HILO ENTREPRENEURS: DRIVEN BY LOCAL VALUES

"Talk Story with Three Hilo-Born Entrepreneurs" was not a typical Kīpapa i ke Ala lecture. Words like trust, love and responsibility were woven in the two-hour conversation on November 30, 2011 at the Ala Moana Hotel’s Hibiscus Ballroom. The event, which was free and open to the public, drew more than 600 people from the UH and local business communities.

Many in the audience flew from Hilo to hear from the three successful businessmen – Allan Ikawa, founder of Big Island Candies; Duane Kurisu, founder of aio; and Barry Taniguchi, president of KTA Super Stores. All three men come from humble backgrounds and are proud graduates of Hilo High School and the UH Shidler College of Business. Susan Yamada, PACE executive director, facilitated the discussion and kept the three in line as they poked jokes; put each other on the spot; and threw up high-fives.

Jokes aside, the three shared their beliefs about life and how it translates to the way they run their businesses. It is important for all three men to do business the “local” way.

The three also believe it is hugely important to give back to the community that supports them. They have instilled this belief in their companies’ missions by investing in their communities, and dedicating countless hours to non-profit work.

When a member of the audience asked how they make business decisions and overcome failures, each had words of wisdom to impart. Barry answered, “Try anything.” Allan said, “Know yourself well.” Duane shared, “Live a life without regrets.”

Each attendee left the event with a goodie bag or “omiyage” filled with treats, provided by the three who came bearing gifts from the island of Hawai‘i. It was just another example of their gracious way – the “local” way.

The Kīpapa i ke Ala lectures are sponsored by the Emmett R. Quady Foundation and Kamakura Corporation. To learn more about the lecture series, and to view a video recording of the discussion, go to www.shidler.hawaii.edu/kipapa.
[Director's Message]

Dear PACE 'Ohana:

Kipapa i ke Ala Lecture
If you didn’t attend the November 30 Kipapa i ke Ala lecture at the Ala Moana Hotel, you missed out on a memorable event. Featuring three Hilo-born entrepreneurs, Allan Ikawa, founder of Big Island Candies; Duane Kurisu, founder of aio; and Barry Taniguchi, president of KTA Super Stores, the event highlighted the business and management mind-set of these successful local businessmen. It was a rare opportunity to hear first hand, their tales of starting a business; lessons learned during their journeys; and management philosophies. For those in attendance who thought they were going to hear only about business and entrepreneurship, got a whole lot more. The conversation delved into personal issues such as being “authentic” and how they achieve fulfillment and happiness. The audience, including myself as the interviewer, laughed, cried and learned a lot about life.

Student Events
The Fall semester was filled with events for students and those in the business community. In November, we held our annual networking mixer with the Entrepreneurs Club and mentors from the business community. A couple of days later, we held our Breakthrough Innovation Challenge where teams presented their innovative inventions to a panel of judges. Events like these give students the opportunity to develop integral networking and presentation skills that are necessary in today’s workplace.

Bring Home Aloha
The ultimate hands-on training project came about with the Bring Home Aloha retail store in the Ilikai Hotel that has been open since November 1. In preparation for the grand opening, Entrepreneurs Club members faced many challenges. The students learned a real-life lesson the hard way—implementation of a business plan doesn’t always go as planned! Needless to say, it’s been a great learning opportunity for the students who have been actively involved.

UH Business Plan Competition
This Spring, our focus turns to the annual business plan competition—recruiting teams; scheduling training workshops; and lining up coaches, mentors and judges. It all leads up to the big event for the finalists on April 26.

None of these programs would be possible without the assistance from members in the business community, who generously donate their time and money. On behalf of the students and PACE, thank you for your continued support. I hope to see you for at least one of our events. Our goal is to inspire and provoke outside-the-box thinking—something we all need from time to time.

Until then,

SUSAN YAMADA
PACE Executive Director
Breakthrough Innovation Challenge

A team of UH Mānoa engineering students, who developed a shoebox-sized nanosatellite, took first place in the 2011 Breakthrough Innovation Challenge.

