



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAII®  
MĀNOA

September 14, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: David Ross, Chairperson  
Mānoa Faculty Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Reed Dasenbrock   
Vice Chancellor  
for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Review of the Proposed *Undergraduate Enrollment Goals for UH Mānoa*

Attached for Faculty Senate review is a proposal to establish UHM enrollment goals for undergraduate students.

Following the August 5<sup>th</sup> retreat on enrollment planning, the attached document has been refined, taking into consideration the various comments and ideas discussed that day. We are now seeking Faculty Senate's input on this document. After the review is completed, please send your comments and recommendations to me, so we can take the next appropriate action.

The advice of the Faculty Senate is very helpful to this office and is an important step in the evaluation procedure for proposals. Your assistance in this process is very much appreciated.

Please contact me if you have further questions on this. Mahalo.

Attachment

c: Vice Chancellor Hernandez

## Undergraduate Enrollment Goals for UH Mānoa

On August 5, 2009, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Vice Chancellor for Students held a retreat with participation from the Senate Executive Committee, the newly formed Committee on Enrollment Planning, deans or associate deans from every college or school at UH-Mānoa, and other interested parties. The data presented to the retreat is available on the VCAA website (url: [http://manoa.hawaii.edu/ovcaa/planning/enrollment/pdf/enroll\\_aug09.pdf](http://manoa.hawaii.edu/ovcaa/planning/enrollment/pdf/enroll_aug09.pdf)). The purpose of the retreat was to develop a set of high-level enrollment goals for the campus, and this document presents the goals developed at the retreat.

There was broad agreement in the group on each of these goals, and we have attempted here to capture the full flavor of the discussion. We don't claim any novelty value or uniqueness to the goals as we have stated them here: many dedicated individuals have been working hard to move in these directions at Mānoa over the years. But we think there is considerable value in the Mānoa 'ohana formally endorsing a set of goals concerning enrollment, and we hope that after a period of consultation, the campus will formally endorse these goals this Fall.

We propose an overall goal and four specific goals as the most urgent areas on which the entire campus should focus at this time. These are not exclusive goals, nor do they preclude more specific goals focused on specific programs or specific aspects of the enrollment picture. For instance, although clearly graduate programs are an important component of the university that demand systematic attention as well, the discussion focused on goals for undergraduate enrollment. As we make progress towards these goals, the relative urgency of enrollment goals will presumably undergo some modification across time.

### **Overall Goal: Raise Our Enrollments**

All information available to us indicates that an individual and a society's overall level of educational attainment is the primary determinant of the life chances of that individual and of the overall health of the society. Individuals with higher education have higher incomes, are more likely to be employed, live longer, are healthier, and in every measurable respect lead better lives, and in the same vein well-educated societies have vibrant economies and healthy social structures. Hawai'i remains well below national norms of educational attainment, which presents a serious challenge to the future of the state, and those national norms are slipping behind other industrialized nations, with Canada, Japan, and Korea in particular achieving levels of educational attainment 40% above those found in the United States and therefore 60% above those found in Hawai'i.

As the flagship and land-grant institution of the University of Hawai'i, UH-Mānoa stands in a pivotal position vis-à-vis the educational attainment of the whole state, and we believe that Mānoa's enrollments need to grow primarily because the educational attainment of the state needs to improve in order for our citizens to have a bright and prosperous future. We therefore set as our overall goal that Mānoa should endeavor to raise its overall enrollment from its current level of just under 20,000. This should not be 'growth for growth's sake,' nor should it be unchecked growth, but we should aim at 'smart

growth' which simultaneously helps Mānoa's fiscal picture and begins to move the state towards at least the national average of educational attainment.

By 'smart growth,' we mean that individual programs must engage in an analysis of the need for their graduates, both here, nationally and in many cases internationally; this external analysis needs to be complemented by an analysis of the internal demand by students (if we build it, will they come?), as well as of the investment needed in order to build high quality programs. We also need to be cognizant of emerging fields and the degrees needed for the economy of the future. We are not going to be able to do everything well, so we need to be akamai about what we try to do. But the major need we can fill is for broadly educated people capable of learning, innovating, and creating, and this is best accomplished by strong undergraduate programs producing high quality graduates.

