

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

2004 JUN 20 PM 1:43



June 25, 2004

Rose Y. Tseng
Chancellor
University of Hawaii, Hilo
200 West Kawili Street
Hilo, HI 96720-4091

Dear Chancellor Tseng:

At its meeting on June 17-18, 2004, the Commission considered the reports that were prepared by the Preparatory Review and the Educational Effectiveness Review teams that conducted the Educational Effectiveness Review visit to the University of Hawaii, Hilo on March 19-21, 2003 and March 16-19, 2004. The Commission also had access to the University's Institutional Proposal and presentations for the two reviews. The Institutional Proposal was reviewed and accepted by Commission staff, and the Educational Effectiveness Review followed the Preparatory Review. The Preparatory Review and Educational Effectiveness reports prepared by the University, which drew high praise from the team, were informative and analytical. Your participation, along with Christopher Lu, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and April Komenaka, Assistant Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, with the Commission Panel is acknowledged. Your comments were very helpful.

The Commission recognized that, in preparation for a review under the *1988 Handbook*, the University had originally completed a self-review but in 2001, at the request of the new System administration, its review was postponed to 2003 so that its review could occur simultaneously with the other senior-level campuses and so that the campus could be evaluated under the *2001 Handbook*. The University, to its credit, used the postponement to implement the recommendations from the earlier review, which, in turn, enhanced its preparedness for the Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness Reviews.

The Institutional Presentation was aligned with the Institutional Proposal and the University provided useful and relevant evidence to support its Educational Effectiveness Review Report and to demonstrate its responsiveness to the Commission and team recommendations that followed the Preparatory Review. The Essays in the Preparatory Review and in the Educational Effectiveness Review effectively presented the state of the University in a variety of areas and were forthcoming about the additional work needed to address the underlying values and intent of the Standards of Accreditation.

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The team commended the University for its bold vision of service to the Hawaiian community and for its progress in transforming its mission to transform itself from a liberal arts college to a comprehensive university that serves the workforce needs of Hawaii. The team found that the University has taken previous Commission concerns and recommendations seriously and has achieved substantial progress in a number of areas during both reviews. The Commission shared the team's positive evaluation of the University's accomplishments. In its report, the evaluation team identified several areas for institutional improvement and the Commission endorsed the recommendations embedded by both teams in the Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness reports. The Commission highlighted four aspects of the institution's performance for further attention, three of which have carried forward from the Capacity and Preparatory Review Report. The fourth is the specific outcome of the Educational Effectiveness Review.

Mission, Planning, and Institutional Resources. The University has moved forward toward its goal of becoming a comprehensive university. In its previous action letter, dated June 30, 2003, the Commission observed that the UH System approach to budgeting does not lend itself to institutional development related to enrollment or program expansion. It funds institutions in ways that support neither program expansion nor enrollment growth. For example, two Master's programs approved by both the Board of Regents and WASC were not started until the legislature granted funds because the System had not budgeted funds to support the programs. The University should strive more systematically to understand the impact of expanding enrollment on the overall University infrastructure, student services and staff workload.

Given the University's emerging mission and the evident high interest in its programs, as demonstrated by its enrollment growth, the Commission encouraged the University and the System to consider ways in which to expand the University's funding base, and the Board of Regents is encouraged to support that expansion. In the meantime, the Commission restated its strong recommendation that the University continue its efforts to attract external funding from donations, grants, and contracts, and make certain that the anticipated enrollment growth does not occur at the expense of currently enrolled students or already thriving programs. Increased State funding is not the only solution. It will be even more critical that the University and the System establish a set of priorities for development along the lines suggested in the June 2003 Commission Action letter:

The System's and University's strategic planning processes will need to be followed up with a set of priorities for development among and within campuses, and must be supported by an accompanying financial plan. This will provide the basis for the University to develop realistic planning priorities and objectives.

While the team may have recommended that the Regents form a task force in regard to the University's mission, growth and funding needs, the Commission is reluctant to tell the

Board how to address the emerging needs of each institution. It was clear to the Commission, however, that some attention, over the long term, will need to be given to this issue by the Regents for all of the senior-level institutions in the University of Hawai'i System.

Institutional Governance and Organizational Structures. In response to previous Commission and team concerns about its lack of an overall faculty-led University governance structure, the University established the Faculty Congress, composed of representatives from each College. However, a faculty senate continued to exist at each college. The team concluded at the end of the Preparatory Review that, by leaving the faculty senates in place, the University continued to foster redundancy in governance functions. The team also observed that the University's academic administrative structure was weighted in the direction of the College of Arts and Sciences, which represented 85 percent of the faculty and recommended that the College be subdivided. Prior to the Educational Effectiveness Review, in response to the Commission and team recommendation in regard to governance, a faculty referendum on these two questions was held. By majority vote, the college-level senates were continued, without modification of their responsibilities or roles in the University process. The College of Business was formed. However, the action to further divide the College of Natural Science failed.

