CNS 1: The College of Natural Sciences would benefit from increased attention to strategic planning (in concert with the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor – Academic Affairs). Plans should, among other things:

- set specific goals in important areas (e.g., target research funding, graduation rate, staffing levels);
- identify areas of excellence (or target areas to develop) in which to hire;
- encourage collaboration across departments in the College and with relevant units outside CNS;
- identify and exploit features that are unique to the local environment where UH may expect to have a competitive advantage over peer institutions;
- explore ways to connect campus organized research units and the academic departments in CNS to the benefit of both;
- develop an integrated strategy to enhance student success (advising, research, internships, etc.);
- pay careful attention to faculty, staff and student diversity and to supporting a diverse student population.

2014 Response: The Dean will bring these issues to the attention of the seven department chairs in semimonthly meetings. During year 1, the Dean will work with the Chairs to develop a vision and strategic plan to address these issues within each department and within the college as a whole. A timeline will be developed to put these plans into action.

2017 Update: The college has suffered from multiple changes in leadership since 2015. A new permanent Dean joined CNS in December, 2016. These items are part of his priorities. He has been working with the departments to address each of these items.

CNS 2: The Campus should carefully consider the budget model that is used to set College budgets. The budget model should provide additional funds to units that are addressing increasing numbers of students. The budget model should also be more transparent to enable Deans to plan.

2014 Response: The College of Natural Sciences most strongly supports this recommendation. Funds must be provided to support the increasing undergraduate enrollment in the College of Natural Sciences. The College of Natural Sciences cannot improve student retention and decrease the time to
graduation in an expanding student population with a flat or declining budget. Whether progress is made on this issue by the completion of Year 1 is dependent upon the actions of the leadership of the Manoa campus. The College of Natural Sciences urges the Vice Chancellors and Chancellor to act on this recommendation immediately.

2017 Update: The Interim Chancellor of UHM announced a new budget model for the campus on April 19, 2016. As of May 2017, details are still being worked out.

CNS 3: The College and Departments should develop programs that reward and incentivize faculty excellence. These can include allowing differential responsibilities for faculty, instituting a college-level faculty recognition program, and setting up a college-level pre-award grant support center.

2014 Response: The College of Natural Sciences is planning on hiring a pre-award specialist to support research-active faculty and to encourage faculty that are less research active to re-engage in the process. Ideally this position will be filled in year 1, but this action requires an exception to the current hiring freeze and must be approved by the administration. The Dean will discuss with the chairs of the seven departments the concept of college-level incentive-based recognition and awards for research-active faculty. Ideas will be developed in year 1 and implemented in years 2 and 3.

2017 Update: The pre-award specialist was hired in March 2015 (Brad Nitta). The College intends to work with the department chairs to develop workload policies that enable them to reward excellent work in all areas and at all levels.

CNS 4: We recommend that the Dean and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs identify a few areas in which campus processes can be improved, set specific goals (e.g., generate faculty offer letters within x days), and then achieve those goals.

2014 Response: The College of Natural Sciences is in the process of implementing a document tracking system for all HR related documents handled by the college. As this system is tested, it will be expanded to include tracking of other documents handled by the college. The College of Natural Sciences would be very pleased to work with the office of the VCAA to improve the velocity of paperwork within the Manoa hierarchy.

2017 Update: CNS hired an Assistant to the Dean in Feb. 2015 which worked closely with the OVCAA, department chairs and Secretaries to minimize the loss of documents and expedite the process. The Dean’s Office also is working on scanning all old documents into archives to be more easily accessible. The College will work with the OVCAA to continue to improve processes.

CNS 5: The College of Natural Sciences should carry out a climate survey of students, faculty and staff.
2014 Response: The College of Natural Sciences would be very pleased to carry out a climate survey. The Dean of the college will work with all stakeholders to determine the scope of this survey. The college will assemble a team to select the best available tool for this purpose. The survey will be conducted in the second half of the first year and analyzed immediately thereafter. Due to current budgetary issues the college may not be able to implement the survey until year 2.

2017 Update: The previous Deans did not conduct such a climate survey. This still needs to be completed.

CNS 6: The campus should continue an aggressive campaign of facilities improvement. Snyder Hall and Keller Hall are the highest priorities within CNS.

2014 Response: The College of Natural Sciences strongly supports efforts to improve campus facilities. The college supports every effort to provide modern and innovative facilities that support learning and research.