This document does not propose specific numerical targets, either for this overall goal or for the specific goals, for two reasons that should be made explicit. First, if the campus endorses these goals, we will then proceed to developing action plans to achieve them. The development of those specific plans will entail setting realistic targets. Second, and perhaps more importantly, we do not at this point have a clear sense of what the capacity of the campus to handle growth is. This is at least partially because the capacity of the campus to handle growth is partially dependent on the form and nature of that growth. We need to make greater use of distance education modalities, and we need to use the facilities we have as intensively as we can, and part of our enrollment plan needs to be an assessment of how many students our current campus can handle and how we can use our facilities as efficiently as possible. Such a capacity study will in turn influence the specific enrollment plans and targets we develop.

**Goal #1: Keep more of Hawai'i's high school graduates here in-state, attending UH-Mānoa.**

Hawai'i has a high rate of students going to the mainland for college: though this has long been true, the imbalance between students going to the mainland and students attending Mānoa has increased in recent years, going from a ratio of 2:1 10 years ago to 2.75:1 today. The trend is both that the percentage of Hawai'i high school graduates going to the mainland is increasing **and** that the percentage attending Mānoa is decreasing. There are of course good reasons for students to want to experience life elsewhere, and many students are attending some of the best private universities in the country, but it is also true that many Hawai'i families are putting themselves under economic stress to attend universities on the mainland that are very similar in nature to and are not objectively better institutions than Mānoa. We need to compete hard for all of Hawai'i's students and do what we can to increase our market share of those students, especially those currently going out of state. This goal is an integral part of what the Chancellor refers to as making Mānoa "the destination of choice."

Our immediate goal is to reverse the worsening ratio between students going out of state and attending Mānoa, by increasing the percentage of Hawaii high school graduates (9% in 2007) who attend Mānoa each year. Returning the ratio to the 2:1 found in the late 1990s would (at 2006 enrollment levels) increase the number of Hawai'i high school graduates attending Mānoa by 285, for a 25% increase to 1437; a 1:1 ratio (clearly unthinkable over the short term) would add 1000 students and nearly double the number of Hawai'i high school graduates attending Mānoa.

We see three key issues here we can address. First, many students leave because they perceive mainland institutions to offer a higher-quality education. We need both to build the programs that such students want as part of a demanding and high-quality education and to make sure that Mānoa's reputation—higher on the mainland than here in Hawai'i—matches the reality. Second, we need to provide additional financial assistance and coordinated academic support services to attract these students to Mānoa. Everything we can do, particularly in today's economy, to increase financial aid, both merit- and need-based, will help keep students here. Finally, many students leave the islands primarily because they wish to leave the islands: we need to make sure they know that they can experience the world with UH-Mānoa as their base, through international and national exchange programs and through study abroad.

## **Goal #2: Address the differential rates of educational attainment across Hawai'i's population**

For us to address the lag between Hawai'i's position in educational attainment and that of the nation, let alone such nations as Canada, Japan, and Korea in this measure, we need to narrow the gap in educational attainment among different sectors of the population. Specifically, a number of groups in the state—native Hawaiians, Filipinos, and Pacific Islanders—are attending and graduating from college at rates below the state's average. We need to achieve equity in educational attainment among the population groups in the state. All of these groups are important, because we need every resident of the state to be educated. We have a special kuleana vis-à-vis native Hawaiians which it is important to recognize, that kuleana extends to other peoples of the Pacific given our role as the leading educational institution of the Pacific, and the underrepresentation of the Filipino population in higher education—on some measures even more severe than that of native Hawaiians—deserves attention and critical analysis at a level that it has not yet received.

This is a complex issue, because between every stage in the educational pipeline (graduation from high school, entry into college, bachelor's attainment, entry into graduate education, and completion of graduate degrees) students from these underrepresented groups decrease in number. So it is not just a matter of access, as important as that is; it is also a matter of success once enrolled, and of continuing beyond undergraduate education to professional and graduate education. Our goal here should be to increase the number of native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander and Filipino students who enter and graduate from UH-Mānoa with both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

To achieve these goals, much work needs to be done at Mānoa, and this work is an integral part of what the Chancellor has referred to as Mānoa representing a Hawaiian Place of Learning. Students from underrepresented groups need to receive the support they need in order to transition successfully into the culture of the university; certain areas of the curriculum need to be strengthened to ensure a relevant curriculum; and we need to make every effort to increase the representation of these groups among the faculty, staff and administration. But much work needs to be done outside of Mānoa as well: it is the K-12 system and the differences in preparation manifested among high school graduates that explains a large part of educational underattainment. The University of Hawai'i has to establish stronger and innovative partnerships with the DOE and the K-12 schools in order to increase student success at every level, and this is the kuleana of the entire university, not particular colleges and schools.

