



KUPONO

THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Fall 2014 • Vol. 4, No. 3



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gift will support critical
ocean research at UH

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SIMONS FOUNDATION: \$40 million private gift is UH's largest



The Simons Foundation award will support microbial oceanography research at UH's School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology. Scientists shown above are collecting ocean water samples for testing.

On June 16, UH Foundation had the honor of announcing the largest private gift to UH: a \$40 million award from the New York-based Simons Foundation to Drs. David Karl and Edward DeLong, both National Academy of Sciences members and UH Mānoa professors in the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST).

For decades, UH Mānoa has been at the forefront of microbial oceanography. This historic award will establish the Simons Collaboration on Ocean Processes and Ecology (SCOPE) project, which builds on this expertise, to further our understanding of the microscopic organisms that inhabit every drop of seawater.

"Microorganisms are the most

important living beings on this planet," said Dr. Karl. "They're mostly invisible to the naked eye, but they're responsible for the habitability of this planet."

Microorganisms in the sea are responsible for producing oxygen that we breathe. They form the base of the food web for all of the fisheries of the world, and they are the organisms that can degrade human-produced pollutants.

Dr. Ed DeLong said, "In SCOPE, we're going to be using a range of technologies – from in situ autonomous sensing to the advanced genomic analyses – to more deeply understand how the ecosystem really works in the ocean waters around Hawai'i, and how that relates to ecosystem function on the rest

of the planet."

"SCOPE is the foundation's first project in microbial oceanography. We are confident that collaborative efforts by this terrific team of scientists will lead to new discoveries and deeper understanding of the microbial ecosystem," said Marian Carlson, director of life sciences at Simons Foundation.

"The Center for Microbial Oceanography: Research and Education (C-MORE) and the Hawai'i Ocean Time-series (HOT) program have been studying Station ALOHA, which is 100 km north of O'ahu, for more than 25 years. So we have a good understanding of its physical variability and how that's structured.

"And now we want to build upon that information to better understand the blueprint of life in the open ocean setting, how everything is connected, and how all of these independent phenomena work together to make the ecosystem whole," said Karl.

While the leadership and program locus will be at UHM with DeLong and Karl as co-directors, SCOPE will be a multi-institutional collaboration with inaugural partners at University of California – Santa Cruz, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and University of Washington.

Private support like this historical commitment from the Simons Foundation catapults our innovations and research to new heights.