



EAST-WEST CENTER
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EAST-WEST CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Brent Watanabe Interview Narrative

2-28-2007 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

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The **East-West Center Oral History Project** strives to capture the Center's first 50 years as seen through the eyes of staff, alumni, and supporters who have contributed to its growth.

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Brent Watanabe

2-28-2007 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

Personal Background

My name is Brent Watanabe. My mother, Alice, was born here and my dad, Tetsui, came to Hawai'i when he was 4 years old. I am the middle child. I have an older brother and an older sister, myself, a younger brother, younger sister.

I was born and raised in Hawai'i, graduated from University High School and spent my undergraduate years at University of Wisconsin in Madison. Graduated in 1970 with a bachelor's in business administration, majoring in marketing with an emphasis in psychology.

After graduation, I attended summer school at the UH where I met my wife. Incidentally the East-West Center played a pivotal role in our courtship. We would meet downstairs at the now defunct Jefferson Hall cafeteria -- she had a meal plan and would feed me breakfast. And anyone who knows me realizes that the way to my heart is through my stomach. Anyway, that's how our relationship got started.

I worked at the Red Cross for two years, got married and backpacked throughout Europe. We returned to Hawai'i in 1973 so I could attend graduate school at the University of Hawai'i (UH).

I was working on my master's in counseling and guidance when a job vacancy opened up at the East-West Center. My brother-in-law, Peter Adler, was working here at that time and informed me of the opening. I applied for it, got the job and I've been here ever since. Since '73.

Life at EWC

Off-Campus Housing

My first job here was as off-campus housing specialist.

At that time, in the early '70s, there was a large married student population here at the East-West Center. And so I helped the students find housing through listings, counseled them about the cost of housing, helped qualified families obtain food stamps, public housing. Married students living off-campus got a housing allowance. This was not enough, especially for students with large families. Many would often qualify for food stamps and public housing. So I assisted them in getting those kind of subsidies.

We also managed a furniture pool. We had a pool of used furniture that was government surplus. And we loaned this furniture to the married students living off-campus.

And a little known fact is that Barack Obama's mother, Ann Soetoro, was an EWC grantee. She was a very sweet person. She borrowed items from the furniture pool. They always refer to her as a University of Hawai'i student but she was also an East-West Center grantee.

I knew the community, where to point them toward, where to look for listings, how to go about it. So that was my first job, from '73 to '75.

EWC Facilities and Services

The unit was reorganized and I was given new duties and responsibilities -- I became the facilities and services officer. As a result of this reorganization I became in charge of facilities and services, i.e., facilities planning and maintenance, the services that we

provided to the residents, working with the hall committee to respond to students' needs and requests.

The reorganization that took place at that time reassigned the activities officer position from the housing unit to another unit. And they did the same thing with *[the]* facilities officer. They assured us that they would provide housing the same level of service and response time. But that did not happen, particularly in the facilities area. Housing is a 24/7 operation and you need someone directly assigned to the unit. We found out very quickly that we needed someone who could respond to the repairs and maintenance problems *[in the dorms]* in a more timely fashion.

There are three dormitories, Hale Manoa, which had 336 rooms (480 beds), Hale Kuahine, with 84 rooms (120 beds).

The third one -- Lincoln Hall came available to us (Housing) in the late '70s.

My experience at the Center, in terms of a support unit, was really quite separate from what happened on the program side. The unit supported the Center's goals by providing a positive housing experience and had little to do with the institutes and what they did.

Then in '83, I became *[Housing]* administrative officer.

And basically what that meant was that I was in charge of the fiscal as well as the reservation functions on the unit. So with my past facilities and services background, I developed a complete picture of the Housing operation.

Housing in the '90s

In '91, I became administrator for Housing because now they created Housing as a separate unit that reported directly to the vice president for Administration.

I had a lot of help. Staff numbers varied. The reservations and front desk operations had four to five positions. And on the Facilities side we had three to four full-time positions and three half-time HSAs -- housing staff assistants. The positions evolved over time -- from the traditional college undergraduate resident assistant (RA), to participant staff assistant (PSA), then housing staff assistant (HSA). They were half-time staff responsible for the maintenance of the buildings and providing after-hour[s] emergency coverage.

It's been an affordable way for us to maintain a 24/7 operation. Typically these are younger people, undergraduate or graduate students working their way through schools. And so it's been a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Housing had about nine full-time and three part-time staff to handle facilities, reservations and front-desk operations. And then, of course, we had a big contingent of student help to work in the office and at the front desks -- anywhere from 20 to 30 student help positions.

