Awa ceremony dedicates Ahu Ola on campus |

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Slideshow Photographs by Student Journalist Amanda Shell
Direct link to photos is FLICKR.

Pōhaku (stones) from alumni and friends near and far were used to build a new shrine built in the Kaka`ako campus Mala Laʻau Lapaʻau (Healing Garden). The Ahu Ola, or healing shrine, was built using ancient Native Hawaiian techniques (assembled using no adhesive cement) and dedicated in an Awa Ceremony on campus on Friday, March 7.



The builders paid respects to the ahu by presenting an oil, or chant, and by meditating at the shrine when their labor was completed.

The Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) at the University of Hawai`i John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) invited those committed to restoring the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians to bring a pōhaku from their home or “special places” for the new alter. Keystones were contributed by Native

Hawaiian Kauka (physicians) who have been outstanding educators at JABSOM: Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell, Dr. Ben Young, Dr. Marjorie Mau and Dr. Naleen Andrade.

The construction of the Ahu Ola is part of the celebration of the Department's 10th year, and a rededication of its commitment to the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians,.



An Awa Ceremony to dedicate the Ahu.

An Ahu is traditionally defined as a mound, alter, or shrine, and is constructed entirely of stone utilizing Hawaiian masonry techniques. "The specific purpose of this Ahu Ola will be the betterment of Native Hawaiian health for the individual and the collective Hawai'i Maoli (Hawaiian People)', said DNHH Community Engagement Director Mele Look. "The hope is that all who visit the campus will be inspired in their personal path to health and as they work to help others achieve health and well-being."

The Department's community partner Papahana Kuaola, led by Kapaliku Schirman, assembled the Ahu.