I. CONTEXT

The University of Hawaii has been a pioneer in many ways in the use of technology to bridge the distances among the Hawaiian Islands in order to extend access to higher education for our citizenry. With the emergence of the Internet and personal computing as radical transformational tools in teaching and learning, the University’s distance learning programs have now blended with the broader use of technology to improve the quality of education for campus-based and distant learners alike.

The technology approaches used to reach distant learners are now routinely applied by our faculty in their campus-based courses. Today’s campus-based students frequently register in completely online courses when available, and they both expect and use flexibly delivered student services that were originally initiated to support distant learners. The result of this "blending," which is occurring across the nation, is that there is no longer a compelling distinction in how we serve our distant and campus-based learners.

Serving the needs of the people of Hawai‘i (and beyond) through distance learning remains a critical imperative for the University of Hawaii. At the same time, the actions needed to advance are part of a broader educational agenda to advance student-centered teaching, learning and service within the entire University and State of Hawaii. We therefore use the broadly accepted term, “distributed learning,” (hereinafter DL) to encompass the use of technology to extend access to education through distance learning as well as the use of information and telecommunication technologies to improve and transform the educational experience for our students anywhere and at any time.

This blending is not primarily about technology; it is about academic planning. All units throughout the University must understand their responsibility to potentially serve the entire State of Hawaii. In addition, all units must collaborate to maximize opportunities for students by leveraging the offerings available through other parts of the System.

A strong commitment to distributed learning pervades the new University of Hawaii Strategic Plan, as elaborated below. From an implementation perspective, the Strategic Plan directs that our system “mainstream” its approach to distributed learning opportunities by incorporating them into the responsibilities of our entire faculty, staff and administration. This supports the realization that, in a world of blended learning, it is no longer acceptable to consider distance or distributed learning apart from the rest of the academic enterprise.

Among the specific recommendations in the Strategic Plan, ten that are most relevant to distributed learning are repeated here, as context for the Action Plan that follows.

• Ensure that students experience a transforming education by: … Using technology to support learning.
• Enhance the student experience by implementing: …A state-of-the-art student information system that supports a positive relationship with students from recruitment to alumni status.

• Provide access for students, faculty, and staff to a first-class information technology infrastructure, support, and services that sustain and enhance University instruction, research, and administrative services within the University, throughout Hawai‘i, and beyond.

• Mainstream institutional response to distance learning and ensure that all professional development and support for technology-enhanced teaching, learning, and student services are integrated to benefit campus-based instruction as well as distance learning.

• Coordinate and facilitate high quality distance learning through a system-wide distance learning council made up of representatives and leaders from the constituencies that provide instruction and support; use grass-roots task forces to leverage the expertise and experience within the system.

• Engage, develop, and support the University’s entire faculty and staff to create a pervasive, technology rich instructional environment that serves on-campus and off-campus learners through intercampus sharing of experiences, application showcases, and collaborative development activities that demonstrate how technology can improve student-learning outcomes across the curriculum.

• Identify and capitalize on strategic international markets for profit-generating programs (short-term training, distance learning, and technical assistance) based on existing partnerships and UH program strengths and capacity.

• Resolve issues that create barriers to faculty participation in distance and technology-enhanced learning, including intellectual property, workload, financial incentives for participation in entrepreneurial programs, and recognition in tenure and promotion processes.

• Fund a first-rate information technology infrastructure.

• Develop a coherent pricing and funding model for distance learning and allocate funds based on the shared priorities of the system.

Following is an Action Plan to implement the ambitious agenda now before the University. In each case there is a specific action and general locus of responsibility for the actitivity in a mainstreamed environment.

II. ACTION PLAN

Abbreviations

DL – Distributed Learning
Includes distance learning but also the broad campus-based use of technologies that enhance teaching and learning and the provision of complete online courses and services to campus-based students. Where a reference is to distance learning alone, the full term is written out.

COC – Council of Chancellors
The new council made up of the Chancellors of all ten UH campuses.
CCAO – Council of Chief Academic Officers
The new council made up of the Chief Academic Officers of all ten UH campuses, facilitated by the Office of the VP for Academic Affairs.

