June 29, 2005

Clyde Sakamoto
Chancellor
Maui Community College
310 Kaahumanu Avenue
Kahului, HI 96732

Dear Chancellor Sakamoto:

At its meeting on June 16-17, 2005, the Commission considered the report of the evaluation team that visited Maui Community College (MCC) on March 15-17, 2005, for Candidacy or Initial Accreditation under the Policy on Joint Accreditation with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). The Commission also had access to the Addendum to the Eligibility Requirement Application to Add a Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Business and Information Technology (ABIT) and your response to the team report, dated May 22, 2005. The Commission found the opportunity to discuss the review with you and David Grooms, ABIT Program Coordinator, helpful in better understanding Maui Community College and the comments of the visiting team.

The March 2005 visiting team was convened following Maui’s successful application for a Substantive Change from ACCJC in January 2004. On June 1, 2004, a Panel of the Eligibility Committee of the WASC Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU) reviewed the Eligibility application from Maui Community College to add the Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Applied Business and Information Technology (ABIT).

The Eligibility Panel found that Maui Community College met the Senior College Commission Eligibility Criteria for the new ABIT degree program and granted Eligibility for the program through June 30, 2007. The Panel was highly complimentary of the comprehensiveness, clarity, and quality of the Eligibility application and recommended that MCC be reviewed for Candidacy or Initial Accreditation for the ABIT degree.

Given its strong Eligibility application, the visit date was scheduled for March 2005, and MCC was asked to prepare an abbreviated report for the visiting team, specifically to (1) update any issues and data from its Eligibility application; (2) respond to the Eligibility Panel’s July 28, 2004 letter; and (3) describe its progress on plans for the ABIT program. The visiting team then organized its review of Maui’s report and the visit under the general framework of the ACSCU Standards.
of Accreditation, with special assignments for general education and the ABIT curriculum, faculty, assessment, and learning outcomes. The team report contains a number of suggestions and recommendations that the Commission endorses and to which it urges the College's full attention. Additionally, the Commission highlights the following areas for consideration:

The ABIT Program Structure, Curriculum, and Faculty. The team report describes the ABIT program as one that is appropriate in content, curriculum, faculty staffing, structure, requirements, learning objectives, facilities, equipment, and nomenclature for the baccalaureate, consistent with Criteria for Review 2.1 and 2.2 in the ACSCU Standards of Accreditation. Community, political, and employer interest and support for the program on Maui has been significant and substantial, and includes considerable financial and scholarship start-up support.

The team report states, "The ABIT development team has made great progress in developing a program responsive to community needs and consistent with the essence of MCC's mission, even as it takes the institution to an expansion of its scope of activities." In anticipation of MCC's and the System consideration of a possible move to a four-year institution with multiple bachelor degree programs, the team made several recommendations to facilitate the transition to a baccalaureate structure and culture, and urged particular attention to the role of scholarship in faculty work expectations and in the learning process, and in the terms, conditions, and processes for faculty hiring and promotion. These recommendations will need to be addressed, whether or not MCC moves to develop additional baccalaureate degrees.

Funding for the Program. The Commission understands that Maui has the option of reallocating internal funding to support the ABIT program, and it also acknowledged the caution of the ACCJC that the program not detract from the College's ongoing programs and continuing commitments. While start-up funding for the initiation of the ABIT program has been generous, the long-term viability of the program will depend on the attraction of adequate numbers of students and ongoing institutional funding from the Legislature. Your response to the team report indicated that the three new faculty positions supported as high priorities by the President's Office in the legislature budget were recently funded. The commitment by the mayor of Maui to support the program with $1 million to be matched by the College has been promised, but the money has not been allocated in the next funding cycle. The Commission still needs to be assured that the ABIT program will have long-term support to sustain the program and demonstrate the adequacy of fiscal resources (Criterion for Review 3.5).

General Education. The team found a clear rationale and structure for general education courses within the ABIT program that meet Criterion for Review 2.2. The faculty and the Curriculum Committee have developed an approval process for new general education courses that requires the faculty member to specify how the proposed course meets the
specific general education area criteria. Learning outcomes/competencies are made explicit in the general education course syllabi. The team recommended inclusion of the College’s statement of general education philosophy and purpose in the next edition of the College Catalog. The Commission noted in your response to the team report that you and the Dean of Instruction and ABIT program leadership are reviewing the general education contribution to the program for possible modifications to strengthen the program in this area. It further noted that one of the three recently approved faculty positions will be assigned to general education. MCC will need to assess student-learning results in relation to the overall general education outcomes as well as in relation to specific course outcomes. If the College were to consider additional four-year programs, it would need to expand the general education courses more broadly, with courses being less directly linked to the ABIT program and more directly linked to support of the upper division curriculum that would need to be developed.

