What was your role in APEC?

The APEC Interns at UH Mānoa had a wide range of responsibilities and roles. We drafted briefs on APEC economies, maintained a website and a blog, worked with the Hawaii Kakou Mural Project, conducted interviews of APEC experts, translated documents and participated in APEC interviews. I, personally, worked closely with Dr. Denise Konan in maintaining the APEC section on the UHHERO website, preparing for the weekly meetings, participating in the Hawaii Pacific Forum and planning a student event called the “APEC Night”. During APEC week, I had the honor of working at the South Korea’s Presidential Press Center as an interpreter to the Speaker of the National Assembly and a press agent.

What does APEC mean to you?

In preparation for APEC 2011, University of Hawaii became actively involved and served as a research and educational center for APEC in Hawaii. This is where my fellow UH Mānoa students and I served as APEC Interns. Even though our responsibilities and contribution to APEC overall were minor, I believe that we made a difference in our community and school by sharing our thoughts on APEC.

APEC gave us real world lessons, priceless memories and valuable relationships that a regular academic curriculum cannot provide. It also made me realize importance of speaking another language. I am honored to have experienced so many unimaginable things as an undergraduate student. APEC holds a personal value for me not so much in what the organization does or the leaders involved in it but rather in the personal development and growth that I acquired. For me, APEC means opportunity and growth.

How did the internship program change your perspective on our school?

Sometimes, I wish there was a simple way to share all of my experiences, relationships and lessons from APEC with fellow students. I believe they too will be amazed by the learning opportunities available for students, especially in how we can coordinate and work closely with faculty and administration. The mentoring and generous support from professors and grad students really touched my heart. I hope other students will have the opportunity to acquire what I’ve learned from the internship. I sincerely hope that I can be an example of a student taking advantage of the resources and assistance available for the UH Mano students.

As my role model and inspiration, Congresswoman Hirono told me, opportunities come when least expected, and how much you get out of it depends on how much you put in. APEC has certainly proved this saying to be true.

At times, APEC was a challenging, stressful and an endless project. However, at the end it rewarded us with pride, growth, and friendship.

Best moment of the internship?

One of the most memorable moments from APEC internship was the opening night of APEC Night at campus center. Before the event I was extremely worried and nervous. However, thanks to awesome volunteers, the team work of APEC interns, the mentoring of professors and staff, and the participation of 200 students, APEC Night was a success. It was a night of passion, inspiration and energy that I will never forget. APEC Night was a big challenge and an amazing experience that highlights the APEC Internship Program.

What’s next on your agenda?

With the knowledge and experiences I have acquired from APEC I hope to further study and train to become an excellent candidate for a Foreign Service Office position. In my post college years I plan to pursue international public policy and international affairs in Washington D.C.

I am very thankful for all the opportunities and friendships that I was able to develop through APEC. I can say with confidence that APEC 2011 was a significant initiation in my involvement in international relations.