One-Year Progress Report
The School of Pacific and Asian Studies (SPAS) Program Review
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM)

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Since submitting my initial response (memo to VCAA, dated July 28, 2015) to the comprehensive review report provided the external review team in April 2015, and receiving VCAA Reed Dasenbrock’s response (memo to me, dated July 31, 2015) in which he responded to the course of action I outlined, I hereby submit this one-year progress report. SPAS has made significant progress on some of the issues raised and is addressing them all within the constraints posed by availability of resources. The insights and suggestions in the external reviewers’ report have been very helpful as we chart our course for the coming years. In this report, I organize my response under the rubrics provided in that external reviewers report, as they were also adopted in VCAA Dasenbrock’s memo to me.

I. Faculty Roles and Appointments:

With regard to establishing “a mechanism to encourage more effective communication about [SPAS] initiatives across campus (and also externally),” I discussed the challenge with SPAS chairs and directors at several of our monthly meetings, encouraging updating of email lists, updating of individual program websites, and wider distribution of information on SPAS activities to other units and the community. Attendance at our events has generally been good. We advertised campus-wide for potential applicants for our new Luce scholarships for study of Southeast Asian Studies, with good results. The suggestion from the external review committee for SPAS to find a way to be informed about all searches likely to produce Asia or Pacific specialists has not been implemented formally, but our Centers are often aware of such searches and Asia and Pacific specialists hired are contacted by the appropriate center or centers. More important, I believe, is for SPAS to initiate more direct communication with other units, especially those with active ties to these regions.

II. SPAS Internal and University-Wide Articulations:

Relations among the academic programs and centers in SPAS has made good progress over the last year. Fourteen SPAS faculty members, representing both the Center Pacific Islands Studies (CPIS) and the Asian Studies Program (ASP) and six of our eight centers, participated in a joint SPAS-Zhejiang University conference held in Hangzhou in October, during which there was much interchange across regional and cultural boundaries that define our units but, at the same time, too often may discourage intellectual interaction and cross-fertilization. A second such conference
is under discussion, with SPAS/UHM as possible host, with financial support from Zhejiang.

In the area of publication, in September 2015 SPAS submitted an initial proposal to the UH Press for a new series. Initial positive response has been complicated by the resignation of UH Press Director Michael Duckworth, but we will be submitting a revised proposal in early August. As Dean I have identified two main editors (Terence Wesley-Smith, director of CPIS; and Patricio Abinales, director of the Center for Philippine Studies), an editorial board (Lonny Carlile, director of the Center for Japanese Studies; Cathryn Clayton, ASP faculty member; Alexander Mawyer, CPIS faculty member; and myself), and obtained three book proposals for initiating the series.

With regard to our interactions with EWC, I continue to meet with Education Director Mary Hammond, former Education Dean Terance Bigalke, and Kim Small on matters of articulations, MOUs, MOAs, and potential funding for UHM students. I am on the Board of Directors of the Friends of the East-West Center, helping to plan programs for FEWC and the community. I attended and read a paper at the EWCA Conference in Manila in January 2016, and will move quickly to introduce myself and SPAS to the new president as soon as he or she is in place.

III. Curricular Issues and Assessment:

CPIS has a solid curriculum in place and a committee to respond to needed changes on an ongoing basis, in response to eCafe evaluations, student demand, and assessment results. ASP initiated a major curriculum review and now has in place a Graduate Chair (Prof. Cathryn Clayton) for AY 2016-17 who will oversee substantial changes in the graduate curriculum.

SPAS has performed well with regard to assessment. The poster presentation by CPIS at the April 15, 2016 Assessment for Curricular Improvement Poster Exhibit, imaginatively entitled "Yeah, WRITE! New Disciplinary Writing Curriculum As Outcome of Assessment Cycle" won the "Best Use of Results" award for 2016. After several years of assessment challenges for ASP, the actions taken and resulting evaluation of our compliance have improved substantially, thanks to the hard work of ASP chair Prof. Barbara Andaya and interim chair Prof. Cathryn Clayton, along with ASP student advisor Pattie Dunn.

IV. Communications Strategy and Information Sharing:

We have been unable to appoint a full-time media specialist. Through a combination of student help, Graduate Assistants, and regular staff with media/tech knowledge, most of SPAS's programs and centers have improved both the look and the content of their websites. The SPAS homepage, although not exceptionally problematic, was created by a former staff member who died five years ago using a platform with which current staff are not familiar, meaning we can only change
announcements and lists, rather than fundamental appearance and accessibility. In light of recent concern over accessibility of all web-pages under the Americans with Disabilities Act, I anticipate spearheading a major change in the website in order simultaneously to comply with ADA and to give our website a 21st century look and style of access.

In addition to initial orientations for new ASP and CPIS students conducted by the respective program personnel, I have initiated a SPAS-wide orientation and plan to continue it.