The dorm desks, were staffed by typically UH student help, undergraduate students, year-round. At Hale Manoa, we had one of the few places staffed 24/7 on the UH campus for many years. Even now, I think there's hardly any place that's open 24/7.

Hale Manoa is one of the few 24/7 operations.

Housing and Support Services from 2001

In 2001, I became administrator for support services. They decided to expand my duties and responsibilities. So now I'm responsible not only for Housing but for Facilities Management, Imin Conference Center and the mail operation.

Basically they were desperate to find someone that could help. (Laughter) And they tapped me.

I.M. Pei & the EWC Complex

In the early '60s the East-West Center commissioned I.M. Pei to design the East-West Center complex. Today, I.M. Pei is well-known for designing the JFK Library in Boston, East Wing of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the glass pyramid at the Louvre in Paris, etc. And so we were quite lucky to get him at that time. It was early on in his career. And he did a wonderful job in designing the East-West Center complex, which not only included Jefferson Hall, Lincoln Hall, Hale Kuahine, Hale Manoa, but also Kennedy Theatre, Edmondson Hall and Moore Hall.

They were all part of the original East-West Center complex. Before the East-West Center staff could move into Kennedy Theatre, Edmondson and Moore, the University of Hawai'i, who at that time administered the East-West Center, kept the buildings for their needs. Edmondson and Moore Halls were intended to accommodate the East-West Center's administrative and faculty offices, as well as classrooms.

So Lincoln Hall, with 75 apartments designed for guest housing, had to be converted to accommodate the East-West Center program and research staff. Until the mid-'70s, that's where the Center's institutes and programs were housed. You would go into someone's office and find that the bathroom or the shower stall was turned into storage areas.

(Laughter)

Jefferson Hall was the Center's premier building. On the ground floor was a huge lobby area and on the second floor were conference and breakout meeting rooms. The upstairs meeting rooms became the offices for the chancellor (now called the president) and the

Office of Administration. Downstairs in the basement was a cafeteria. That's the way it was until the mid '70s. OK, let's not get ahead of ourselves. We are still talking about the '60s. The first building that was built was Hale Kuahine.

It had 120 beds -- 84 single and double rooms for females only. And shortly thereafter Hale Manoa was built (initially for the men only) along with Jefferson Hall.

The Dorms

In the '60s

Since I came in '73, I'm going to talk about things that I've heard about or things that I've researched, in terms of our facilities.

I'm not sure exactly where they were housed, but I know in the '60s some married students lived by the airport in an old Navy housing facility. If my memory serves me correctly they lived in old Navy housing -- Ohana Nui Apartments. And they had to travel back and forth from the airport to the UH campus.

Hale Manoa was quite a challenge. It is my understanding that I.M. Pei never came to the site. It was designed as an open-air building. The ground floor of Hale Manoa, which currently houses our front desk, lounges and offices, was largely open to the elements -- there were no glass windows.

It was a wind tunnel and, of course, open to all the rain. I don't think he realized what it was like to be at the entrance of Manoa Valley.

You take the elevator up to the third, sixth, ninth or 12th floor. Currently, each elevator floor has community kitchens, a TV and private-use lounge along with a laundry room.

Originally there were just the laundry rooms and entry lounges. From these entry lounges, you would walk either downstairs or upstairs to what we call the living room

floors. This is where the rooms are situated. Each floor was sectioned off into six units or clusters, each unit had three doubles, four singles and a common bathroom.

And the theory was that from the elevator you'd go to the common entry lounge. This lounge would serve as a community area for residents living either up or downstairs. It was envisioned to be a place where residents would congregate and be like a living room. And over the years we've tried everything to make it work. We furnished the area with carpeting and furniture, but functionally it was not what residents wanted.

Residents wanted to go up to their rooms and that was it. They spent very little time in these areas, and what they needed was a storage area. So these areas evolved into storage for refrigerators and bicycles. We try very hard to maintain these areas because it can look awfully unsightly and could pose a potential safety hazard.

And you have to go up a flight of stairs or down a flight of stairs.

Initially there were no kitchens. The complex was designed as an undergraduate facility with a cafeteria in the basement of Jefferson Hall. So in the '60s there was a mandatory meal program that the students had to participate in.

Cooking was not encouraged; don't forget the dormitories were not designed for cooking. This was a source of aggravation and frustration for the students, especially coming from different countries, with varying dietary restrictions. And so after much protest, the mandatory meal program was discontinued in the early '70s. This led to the eventual demise of our food service operation. Unfortunately without having a core of students or clientele, the food service operation could not make ends meet. So eventually in the '80s the cafeteria was discontinued.

