The Mānoa Experience
Creative Arts Competition Report

Office of Academic Affairs
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

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Following the Mānoa Experience Alumni Survey and the New Students Survey, the Mānoa Experience Creative Arts Competition was another effort to "more clearly articulate" the Mānoa Experience which was recommended by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation team when they visited UH Mānoa in March of 2011.

The Mānoa Experience Creative Arts Competition was announced at the beginning of the Fall 2011 semester. In this competition, students were asked to share their experience at UH Mānoa through art, storytelling, essays, posters, music, theatre, videos, t-shirts, dance, poetry, or photography. Entries that best reflected the most important and compelling aspects of student life were selected for prizes. The deadline for the submission was October 13, 2011.

Forty-three current UH Mānoa students submitted their Mānoa Experience Creative Arts Competition entries including five freshmen, five sophomores, 14 juniors, 12 seniors, and seven graduate students. The entries submitted included seven essays, four posters, 10 poems, 14 art work, and eight videos.

Winners were announced at the Ka Leo Arts Festival (McCarthy Mall) on October 20, 2011. The Grand Prize winner received a $500 gift card from the UH Mānoa Bookstore, and six additional $100 gift cards were awarded for the runners-up. Christina Waters, a graduate student at UH Mānoa won the Grand Prize for her poster titled "POST Elevator Poetry Jams." Six other students were prize winners. They were Jennifer Migita (senior), Stanley Chan (freshman), Virgel Rayo (freshman), Cheryl Chinate (senior), Fatemeh Honey Mohammadi (junior), and Chelsea Yamase (senior). The winning entries were posted on the Office of Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs’ website. The prize winners and what their Mānoa experience means to them were also spotlighted in the Ka Leo throughout the Fall 2011 semester.

The students’ entries centered on six primary themes that were found in the Mānoa Experience Alumni Survey and the New Students Survey, and three new themes that emerged from the Mānoa Experience Creative Arts Competition. The six primary themes were: (1) quality and distinctive academic programs, (2) engagement in research and creative activities, (3) artistic and cultural expression through its curriculum and campus life, (4) issues about sustainability, (5) appreciation of diverse cultures and perspectives, and (6) infusion of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific traditions, values, and perspectives in Mānoa courses and campus life. The three new themes were: (7) socialization and friendship, (8) personal stories, and (9) natural beauty of UH Mānoa and Hawai‘i.

The following section analyzes the nine themes in detail. Some entries covered more than one theme. A brief summary of each theme is presented, followed by two or three
examples of the entries which typically reflected this particular theme. The examples are taken from all 43 entries.

**Theme One: Quality and Distinctive Academic Programs**

The high quality and distinctive academic programs at UH Mānoa were reflected in 10 entries: two essays, one poster, two poems, four art works, and one video.

Alice Kim, a UH Mānoa graduate student, wrote an essay about her undergraduate experience at UH Mānoa. Kim said, “I received two degrees from UH Mānoa, and most of my jobs were in the UH system. These experiences allowed me to develop myself professionally, intellectually, and personally.” (Entry #14)

The art work titled “the Outflow of Knowledge” by Joanie Wong, a junior student at UH Mānoa, depicted the high quality and distinctive academic programs at UH Mānoa. Wong said, “The outflow of knowledge that is enclosed in me helps the development of growth in my experience in Mānoa.” (Entry #23)

**Theme Two: Engagement in Research and Creative Activities**

The theme of engagement in research and creative activities was highlighted in seven entries: two essays, one poster, one poem, two art works, and one video.