2017 Update: The Snyder Hall renovation was cancelled due to the new Life Science building to be the replacement. Keller Hall has moved up the list for either renovation or replacement. The facilities department has worked with the Math, Micro and Biology departments and the Dean’s Office to recognize which classrooms and labs need current attention in Snyder to make the building habitable for students, faculty and staff while they wait on the new building and future renovations. Physical Sciences and Bilger Buildings are also in dire need of repair or replacement.

CNS 7: The Dean and Department Chairs should increase their efforts to educate faculty about the need for assessment and the ways assessment can be used to enhance programs.

2014 Response: The College of Natural Sciences recognizes the many purposes of assessments. The Dean will ask department chairs with more advanced assessment programs to present their assessment programs at the semimonthly meetings of the department chairs. This will provide a forum to discuss the benefits of a well structured assessment program as well as the obstacles to developing and implementing assessment. It should then be possible to develop a timeline for the development or improvement of assessment programs in those departments in which assessment is minimally implemented. The Dean will make every effort to provide the support needed to develop and implement these plans.

2017 Update: All CNS departments are making progress in program assessment. For example, during summer 2015 two CNS department chairs (Botany and Microbiology) completed a summer workshop on program assessment. The new Dean will continue to work with the departments to improve assessment programs.

CNS 8: Departments need to pay careful attention to the financial offers made to graduate students. Offer letters should be clear and transparent to the students. Stipends should be increased as funds allow and longer guarantees made where
possible. In addition, an effort should be made to provide summer opportunities (support, internships, etc.) for students.

2014 Response: The College of Natural Sciences is all too aware of these issues. The college has already developed a standard letter of offer for graduate students. Everyone is very concerned about increasing stipends. The college recognizes that to be competitive with stipend levels at competing graduate programs on the mainland, stipends must increase more than 50%, raising stipends from approximately ~$18,000 annually to between $25,000 and $30,000 annually. The college supports approximately 250 teaching assistantships annually. Thus, the college must identify $250,000 per year to support each $1,000 increase in stipend. The college also recognizes the need to guarantee support throughout the career of a graduate student and understands that generating these funds will require a commitment from the university as well as efforts by faculty to secure training grants and efforts by the Dean to secure endowed fellowships and scholarships.

2017 Update: The HR Specialist worked with all department chairs to ensure that the financial offers are fair and consistent. Raising graduate TA stipends remains a high priority for the Dean’s office. The current CNS budget deficit does not allow for such increases anytime soon out of the CNS budget.

CNS 9: It is critical that graduate curricula be reviewed regularly to ensure that course offerings are sufficient to meet program requirements. To the extent this is not possible then departments should ensure that students are recruited only into programs/areas where students can expect to make regular progress.

2014 Response: The College of Natural Sciences would bundle this recommendation with recommendation CNS 7 concerning the need for and value of assessment. The Dean of the College of Natural Sciences will meet with the graduate division to get their perspective on the programs within the college in which students appear to have difficulty making regular progress. The Dean with then bring these issues to the appropriate department chairs. The department chairs will be given the opportunity to respond. If the Dean feels that the response is inadequate, the Dean will require that the department develop and implement a plan to address the problem.

2017 Update: The Graduate Division and the Interim Dean had an open communication about the students and worked to address student concerns. The new Dean intends to work with departments to modernize and streamline their graduate programs with an eye toward improving recruitment, retention and time to degree.

CNS 10: The College should move as quickly as possible to develop a standalone CNS undergraduate advising system. A single point of contact model in which students can get information on a range of topics (curriculum planning, financial aid, etc.) would be ideal. The advising structure should ideally achieve an integrated model for student success that addresses internships, research experiences and jobs as well!
**2014 Response:** The College is rapidly moving toward this model. On August 18, 2014, the department with the largest student enrollment in the college, the Department of Biology will be taking over all undergraduate advising for all life science majors within the College of Natural Sciences (botany, ethnobotany, microbiology, molecular cell biology, biology, and marine biology). The scope will be limited to all undergraduate degree requirements and curriculum planning. Issues of financial aid are currently beyond the scope of this integration. The college is working to centralize all of the advising. Space has been identified in Keller Hall that will be used to open a comprehensive student advising center. The space will be available to occupy by August 20th. Advising services will be available in this space shortly thereafter.

**2017 Update:** Life science advisors housed in the Department of Biology are now responsible for advising majors in the life sciences. Centralizing the advising of majors in Chemistry, ICS, Math, and Physics is underway and should be fully implemented in the 2017-18 academic year.