1. E Board
Emily Hawkins, Liaison

The E Board met on Feb. 3 to review courses for the summer and fall courses. Among the summer courses, two more were recommended after receiving more information, one was not recommended due to instructor's lack of response. Among the fall courses, 8 new and 6 renewals were recommended, but 3 staff classes were not. The board decided that a workshop is helpful, and is planning one for mid-March. Instructors who have incorporated ethics into their courses will be featured. There wasn't enough time for extensive discussions of the issues raised at the GEO advisory group meeting: (1) course, rather than instructor, focus designations, (2) handling "staff" courses, and (3) the number of focus designations possible on a single class.

2. H Board
Jon Goss, Liaison

February 7, 2005 Meeting
Lisa Fujikawa from the GEO explained changes that will be made to the GEO web pages regarding H-Focus hallmarks and explanatory notes. There was some discussion as to when to post the changes, and it was agreed that it should be done immediately, and dated. The new documents would apply to all proposals for Spring 2006, but those submitting proposals for Fall 2005 could choose to use the old documents. The web page would contain links to the old documents for their reference.

The main topic of discussion was the workshop scheduled for February 14. As well as Ty Tengan (Anthropology, UHM) and Liko Hoe (Hawaiian Studies, WCC), whose participation was announced at the last meeting, speakers will include Will McClatchy (Botany, UHM) and Tricia Watson (Political Science, UHM). Speakers will be given 5-7 minutes to address the topics agreed at the last meeting.

There was a discussion of several proposals. The Board approved one proposal and marked three for further communication with the instructor, all deemed short on “native voice”. The Board also considered an “appeal” stating that the syllabus is identical to one submitted by another instructor. Upon further examination, the syllabi are different in that one syllabus contains several assigned readings that are “TBA”, while the other has fully referenced readings that satisfy the requirements of native voice. Solis will communicate the Board’s findings to the instructors.

3. O Board
Dick Chadwick, Liaison

February 4, 2005 Meeting
After approving last meeting’s minutes, the O-Board’s focus for the entire session was on assessment. The discussion was complicated, but to me several issues stood out.

The first issue concerned the nature of assessment in general and the multiple dimensions of performance. The hallmarks provide general guidelines but not specific processes or procedures for assessment. Thus the first issue was how to approach the further explication or specification of O-Focus hallmarks in terms of student capability levels, especially given the great diversity of skills and subject matter that characterize O-Focus courses’ objectives. Among the suggestions for possible performance criteria discussed were: ability to organize messages, to speak audibly, and to employ language appropriate to subject matter and audience. It was decided that a list of O-Focus skills be compiled that are comprehensive of those taught by educators in their O-Focus classes, skills specific to meeting O-Focus hallmarks.
A related issue concerned the scope of responsibility of the O-Board for actual assessments of O-Focus courses as far as actually meeting some criteria for performance. Whatever the assessment procedure, if it were a process that required a team outside the classroom environment to implement, it would cost time and money to prepare, implement, and report results. There is no budget for this, so it stands to reason that the O-Board’s responsibility is limited to designing and recommending an assessment process that is intrinsic to the classroom environment, and evaluating reports of its completion. One suggestion was to hold a series of meetings with O-Focus course instructors to specify and organize the aforementioned outcomes skills and knowledge list, and produce a common set of generic criteria to be used in the actual grading of students. The assessment process would thus be integral to the instructors’ grading process. Reports regarding average attainment and average variation in that attainment could then easily be generated by the instructors and accumulated for O-Focus assessment purposes with no intrusion into classrooms.

If some form of verification were desired for assessment at the college, campus or system level, a small random sample of students in O-Focus courses could be identified and appropriate materials gathered related to a random sample of assessment criteria that were employed. But it seems that such verification lies outside the scope of the Focus Boards’ responsibilities in general. The easiest alternative would be to use the students’ performance evaluations already provided by their instructors and accumulate them at the appropriate college, campus and/or system level. In addition, it was suggested that student self-assessments and peer assessments might also be included in the mix. In any case, a standard set of generic assessment criteria, arrived at through meetings with O-Focus faculty, was the best approach.

Some discussion of CAFE surveys also took place; it was agreed that this instrument was inappropriate because it did not include specific performance evaluations.

An important question arose regarding the general nature of assessment. Two models were discussed. One was a before-after comparison yielding a measure of change as an indicator of improvement in student skills and knowledge over a semester. The other model was to rate students’ level of oral communication competency at the end of a semester. The first has the advantage of recording change in skill and knowledge levels, the second gives a measure of oral communication competency. While the former is interesting, the question was raised whether it was appropriate to the question of assessing student attainment. What matters is what skills and knowledge the student possesses at the end, not where they began from or what their rates of progress were. Faculty and administrators may wish to have information about rates of change for other purposes, but what assessment is about is outcomes, not what led to those outcomes as interesting and useful as that might be.

4. W Board

5. Foundations Board
Megumi Taniguchi, Liaison

6. HSL
Patricia Fryer, Liaison