September 16, 2011

TO: Reed Dasenbrock
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

FROM: Sylvia Yuen
Interim Dean, CTAHR

SUJBECT: Action Plan for Priority Areas

Please see below for the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resource’s (CTAHR) Action Plan for the three priority areas identified by Chancellor Virginia Hinshaw: retention and graduation rates, Native Hawaiian advancement, and quality of graduate education. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding the Action Plan.

Retention and Graduation Rates

- **Improve the quality of academic and career advising**
  - The two CTAHR departments with the largest number of undergraduate majors—Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) and Food Science and Human Nutrition (FSHN)—are utilizing UHM peer advisors who provide valuable student-to-student information and assistance, and ease faculty members’ heavy advising burden. CTAHR will be requesting more peer advisors in the future to enlarge the reach of this initiative within the college. In addition, three students have been hired to assist with recruitment and advising in our pre-veterinary medicine program.

  - For the past two years, CTAHR and employer partners have sponsored a student-led CTAHR Employment Conference in which students can meet with employers, learn more about job opportunities, and apply for internships and positions. Conference evaluations indicate that both students and employers are highly satisfied with their experience and value the networking opportunity.

- **Strengthen student engagement**
  - A monthly online *Student Newsletter* has been developed to enhance communication to and among students and to improve student engagement. Students also receive the
weekly CTAHR Notes, the college’s electronic newsletter disseminated to faculty, staff, and students which often publicize student activities and achievements.

- CTAHR sponsors six or more events annually to create a sense of community and increase student involvement and engagement. Among these events are the New Student Orientation, Annual Research Symposium, Spring Event, and Awards Banquet (for fuller descriptions, see http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/site/Activities.aspx for event descriptions). Student evaluations indicate that these events are highly successful in engaging them.

- CTAHR values out-of-the-classroom experiences that expand students’ learning and skill development, and have taken actions to encourage participation in these activities. For example, we have increased the visibility and activities of the college’s student clubs by highlighting the club officers at the New Student Orientation, featuring club activities in the Student Newsletter and CTAHR Notes, and providing opportunities for clubs to recruit at various college events.

- The CTAHR Entrepreneurial Competition is a new event that will be inaugurated in the 2011-2012 academic year. Students will submit YouTube videos on how they would create a new product or repurpose an existing product made with biological materials from Hawaii (i.e., locally grown food, fiber, agriculture, and other bio-products). A panel of judges will review the entries and select the winners, who will be recognized at our Annual Awards Banquet.

- **Improve student preparedness and timeliness of graduation**
  - Four of CTAHR’s nine undergraduate programs are making significant changes to streamline their curricula without negatively impacting students’ core competencies and discipline-related skills.

  - CTAHR has encouraged departments to request lecturer positions to offer new or additional classes/sections that are highly enrolled to avoid creating bottlenecks that prevent students from taking courses that will delay their academic progress and graduation.

  - In collaboration with the College of Education’s DCDC, three new online courses in three of CTAHR’s departments were developed. A presentation of these courses was recently conducted to encourage other faculty in the college to develop new online courses. The distance education courses will be initially offered this Fall, and we anticipate enrollment growth in the future as well as the ability to accommodate students who might otherwise not be able to enroll in CTAHR courses because of scheduling and other conflicts.
CTAHR and Leeward Community College (LCC) have developed an articulation agreement to increase the number and preparedness of students entering CTAHR. The agreement has been signed by all UHM parties, including the Chancellor and LCC administrators. The agreement will serve as a template for future agreements with other community colleges to allow for a more seamless transition into CTAHR.

CTAHR is leading a consortium comprised of University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, University of Hawai‘i Maui College, Hawai‘i Community College, Honolulu Community College, Kauai Community College, Windward Community College, Leeward Community College, and Kapiolani Community College that is developing greater coordination and articulation among agriculture and natural resources education programs. Consortium members are focusing on the issue of food security, exploring the feasibility of common core courses across campuses, and developing a statewide recruitment campaign.

**Native Hawaiian Advancement**

- CTAHR has made targeted recruitment presentations to Native Hawaiian students. For example, in the past year presentations were made to: 39 students from Ma‘o Farms and 20 transfer students from KCC’s Po‘i Na Nalu program.

- In Fall 2010, 29 students from agriculture programs at Kea‘au, Pahoa, Kealakehe, Kauai, Lahainaluna, Kahuku, Mililani, and Wai‘anae High Schools, all with high enrollments of Native Hawaiian students, attended CTAHR’s first Agriculture and Natural Resources Student Enrichment Day event. After touring the UHM campus, students participated in learning activities by CTAHR faculty, staff, and students.

- In Summer 2011, CTAHR presented a for-credit service-learning course as part of the Hawaii Youth Conservation Corps (HYCC) summer program for high school and college students (for more information, see http://www.kupuhawaii.org/hawaii-youth-conservation-corps/programs/summer-program/). HYCC targets Native Hawaiian and other under-represented students.

- CTAHR continues to partner with Kamehameha Schools (KS) in various ways. For example, in Summer 2009-2010, the college teamed with UH Hilo and KS to offer agricultural biotechnology courses on Hawai‘i Island to high school agriculture and science teachers. These for-credit courses provide neighbor island teachers, who serve large numbers of Native Hawaiian students, the opportunity to retool and gain professional development credits.
In recent years, CTAHR has directed significant resources to programs areas that historically have been of interest to Native Hawaiians, including aquaculture and aquaponics, organic agriculture, and ecosystem management.

Quality of Graduate Education

Several graduate programs in CTAHR have made major changes to their programs, which have substantially increased quality and enrollments. For example, the two largest graduate programs in CTAHR—Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering (MBBE) and Natural Resources and Environmental Management (NREM)—increased graduate student enrollments from 39 and 26 majors, respectively, in Fall 2005 to 91 and 78 majors, respectively, in Fall 2010.

As mentioned previously, CTAHR sponsors an annual Student Research Symposium, probably the largest college student symposium in the state. In 2011, this highly successful event attracted 135 presentations. Faculty members within and outside the college serve as reviewers, and awards, including travel support to present at a national or international conference, are presented at the CTAHR Awards Banquet. CTAHR collaborated with the College of Engineering to allow the latter’s students to participate in the Student Research Symposium for the first time this past year.

CTAHR is making significant effort to increase funds to support its graduate education from sources that have not been tapped in the past. We recently announced a $500,000 gift from the Monsanto Company that will be directed to graduate research assistants and post-doctoral fellows in plant sciences and protection. This and other gifts will allow CTAHR to recruit outstanding individuals and to enhance its graduate and research programs.

Part of CTAHR’s $25 million grant from USDA will be directed to training programs for obesity-prevention professionals in Hawai’i and cooperating Pacific Jurisdictions. Programs will be required to meet project goals and criteria, and funds will be provided to students to cover living expenses and tuition. The following UHM programs have been approved by the project: CTAHR’s undergraduate and graduate programs in Dietetics, Nutritional Sciences, and Nutrition in the Department of Human Nutrition, Food, and Animal Sciences (HNFAS), and JABSOM’s graduate program in Epidemiology in the Department of Public Health Sciences.

✓ e: Debra Ishii