

UHCC SPECIAL REPORT

On November 14, 2007, a two person team representing the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges visited the University of Hawaii Community College system in Honolulu, Hawai'i. The purpose of the visit was to verify the contents of the Special Report prepared by the university at the request of the Accrediting Commission. The report required the system to comment on the progress made in addressing the system recommendation regarding the effectiveness of the new community college organization and governance structure, as follows:

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the Office of the President and Vice President for Community Colleges conduct a systematic evaluation process to determine the effectiveness of the new community college organization and governance structure between—and among—the system and its community colleges in the areas concerning:

- a. Strategic planning processes (Standard I.B.3)
- b. Program review and assessment practices (Standards I.B.1, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a,e,f, II.B.1, II.B.3.a, and II.b.4)
- c. The allocation of resources (Standards I.B.6, III.D.1.a,d, IV.B.3.c)
- d. Facilities management, including deferred maintenance (Standards III.B.1a,b, III.B.2.b)
- e. Board and administrative leadership (Standard IV.B.3.a)

The system should implement the improvements/changes that result from the review and widely communicate those outcomes (Standards I.B.3.g, IV.B.3.b, and f)

The visit began with an interview with the President of the University of Hawaii and the Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy. Interviews were conducted with individuals knowledgeable about various portions of the report and included UHCC system representatives, administrators and faculty from all community colleges in the system as well as a member of the Board of Regents. The day ended with an exit interview with the Vice President for Community Colleges. The team found all individuals to be knowledgeable about the contents of the report and candid regarding their assessments and opinions about the issues contained in the report.

The assessment called for in the recommendation was conducted using two primary sources: a survey instrument (*The Community College Inventory: Focus on Student Persistence, Learning and Attainment*) and an analysis done by a representative governance group, the Strategic Planning Council. Additional evidence was gained by the team through interviews and review

of documents. The team found that the survey instrument was somewhat confusing for participants in that the terms “college” and “institution” were used interchangeably. Although the directions in taking the survey were to consider the “community college system” as the unit being evaluated, some participants answered the questions with their own local colleges in mind. Thus, this instrument may not reflect entirely valid information and may be questionable as a reliable methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of the current structure. But the survey did identify trends that were felt to be true of the current structure based on interviews with the survey participants (SPC). If this instrument continues to be used, it should be modified for clarity and/or the directions should be more clearly stated.

Strategic Planning

The current UH System and Community Colleges 2002-2010 strategic plans are being revisited by streamlining and updating the goals and indicators (benchmarks) to provide a more uniform method with which to evaluate progress. The new plans will span the years 2008-2015. These plans are intentionally more in line with the State of Hawaii’s current and future K-12 educational environments. The plans, by design, will respond to the future educational and workforce needs of the Hawaiian citizens. The U H System, the Community Colleges and the individual community colleges will each have a plan using the same goals as the System. The process was begun by the VPAPP visiting all colleges within the system and presenting state and national data to provide a framework for the strategic directions and receiving feedback on the goals. This inclusive process has been well received by the community colleges and based on interviews with the chancellors is being used in addition to their individual college program reviews and health indicators to develop and/or refine their college’s strategic plans. This process was an example of how the current structure is providing a community voice to the larger UH System.

Strategic planning for the community colleges is overseen by the Community College Strategic Planning Council (SPC) made up of chancellors, faculty senate chairs and student body presidents from each college, and the Vice President and Associate Vice Presidents for the CC system. The current activity before the council is to set benchmarks and goals for the major goals of the plan and then each college will set their own goals and budgets to meet the overall goals set by the council. Faculty Senate participants report short timelines for review of data and/or input but also report they have had extensions to complete work when necessary. Although the faculty report difficulties in balancing their participation in this council with other academic responsibilities, they also recognize that they are seeing a larger perspective of all the elements of strategic planning.

In summary, there has been progress in strategic planning in the form of becoming more data driven and being more inclusive of the community colleges. Members report that the

environment has never been more open and participatory than it is now. The new structure is working well.

