

August 8, 2003

Dear Academic Faculty:

I would like to welcome you back from your summer vacation. Please allow me to share with you some of my thoughts as we all look forward to another productive and progressive academic year.

Academic Year 2002-03

Academic Year 2002-03 was indeed a good year for UH Hilo. The following are a few of the achievements that we can celebrate:

- Our Strategic Plan 2002-2010 was approved by the Board of Regents, and we developed campus strategic initiatives in a process that was participatory and inclusive.
- We received a positive assessment from the WASC accreditation team for the first phase of our current accreditation review, which will be completed in Spring 2004.
- The UH Hilo Congress Assessment Committee is implementing our revised program review guidelines and procedures; in 2002-2003, the committee oversaw six program reviews involving external reviewers and has been training faculty for the next round of reviews.
- We obtained the approval from the Board of Regents to establish a separate graduate division at UH Hilo.
- The campus started to address issues related to academic advising and student retention with two new committees; the Advising Committee has already submitted a set of recommendations.
- We received approval to move from a two-tier to a single tuition rate, a change that goes into effect in Fall 2003 and that will eventually generate an additional million dollars annually for UH Hilo.
- We completed our third year of the National Survey of Student Engagement and involved many faculty in the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement.
- We began work on a comprehensive campus policy and procedure manual.
- Three new programs – the BA in Geology, the BA in Health and Physical Education, and the BA in Performing Arts – have been approved by the BOR and all are being implemented.
- We have established an institutional web portfolio that make policies, reports, other useful websites, and documents readily available to the university community at <http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/~accred> .

- The UH Hilo Congress General Education Committee has reviewed our General Education program against our accrediting commission's requirements and will announce its recommendations and implementation plan to the faculty at the beginning of the Fall 2003 semester.
- The new Banner system is largely in place, and staff and faculty are familiarizing themselves with this new, more powerful student registration and information system.
- We continue to work toward the goal of increasing the efficiency of resource utilization through a centralized scheduling of classes through the Office of the Registrar.
- The Nursing program has received full accreditation status from the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission.
- We are working towards greater cohesiveness and collegiality among the three degree-granting colleges through the UH Hilo Congress and by such means as a UH Hilo Faculty Handbook.
- We are working to improve articulation with community colleges and distance learning administration.

Accreditation

The most pressing project for the University for 2003-2004 is successful completion of its institutional self-study for reaccreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The first phase of our self-study culminated in a campus report on our institutional capacity and a site visit by a WASC team in March 2003. The second phase will culminate in a campus report on our educational effectiveness and a second WASC site visit in March 2004.

The 2003 site team's report to WASC and to the campus concluded with a number of long-term and short-term recommendations. The full report is at <http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/~accred>. The six short-term recommendations, which the team asserted "should be implemented or addressed within the next 6-8 months prior to the WASC educational effectiveness review that will take place a year from now," are as follows:

1. Ensure that all degree programs have a set of measurable learning outcomes for both the programs and the courses within the programs that express what students will demonstrate as a consequence of completing the academic major; and, in addition, develop measurable learning outcomes for each of the General Education categories.
2. Implement a procedure that will ensure the University maintains a current set of approved syllabi for the approved courses in the official University Catalog.

3. Initiate an inclusive budget planning process so that all constituents are aware of the budgetary problems that confront the institution, and involve faculty in evaluating the strategic initiatives, modifying/adding/deleting where deemed appropriate, and prioritizing them.
4. Examine and utilize the Strategic Plan to institute budget cuts, if necessary, in the near term, fully utilizing the Office of Institutional Research's capabilities in data collection, analysis and dissemination and keeping UHH positioned to implement some of its goals even during the pending budget crisis and definitely when the economy recovers and funding is restored/enhanced.
5. Continue and expand efforts to improve the University's retention and graduation rates by analyzing and better understanding data gathered from various surveys and by the Office of Institutional Research.
6. Take steps toward abolishing the college faculty senates and having the Faculty Congress assume most of their functions (as is commonly the case at other institutions of comparable size), while ensuring equitable representation and better defining the role of the Faculty Congress and expanding it to encompass a wider range of issues that significantly impact faculty and academic programs.
7. The administration and the College of Arts and Science should take initial steps to develop and agree on a more efficient and effective organizational structure and settle this matter once and for all. Particular consideration should be given to breaking down the college into smaller and more manageable units, which should result in many benefits, including greater efficiency and effectiveness, empowerment, and sense of identity and community.