In the '70s

The kitchens were built soon after I started in '73. The '70s was a period of student activism. And this is where I learned how to work with our residential community. I was mentored by *[fellow Housing staff members]* Walter Quensell, Glenn Yamashita, JoAnne Punu and Wally Fujikawa. It was a real challenging time. But at the same time I think it was a really healthy process. Having been a recent graduate, I understood where the students were coming from.

So when the mandatory meal program was discontinued, residents began cooking in their rooms. And that was not safe. Number one, it posed a potential fire hazard. The rooms were not wired to handle cooking appliances and other high voltage units. Number two, it created sanitary problems. They would leave their dirty dishes in the bathroom sinks and when they did clean them, the sinks would often get clogged with food particles. So the solution to this problem was to build community kitchens. One kitchen on every elevator floor.

On every elevator floor -- three, six, nine and 12, because this is where the community lounges were. And so we built the kitchens with the understanding that cooking in the rooms would stop. This was supported by the student leaders.

Cooking in rooms did not completely stop. That would be unrealistic. And that's been one of the challenges I've had throughout my tenure with Housing was the enforcement of rules. But we can talk about that later.

84 rooms with a maximum of 120 residents would share one kitchen. Let's see, if my memory serves me correctly, each kitchen had three or four ranges and three cooktops. We had one big community refrigerator in the kitchen, but this was not

sufficient, so we allowed the residents to place their own refrigerators in the entry lounges as long as they complied with established guidelines. So today, you'll see a wide range of refrigerators from vintage refrigerators, 10- to 20-year-old units to more recent models.

The kitchens proved to be a success, and of course we needed more. So we built another set of kitchens a few years later on the opposite end of the building. So now currently we have two community kitchens on floors 3, 6, 9, and 12, one on each side of the elevators. Several years ago we renovated the kitchens and are really pleased with how they came out. The renovations expanded the cooking surfaces, counter and storage areas.

Well, this is one of the areas where I take pride in or at least I feel that my years here have been worthwhile, because it's not unusual for returning alumni, to mention their housing experiences are what they remember -- the friendships they established and a lot of it centered around food and cooking. Prior to the kitchens being built similar comments were made about the friendships being established at the Jefferson Hall basement cafeteria. So I think food is a real uniting factor that brings people together. And I think that's one of the main reasons our dormitory living situation has been successful in terms of bringing people from all over the world.

Resident Policy

The other unique thing that happened in the '60s was that we required roommates be from different countries. It was a requirement. Having a roommate was a challenge -- differing work, sleep and recreational schedules as well as personal habits, was a source of a lot of tension. And so trying to resolve these problems became a real challenge.

Glenn Yamashita, who was in charge of reservations, conscientiously paired people up being sensitive to individual preferences and to political concerns. For example, he didn't want to house someone from China PRC and Taiwan, or from India and Pakistan initially. There was a heightened sensitivity to the social and political concerns.

We had to work with our staff on how they presented themselves, especially in the '70s, when American students dressed very casually -- miniskirts, braless and/or strapless blouses. People from some Asian countries took offense to this.

So we really spent a lot of time trying to make our staff sensitive to our multicultural setting -- they needed to be respectful and come to work dressed appropriately.

Another area of concern was our shared bathroom facilities -- male and female shared common bathrooms. And the typical problems that you have.

When I first started work, Housing had just implemented coed living units. Prior to this, men and women were housed in different buildings or in different sections of the building. A large segment of the married population were couples and had to live off-campus.

No children. And so they wanted to be able to live in the dorms. In a double room and so we had to create coed living units. We were one of the first dormitories here in the islands to do this.

That was '73. Initially we tried to have one unit bathroom for males, one unit bathroom for females and another for coed use. That sounds so reasonable. But in practice, it just didn't work. When you have couples living near a certain bathroom -- that's where they gravitated toward. So eventually we came up with guidelines for our coed bathrooms.

For example, it's OK for men and women to use the bathroom sinks at the same time.

The toilet stalls had doors so it was not a problem. The line was drawn at the showers.

Well, our showers have a drying area that leads to two private showers. So we installed a swinging door leading into the drying area. That would hide individuals in the shower area but you could still tell that there's someone in there. And so what people would do is they would drape their towel or something over the doors to let people know that there was a male or female in there and that would work out. Over time, we installed a sliding bolt lock to provide better security.

Well, over the years we've refined things so we have signs where you flip back and forth, indicating either "male", "female", for those who wish privacy and hopefully their unit mates will be respectful.

