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The University of Hawaii Foundation has a new power team – couple Rebecca Tseng Smith and Tom Smith Tseng, who joined the university's fundraising arm recently as vice presidents for development and campaign co-directors.

Rebecca Smith, a former associate dean for external relations at the Stanford Graduate School of Education, and Tom Tseng, former senior director of the International Division of Stanford's Office of Development, are bringing experience from some of the nation's top private universities, including Harvard University and Cornell University.

University of Hawaii Development Directors Rebecca Smith and Tom Tseng are bringing a... more

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Smith focuses on the health sciences colleges and the seven University of Hawaii Community Colleges. She is based at the Kakaako campus, which includes the John A. Burns School of Medicine and the UH Cancer Center. Tseng focuses on UH Manoa fundraising and central foundation functions including scholarships, corporate relations, athletics, and the office of estate and gift planning.

The new position is a homecoming for Tseng, a McKinley High School graduate and engineer by training. The two are married and previously worked together at other institutions, but this is the first time they were hired to work so closely together.

"We'd worked in private schools most of our careers and the idea of coming to a land grant university was very attractive," Smith told PBN. "I have also worked at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University so I had a feel for the connection between a university and the people that lived there in the state."

"At UH, we have campuses on multiple islands," Tseng added. "We're not just a land grant institution, we're also a sea grant and space grant institution. It's even more than just the traditional land grant mission."

Both were optimistic about available capital in the Hawaiian Islands to support the university.

" The majority of our alumni and supporters to do live in the state," Tseng said. "We obviously have communities on the Mainland and worldwide throughout Asia and the Pacific that still care deeply about their home state and if given the right opportunity, I'm convinced that many of them will want to partner and invest in Hawaii's future."

http://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/blog/2016/04/uh-foundation-hires-philanthropy-execs-from.html