Jennifer Migita, one of the six runners up and the author of an original T-shirt and accompanying essay, commented very positively about her band experience. Migita wrote, “I stared off as a frightened freshman in band and now I am working as student staff member. The older band members are gone now but they have “passed the torch” down to me and I hope to do for the younger students. UH Mānoa’s Marching band is not just a club or a class to me, it is my Mānoa Experience.” (Entry #1)

Paul Bump, a sophomore at UH Mānoa, submitted a poster which was originally presented at the Asia-Pacific Youth Science Exchange Forum held in Okinawa, Japan at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology. This forum brought together 35 students from 14 Asia-Pacific islands to develop an accurate well-structured resolution plan. Bump said, “For me, the joy of being a student at UH Mānoa is all about life-changing experiences. This poster presentation reflects a wonderful chance that I had to share issues and solutions that face Hawaiʻi with other youth of the Asia-Pacific Region.” (Entry #2)

**Theme Three: Artistic and Cultural Expression Through Curriculum and Campus Life**

The theme of celebration of artistic and cultural expression through curriculum and campus life can be found in five entries: three poems, one art work, and one video.
Karleanne Matthews, a junior at UH Mānoa, stated, “My entry is a 3-D photo collage representing my intertwining roles as a student of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I have taken these photos over the course of my four years at UH, and the collection is a representation of the activities that have filled my everyday life: studying, researching, working, socializing, and enjoy the natural beauty of Hawai‘i.” (Entry #16)

Francis Ching, a senior at UH Mānoa, submitted a Chant Song Poem which included his experience in sharpening his music talents at UH Mānoa. Ching wrote, “One memorable experience that I had during my time at UH was taking guitar lessons at the Music Department. “ (Entry #7)

**Theme Four: Issues of Sustainability**

Though sustainability was not the major focus of students’ competition entries, the concept of sustainability can be found in one drawing with accompanying quotes and one video.

Savea Loa-Anakalea, a junior at UH Mānoa, introduced the history of Mānoa valley and UH Mānoa using drawings along with the quotes which reflected how Native Hawaiians exemplified sustainability living through their wise management of natural resources. (Entry #31)

Additionally, in his video, Taylor Ho, a senior at UH Mānoa, recorded that he went to school using his scooter and went to surf in late afternoon. His Hawaiian lifestyle, actually, reflected the sense of sustainability. (Entry #40)

**Theme Five: Appreciation of Diverse Cultures and Perspectives**

The theme of diverse cultures and perspectives that comprise our local community was reflected in nine entries: two essays, one poster, three poems, two art works, and one video.

Temidayo Alamurin is a UH Mānoa graduate student in the Department of History from Nigeria under the Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program and the East West Center. In his essay, Alamurin introduced his eight “the first time” experiences, such as the first Nigerian studying in UH Mānoa under IFP-EWC program, the first laptop he owned, the first time he made a power point presentation with a projector and so on. Alamurin wrote, “A worthwhile experience of a typical local African man becomes a sociable American student.” (Entry #3)

Fatemeh Honey Mohammadi, a junior at UH Mānoa, was one of the runners-up. Her water-color painting, “Beauty Lies within Culture”, illustrated the richness of diverse cultures on campus and how they have shaped her as a UH Mānoa student. In an article of the *Ka Leo* on November 30, 2011, Mohammadi said, “The tie-dye represents the rainbow of the Aloha State. The hands represent cultural diversity. It shows how great it is to live in a place like this.”

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According to the *Ka Leo*, the pictures in the Polaroid frames and accompanying Hawaiian proverbs are also important to Mohammadi. ‘A‘ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia: "No task is too big when done together." Pupukahi i holomua: "Unite to move forward." Laʻi lua ke kai: "All is peaceful." Kūlia i ka nuʻu: "Strive to reach the summit." "Each Polaroid represents a snapshot of my experience," said Mohammadi. "(They are) reminders of how culturally diverse the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa is, and how every single person on campus has something beautiful to contribute." (Entry #30)

Hsingshu Elvis Yang, a graduate student at UH Mānoa, captured different people’s voices, faces, and experiences to reveal the diversity of cultures and perspectives on campus. In her description of her entry, Yang wrote, “When I first got here, I was homesick, but because of this multicultural environment I was able to fit in the student body very quickly. I had opportunities to learn from the others and grow in a professional setting here, at UH Mānoa, to become a better student.” (Entry #38)

**Theme Six: Infusion of Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific Traditions, Values, and Perspectives in Mānoa Courses and Campus Life**

The infusion of Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific traditions, values, and perspectives in Mānoa courses and campus life can be found in seven entries. They were two essays, one poster, one poem, two art works, and one video.

