

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO ACADEMIC FACULTY REGARDING ACADEMIC REORGANIZATION**

Dear UH Hilo Faculty,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a campus-wide discussion of a possible reorganization of the College of Arts and Sciences. I first heard about the issue during my interview of my current position. Subsequently, I have learned that the issue has been discussed on and off for almost a decade and a number of proposals have been put forward. I also understand there is a strong desire among some faculty to settle the issue once and for all.

We all recognize that changes do not come easily, and there may not be a perfect reorganization plan. However, we can search for a model that may render substantial improvements. The guiding principles for such reorganization might include the following:

1. **Efficiency:** Reorganization should not incur significant additional financial cost to our already constrained budget.
2. **Empowerment:** Reorganization should empower people at all levels to work effectively and efficiently together by eliminating a level of bureaucracy and simplifying processes.
3. **Growth:** Reorganization should encourage viable programs to grow and gain regional and national recognition.
4. **Synergy:** Reorganization should promote a healthy sense of identity among departments and programs, expedite development in directions appropriate to each field, and reflect the academic aspirations of faculty.
5. **Support:** Any reorganization must be strongly supported by the faculty.
6. **Vision:** Reorganization should contribute to UH Hilo's continuing evolution as an excellent undergraduate, graduate, and research institution.

A plan for reorganization was broached in June 1999. Dr. Marlene Hapai, the natural sciences division chair during 1994-97, wrote to Chancellor Tseng with an update of CAS reorganization. She indicated that the natural sciences division had desired their own college for a number of years and it would be most beneficial to the division to be on its own with a leader representing its sole interests. A three-college structure was proposed to include a College of Social Sciences and Humanities, a College of Business, and a College of Natural Sciences.

In April 2002, the Committee on the Future of Education on the Big Island, led by Dr. Rick Castberg, presented a plan to include a College of Business and

Economics, a College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, and a College of Social Sciences and Humanities, among others. Also in April 2002, the business and economics faculty unanimously signed a petition to establish a College of Business and Economics.

Perhaps the time has come for us to make a decisive move. A division of the current College of Arts and Sciences into a College of Social Sciences and Humanities, College of Business, and College of Natural Sciences appears to be the most viable. There would be no change to the College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resource Management or to Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikolani College of Hawaiian Language.

**Efficiency.** A three-college model may actually save money. Here is a possible reconfiguration of costs.

	Current CAS	Three-College Model
Dean Salary*	\$117,000	\$255,000
Asst. to Dean Salaries (2)*	\$140,000	\$0
Asst. to Dean Stipends	\$3,600	\$0
Division Chair Salaries (4)*	\$280,000	\$0
Division Chair Stipends	\$7,200	\$0
Department Chair Stipends <sup>a</sup>	\$22,500	\$60,000
Replacement Lecturer Credits	\$0	\$27,000
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$558,300</b>	<b>\$342,000</b>

\*Approximation

<sup>a</sup>The department chair stipend will increase from \$900/yr to \$2400/yr. The estimate is based on 25 departments.

The current salaries and stipends of the dean, assistant deans, and division chairs would be replaced by salaries to three deans, one associate dean and replacement lecturer costs; and department chair stipends would be increased. This is a model that will encourage department to be basic operating units. Support staff, secretaries and student help can be redistributed to the newly formed colleges. As certain programs continue to grow, those colleges may merit the employment of associate deans.

**Empowerment.** Under current the structure, only the dean can legally make any managerial decision, and assistants to the dean and division chairs cannot. This makes the dean's job very difficult because he/she must represent a multiplicity of interests and fields. Under the proposed three-college model, all deans are in the executive/management category and will be able to make managerial decisions while representing more homogeneous and coherent groups.

**Growth.** Under the current structure, many initiatives must go through at least five layers: faculty, department chair, division chair, assistant dean and dean, and vice chancellor. It is easy for the dean's office to be overwhelmed by the volume of initiatives and routine work coming from all directions. In many instances long and complex processes discourage people from seeking growth. Under the three-college model, initiatives could move more quickly through the layers, and the university can be more responsive to new initiatives and the needs of individual programs.

**Synergy and Support.** Faculty are the foundation of programs and colleges at the university. Reorganization is worth pursuing because it can better support faculty aspirations to teach, to develop, to conduct creative work and scholarship more effectively and efficiently. The business and economics faculty wish to have their own college. There is strong indication that the natural sciences faculty would like to have their own college as well, although I would need to confirm this. Through the reorganization, we hope to facilitate cohesiveness and synergy and improve communication among faculty and staff. When a desirable environment has been created that is conducive to scholarship of discovery, integration, application and teaching, synergy that powers development and growth will follow.

**Vision.** UH Hilo in the future could have a number of colleges and function as a true university. In my own view, UH Hilo should eventually include at least seven colleges:

- The College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resource Management
- Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikolani College of Hawaiian Language
- The College of Education and Community Services
- The College of Health Sciences
- The College of Natural Sciences
- The College of Social Sciences and Humanities
- The College of Business and Economics.

Of course, other visions will be welcomed and should be explored and discussed. The three-college model will lead us in the direction of a more capacious university. A serious, campus-wide examination of reorganization is sure to be helpful and healthy. A number of issues can be addressed openly and creatively, such as the profound difference in the size of the various colleges, the widely-held suspicion that there is a better way for us to be organized, and the potential for synergy of academic units.

### **Other questions**

Regarding discussion of the education and nursing departments: Given the demand for teachers and nurses state- and nationwide, could reorganization free these programs for more entrepreneurial initiatives than have been

available to them? With proposed programs in pharmacy and allied health services in the wings, a College of Health Sciences is a possibility. Nursing could be a component of such a college. Could a College of Education be formed, combining the education department and the College of Continuing Education and Community Service? In raising these questions, I hope to generate some more discussion. Until a consensus can be reached, it would probably be best that nursing remain as a part of natural sciences and education a part of social sciences.

Many people have warned me of the difficulty in bringing about changes and reorganization. And many have doubt that any reorganization will actually work at UH Hilo. Ron Gordon sent me an article about Daniel Goleman, the author of *Emotional Intelligence*. I quote, "Emotions are contagious. Positive people nourish others. Someone who keeps his/her soul intact, despite the difficulties of life and work and the scary economy, can make others feel uplifted." Let's share positive emotions and move this university forward.

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Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

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