V. Student Support and Academic Outcomes:

The issue of enrollment (numbers of majors and SSH) remains the most challenging area for SPAS now. The rehiring of our ASP student advisor Pattie Dunn at 100% and increased presence at campus events has not resulted in the increases we are hoping for. Building better awareness of SPAS and the value proposition of academic degrees, including double degrees and certificates in Asian Studies and Pacific Islands Studies is regularly discussed, but the magic bullet remains elusive. During 2015-16 we did successfully renegotiate our certificate offerings in Asian Studies. How this will effect enrollments remains to be seen.

In the area of alumni relations, we have had to build from scratch. Since fall 2015 we have been making major efforts to reach out to alumni, particularly those in the state of Hawaii. On March 9, 2015 we held our first alumni gathering, honoring two distinguished alumni (Chizuko Endo, MA from ASP; Kalani English, MA from CPIS), presenting two short performances, and offering ample food and beverages, all costs covered by SPAS. Attendance was less than expected, probably because our alumni identify more with their program (either ASP or CPIS) and not with "SPAS," which did not even exist as SPAS before 2007, with the creation of Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, which divided SHAPS into two separate Schools. Good progress was being made throughout the year as I worked with UHF Director of Alumni Engagement, Tara Loty, who not only helped organize the event in March, but arranged meetings for me with alumni on the mainland. We were looking at international alumni as well, until she resigned last month.

In my capacity as AVC for International and Exchange Programs I have overseen the creation of a recruiting brochure aimed at attracting Indonesians to UHM and have my staff working on data and text content for comparable brochures for other countries in Asia (first China, Vietnam, and the Philippines, and eventually S. Korea and Japan). ASP established one 3+2 program with Beijing Foreign Studies University/Beiwai in March 2015 and a second 3+2 with Zhejiang University/Zheda in April 2016. The latter was strongly supported and pushed forward on our side by CCS director Fred Lau and myself, and on Zheda side by Dr. Zhang Zhi-wai, who has promised to fund future participating students from Zheda at $10,000 per student per year. Recruiting for the Beiwai-UHM 3+2 has been unsuccessful so far, with Beiwai representatives informing us that the high cost of tuition and living expenses
here is discouraging students from applying. Additional 3+2 programs with Chinese universities are in progress.

Discussions at monthly meetings with Center directors and program chairs addressed recruiting needs, but truly effective action steps have not been found. In the coming academic year, as dean, I will be requiring of the Centers a more active role in recruiting, especially with greater outreach to undergrads and the promotion of double majoring in Asian Studies or Pacific Islands Studies.

As cost is a major factor in recruitment, I have actively sought external funding and secured a grant from the Luce Foundation to provide scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students, tied to the study of a Southeast Asian language. I always rank student scholarship support as our top priority when speaking with donors and have some modest successes, but not enough to address the need adequately. Ongoing efforts continue.

With regard to greater student engagement with SPAS, my plan to involve SPAS students in listening sessions remains to be fully implemented, but will be in fall 2016.

VI. Administrative System and Staffing:

I have followed up on the review committee’s suggestion to hold SPAS-wide meetings of secretarial and support staff. Despite some initial resistance, we have held three meetings, at each of which two or three staff members make a presentation on the activities of their unit (center or program) and their roles in the functioning of that unit. Two additional meetings are planned for the fall 2016. Feedback thus far has been positive, indicating that staff both enjoy and benefit from hearing from their colleagues in other programs and centers.

VII. Infrastructure and Technology:

With regard to our IT needs, I held an initial meeting with a select group of faculty and staff members and Colin McDonald, media specialist from the Chancellor’s office. We decided against a task force meeting regularly and opted instead for individual faculty or staff members consulting individually with Colin at first, in order to gain better understanding of the potential of our current software for manageable changes and updates. I plan to work further with Colin as we address the ADA accessibility issue and will likely form a task force as more major changes are likely to be not only desirable for our brand, but legally required.

VIII. Area Centers

The Title VI funding on which our Centers rely may seem precarious, as it has on and off for much of its 40+ year history. Depending on the outcome of the upcoming presidential (and congressional) election, we may see a serious reduction, or we
may see continued funding, possibly even a modest increase. Major foundations are no longer a feasible source for major funding for area studies. Private donors have been generous to some centers (in particular Korean Studies), but not at the level that could even begin to replace the funding provided under Title VI. Alternative scenarios, such as the possible consortial arrangement with the Center for Okinawan Studies, has not been pursued by the current director, in large part because the other potential consortium members have not indicated readiness to proceed. The best action the centers can take in the coming few years is more aggressive recruiting of majors to our programs, and students to our courses. This will be top of the agenda as I work with center directors and program chairs in the next year and beyond.