Alice Kim, a graduate student at UH Mānoa, stated in her essay, “UH Mānoa’s geographic focus also helped me learn about the local Hawai‘i culture. As a local person in Hawai‘i, I developed pride in the local culture through taking literature courses focusing on the Pacific Rim.” (Entry #14)

Taylor Ho is a senior at UH Mānoa and submitted a video recording of a typical day of his daily life: going to school via scooter, taking classes, and surfing in the late afternoon. This video shows how the local life style and Hawaiian values have been infused into Taylor’s daily life. (Entry #40)

Jenni Yanagihara, a sophomore at UH Mānoa, submitted a visual poem titled “Only in Hawai‘i.” Yanagihara wrote, “Students from all across the world are now sitting on one beach: sunning, surfing, swimming. Languages barriers do not stop us from laughing together as we catch some waves. In one afternoon we all learned the language of Aloha.” (Entry #44)

**Theme Seven: Socialization and Friendship**

The theme of socialization and friendship was reflected in 11 entries: one essay, three posters, one poem, two art works, and four videos.
In her photo book, Rachel Sahni, a senior at UH Mānoa, recorded her friendship with her roommate. She concluded in the end of her photo book, “So when you come to UH, don’t be afraid, you will have a blast, with all the friends you made.” (Entry #27)

Kim-Abh Nguyen, a junior at Mānoa, introduced his entry as “The entry displays the atmosphere of tailgating at UH Mānoa Warriors home games. Many participants use tailgating as an event to socialize and take a break from school work.” (Entry #28)

**Theme Eight: Personal Experience**

The theme of personal experience includes five entries: two essays, one poster, one poem, and one video.

The grand prize-winning entry, titled "POST Elevator Poetry Jams," by Christine Waters, a graduate student at UH Mānoa, was a poster that collected poems she had been writing and posting in the POST service elevator. According to her explanation in her entry, this became "an intriguing lesson in how people react to them, play with them and/or what happens to them."

In an article published in the *Ka Leo* on November 30, 2011, Waters said, “I thought the Mānoa Experience Art Competition was the right forum for me to inspire people and to address the ability for every person to continue to learn things outside their area of expertise. I would like very much to share this message with the rest of the academic community.” (Entry #22)

Crystine Ito, a senior at UH Mānoa, recalled her four years of college experience in her poem. In a late stanza of the poem, she wrote, “I urge other students who come to this school to participate in everything that appeals to you. I have learned that time here goes by extremely fast, so take advantage of what the University offers and make your own Mānoa experience last…” (Entry #37)

**Theme Nine: Natural Beauty of UH Mānoa and Hawai‘i**

The theme of the natural beauty of UH Mānoa and Hawai‘i was reflected in seven entries: one poster, two poems, three art works, and one video.

Karl Hsu, a freshman at UH Mānoa, video-taped his personal exciting adventure of biking down a hill through a secret spot at UH Mānoa. This video also presented the beautiful views of Hawai‘i and UH Mānoa. (Entry #39)

The entry for Willian Meinke, a graduate student at UH Mānoa, was a sunset photo which he took one evening after class at the beginning of fall semester in 2011. Meinke wrote in the introduction of his entry, “No matter how many hours and days I spend working on my masters degree at UH Mānoa, I always have to remember how fortunate I am to live in such a beautiful place. Even if I only have time to stop for a moment and take in my surroundings, it is views like this that make it all worthwhile.” (Entry #43)