The WASC site team's recommendations add urgency to activities which the university has already been either considering or implementing. As will be apparent in the ensuing discussion, by the end of the 2003-2004 academic year, UH Hilo will be able to demonstrate to our accrediting commission that we have in place sustainable processes and policies in those areas which are crucial to our mission as a teaching and learning institution.

Academic Budget

As unpredictable as the budget climate in Hawai'i has been, we on the academic side of the university were fortunate to have a relatively stable budget year in 2002-03. We had a slight increase in our academic budget the past year, in spite of the system's midyear assessment of funds and the Governor's restriction,

which also reduced the total budget in the middle of the budget year. Teaching and student learning is our priority and we have demonstrated our commitment to the students and faculty by protecting the instructional budget. We will continue to do so in the future. With the cloud of further budget cuts lingering over us, we can rest assured that the Chancellor's cabinet agree with me that faculty and instructional staff must continue to be our priority. In the coming academic year, the University has committed to an increase in faculty and instructional staff budget of approximately \$500,000.

At the request of the System, I prepared an article entitled "Growth or No Growth?"

Moving from State-Supported to State-Assisted, the University of Hawai'i at Hilo Is at a Crossroads." The entire article is posted at:

<http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/uhh/vcaa> By several measures--funding patterns within the System, peer institution comparisons, enrollment growth, and empirical observations from academic units--UH Hilo is underfunded by about \$5 million. Within a period of two to four years, \$2 million can be generated annually to reduce this amount through these efforts:

- A change of the tuition system that was approved by the Board of Regents recently will generate additional tuition income (\$1 million by 2004).
- Some of our programs, such as the College of Continuing Education and Community Service (\$130,000 by 2005) and the Office of International Affairs (\$170,000 by 2006), have established their respective goals of fiscal self-sufficiency.
- We hope to integrate the Small Business Development Center with the School of Business to create synergy and engage in entrepreneurial activities (\$100,000 by 2006).
- The Conference Center is being refocused to generate needed financial support for the University (\$100,000 by 2007).
- We need to undertake fundraising efforts with greater vigor and effectiveness.
- Faculty and staff continue to work diligently to increase extramural funding (\$500,000 by 2007).
- We are in the process of signing a master agreement with the U. S. Geological Survey to bring its Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center to UH Hilo. The transaction will generate annually \$160,000 to \$560,000 indirect cost returns to UH Hilo.

Teaching and Student Learning

Institutions of higher learning are increasingly aware of the public demand for accountability in the form of documented student learning outcomes.

Assessment has been the center of the accreditation process nationwide for almost two decades. Our primary mission at UH Hilo is teaching and learning excellence. As the campus moves forward to achieve these goals as demonstrated through measurable student learning outcomes, I would like to invite your support and cooperation in achieving these goals.

More informative and student-friendly course syllabi, clearly defined learning objectives for general education courses, improvement in academic advising, and vigorous program review are among the immediate objectives for the university. We identified these priorities in our institutional self-review for accreditation, and our accrediting commission expects us to move forward on all of these fronts.

We are in the process of institutionalizing a Center for Teaching and Learning. The Center will be led by a group of faculty and staff leaders that includes April Komenaka, Sonia Juvik, Robert Chi, Diane Higgins, Michael Bitter, and Craig Severance. The Center will coordinate faculty and staff development in the areas of teaching approaches and strategies, instructional technology, academic advising and student retention.

The Academic Advising Committee, led by Diane Higgins and Michael Bitter, met diligently during the last academic year and has submitted to me a series of recommendations, some of which are already in the process of implementation. Last Spring, the Congress established the Student Success and Retention Committee, charging it with developing ways of supporting student learning and satisfaction with their educational experience at UH Hilo. As UH Hilo continues to grow and additional funds become available from the new tuition structure, the numerous teaching and learning activities and initiatives necessitates a full time administrator. We will begin the consultation process with the UHH Congress, deans and directors to look into the possibility to have an administrator to coordinate undergraduate teaching and learning in the future.

Research and Graduate Education

We have experienced persistent growth in our grant and contract activities, from about \$9 million in 1999 to about \$12 million currently. The bulk of funding is in the form of training grants. We hope to increase our activities in research and be competitive in research grants. Most of us agree that a research organization and infrastructure will have to be developed in order to sustain the growth.