One of my "Top 10" resident problems involved shower usage. We try to encourage residents to work things out, because this is part of the EWC living experience. We had a situation where an American male felt that he knew what was "right," that he was mature enough to make decisions on his own, and he chose not to abide by the bathroom usage rules we established. There was a female taking a shower and he went right in there and used the adjoining shower, which really upset her. This was before we provided a lock to the door leading to the drying area -- and although both showers had doors.

Yeah, especially with females, this can be a very delicate situation. In this case it turned out to be a very strong-willed female who did not take any guff, and so one of my vivid recollections was having both of these residents in my office trying to resolve this problem. I would calm one down and then the other one would get agitated.

Yeah, the male said something like “I'm a mature person, I needed a shower and had to leave for class in five minutes. You were in the shower a long time, and I wasn't going to look at you.” The female yelled, “That's not the point, I want my privacy!” I let each side vent, worked on getting them to “hear” what the other was saying, and eventually got them to agree on an acceptable solution. This was a time when we “worked” things out. Today, we are much more “security” conscious and things are handled a lot differently.

OK, let's segue to the '70s where we solved the roommate problem. At this time we had mainly graduate students, so the Center agreed to discontinue the requirement to share double rooms. First-year students were assigned to a single room and after their second year, they qualified to be assigned to a double by themselves.

Yes, we did [*have enough single rooms*] -- because every living unit had three double rooms and four single rooms. Additionally, married couples were placed in a double and provided a single room realizing they would benefit having a separate space. This worked out well.

Yes, we were able to swing that. This was at a time when the Center's budget was sufficient to fund a very generous award program. This policy worked well for the students but was discontinued when Center funding was cut in the '90s.

1980s – Introducing IT to EWC

I view the '80s period as the start of technology. We started using computers for word processing, then spread sheets, etc. In Housing everything was done manually -- room confirmations, registration cards, telephone strips for our resident directory. All the

financial reports, billing statements, room availability reports were done manually.

During the '80s is when we transitioned to a computerized reservations system.

We automated and there's quite a story about my experience with designing an in-house reservation system. In theory it sounds good but its creation and implementation had its challenges.

We did design and use it for almost 10 years. We had a computer section that was up to the challenge to design a computerized reservation system. IT under Raleigh Awaya.

They confirmed our procedures were sound and then provided a blank piece of paper and had me design all the forms and reports that were required. It took many months for us to design a reservation and billing program. It was a real learning experience.

My major concern was that the program had to be user-friendly. Basically it was designed where the users, secretaries and program officers could go online and input a reservation request, it would be sent to Housing and we would confirm it and handle things from there.

It sounds good in theory, but this was when computer programming was evolving, and if you can recall, user interfaces were not the most user friendly. It was DOS and it was not intuitive, and you had to use special keystrokes to do this and that. It worked fine if you used the program all the time, but if you were an occasional user of the system, then it could be a real drag.

It's still true for software today, but even more so during the '80s and early '90s. And so it took an extraordinary effort for the Housing staff to work with the programs, to keep people trained, to be as responsive to their concerns and make modifications.

Our ability to make changes was never as quick as the users wanted. And of course there's always a constraint as to what could be done. So that was my first experience with computerized systems. And it was a valuable lesson, because I see it continuing today -- that people think that computers are the answer for everything -- where tasks can be accomplished simply and quickly. This is not always the case. To minimize problems it takes a lot of planning and don't be surprised if the end product doesn't do all what you had hoped for.

As I mentioned we used it for 10 years and the IT staff were great -- Susan Kuioka, John Santos, Tami Tanji, Claire Kawada, Kevin Yoshida, etc. And I can't ignore the Institute/Program support staff -- secretaries, clerks, program officers who did the inputting.

My second "memorable" experience with computer technology -- the dormitories needed a new lock system because our locks were over 20 years old and the locks were being discontinued, so we started looking for a replacement lock system. At this time hotels were beginning to use computerized locks.

Computerized lock systems started in the '80s and it was being used for a number of years when we were evaluating a changeover. Bids were processed and Schlage was awarded the job. Schlage was and still is, a respected company, and the lock system had great reviews from local hotels. They loved it, worked great. Incidentally, the Halekulani [*Hotel*] also bought the same system. Of course we ordered the basic version of the lock hardware.

Unfortunately, from the get-go, the project was trouble. The students with their experiences with [*EWC's*] incorporation were very skeptical about what was going on.