OVPAA – Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs

ITS – Information Technology Services, including its Distributed Learning and User Services (DLUS) group.

UH – the University of Hawaii System

**Academic Issues**

Many of the most important issues facing DL at the University of Hawaii are fundamental issues of academic planning and policy that are particularly exercised or exacerbated by distributed learning. For example, providing distant learners in relatively remote areas where there is no campus with access to a coherent range of credential programs in a cost-effective manner requires more collaborative planning than has been customary across the UH system. Similarly, increased cross-taking of online courses between campuses, even by campus-based students, has increased the need for transparent articulation and transfer among all UH campuses. These issues must be addressed within the context of overall academic policy, not as problems unique to DL.

**A1 - Statewide Educational Planning**
WHAT: The UH System must meet the greatest priority statewide needs for higher education. There must be ongoing statewide needs assessment informed by an understanding of community needs, the workforce and monitoring of economic development directions. Collaboration is essential to maximize opportunities for students, including activities such as 2+2+2 and the offering of “gap courses” that bridge program requirements. This must strongly influence overall academic planning and coordination for the University, including for DL.
WHO: CCAO working with University Centers and others

**A2 - Program Planning**
WHAT: Program planning for DL should be managed through the same processes that apply to other academic programs rather than through special groups or independent processes. Similarly, all academic program planning should include consideration of statewide needs. Input from faculty and other appropriate parties should be included.
WHO: CCAO

**A3 - Entrepreneurial programs**
WHAT: UH should identify strategic national and international markets for DL programs based on existing partnerships (primarily in the Pacific Rim), UH niches and areas of academic excellence. These programs, which would not normally be funded with State resources, are by their nature “entrepreneurial.” Such programs cannot become the primary focus of UH as a public institution. But they can be an important means to enhance our capacity to serve the State. System level communication and coordination is essential, but entrepreneurialism is best fostered on a decentralized basis. Units should be given the flexibility and incentives to develop entrepreneurial DL programs with resources they can identify, acquire and allocate, subject only to the usual considerations of mission and program appropriateness.
WHO: All Colleges

A4 - Assessment
WHAT: DL should be assessed with the same rigor and methodology as applied to campus-based instruction
WHO: CCAO

A5 - Articulation
WHAT: The University of Hawaii, as a system, must leverage the strengths and capabilities of all its units to serve learners throughout the State. Recognizing the mobility of students among our campuses, we must implement and communicate rational student-centered articulation and transfer policies.
WHO: CCAO, OVPAA, Faculty

A6 - Update Outreach UH Distant Learning Plans, Policies and Procedures
WHAT: Re-visit E5.204 and update for current situation. This should update the priorities of units; discuss role of “entrepreneurial” programs; clarify definitions and statistical categories (e.g., should we continue to count face-to-face courses on military bases as distance learning?)
WHO: OVPAA

A7 - Interactive Video and Cable TV Scheduling
WHAT: Interactive Video and Cable TV scheduling for classes should reflect statewide educational priorities. The CCAO should approve the Interactive Video & Cable TV course schedules and make decisions on priorities that can not be resolved as an operational matter.
WHO: CCAO & ITS

Community, Collegiality & Support

Our faculty have already learned a great deal and made dramatic improvements in their service to students, on- and off-campus, through their use of distributed learning. But many of our individual successes have not been shared widely with the rest of the System. UH needs a much stronger community of faculty and staff engaged in DL. This will help us all learn from the experience of others, nurture our successes, and reduce burnout of some of the lonely pioneers who have led the way. In addition, UH needs to ensure that our faculty are deeply engaged in DL planning and policy development. DL is fundamentally about teaching and learning; it cannot be driven solely by administrators.