Program Review and Assessment

Program review is governed by established policy. In November 2006, the entire process for academic programs was reviewed by the Instructional Program Review Committee which has representatives from each college. Changes were made to the process to make it more effective, such as: numerous data points were consolidated into common data elements; the process was synchronized with the budget process; the system now provides common data to all colleges as the foundation for program review; colleges are now doing benchmarking studies to set levels for programs as "healthy, cautionary, unhealthy"; and, after the college benchmarking is complete, the system will set system-wide benchmarks and goals. The community colleges are scheduled to have their reviews in to the system by December 1, which will provide a system view of programs and influence the strategic plans. This benchmarking has been influenced by UHCC becoming part of the national initiative Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count. This initiative focuses on helping students earn more degrees/certificates or transfer. Achieving the Dream requires the use of data to improve achievement and success and thus requires its participating colleges to develop and use that data in their own processes to become more effective in meeting the project's goals. As an example of the initiative's effect on program review, student services units of each college have modified their program review template, based on Achieving the Dream data elements. The colleges have been given legislative support to begin assessment activities although hiring the appropriate personnel has been difficult because of the low unemployment rate in Hawaii. In summary, the UHCC system has been effective in continuing the development of the program review process and the new organization has worked well in this context. This first completed cycle is planned to influence the next biennial budget.

Allocation of Resources

The president prepares a budget which includes all elements of the university and submits it to the state legislature. Allocation of resources is done system wide after the appropriation from the legislature is known. The community college allocations are determined through a budget process overseen by the SPC and submitted to the president for inclusion in the larger university budget. The SPC has set benchmarks and will be setting numeric goals. The colleges set local goals, relying on program review data. In this way the colleges planning aligns with the overall goals set by the strategic planning council. The president's final budget recommendation is communicated to the community college chancellors. The community colleges have done well in the latest legislative session, both in additional positions (60FTE) and specific appropriations for enrollment growth, workforce training, and special academies. The

colleges confirm through interviews that the budget allocation process is working well, in large part because the strategic planning process is inclusive and reflective of the colleges' needs. For example, program reviews based on systematic data and assessment were a high priority and as a result the colleges were funded for research functions. Review of the current biennium budget reflects the community college interests and priorities.

Facilities Management, including Deferred Maintenance

Facilities management and deferred maintenance are shared responsibilities between the University and the UHCC system. The legislature appropriates funds for both new facilities and renovations. At the time of the last accreditation visit in 2006, there was some concern that the true cost of ownership (e.g. construction, equipment, staff for new facilities) was not being taken into account. In addition, the deferred maintenance issue was at a different level of urgency among the campuses depending on their ability to either secure or repurpose funds for needed projects. The team explored the current situation through interviews and found that the previous sense of urgency had abated. The chancellors now state that facilities and deferred maintenance projects are being handled adequately and they are able to balance needed projects with the available funds. It is likely that some of this change of perception may be due to increased clarity in the budgeting process and also the delegation of authority to the chancellor's to make decisions about certain levels of projects on their campuses as well as there was more funding for education in this past budget due to a robust Hawaiian economy. Also, the Vice President for Community Colleges and his Associate Vice Presidents have made efforts to visit each college to see in person the facilities needs for each college. This personal attention by the community college administrative leadership has been noticed and greatly appreciated. In summary, while the system for facilities management/deferred maintenance has not significantly changed, the perception of fairness in allocation and authority to act has improved under the new organization.

Board and Administrative Leadership

A major element of the new administrative reorganization was the recreation of a defined administrative structure for community colleges within the larger university system. This organization had been dismantled in the reorganization of the university in 2002. After recognizing that a more definitive organizational structure was needed to serve the needs of the university's community colleges, the BOR reestablished a community college structure under a new vice president position. The Vice President for Community Colleges was created in 2005 and filled on an interim basis by the former chancellor of Kapi`olani Community College. The interim Vice President was appointed on a permanent basis in March 2007 and the new table of organization reflects this change. Also part of the new administrative structure was that the seven community college chancellors were to have dual reporting to the president of

the University of Hawaii (for system-wide and/or policy matters) and to the vice president for community colleges (for community college specific and/or operational matters). The special report indicated that this dual reporting structure was working well. The team found ample evidence to corroborate this assertion. The president feels entirely comfortable with the arrangement, in large part because of his confidence in the vice president for community colleges. They have established a close working relationship that is widely characterized as genuinely grounded in shared values, common goals and similar approaches. When asked if the structure would work absent the current occupants of these positions, it was stated that these relationships are currently being codified in University policy and regulations and will serve as the infrastructure for any occupant of either position. The “culture of collaboration” described by the president would be a precondition of hiring for either position in the future. The team observed that the VP for CC serves, as needed, as acting president in the absence of the University President, indicating there is a balance of leadership within the system, which has not been the situation with prior community college organizational structures.

