



February 5, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: UH Community

FROM: David Lassner
President

SUBJECT: [Third Decade Report](#) and Next Steps

At the beginning of each decade, the University of Hawai'i (UH) conducts a long-range study of the needs of the State of Hawai'i on which its public higher education system should focus. To provide a measure of objectivity, this decade's study was conducted by Guild Consulting, a local consultancy group headed by Dr. Peter Adler. The central goal of the report is to understand how well the UH is fulfilling contemporary community needs and how it can best position itself to address future state needs in areas including building an educated citizenry, workforce development and economic development. The decadal study provides the framework for the development of more specific strategies and tactics that guide academic, operational and budgetary planning.

Background

The 2015-2021 strategic plan, commonly referred to as [UH Strategic Directions](#), is based on the [Second Decade Report](#), issued by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy in 2008-09. Its distinctive goal was to identify the relative needs for higher education across the state. The project identified the most severe gaps in access to and need for higher education in two Hawai'i regions, the 'Ewa region on O'ahu and the West Hawai'i region on Hawai'i Island. Over the ensuing decade, the UH worked with the community, the Legislature, and the Governor's Office to prioritize and finally build the West O'ahu campus and the Pālanui branch of Hawai'i Community College. Both facilities are fully functional and have enhanced educational opportunities in those two regions, thus expanding the overall reach and impact of UH within the state. Additionally, the *Second Decade Report* motivated the UH System to develop specific goals and metrics to improve student success and increase the number of citizens with college degrees in the state, particularly in critical areas of need such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

Drawing from the *Second Decade Report*, the initial version of the *UH Strategic Directions, 2015-2021* addressed four priority areas: Hawai'i Graduation Initiative, Hawai'i Innovation Initiative, 21st Century Facilities, and High Performance Mission-Driven System. Each of these areas has associated action strategies and metrics that are reported on annually.

Highlights from the *Third Decade Report*

The [Third Decade Report](#) is based on an extensive scan of state, national, and international trends and emerging issues. The report is also informed by more than 84 individual interviews,

six focus groups with UH members and community stakeholders, and 200 survey respondents, all conducted between January and October 2020.

The report makes eight recommendations:

1. **Vision** - UH must fashion a fresh and inspiring new vision, a crisp and simple “collective ambition” that stresses the unity of the System and creates a stronger *raison d’être*. The new story should embrace the idea of “One UH” with many entryways into different learning communities where students, teachers, and researchers thrive.
2. **Focus** - A major break from the past is essential. The notion that UH can and should “be everything to everybody” is no longer tenable and requires a shift to strategic and prioritized programming.
3. **Rightsize** - Rightsizing is necessary and should be based on clear criteria that may include: (a) criticality to mission; (b) workforce demands; (c) community impact; (d) enrollment projections (or return on investment) and; (e) locational advantages.
4. **Organizational Shifts** - UH needs to bring together leaders, inclusive of all campuses, from clearly related program areas, and should create academic clusters aligned with the state’s major economic clusters.
5. **Technology** - UH needs to leverage technology to personalize learning for its students and engage them better online across all academic offerings.
6. **Academic Flexibility** - Conventional academic structures and norms disadvantage UH in doing what it needs to better support non-traditional students and rapidly changing workforce needs using nonconventional academic structures, like stackable and micro-credentials, shorter modules, and other flexible programs.
7. **Outside-in** - UH needs a more outward-facing orientation to ensure tighter links to Hawai‘i’s public, private, and civil sectors. UH needs to institutionalize and expand its “town-gown” relationships.
8. **Racial Equity** - UH needs to continue, strengthen and expand efforts to support racial equity across access, graduation rates and faculty and staff representation.

As with the *Second Decade Report*, UH will now begin to use this *Third Decade Report* to help set its strategic directions for 2022-2027.

Other Foundational Documents

The recommendations of the *Third Decade Report* largely align with the recommendations prepared and presented to the Board of Regents in June 2020, [A Post-Pandemic Economy for Hawai‘i and the University of Hawai‘i](#). In that report, the following imperatives, with specifics, were offered to outline a path forward for Hawai‘i and the role of UH in creating that future:

- Engage more of our citizens in post-secondary education;
- Educate Hawai‘i residents for the workforce Hawai‘i needs;
- Seed new economic sectors and develop new approaches to old ones; and

- Strengthen the UH research enterprise as a major economic as well as intellectual driver.

Prior to that, in April 2017, the Board of Regents approved a new [*Integrated Academic and Facilities Plan \(IAFP\)*](#). This plan sets out a vision and guiding principles for the UH as a whole, with differentiated missions for the four major UH academic units: Mānoa, Hilo, West O’ahu and the Community Colleges. It emphasizes similar points, including the need for UH units to work collaboratively and efficiently to meet the diverse needs of Hawai’i’s communities across the islands.

1. UH supports and rewards collaboration across all programs and activities. New silos are discouraged and current silos are eliminated or reduced. The UH prioritizes and integrates systemwide articulation and transferability in all academic planning.
2. Duplication of academic programs takes place only with intention and sound justification. All programs are planned in a fiscally sound and sustainable manner and placed in appropriate locations. Considerations include type of program and mission, regional and statewide demand, and availability of physical space, facilities, and land.
3. To increase and diversify enrollment, UH features a centralized enrollment management support system that enhances campus efforts and provides clear lines of responsibility, authority, and accountability.
4. To advance its academic mission and ensure modern well-maintained facilities, UH strengthens the diversity of its financial base beyond the continuing critical cornerstones of state funding and tuition revenue. Opportunities include leveraging land assets, generating more revenue from intellectual property, and increased philanthropy.
5. UH is committed to shared use of facilities. New capital projects maximize long-term flexibility and include shared classrooms and resources to make the best use of institutional space. Campus space belongs to the UH, not to a department, school, or person. Specialized and costly facilities and capabilities are shared externally to address community needs, while generating revenue to support operating costs.
6. UH land is an asset of the UH System, not an individual campus. UH has a systemwide plan for real estate assets that respects each campus mission, while maximizing opportunities, including through the use of public-private partnership (P3) strategies where appropriate.
7. UH is committed to prioritizing its investment of fiscal resources to support academic programs and facilities that reflect the principles and priorities set forth in this policy.

Next Steps

This *Third Decade Report*, the *Post-Pandemic Economy for Hawai’i*, and the *IAFP* provide the foundation for the UH’s next five-year strategic plan and the plans of UH units to reposition the University.

The next Strategic Directions will provide a more specific framework for UH to take the lead and create a more sustainable and equitable future for the UH and the State of Hawai’i.