C1 - Faculty Involvement
WHAT: Faculty must be actively engaged in DL planning and policy, particularly driving matters of teaching & learning
WHO: COC, CCAO, OVPAA, ITS

C2 - Faculty & Staff Development and Support
WHAT: Faculty and staff must have access to training to help them get started using technology, and ongoing support to ensure continuing development and success
WHO: COC, CCAO, ITS
C3 - DL Colloquium
WHAT: Establish (at least) an annual system-wide DL colloquium/conference as well as regular events throughout the year that bring the UH DL community together. Topics should include pedagogy, costs, program planning, learning resources, library support, student services, new technology approaches, etc. that will appeal to faculty, administrators, librarians, student services professionals, and technologists.
WHO: ITS facilitates

C4 - Online Community Support
WHAT: Establish online communities for those involved in DL with discussions, mailing lists, online resources.
WHO: ITS facilitates

C5 – DL Database
WHAT: Establish and maintain a system-wide database of and for the DL community that shares what individual faculty are doing and which staff and administrators can help. (Can build on FIGS)
WHO: ITS facilitates

Student Support

Improving the university’s student support services to incorporate modern approaches to one-stop service centers and online electronic support is critical to distant and campus-based learners. With the chance to learn from the work already underway at Kapiolani CC and the imminent implementation of a system-wide student information system, UH is positioned for truly dramatic advances if we can seize the opportunity before us.

S1 - First-class Student Services
WHAT: Implement a one-stop shop approach using state-of-the-art technology for both distant and campus-based students that includes: marketing, recruitment, admissions, financial aid, registration, bookstore, cashiering, degree audits, academic advising, counseling, and statewide proctored testing.
WHO: COC, VPSA, OVPAA, CFP/VPA, ITS, all student service units

S2 - Library Services
WHAT: Maximize system-wide access to online library resources.
WHO: Library Council

S3 - Student Readiness for DL
WHAT: Provide comprehensive orientation and development opportunities for students to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for success in DL.

S4 - Distance Learning Web Site
WHAT: A single coherent web site must provide access to information about distance learning opportunities at UH and serve as a single entry point for participation by off-campus students. This must indicate how UH is addressing the high priority educational needs of the state and what external programs are available. (Note: much of this information will also be available and of use to campus-based programs, but this is one area where the university’s distance programs should be highlighted separately for off-campus customers.)
WHO: ITS facilitates

Faculty-Related Policies

UH must begin building toward its future in which the technologies have matured, our support structures have been strengthened and our entire faculty has embraced the appropriate use of technology to improve and extend learning opportunities for students. There are a number of barriers that must be removed. In implementing new policies for faculty, UH must ensure that teaching with technology be viewed simply as teaching, rather than as a special activity with unique governing rules and guidelines.

FAC1 - Tenure & promotion guidelines
WHAT: Review tenure & promotion guidelines to recognize and reward innovation and service in teaching, including through DL. Link job descriptions and hiring guidelines to tenure and promotion guidelines.
WHO: ACCFSC

FAC2 - Hiring guidelines
WHAT: Update hiring guidelines relating to teaching faculty to ensure clarity that UH faculty may be expected to make appropriate use of DL.
WHO: CCAO, COC

FAC3 - Intellectual Property Policy for DL
WHAT: UH should adopt an intellectual property policy that encourages faculty participation in DL and institutional investment in our faculty. The policy should be geared to a future in which nearly all faculty will make some use of technology in their teaching and not on the expectation that, in the general case, either the University or individual faculty will get rich from DL.
WHO: Address through Collective Bargaining Process

FAC4 - Overload Policy
WHAT: Overload must be available to faculty for credit courses “above load” without the necessity of offering the course through the campus “continuing education” unit. This is necessary to encourage and reward faculty for participation in “entrepreneurial” or other special programs.
WHO: Manoa & Hilo

FAC5 - General Workload
WHAT: Campuses should be reminded to be attentive to the evolution of workload requirements associated with DL and the individual skills and capabilities of faculty at different points on their individual learning and experience curves. UH should not adopt any hard-and-fast rules or one-size-fits-all regulations relating to workload for DL, any more than we do for classroom-based instruction.
WHO: CCAO

Financing

The University of Hawaii has embraced the principle that our campuses and education centers collaboratively serve students throughout the State without campuses paying each other for specific support services. Nonetheless, there are a number of ways in which our current
financing models do not encourage the behaviors UH has committed to in our Strategic Plan. Given that tuition covers only a small part of instructional costs, especially for in-state students, UH needs a clearer financial model or models that describe the situations when general operating funds are expected to subsidize delivery costs, what types of programs would be eligible for systemic startup assistance, how UH will balance its core offerings to campus-based and distant learners, when the University’s existing flexibility in setting tuition for specialized programs should be exercised, and the basis for establishing entrepreneurial programs. Incentive and seed funding will be essential, so any available system-wide resources should be utilized in maximum alignment with system-wide priorities.