### **Goal #3: Increasing Mobility between the two and four-year sectors**

Hawai'i is one of the states with the highest percentage of its enrollment in community colleges, and by this point over 70% of the students in the University of Hawai'i enter public post-secondary education through one of the seven community colleges, not through Mānoa or the two other universities in the system. The recent spike in community college enrollments suggests that this trend is accentuating, and the recent and future tuition increases in the system by sharply increasing the tuition differential between the community colleges and Mānoa have probably helped make this a permanent change in the pathways into higher education for citizens of the state. If students are choosing based on perceptions of quality, they are heading to the mainland; if they are choosing on affordability, they are heading to the community colleges. Mānoa is caught in between.

However, these situations are slightly different: we should be able to compete on perceptions of quality with the mainland universities that Hawai'i students attend, and we believe that if we can narrow or eliminate the perceived gap in quality, our ability to compete on price will bring us additional students. But we simply aren't going to successfully compete on price with the community colleges for the students now going from high school or adult life into the two-year sector. But we don't need to compete with them for students; we need to shift our focus to cooperating with them for students. Both nationally and in Hawai'i, a high percentage of students entering community colleges say that they intend to transfer to a four year institution and receive a bachelor's degree, and the figure in the case of UH community college students is 50%, even though the actual transfer rate is much lower. This is both a challenge and an opportunity: we need to develop the pathways that lead from the two year to the four year sector, but if we make that transition easier, we can make a huge difference in degree attainment in the state as well as in our upper division enrollments and degree production.

Increasing flow rates from the two year to the four year sector is also key to addressing the issues of underrepresentation defined in Goal #2. Students from underrepresented groups are far more likely to attend community colleges than universities, because of cost, proximity to where underrepresented groups live, and because of cultural and academic barriers to access and success for these students in universities. While we are working on removing those barriers, we need to understand that the community colleges represent the place where underrepresented groups in higher education already are represented: if we can increase flow rates from the two year to the four year sector, we will undoubtedly increase the number of native Hawaiian, Filipino and Pacific Island graduates from UH-Mānoa.

### **Goal #4: Improve Retention and Graduation Rates at Mānoa**

Mānoa lags behind its peer and benchmark institutions in its third semester and graduation rates. This has long been the case, and the gap is in part a function of UH-Mānoa's commitment to diversity and access that we need to reaffirm. However, it is also the case that the gap has increased in recent years, as these institutions have in general made progress on these rates while we have not. Increasing our retention rates—all other things being equal—will increase our enrollment, and increasing our graduation rates—all other things being equal—will help Hawai'i's overall educational attainment, so it is important that we improve our record in retention and graduation.

This is another very complex issue, involving academics, student life, and financial issues alike. A key reason why students don't graduate is that they don't pass the courses they need to pass in order to graduate, so attention needs to be paid to how we can improve student learning and therefore pass rates in key, pathway courses. Another reason is slow progress towards a degree, from changes in major, from difficulty entering certain degree programs, from not taking enough credits per semester, so attention to credit momentum towards degrees is a key issue. Many students live and work off campus, and anything we can do to increase their engagement with campus life will help retain and graduate students. Finally, many Mānoa students work, so anything we can do to provide scholarships and on-campus employment can help them focus on their studies and progress towards a degree. Anything we can do to enhance the Mānoa experience will help keep students in school and on track for a degree.

Our immediate goal should be to increase both the third semester retention and six-year graduation rate each year, i.e., to reverse a period of flat outcomes, while our medium-range goal should be to begin to reduce the gap between our performance and those of our peers.

**Next Steps:**

We propose these four goals for discussion by the broader campus and welcome comment on them as well as invitations to any fora in which to present and discuss them. Once we have agreement on a set of campus-wide enrollment goals, the next steps are to develop some more specific numerical targets for each of these goals, develop concrete plans on how to achieve them, define metrics for assessing progress towards them, and go to work. The Committee on Enrollment Planning will be central to this effort, but the full efforts of the community will be needed to make rapid progress on the goals we set.

**Timeline:**

- September and October: Presentation of these goals to campus community for its approval
- November and December: Formation of workgroups to develop tactics for each of the goals
- January 2010: Workplans for each goal developed; implementation begins