

UH Manoa Foundation Board Annual Report for 2008-2009

Henri Casanova, Chair, UHM Foundations Board

1. Policies

The main task of the Foundation Board (hereafter, FB) this year, besides its routine duties, was to investigate and propose solutions for the problem of FS compliance, as requested by a 11/26/2008 memo from the GEC Chair. The problem is that a large percentage of our students (> 40%) do not comply with the FS requirement by the end of their freshman year. This is possible because in spite of the "intent" of the Foundation requirement, this requirement is not enforced. The FB has investigated this problem by gathering feedback from advising units, by talking to their departments and colleagues, and by gathering enrollment data. The main reasons for the problems are: (i) unprepared students and (ii) misalignment with major requirements. Addressing (i) is of course difficult, and one envisioned solution is to reduce section sizes (although this of course raises budgetary concerns). Addressing both (i) and (ii) could be solved, at least as a temporary solution, by making the FS compliance a "by the end of the second year" requirement. Appendix 1 at the end of this report contains a full copy of the answer of the FB to the GEC.

2. Designation Removal

The FB did not receive any request for and did not enforce any designation renewals.

3. New Course Proposals

The FB received only one request for a new designation: an FW designation for English 190 ("Composition I for Transfer Students to UHM"). The objective of this course is to provide transfer students with an appropriate FW course that matches their experience levels, rather than placing them in the freshman course English 100. The FB agreed to examine this course informally and early on to help streamline and speed up the process, and eventually voted to formally grant the FW designation.

4. Five-Year Designation Renewals

The FB did not receive any request for designation renewals.

5. Multi-Campus Foundation Board

The Multi-Campus Foundation Board teleconference, with representatives from UHM, Kauai CC, MCC, and WCC, is scheduled on 04/27/09. Given that this report is due on 4/16/09, it cannot provide content on what happened during the teleconference. The FB Chair will communicate relevant information from that teleconference to the GEC directly.

6. Ongoing Concerns and Issues

Late in the semester, while the FB had been tasked with exploring the issue of FS compliance within the first year (see Section 1), at a useful joint meeting with the GEC, the issue of FG was brought up. While as far as the FB knew the issue of FG compliance was to be explored in Fall 2009, it seemed strategically better for the GEC to address both issues as once. The FB has started exploring the FG compliance issue, but at the time this report is being written it is not possible to report on progress. The FB Chair will communicate findings directly to the GEC by the end of the semester.

Last year, in his final report, Chair Stephen Canham expressed his concern regarding the position of FB Chair. He advocated for a 2-year term, rather than a 1-year term, as chair given that the learning curve is steep. He also

indicated that a 2-year term should be accompanied by a course release (noting that there was a proposal for a course release for a 1-year term, but that this proposal had never been approved by the administration.) This year again the same pattern was repeated, with myself selected as Chair in spite of my term on the FB ending this semester. This year it seems that members were either in their 1st year or in their 3rd year on the FB, which did not make it possible to pick a chair that would have some experience and that would stay on for 2 years. Part of the problem is that designating the FB Chair is a very ad-hoc process without much incentive to be chair. Next year the chair selection should be easier given that many board members will be starting their 2nd year on the board, but nevertheless exploring the notion of a course release for a 2-year term as chair is clearly worthwhile.