To: Thomas Bingham, Interim Dean  
School of Travel Industry Management

From: Michael Bruno, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and  
Vice Chancellor for Research  
Krystyna Aune, Dean of Graduate Education

Subject: TIM Graduate Program Review Response

Thank you for your September 15, 2017 response to the 2017 program review report. The School of Travel Industry Management (TIM) and the Master of Science program, specifically, are important to the State of Hawai‘i with its significant reliance on tourism to the state economy. The uniqueness of the program in integrating tourism, hospitality, and transportation is noteworthy. The graduate program was permanently established about 24 years ago. Headcount graduate enrollment is relatively flat and small, hovering at about 15 graduate students, however number of graduates per year is low – around 3 on average over the past 5 years. In contrast, the undergraduate program is robust, with over 400 undergraduate students enrolled and over 90 B.S. graduates per year on average over the past 5 years (MIRO data). Given this potential pipeline of students, and that the strength of the program lies in the “highly productive and academically engaged” faculty, it is somewhat surprising that the graduate program has not flourished.

The School’s response to the program review report points out the lack of a permanent dean has negatively impacted the potential of the unit. Given the ongoing discussions within TIM, between TIM and Shidler College of Business, and with the community constituents about a possible reorganization, a search for a permanent dean will not be undertaken until that matter is settled. We recognize and agree that the School of Travel Industry Management should be able to retain its identity regardless of the structural configuration.

We concur with the report and applaud your efforts to update the M.S. curriculum. We note that the 36-credit current requirement is high relative to other master’s degree programs (above the 30-credit minimum). The time frame for change seems rather conservative, however. Some changes may be able to be made in a shorter time frame. You might consider other credential options for graduate students and working professionals such as a certificate program. Online course offerings could also expand the pool of prospective students across the state and beyond. The Office of Graduate Education can work with the graduate chair to facilitate timely review and ultimately, implementation of the revisions.
The program needs to significantly improve and diversify recruitment efforts. The 3+2 program is off to a good start with an agreement with South China Normal University and students already participating in the program. The bachelor’s/master’s pathway in TIM can be readily developed and ushered through the approval process once we see the 5-year degree plan. Clearly, more undergraduate students can and should be recruited for and well-prepared to succeed in the master’s program. Faculty members should all be encouraged to reach out to top performing undergraduate students to discuss graduate school options. The suggestion of a “boot camp” to provide an on-ramp for students from outside fields is worth considering as well.

Finally, we want to encourage further collaboration with other UHM departments as well as the tourism industry community for curriculum/teaching, research, and service opportunities for faculty and students alike. Likewise, it may be fruitful to collaborate with community college colleagues to facilitate transfer student pathways and success.

We look forward to continued collaborations in the effort to continually evolve and improve this important graduate program. The one-year report should describe the progress and outcomes of the program modifications, funding strategy, and recruitment efforts. That report will be due November 1, 2018.

c: Julienne Maeda, Associate Dean, OGE
April Goodwin, Program Officer, OVCAA