They questioned why their program funding was being reduced. They saw our housing operation spending a large amount of money on this lock replacement project and asked “Why are you doing this, it should be spent for student programs.” Little did they realize that the funding for this project was generated from our housing reserve, earmarked specifically for long-term housing improvement/maintenance projects. Funds did not come from the same pot. Not everyone accepted this explanation and it put an unfortunate dark cloud over this project. Needless to say, we wanted the lock project to go off without a hitch, but within two or three weeks of being installed, locks were “dying” on our doors. *[Editor’s note: As a result, students couldn’t get into their rooms.]* And the Halekulani was having the same problem. Schlage had upgraded to a new model which had a defective circuit board.

So for a period, oh, over a few months they had to correct the problem, they brought personnel in from the Mainland and replaced all the door locks. That was a trying time for our staff, because we just never knew when a lock was going to die on the door, and the only way that we could actually remove the lock was to drill a hole into the unit. So it was a tense period!

It was only in the three dormitories. Once that part got fixed, the lock system worked like a charm. We just recently replaced our Schlage locks. We would have kept them longer but the system utilized old Apple Macintosh computers, those small little Apple Macs and we couldn't get replacement parts locally. We were buying used Macs from the internet.

So we were forced to change. We got to know the old lock system very well, we could take the units apart, and fix almost any problem. Additionally, the lock system provided

us a level of security that you could never get with a regular metal key system. If you lose a metal key, then you're subject to security concerns and the cost of changing lock settings and making new keys. With a computerized keycard system you just make a new keycard, run it through the lock, and you have a new key lock combination.

Closing the Dorms/Asbestos Removal

Another major project that happened in '87 was the removal of asbestos in the residence halls. Asbestos was a major health concern during this time. The ceilings in our dorm rooms had flaky soundproofing material sprayed on the ceiling that contained asbestos. This affected most public schools, the UH and their dorms. In fact, many apartment buildings built in the '60s and '70s had their ceilings sprayed with a similar mixture. The health and safety experts told us that as long as you didn't disturb the affected surface, that it did not pose a health problem. But it's hard to convince people living under these ceilings, that it is safe.

The State decided to remove asbestos in their buildings, which included the schools and University dormitories. Unfortunately, the East-West Center was not included because we were not officially with the State. Senator Inouye became aware of this and got funding for the East-West Center. This was the only time, to my knowledge, that we closed our dorms.

We closed the entire building. So this was a huge undertaking. We did it during one summer. University of Hawai'i housing assigned our students to the Hale Wainani apartments. We had to remove asbestos from all the dorms.

Institutional Transitions

Separation From UH

It was during the '70s when the Center was incorporated. It was a real challenging time. The students had their *Impulse* magazine and there was a lot of tension between the student organization and the administration -- a lot of distrust amongst both sides. The Housing Office tried really hard to listen to what students said and be responsive to their needs. I think we were somewhat successful.

In 1975, the Center was incorporated and no longer under the administration of the University of Hawai'i. I don't think a lot of people know this, but part of the agreement made at the time of incorporation was to compensate the Center for the loss of space that the University had taken years ago. So to compensate for the loss -- Edmondson and Moore Hall and Kennedy Theatre -- they agreed to compensate the Center for the space it lost, thus Burns Hall was built.

In 1977, Burns Hall was opened and became our administration and program building. The program staff moved from Lincoln Hall to Burns Hall. The president's office and administrative staff that was in Jefferson Hall also moved over to Burns Hall.

Administration and the president's office moved to Burns Hall. So that freed up Lincoln Hall for its original intent, which was transient housing -- 75 apartments for short-term housing. When we first opened up the building, the units were nicely furnished but the bedrooms and living rooms had banks of ceiling fluorescent lights. Especially, in the evening, the rooms were very, very bright. These light fixtures were appropriate for offices, but not for residential use. We quickly had to remove fluorescent tubes and reduce the number of fixtures.

The entire building had to be renovated. For example, when used for offices, doorways between units were created and these openings had to be closed when the units were converted back to residential use. The entire building was re-carpeted and provided with new furnishings.

Yes, that was a challenge. The Facilities staff had to move the Lincoln Hall staff to brand new quarters here in Burns Hall. At that point I was still in Housing.

The Imin Conference Center

During the '80s, the Japanese community was planning its centennial celebration of their immigration to Hawai'i. They wanted to celebrate it and to have some special recognition of this event. So they found funds to renovate Jefferson Hall to its present use -- the Imin Conference Center. Not everyone, including myself, was happy with these changes. The lobby area, where older students remember international flags hanging at both ends of the stairwells. Big wooden windows that swung open. There was a central area, how do you say, with offices where they had the mailroom and an information desk. And there was a piano and every so often you'd hear someone playing it.