**FIN1 - Financial models**
WHAT: Given that tuition covers only a small part of instructional costs, especially for in-state students, UH needs a clearer financial model or models that describe the situations when general operating funds are expected to subsidize delivery costs, what types of programs would be eligible for systemic startup assistance, how UH will balance its core offerings to campus-based and distant learners, when the University’s existing flexibility in setting tuition for specialized programs should be exercised, and how to establish, encourage and reward faculty participation in entrepreneurial programs.
WHO: Ad-hoc working group to be appointed

**FIN2 - Seed & project funding**
WHAT: Through up-front system-wide collaboration and planning, maximize the utility and effectiveness of system-wide seed funding programs to ensure allocation to the highest priorities.
WHO: CCAO

**Technology Infrastructure**

To succeed in the 21st century, UH absolutely requires a first-rate, ubiquitous, integrated information technology services and support infrastructure.

**T1 - Strategic Plan for IT**
WHAT: Information Technologies are essential to the success of distributed learning. The University’s Strategic Plan for IT should be updated to reflect the new University Strategic Plans. Of particular importance to DL are: improving classroom technology; faculty & staff development and support for instructional use of technology; and maximizing student access to the technology, services and support needed to succeed as a distributed learner.
WHO: ITS with advisory committees

**Manoa–Specific Actions**

While this is a system-wide action plan, it is clear that full participation by and collaboration with the Manoa campus is essential. Manoa is the largest campus, the most complex campus, and offers a rich array of unique capabilities and programs unavailable anywhere else in the UH system. Therefore, we identify a number of Manoa-specific issues that should be addressed to advance DL at Manoa and thereby for the entire State. They are presented here solely to recommend follow-up within the context of campus-level planning.
M1 - Ensuring substantive change compliance
WHAT: With the delegation of substantive change authority to the campus, Manoa needs a substantive change process that is an integral part of its overall program review processes.
WHO: Manoa Chancellor’s Office

M2 - Outreach College role
WHAT: Outreach College provides a number of important enabling capabilities to Manoa. These include: more flexible student support services than those offered by the campus at-large; the ability to return a portion of tuition generated to the offering program to cover marginal costs; marketing support; and the ability to pay overload to faculty teaching credit courses. However, there are also issues with offering credit instruction through Outreach College rather than through standard campus mechanisms. Manoa should determine the role of Outreach College as it relates to credit instruction (including DL) in a mainstreamed environment and move forward accordingly.
WHO: Manoa Chancellor’s Office

M3 - Tuition distribution mechanism
WHAT: It is expected that the financial model(s) for DL will require that some portion of the specific tuition from a DL program be made available to the generating unit to cover marginal costs of delivery. This is already a requirement for Manoa colleges running DL programs through general campus processes rather than through Outreach College.
WHO: Manoa Chancellor’s Office

M4 - Manoa coordination
WHAT: There have been a number of suggestions that the Manoa campus should have a “point person” for distance learning and specific recommendations as to where such a position should be located. Others have suggested that in a mainstreamed environment with greater faculty engagement, each Manoa school or college should have a coordinator who can interface with the rest of the campus and the system. Manoa needs to answer such questions so that it can improve collaboration internally and beyond.
WHO: Manoa Chancellor’s Office

III. Implementation Plan

The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall appoint a standing system-wide Distributed Learning Advisory Council (DLAC). The DLAC will oversee and lead the mainstreamed implementation of the DL Action Plan, which must continue to evolve over time. The DLAC will advise and counsel administrators, policy-makers, faculty and others as appropriate. The DLAC is not intended as an operational body.

The DLAC must be carefully appointed to be broadly representative of the University. It must include faculty, staff, administrator and student representation. It must include members from all types of campuses and all islands. Its members must be knowledgeable about distributed learning and committed to innovation.