hollywood stars clamoring for their pieces, while Animal Sciences alumni who are training in veterinary schools follow in the footsteps of a CTAHR-associated vet who cared for the animal actors of the early movie industry. An alumna with an attraction to plants, conservation, and communication parlays these interests into a law degree and an Environmental Law certificate in UH's law school. A third-year medical student in Japan shows how undergraduate experiments in chicken feed additives and egg-laying helped him learn about human nephrology. Finally, groups of students participate in traditional and innovative agriculture in China, providing aid and returning with new techniques and viewpoints. This quarter's report shows that CTAHR not only brings global perspectives into the college community and curriculum; it prepares its graduates to contribute locally, nationally, and internationally as well.

Aloha,

Maria Gallo  
Dean and Director of CTAHR

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# Far-East Farming and Floriculture

**A**griculture is an ancient global practice, and international exposure can provide a broader perspective as students enter this venerable profession. Two groups of students recently visited China for the wide variety of experiences that only ag in its many forms can offer.

Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences (TPSS) students David Shepard, Aleta Corpuz, and Flora Chen and their professor Hye-Ji Kim spent two weeks in Beijing, Nanjing, Fu Zhou, and other areas studying horticulture production, joined by other U.S. professors and students interested in the unique challenges and innovations of Chinese agriculture. The students learned that a fifth of China's arable soil is polluted and cannot be cultivated, but they experienced hydroponic systems and large-scale production factories where they compared Chinese and Hawai'i practices for familiar products such as anthuriums and mushrooms. Many of the facilities they toured, from biotech companies and agricultural research stations to tea plantations, demonstrated the work that goes into keeping more than 1 billion people fed, utilizing concepts that Hawai'i's much smaller but equally land-strapped population and ag producers might do well to heed.



*TPSS students, led by Professor Kim (right), enjoy a two-week tour of China's agriculture.*

The other international student journey truly embraced the “work” in work-study. Felicia Geronimo (TPSS), Tyler Daguay (Plant and Environmental Protection Sciences), and Miho Fujii and Kelli Zakimi (Food Science and Human Nutrition) joined Sylvia Trinh of Academic and Student Affairs on a 10-day adventure in Hong Kong to learn about farm and food issues. They stayed at a workcamp and traveled to other farms to weed, till, harvest, repair facilities, uproot trees, and aid in pest management. They had the extra challenge of cooking and feeding the group on a budget comparable to that of the average farm worker. Workcamp participants came from all over the world, so the CTAHR students got to learn about many other cultures and share some aloha with new friends.

As one student reflected, “I learned not only a great deal about Hong Kong's culture, environment, and economy, but I also learned a whole lot more about myself. Being so far from home, I found out what I truly stood for... I understood myself, my decisions; most important, I became more confident in myself.”

*CTAHR students get their hands (and feet) dirty harvesting rice alongside their Hong Kong hosts.*

**Travel blogs by the students and their advisors:**  
<http://ctahrasao2014hongkong.blogspot.com/>  
<http://aletacorpuz4.wix.com/aletagoesabroad>  
<http://dasheprd.tumblr.com/>



# CTAHR Meets Hollywood

**T**here's more than one way to get to Hollywood, as CTAHR alumni and supporters show—including veterinary skills and fashion design.

While many aspiring fashionistas see New York as the place to make their mark, there's nothing to compare with seeing one's designs gracing a Hollywood star. Fighting Eel founder and Apparel Product Design and Merchandising (now Fashion Design and Merchandising) alumna Lan Chung and her business partner Rona Bennett know the feeling: they count Lindsay Lohan, Eva Longoria, Hayden Panettiere, and other celebrities among the enthusiasts of their chic yet wearable designs. It's all evidence of what an online celebrity fashion boutique describes as "the latest fashion addiction of choice in Hollywood... Fighting Eel." Lan and fellow UH alumna Rona have expanded their clothing line, established in 2003, to three stores on O'ahu and recently added a sister line, Ava Sky; they've also received numerous accolades and awards, including the Governor's Fashion Award for Established Designers for 2013.



*Rona Bennett and CTAHR alumna Lan Chung created their clothing company Fighting Eel in 2003.*

The story of CTAHR supporter and Hollywood veterinarian Charles Reid points to another path toward associating with the stars—four-legged ones, that is. Dr. Reid, a close friend of CTAHR's early pre-veterinary advisor and Animal Sciences professor Robert M. Nakamura, treated some of the movie industry's most famous animal actors, including Lassie, Roy Roger's horse Trigger, and "Francis, the talking mule." Thanks to his association with CTAHR's Pre-Veterinary Club and his mentorship of many pre-veterinary students, he established the Charles Reid, DVM Memorial Scholarship in 1979, an endowment that has since provided almost 250 scholarships for pre-veterinary students at UH Mānoa.

Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Sciences alumni Geneva Graef and Jonathan Onaga are the latest recipients of this scholarship, as well as the prestigious Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) State of Hawaii Scholarships—a combined total of almost \$300,000 towards their DVM degrees. Geneva is attending Washington State University's veterinary school, while Jonathan is at Colorado State University's. The WICHE Scholarship requires that recipients come back to practice one year in Hawai'i for each year of scholarship support, so Geneva and Jonathan will be returning to the Islands, at least for a while... but perhaps Dr. Reid's scholarship will inspire a trip to Hollywood, as well!

*Dr. Charles Reid is seen here with his patient Lassie, one of Hollywood's beloved animal actors.*



## He Speaks for the Trees

**P**lant and Environmental Protection Sciences BS alumnus Matthew Alan Sylva is descended from farmers and plant lovers on both sides of his family. He has been interested in plants “since before I could talk,” which led eventually to one of his concurrent bachelor’s degrees. And though plants came before speech, his interest in communication soon caught up, manifesting first in his BA in journalism and later in his study of the law.