All interviewees, including the BOR member, expressed the same confidence in the dual reporting structure and agreed that it was the individuals in the positions that made the structure work so well. Specifically, the seven chancellors enjoy their ability to sit as members of the Council of Chancellors, with their three colleague chancellors of the University, the vice president for community colleges and the president of the university. The community college chancellors also meet alone in a separate council (Council of Community College Chancellors) with the vice president and the two associate vice presidents for community colleges. Interviews with community college Chancellors, the vice president and president of the University confirmed that the structure of these councils have expanded communication between and among the chancellors and have also given them direct access to their supervisors on a regular basis, something they did not have before. In fact, they report that communication between the community colleges and the university is better than it has ever been. There is also more clarity in the reporting structure with the chancellors reporting to the Vice President for Community Colleges for operational matters. The chancellors also report the positive effect of the delegation of personnel matters (at the level of Dean and below) to them as these decisions can now be made more swiftly at the local college level. The chancellors are responsible for tenure, promotion and the first level of grievances. In terms of evaluation of the chancellors, both the Vice President for Community Colleges and the President of the University participate in the evaluation conference with each chancellor in which they discuss the results of the “360 degree” evaluation and the development of the chancellor’s goals. Both supervisors agree on the evaluation summary, including any merit pay increases.

As part of the 2005 administrative reorganization, the Board of Regents (BOR) established a Board subcommittee for Community Colleges. The intention was for the subcommittee to

meet four times per year, addressing the topics of budget, program review, planning and facilities. While this subcommittee met the proposed meeting schedule in 2005-06, it has not met in the current academic year. Several events have occurred which caused this inactivity. In 2004, the BOR had advice from the Association of Governing Boards that they should work more as a board of the whole and reduce their reliance on subcommittees. In addition, the BOR changed their meeting structure to alternate monthly transactional meetings (where items needing board approval are heard) and informational meetings (where topics are presented in a workshop format). With this change of meeting structure, the BOR has delegated more authority to the president, and he in turn, to the vice president for community colleges. Even though the subcommittee for community colleges has not recently met, all parties (the colleges, the president, vice president and the board member interviews) confirmed that the issues of the community colleges are being addressed appropriately by the Board of Regents. A review of Board of Regents minutes from January to August 2007, revealed many agenda items to focus on the needs and issues of the community colleges. Also, the new practice of meeting at the colleges for Regent's meetings has achieved a better understanding by the whole Board of the community colleges. The Regents have had a long standing practice of annually holding it's meetings on each of the University's campuses; since January 2007, five of the Regent's meetings were held at the community colleges. The team determined that the intention of the subcommittee is being met through this new structure wherein the entire board of regents is hearing community college concerns and monitoring effectiveness. Since this meeting structure is new, it will be important for both the board and the colleges to maintain attention to community college matters as it tests the validity of the new arrangement.

A recent development in the legislature could have a major impact on the makeup of the Board of Regents. In the latest session, a law was passed that changes both the number of seats on the University Board of Regents and how those regents are chosen. The board number is increased from 12 to 15 members. Individuals will be identified as potential candidates by a new group, the Regents Candidate Advisory Council. The Council will present pools of qualified candidates to the governor, who will nominate candidates to the state senate. The candidates receiving senate approval will be appointed by the governor. There is a potential of 12 vacancies in 2008. Thus, within a year, there will be virtually a new Board of Regents, creating a new dynamic for the UHCC system and the entire university. It will be important for the community colleges to continue to meeting their goals and maintain their attention to accreditation recommendations within this new environment.

Summary

The team confirmed the contents of the Special Report through interviews and review of documents. Overall, the University of Hawaii Community Colleges are progressing well in

meeting the elements of Recommendation 1 of the comprehensive accreditation report of 2006. The university has codified this administrative reorganization in policy and the table of organization. The new administrative structure is working well in all regards, by supporting the activities of the colleges, delegating more authority and responsibility to the VP of CC and the college chancellors and in becoming more effective and fostering improvement in meeting all accreditation standards. These new structures are being implemented, however, in a context of potential change with the new Board of Regents appointments in 2008. It will be important for the community colleges to continue this positive momentum while adapting to new board leadership. This recommendation has been met at this point in time, and by the colleges' midterm report the structure should be fully functional and codified in policies, procedures and practices.