The Challenge, organized in partnership with the College of Engineering and the William S. Richardson School of Law, provides an opportunity for UH students and faculty to bring attention to their innovations and get the help and resources needed to further develop their inventions. Contestants were required to describe their innovation and market opportunity, and submit it in the form of a two-minute video via YouTube.

Video submissions were viewed and ranked by a preliminary judging panel. Each of the four teams that were selected to continue in the competition was matched with a mentor. These mentors advised the contestants as they prepared for an oral presentation. On November 17, 2011, the four finalists pitched their innovations and its commercial potential to a judging panel of Chenoa Farnsworth, managing director of Hawaii Angels, Gregory Kim, partner at Convergent Law Group LLP, and Bennett Wo, founder of Wo Capital Group.

Winners walked away with cash prizes and the confidence to develop their inventions. A team from the Engineering College won second place for their electric utility vehicle. Third place went to a faculty member from Kauai Community College for his clipboard with mono-pod leg. Fourth place was awarded to a business student for her idea of an all-in-one tablet. All finalists received $100 Imagine grants for their efforts.

For more about the Breakthrough Innovation Challenge, visit www.shidler.hawaii.edu/bic.

STUDENT AWARDED HOKU SCIENTIFIC MICROLOAN

A Hoku Scientific Microloan was awarded to Liane Eve M. Ancajas to help further develop her business idea, Pneuma. Pneuma is a Christian surf clothing brand inspired by the board sport culture. The purpose of this business is to promote good societal values in artistic design. The Microloan program helps students bring their business idea to reality. The program allows UH students to apply for loans of up to you $5,000 at a nominal interest rate. To learn more about the program, visit www.shidler.hawaii.edu/microloan.

MAHALO MIXER

More than 60 students and professionals gathered for the Mahalo Mixer on November 15 at the Waialae Country Club. Entrepreneurial-minded students had the special chance to mix and mingle with professionals in a program that was carefully crafted by the Entrepreneurs Club.

COFFEE TALK WITH DENIS COLEMAN

A small group of students were invited to talk story with Silicon Valley veteran entrepreneur and educator Denis Coleman on November 3. MBA student Ben Trevino who attended the meeting said, "Much of the advice Denis gave was priceless—genius and practical at the same time." Coleman gave advice for overcoming failures and getting value out of each interaction.

LUNCHROOM WITH RICARDO LEVY

Engineer, entrepreneur and author Ricardo Levy was the special guest at a Lunchroom session on November 7 at PACE. Students from various disciplines were invited to lunch with Levy. Levy shared experiences from his career of starting new ventures and the qualities that successful entrepreneurs possess.

IP PRESENTATION BY MARTIN LOUI

On September 29, Martin Loui, an attorney from Good Shepherd Quinn & Stifel, gave a special presentation to students about intellectual property. He stressed the importance of protecting IP to create a sustainable competitive advantage. To view his PowerPoint presentation, visit www.shidler.hawaii.edu/pir.
Aloha!

The Entrepreneurs Club has been given a rare opportunity to open a start-up company called Bring Home Aloha, which opened for business in November 2011. Bring Home Aloha is a retail store located in the Ilikai Hotel, specializing in made in Hawaii products as well as UH brand products.

The business has provided a unique learning experience for our members. Students were involved in the entire start-up process, from completing incorporation paperwork to securing financing and merchandising inventory. There is only so much one can learn about business in a classroom.

This semester members will learn how the business was started. They will learn about the difficulties in running a business, the unforeseen obstacles, the day to day operations, selling skills, writing marketing plans and much more.

Our club has also taken steps to share this opportunity with other business students by starting an internship program through Bring Home Aloha.

Along with the start-up business, the Entrepreneurs Club will continue to offer our members an array of seminars, public lectures, workshops, and company visits. Our goals have upgraded from last semester, but we still have a mission to make all of our members well-rounded and equipped to take on the business world.

We owe all of our success to PACE and the UH Apparel Product Design & Merchandising program, all of our vendors, and the entire Entrepreneurs Club.

For more information, please visit our website at www.ecmanoa.com.