While it is not the responsibility of the Commission to tell institutions how they should be organized, it is its responsibility to ensure that the organizational structures are aligned with, and serve, the institution, in keeping with the Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity and the Standards of Accreditation. The Commission urged the University to monitor the operations of its senates and Faculty Congress and to evaluate the effectiveness of the two-tiered system. By the time of the next review, the Commission will need to know how effectively the governance system has worked and the extent to which the faculty voices within the College and across the University are heard equally and fairly. In light of the long-standing team and Commission concerns about this issue, and the lack of any structural change, the University will be responsible to demonstrate that it has established and operates with effective governance and administration. Otherwise it could be found out of compliance with Standard 3.

Diversity. The Preparatory Review team also noted that the University has taken a number of steps to respond to its very diverse student population. These steps include faculty development efforts to heighten their understanding of cross-cultural differences, the creation of cross-disciplinary courses and programs sensitive to Hawaiian students and the work of student affairs within the cultural contexts of the University's students. Particularly commendable is the success responding to the "40 little things" that go into the students' experience. Less success, however, has been achieved in diversifying the faculty and staff. The team wrote:

The University has achieved a remarkably diverse student population, but the diversity of faculty and staff complement lags well behind. The University is urged to take steps to ensure that the mandate of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action is broadly understood and shared. This would include staffing, funding and broad assignment for the recruitment and retention of a more diverse faculty to the entire University community.

The University's commitment to diversity at the student and curricular levels was quite evident to the team and the Commission. The program of study in Hawaiian Language and Literature is recognized worldwide and is a model for the study of the culture of indigenous people. Nevertheless, that commitment did not appear to extend equally to the diversification of the faculty and staff or across the entire University curriculum. Indeed, despite the Commission's recommendations at the end of the Preparatory Review, not only had the University not begun to implement a diversification plan, it had not even begun to develop a plan. Further, it was not clear to the Commission how the institution planned to diffuse throughout its curriculum the important ways of knowing that are unique to indigenous people. The University is expected to move ahead with the development and implementation of a plan for improving the diversity of its faculty and staff and for diffusing through its curriculum the key learnings and insights that have made its Hawaiian program a worldwide exemplar. Plans for both activities need to be developed and integrated into the University's more general strategic plan and planning process.

Educational Effectiveness. At the time of the last visit, the team found that the University had made "great strides" in moving toward the vision of becoming a learning organization. Cited by the team were the formation of assessment and general education committees, the establishment of policies for assessment and academic program review, the conduct of faculty assessment workshops, and the provision of coaching and consulting services by the Institutional Research Director. The University has continued its progress in the collection, analysis and use of performance indicators to help understand institutional effectiveness. This includes using retention and graduation rates, disaggregated by ethnic group, as well as other data collection and analysis strategies. Yet, efforts to implement assessment initiatives have not yet reached the level of campus-wide engagement. Many faculty still resist the assessment initiatives and much work remains to be done with the general education initiative. Likewise, a solution for the problem of students who are ill-prepared in mathematics will need to be found. In all cases, the University must maintain its momentum so that faculty will understand that the ultimate purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning. Assessment and cultures of evidence are tools to that end. The Commission expects the University to sustain its efforts to fully engage faculty in this important endeavor.

The Commission acted to:

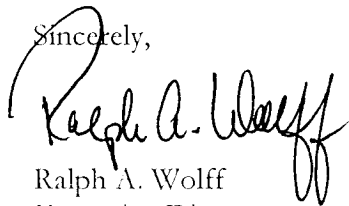
1. Reaffirm the accreditation of the University of Hawaii, Hilo.
2. Schedule the Proposal to be due October 15, 2010. The Capacity and Preparatory Review will be in spring 2013 and the Educational Effectiveness Review will be in spring 2014.
3. Schedule a Special Visit to address the issues in this letter for spring 2008. The format of the special visit report should follow that suggested in the enclosed memorandum. The Guide for Special Visits will be mailed shortly. Four copies of the report will be due two months before the visit.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that the University of Hawaii, Hilo has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness and that it has successfully completed the multistage review conducted under the Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review, the University is expected to continue its progress and be prepared to respond as expectations of institutional performance, especially with respect to Educational Effectiveness and student learning, further develop under the application of the Standards of Accreditation.

In accordance with Commission policy, we request that you send a copy of this letter to Interim President David McClain.

Please contact me if you have any comments or questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff
Executive Director

RW/brn

Cc: James Appleton
Christopher D. Lu
Members of the team
Gregory M. Scott

Enclosure