That got replaced by a 300-seat auditorium. All the windows were sealed closed. In the basement, the cafeteria was replaced with a small caterer's kitchen.

1990s – RIF, Internet and Email

Let's move on to the '90s. I remember the '90s primarily as budget cuts, our RIF [*reduction-in-force*]. That, for me was one of the hardest things to be confronted with during my tenure at the Center.

Right, Congress, with just a matter of a few months advance notice, decided to drastically cut the nation's budget which resulted in a 50 percent budget cut for the Center. So the

Center had very little time to prepare for this. Over half our staff was let go through reduction-in-force, RIF. It was emotionally tough on everybody.

What followed was very austere times where you got by with less. The other thing that characterized the '90s was the internet and email, which really changed the way we “do business.”

Especially the email, it's one of these things, you know, where there's “instant” communication, it's so handy. At the same time, it's almost too handy, so it's good and bad. It gives you timely communication, but you have to be really careful of what you write or whom you send it to. You make one mistake and it could be circulated around the world.

We communicate [*by email*] with students and requesting offices, because this enables us to be responsive, especially with reservations. Our in-house reservation system had to be discontinued because the operating system became obsolete, so we bought a self-contained hotel management package. And so all processing is centralized in Housing. Requests had to be processed on official reservation forms, but over time we were able to accept emails as long as it contained the required information.

This really sped up our response time -- a request sent through the traditional mail service (U.S. Mail or UH campus mail) could take days or weeks to be delivered. With email, it could take seconds. Similarly, we were able to address resident inquiries in a more timely fashion. As email evolved in the '90s, the internet has become a real force in 2000. In response to this, we wired our buildings, so all our buildings have internet access now.

Yes, all the dorms have internet access.

We researched wireless but it has its own set of problems. We have hardwired our dorms because it provides the best security and the IT department is planning to convert our telephone system to a voice-over-IP system in the future. Requests have come in for wireless, but our buildings are not the most conducive place for wireless because there's a lot of concrete. The other concern of wireless is security and illegal file sharing activities. We are researching the issue with our IT department.

Late 1990s – RIF 2

[Editor's note: In the late '90s right after the RIF, or as part of the RIF, there was another major restructuring at the East-West Center.]

We were restructured because of budget concerns, so we were asked to do more with less staff. And so that's how we got involved. Housing was one of the few units that actually made money. Realize that we not only house our East-West Center participants but also UH students.

We have a price structure that gives East-West Center students on award, the lowest rate. We have a higher rate for people that are not directly affiliated with the East-West Center. So surplus rooms have been rented out to University of Hawai'i students -- mainly graduate students. We try to accept students with a similar interest/field of study with our current EWC students -- graduate students with an interest in the Asia-Pacific area. That's the top priority, and then we go down the list. We have had no trouble in filling our spaces because of the housing shortage at the UH. We've been able to meet our operational expenses and to save money for Housing maintenance and improvement projects.

We were paying our own way and were one of the few units that did not actually lose staff. We maintained our staffing levels. A lot of people don't realize we operate like a hotel, open year-round, 24/7. We have long-term and short-term occupants arriving throughout the year. To be responsive to our residents we require a core staff.

Marshal Kingsbury is the *[Imin]* conference manager and he does a wonderful job with his staff. He's been here a number of years and he knows the conference operation inside and out.

Post-9/11 Adjustments, Upgrades in 2000s

In reference to what's been going on, during this present decade -- of course we can't ignore 9/11. That has put a cloud of apprehension and uncertainty in our lives, along with the avian flu, natural disasters, be it hurricanes or earthquakes. Throughout the whole State, I think there's a heightened awareness and concern for this.

So we have been working with the University in trying to address these concerns. The Center has set up certain basic response guidelines. Within the dormitories we have refined our procedures. But it's only to respond to the initial emergency.

If a major disaster ever strikes, the Center isn't equipped to handle these situations -- massive islandwide power outages, water supply, food shortages, etc. We have to rely on the community at-large -- the UH, the City and the State. To this end, we are in contact with the University of Hawai'i to insure they include us in their disaster response plans. We rely upon them for infrastructure concerns (water and electricity) as well as emergency shelter and meals. We have reminded them that we house a large number of UH students in our dormitories.