Program Review and Assessment of Student Learning. The Commission understood that all of the community colleges in Hawaii are on warning by the ACCJC, in part, for inadequate program review processes. Although Maui Community College’s articulation for the program review process with the system-wide office is not yet fully defined, the team found that the ABIT program has a well-structured internal program review process in place. This process is designed to compare student-learning objectives with evidence of student learning at the course and program levels. Both direct and indirect measures of learning are employed, with attention to ACSCU Criterion for Review 2.7. Last year, the ABIT Program undertook a preliminary program review with just the first two years of its curriculum. The visiting team recommended that this preliminary program review be repeated in spring 2006 when the junior and senior year ABIT courses have been implemented, and in anticipation of Maui’s next ACCJC comprehensive review in fall 2006. The Commission endorses this recommendation.

The Commission also concurred with the visiting team recommendation that the faculty review the number of learning outcomes for the program to determine whether there are too many outcomes for effective evaluation or whether the learning outcomes might be grouped to make the assessment process less complicated. The Commission noted from your response to the team report that the faculty review of the learning outcomes has already begun.

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the report on Candidacy/Initial Accreditation for the ABIT program of Maui Community College.

2. Grant Candidacy through July 15, 2009 for the ABIT program under the Policy on Joint Accreditation with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. Accreditation is limited to this single ABIT program.
Institutions granted the status of Candidacy must use the statement on page 11 in the *How to Become Accredited* manual if they wish to describe this status publicly. Accreditation at the associate degree level remains within the purview of the ACCJC.

3. Tentatively schedule the review for Initial Accreditation during MCC's next ACCJC comprehensive visit for accreditation in fall 2006, pending the outcomes of a Senior College Commission study reviewing whether to continue or modify the Policy on Joint Accreditation with ACCJC. If the Initial Accreditation review of the ABIT program occurs as tentatively scheduled, MCC is requested to include its response to these issues and the other recommendations of the visiting team in the section of the self-study dealing with the ABIT program.

4. Permit the ABIT program to continue to enroll students and implement the fourth year of the baccalaureate program beginning with fall 2005.

This action is limited to approval of Candidacy of the ABIT program only. Any decision to add other baccalaureate programs will require a separate and independent review process requesting transfer of accreditation and application to the Accrediting Commission of Senior Colleges and Universities as a baccalaureate level institution. The Commission understands that the University of Hawaii will undertake a study during the next six months to determine future directions for community colleges in the UH System, and it requested that Commission staff be kept informed of the results of that study.

The College will be listed in the WASC Annual Directory under both the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities. Federal law requires that the Commission address and phone number appear wherever you publish your accreditation status. To avoid confusion, references to the Senior College Commission status should be limited to references to the ABIT program. Institutions granted the status of Candidate for Accreditation under ACSCU Standards must use the following statement whenever they describe that status publicly.

"The ABIT program of Maui Community College has been recognized as a Candidate for Accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, #100, Alameda, CA 94501, (510) 748-9001. This status is a preliminary affiliation with the Commission awarded for a maximum period of four years. Candidacy is an indication that the ABIT program of MCC is progressing toward Accreditation. Candidacy is not Accreditation and does not ensure eventual Accreditation."

Institutions granted Candidacy are required to:
1. Submit an Annual Report form in the format required by the Commission.

2. Keep the Commission informed of any significant changes or developments, especially those required to have prior approval by the Commission Substantive Change Policy and of any changes in the College's accreditation status with ACCJC.

3. Pay Annual Membership Dues calculated on the FTE of the ABIT Program.

In accordance with Commission policy, we request that you send a copy of this letter to David McClain, President of the University of Hawaii System. Please confirm with me that you have done so.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to extend my congratulations to the College community for the quality of institutional planning and implementation of the ABIT program. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Ralph A. Wolff
Executive Director

Cc: John D. Welty
Diane Meyer
Barbara Beno
Members of the team
Elizabeth Griego