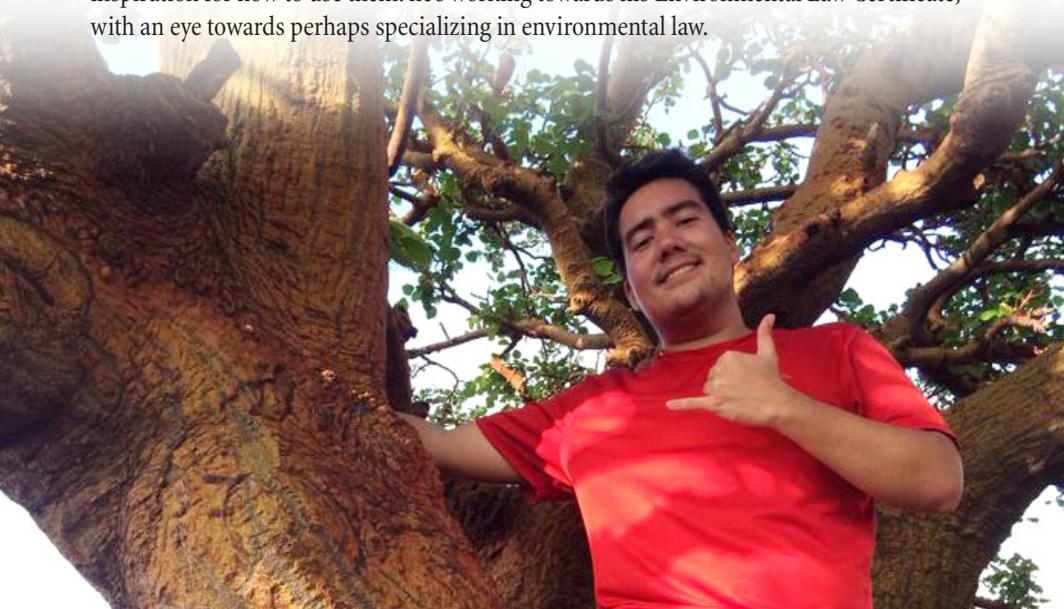
During his time at CTAHR, Matt put both these interests to good use, not only researching the conservation and cultivation of native trees and other plants, but also communicating the results of his research. He won a CTAHR Award for Merit for Undergraduates at the CTAHR/COE Symposium and the first-place award for Natural Sciences Presentations at the Honors/UROP Symposium, successes he credits to his philosophy that people are capable of greater things than they realize.

It was working on his senior Honors project on wiliwili trees in Waikoloa Dry Forest that taught Matt the most: not only subject-specific knowledge but also time-management skills and a sense of perspective that have proven invaluable in law school. His mentor and thesis adviser Dr. Leyla Kaufman was impressed with his “motivation and determination” during the extensive effort the project required, including over 180 hours of fieldwork: “He wasn’t intimidated by the amount of work needed to achieve his objectives. . . counting and tagging inflorescences, measuring tree diameters, counting seedlings, etc.,” she remembers; “I was also very impressed with his presentation and communication skills.”

After graduation, Matt spent some time working, as is his summer practice, with native Hawaiian plants at the Amy B.H. Greenwell Ethno-Botanical Garden on his native Big Island before starting UH’s William S. Richardson School of Law in the fall. But he says his CTAHR classes and mentors, especially Drs. Kaufman and Mark Wright, remain “crucial” in aiding him along his journey. This is true not only in terms of skills—learning about governmental agencies and laws in a PEPS Environmental Law class and gaining writing experience that’s now helping him with legal briefs—but also in the inspiration for how to use them: he’s working towards his Environmental Law Certificate, with an eye towards perhaps specializing in environmental law.



*Matt says his CTAHR classes and mentors remain “crucial” in his journey.*



## The Road to Med School

**W**hich came first, the egg-fortifying project or the clinical rotation? For Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Science (HNFAS) alumnus Nobuhisa Morimoto, there's no question. As he explains, his studies and research at CTAHR—including the aforementioned project to boost the omega-3 fatty acid content of chicken eggs—were integral in preparing him for his next step, medical training at the Tokyo Medical and Dental University.

After the required med school core classes in his first year, Nobu chose nephrology for his research project in his second year, learning genetics and molecular biology techniques related to the kidneys. These included Western blotting (an analytical technique used to detect proteins), promoter assays, and reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction—techniques, he reflects, that he was well prepared to master thanks to his research experiences at CTAHR. Specifically, he says, his studies with Drs. Diane Dooley, Joannie Dobbs, and Alan Titchenal of HNFAS and Harry Ako of Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering prepared him for this project and his new training.

Dr. Ako remembers Nobu's work in his lab, which he also sees as important to his former student's future success in medical school and as a doctor. "This lab really encourages free and creative thought," he explains, qualities of mind that are in demand among med school applicants and invaluable for physicians.

As he moves closer to doctorhood, Nobu also appreciates the learning he did outside the lab and the classroom at the college. "I really feel that my experiences in CTAHR are helping me in many ways," he confirms. "The service projects I did as a scholarship recipient remind me of the importance of giving back to the community and motivate me to study harder. It was so fortunate that I met many individuals in CTAHR who really cared about students. Now I want to study harder to become a proficient physician who can provide the best care for each patient I see."

Nor was it all work and no play for Nobu—attendees of the CTAHR Centennial Celebration may recall his memorable Michael Jackson impersonation. And given a choice between two equally proficient doctors, who wouldn't choose the one who could also moonwalk?

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