Q: Hawaii Broadband Hui is focusing on Pilina (connection) and Digital Equity ... do you think it is important to have values-based vision as a foundation for innovation that serves a greater purpose than mere profit?

A: This is something a scientist wrestles with all the time, especially in Hawaii because we live on such a small “canoe” where small things good or bad can have such huge impact. In our ICS department for example, one of the questions used to evaluate new faculty hires, is what their thoughts are on the ethical impact of their research. And one of the questions we always have to answer in our grant funding from the National Science Foundation is what will be the broader societal impacts of our innovations. Humans always inject their values into technologies we create whether we intended it or not. Values can be good and bad. Values can have intentional and unintentional consequences. Science can be correct and incorrect. Scientific outcome can have intentional and unintentional outcome. Whatever we put as the foundation for our technology should be strong, whether they are values or science or both or something else. One could argue that strength can be thought of as the systematic reduction of our weaknesses. That’s what the scientific method is about- taking assumptions and systematically correcting them in the face of better evidence. Values also change over time- through societal actions. No one has 20/20 vision of the future. But we can’t be afraid of the future and we most certainly can’t stand still or go backwards. In Hawaii we need to have the courage to progress, make mistakes, and correct more quickly, if we are to get out of being the 47th in the US for innovation.

Q: Would someone be able to share that list that Chris Lee just shared? Higher education needs to listen carefully to this.

A:

Q: With more and more people who can work from home now. Do you see companies, both US and Asian, can at least set up a department here to take advantage of the time differences so they can relate to both mainland and divisions in other countries especially in Asia, middle East, Australia, etc. Their people can either work at home or in the officer depending on the time of day they need to work. How can we attract these companies to do that?
A: For companies to see value in setting up operations/small offices/footprints here the value needs to be broader than time zone changes. Companies look for market share gains, community impact, cost of doing business, incentives, among many other considerations. Having said this, YES, one of our structural advantages is our geographic positioning. But as panel members stated, the State needs to let people know we are open for business. No one believes anyone does anything here except vacation. The panel also spoke to -- the State needs tax policy and legislation to repatriate our kids who left for the high salary tech jobs on the mainland which can now be done anywhere. Like the production tax credit, they aren't just going to come if there are better alternatives. But the transformation of the how and where we work because of covid should work in our favor. DBEDT is a good resource/agency to help lead this type of exploration.

Q: DBEDT used to have a website to help people interested in looking for IT/Tech jobs in Hawaii find them. I believe they discontinued that. Is anyone else providing that type of website?

A: See HTDC for more - https://www.htdc.org/tech-careers/

Q: what about restoring state support for the university? being able to staff and run stem programs and courses on attractive and well-maintained campuses could be more effective than running a PR campaign

A: Suggest connecting with your state representative or senator

Q: The tech/digital innovation industry appears to be very male driven and dominated. What incentives do you have in place to encourage and embrace female participation?