The other thing I'd like to mention is the assistance Senator Inouye has provided. Senator Inouye has been our benefactor and someone the Center should never forget. He has been instrumental in our yearly congressional funding, but he has also helped Housing -- in the '80s with asbestos removal and more recently, after a tour of our residence hall, he found funds to upgrade our facilities. Our buildings were built in the '60s, they're almost 50 years old. And despite our efforts to maintain them, major upgrades were needed. And so, for example, fire sprinklers.

Room sprinklers were not required in the '60s, but are a critical deterrent for fires and personal safety. And he saw this need and was able to provide initial funding to help with dormitory improvements. We were able to install fire sprinklers last year.

They were installed in all our residential buildings. High speed internet access was also installed. And recently our door locks were replaced. And this is because of the efforts of Senator Inouye.

We did upgrade Burns Hall and Jefferson in terms of fire alarm systems. All building alarm panels are integrated. So if any alarm goes off in Burns Hall, the Facilities office and the Hale Manoa front desk are alerted.

A couple of years ago, we got an estimate of \$250,000 to upgrade the Hale Manoa elevators. We have contracts with Otis and they've been doing a decent job in maintaining the elevators.

One of the projects we're working on for Hale Manoa is to replace our emergency generator. In case of an electrical outage, we currently have gas-run generators that provide power for emergency corridor and stairwell lighting for all the buildings including the dorms.

It doesn't provide power for all electrical needs. We don't have generators big enough. Our plan for Hale Manoa is to replace the current generator that's over 20 years old with one that is large enough to power one of our elevators. Our current generator cannot handle this, so when there's an outage, residents may have to walk up to 12 flights of stairs to get to their rooms.

There are stairs on both ends of the building. There's actually 13 floors because you have eight floors with residential rooms and 4 elevator floors. The elevator stops on the 3rd, 6th, 9th and 12th floors which have the kitchens, a laundry room, TV lounge and entry lounges where one walks up or down stairs to the living floors where the resident rooms are located.

It's very easy to get lost in Hale Manoa.

The Japanese Garden

The Japanese Garden was done in the early '60s. My understanding is a group of Japanese businessmen supported by the Japanese government, designed and funded the garden. They wanted to share some of their culture with the people of Hawai'i. It's the most photographed landmark on the East-West Center campus.

The tearoom was constructed for the Urasenke Tea Foundation. This is the only building that the University is responsible for the maintenance -- on our campus. They have tea classes conducted on a regular basis. And once or twice a year they have formal ceremonies with a tea master.

Hale Halawai and the Friendship Circle

The Hale Halawai and Friendship Circle landscaping project is something I feel good about. In 2001, when I first became responsible for the support services unit, I was given

the unenviable task to present to Center staff a plan to raze a number of old wooden cottages and to provide a parking lot, in the area between Hale Manoa and Burns Hall.

This was a project that I had inherited and was in the final planning stages.

These cottages were old UH faculty housing units that were over 50 years old. They were deemed unsafe because of their structural condition as well as containing hazardous materials. So it was decided that it was too costly to [mitigate] these problems and that the buildings should be razed. The thinking at that time was let's knock them down and build what we really need -- parking.

I was not crazy about this proposal but I presented it to our staff and not surprisingly, there were quite a few vocal opponents. People expressed concerns over it. Joni Mitchell's *[song]* "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot," that's what came to a lot of people's mind[s]. So I was given the opportunity to re-design the project. It was a challenge because we had to incorporate staff as well as student input. The students had a vested interest in the outcome because they used the cottages. The Club Cottage -- the student activities cottage. The location of many parties and social gatherings!

And it was through a collaborative process that we formulated how we wanted to proceed. Basically we wanted to maintain as much green space as possible - maintain the Friendship Circle, ficus trees, provide a substitute activities building and provide additional parking. We were very fortunate to obtain the services of well-known landscape professionals, Leland Miyano and Jason Umemoto, who came up with a design which I think all of us can be very proud of. We were able to keep our grass lawn and provide temporary parking for Center functions. This was accomplished by plastic pavers that were installed underneath the grass to provide support for parking.

We have a beautiful garden area that people can use. And finally we have an activities center called Hale Halawai, which is very, very popular.

And I am proud of this project in two regards. Number one, I think it kind of set the tone of my administrative style -- my willingness to work with staff and participants on projects like this. And number two, it was part of a long-term plan, that Doug Lamerson and myself had envisioned -- to maintain and improve the East-West Center campus. We were very fortunate to have the support of [*President*] Charles Morrison and Ricky Kubota [*Director of Administration*], who shared our vision. We have placed a lot of emphasis to improve the infrastructure and the grounds. And we've tried to make the East-West Center campus special, distinctive -- a place that we can be proud of. The garden itself has native Hawaiian plants, vegetation. We included an educational component with signs that identify the plants and their various uses. So that people can appreciate the plants and trees.