March 14 was indeed a historical day for UH Hilo. The Board of Regents modified its policy and approved the creation of a separate graduate division at

UH Hilo. The BOR's action paves the way for UH Hilo to develop a Graduate Faculty and formalize the roles of the UH Hilo faculty Graduate Council and Research Council. A UH Hilo Graduate Division gives primary responsibility for the quality and development of our graduate programs to UH Hilo faculty.

With justifiable needs, faculty expertise, available resources and potential for extramural funding, we will continue to develop our graduate education. We will also explore every possibility to offer joint graduate programs with UH Manoa. Graduate programs are expensive in nature, and we shall keep this in mind. The UH Hilo Graduate Council, led by Jim Juvik, Susan Brown, Pila Wilson, John Cheng and Don Price will establish graduate policy and operating procedures for the graduate division. The Research Council led by Dan Brown, Hank Hennessey, Sonia Juvik, Ron Amundson, Bill Sakai, Don Price, Pila Wilson, and David Sing will continue to provide support to researchers in order to encourage and support extramural activities. We are in the process of establishing a new, percentage-based formula to distribute Research and Training Revolving Fund moneys to the individual principal investigators, the departments, research council, RCUH Hilo and administration.

As research and graduate programs continue to grow, they will make increasingly heavy demands on coordinators. Eventually, these activities and responsibilities will have to be coordinated by an office for research and graduate education. In the future, I will consult with deans and directors and UHH Congress for the process and possibilities.

Academic Plan

The UH Hilo strategic plan developed in 2002 will be the basis for our next UH Hilo academic plan, a plan mandated for each campus by the University System. I am committed to supporting the development of new academic programs which are consistent with our mission and which meet well-documented community and academic needs. New programs will require new funding, because we must not erode support for productive existing programs. This new funding will be supported by enrollment growth, federal grants, additional state legislative appropriations, and more active fundraising activities in the private sector. I also encourage faculty to evaluate the need and viability of existing programs and make courageous decisions that will bring about changes and transformations and help UHH to be competitive. In consultation with the UHH Congress, deans and directors, our academic plan will include such initiatives as:

- Development of campuswide contract renewal, tenure and promotion guidelines.
- Development of a faculty hiring handbook.

- Overhaul and revision of university catalog.
- Assessment of General Education.
- Measurable student learning outcomes for all major programs.
- Development of support and leadership for undergraduate education.
- Development of support for research and graduate education.
- Establishment of a Center for Teaching and Learning.
- Development and implementation of new academic programs such as conservation biology and environmental science, Hawaiian and indigenous language and culture, counseling psychology, China-U.S. relations.
- Moving from the category of Baccalaureate Colleges – Liberal Arts to Master's Colleges and Universities II, according to the Carnegie Classification.

Communications

I will communicate more frequently with academic constituencies in the coming academic year. The multiple channels of communication include:

- Monthly meetings of the UH Hilo Faculty Congress
- Monthly meetings of the **Academic Council** to discuss policies and procedures affecting academic units. The council includes the deans and director of the three degree-granting colleges and of CCECS, assistant to the CAS dean, the registrar, director of institutional research, chairpersons of research and graduate councils, director of technology and UHH Congress chair..
- Monthly meetings of the **VCAA Council of Deans and Directors** which to discuss administration, operation and coordination of academic units. The council includes the deans and director of the colleges and CAS assistant to the dean and division chairs.
- Conversations with groups of faculty on the future of UH Hilo to be held in the fall.
- Conversations with groups of department chairs to be held in the spring.
- Conversations with UHH Student Government Association once a semester.

This summer I met with the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resource Management faculty and discussed a wide range of issues as a result of program review. I have also met with the staff of College of Continuing Education and Community Service to discuss goals and concerns. I will continue to do so with other colleges/divisions.

However, official meetings like these are never enough. Please reach out to me with your concerns as I am reaching out to you.

Afterthought

As I reflect on the progress we have made and the progress we are continuing to make, I feel deeply grateful to the many of you who have contributed to the betterment of this university.

Administrators cannot claim any success of our own; every achievement is the product of many people working cooperatively and patiently in a common cause. Administrators are here to serve in all instances, and lead in certain occasions. Your success is our success. Let us each be a champion of student learning!

Mahalo nui loa.

Sincerely,

Christopher D. Lu
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs