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WEST O'AHU

NEWS RELEASE

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UH West O'ahu Ho'oulu Pacific team wins awards for social enterprise agricultural project designed to improve Pacific Island community health

KAPOLEI --- A team from the University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu has been busy working on a social enterprise agricultural project aimed to improve the well-being of Pacific Island communities by helping families mitigate the high cost of imported food and maintain healthy eating habits.

UH West O'ahu Assistant Professor of Business Administration, Dr. Keith Sakuda and Ho'oulu Pacific team members UH Mānoa Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work graduate student, Ilima Ho-Lastimosa and UH West O'ahu student, David Walfish created Waimanalo Aquaponics, a project involving "backyard" aquaponics systems (soilless farming technology) and Coordinated Distributed Agricultural practices in Pacific Island communities that allow families to grow their own vegetables and fish, creating affordable and healthy food options that reduce the high rates of obesity and diabetes prevalent in these communities. The project also partners with community organizations to offer counseling, nutrition education, and entrepreneurial guidance.

UH West O'ahu's Ho'oulu Pacific team recently won the \$12,000 first place prize in Chaminade University's Hogan Entrepreneurs Non-Profit Business Plan Competition for the Waimanalo Aquaponics project, as well as \$25,000 as finalists in the national Agricultural Innovation Prize held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in April. Sponsored by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture and in partnership with the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery, the prize awarded \$240,000 to college teams across the country to advance their proposals to improve global food systems.

"Projects like these are what make the University great," said UH West O'ahu Chancellor Rockne Freitas. "We are so proud of our Ho'oulu Pacific team and their vision for addressing local health and food challenges with a system that has the potential to improve the health and well-being of people all over the world."

"The Agricultural Innovation Prize was a wonderful opportunity for our team to share our vision of a scalable solution for food security in the Pacific Islands," said UH West O'ahu's Dr. Keith Sakuda. "Success at Chaminade's non-profit competition was important to us because it was recognition that came from the Hawai'i community. We hope the momentum from both competitions will help move us forward with our Waimanalo Project."

Prize money from these and other competitions allows Ho'oulu Pacific to continue scaling the project throughout the state of Hawai'i and the Pacific. Ho'oulu Pacific's Waimanalo Aquaponics has received numerous local and national awards including

- 2012 Harvard Social Enterprise Pitch for Change Competition: Winner
- 2012 Dell Social Innovation Challenge Design Phase: Winner
- 2012 Dell Social Innovation Challenge People's Choice (Oceania): Winner
- 2013 University of Hawai'i Business Plan Competition: Finalist
- 2013 Fish 2.0 Competition: Third Place

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UH West O'ahu became a four-year, regional comprehensive university when it served its first class of freshmen in fall 2007. The University offers quality education, small classes and personalized attention at convenient locations. UH West O'ahu serves approximately 2,400 students at its brand new, state-of-the-art campus that opened in the City of Kapolei in 2012. For more information, visit uhwo.hawaii.edu, twitter.com/uhwestoahu, facebook.com/uhwestoahu or call (808) 689-2800 or toll-free (866) 299-8656.