We've also extended the signs to the Japanese garden that's below Jefferson Hall. I am pleased with how that has come out. And I'm hoping that in the future that we can extend our landscape master plan to the rest of the campus.

EWC Campus – UH Ownership of Land

We were given the use of the land in perpetuity. So as long as the East-West Center is in existence we can have the use of the land and buildings. But for whatever reason, if we are no longer in business then it reverts back to the State of Hawai'i.

The Lincoln Hall driveway, that borders the Korean Studies Center and provides access to three similar dormitories, ends our campus. The first one is our dorm, Hale Kuahine, next is Hale Kahawai, and then Hale Laulima. Hale Kahawai and Laulima are University

of Hawai'i dormitories. It's my understanding the University liked Hale Kuahine's design and copied it for their two buildings.

EWC's Impact

Well, really the East-West Center experience has been my life. I've been working here almost 35 years. And maybe I'm oversimplifying things, but I think that the Center and myself personally share a common belief, and that's to try to promote mutual understanding amongst people. That's one of the main reasons why I value my job and it's my hope, in a small way, that I've helped with this.

The way I look at influencing people, I think of it in two categories -- the residents and staff. I hope that through my management style, I have provided the residents with a positive experience. And it's interesting because really we do very little to make it work. I mentioned how when students shared double rooms and the staff went to extraordinary efforts to make room and unit assignments to minimize potential friction due to political, nationality or ethnic concerns. Now we're just too busy, to be quite frank with you, to do this.

The residents seem to be able to coexist quite nicely. As I said before, we let them work out their problems themselves. But it all seems to work out. It's nice to hear returning residents fondly reminisce about their dormitory experiences. And so, in terms of the residents, I hope we've done an OK job. The other group of people that I'm hoping to have positively affected are those whom I work with.

The staff. I'm very sensitive about trying to be responsive. To provide good customer service. I'm very sensitive to criticisms about government workers. Hopefully, we keep that to a minimum -- where the answer is simply "no" or the attitude is "don't bother me."

And so I've tried to promote this attitude or this feeling of being responsive. To be respectful.

In the area that I work in, administrative support, there's a common feeling that oftentimes we're dumped on. It can be tiresome to handle complaints every day. In our line of work -- support services, we handle all sorts of problems, but it's been my experience that most people are reasonable. Yes, you will have complainers. But if you respond to them in a timely fashion, and if you explain to them what you are doing or why it can't be done, even these "difficult" individuals can be placated. I've tried to be responsive and to set the example for others.

It's ironic because there weren't any counseling positions after I got my degree and so I continued to work at the Center. And although I never found a position in the field, I have used much of what I learned from my counseling training in my job as an administrator.

I want to be thought of as being a good administrator. I take pride in that. And it's not only getting things done but how you get it done. Treating people fairly, I think that's really important. And also to be supportive of the staff that works under me. They really are the key to the success that the unit has. I have a really good staff and am very fortunate.

Ties That Last

My best memories are the people that I work with. It's my co-workers, and when I first started the job I want to mention Glenn Yamashita, Joanne Punu, Walter Quensell. And then in my later years -- Amy Manago. Arnold Kishi and Doug Lamerson. The numerous program, administrative, clerical staff ... and, of course, my housing, facilities,

mail and conference co-workers. This makes work what it is. Where you have a group of people whom you can work with, but more importantly have fun with, too.

I also want to acknowledge the bosses that I've had. They all are unique individuals and they all have helped me grow. Wesley Park [*Vice President for Administration*], Kenji Sumida [*Vice President for Administration, later President*] and Ricky Kubota, they all had their own unique management styles -- I've learned from all of them and I've appreciated their help. And last but not least, and I mentioned this previously, are the staff that works in our unit. It'll take too long to mention all their names, but they know who I'm talking about.

Presently. And in the past also, because as I mentioned before, they are the ones that really do the work. They are the ones that make things happen. And there have been many of them over the years. In fact sometimes I'm embarrassed because people come up to me and say "Hi" and I can recognize their face but I can't remember their names. I've worked with so many EWC staff and students over the years.

Previously, in my early years I got to work with people on a more hands-on basis. Now being at the level I'm at I don't have that opportunity and I miss that. But I think that's where my good memories are. Just like how students remember good times that they've had in the dorms and the friends they made. What makes the Center for me, have been the people.