



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

February 18, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Peter Arnade
Dean, College of Arts and Humanities

FROM: Reed Dasenbrock 
Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Third Year Progress Report for the College of Arts and Humanities

Thank you for your thorough Third Year Progress Report of November 15, 2013. While you were not Dean at the time of the review, nonetheless, the issues raised in the report are largely still live issues in the College as your report demonstrates. We are in fact most of the way to the next program review, and clearly it will be important by the time of that review to have responded (and to be seen to have responded) to the issues in the review.

My response will follow your format in discussing college-wide issues before briefly responding to some of the issues in the departmental responses, which are more properly your kuleana than mine. I like the approach you are taking to the issue of the mission and vision of the College which is to increase “curricular and scholarly collaborations” to create convergences rather than a single grand point of coherence. I look forward to seeing concrete results from this approach. We understand the challenges any coherent hiring plan for the College has encountered in the face of the current budget challenges. As Dean, of course, you have a responsibility to do what you can to augment the flow of resources into the college as well as to distribute what you have. I remain concerned about the absence of a real grant-writing culture in the humanities broadly speaking at UHM: I am unclear about what your new APT actually does and how her presence may modify the discussions I have encouraged you to have about grant support across the humanities. On-line education and the Semester in Hawaii program are also ways resources can come into the college, and I hope both activities can grow and flourish.

I support your sense that proposing additional graduate programs in the College at this time would be a mistake, though the various ideas about new programs discussed in this report could be one of the foci of the next Program Review as you suggest. In terms of existing programs, the issues surrounding time to degree and placement for doctoral programs in the College are

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real ones that I appreciate your highlighting. I suspect, however, that you may need to be more directive than your language of “I would encourage” suggests in order to get the data you need concerning placement for all the college’s doctoral programs. Poor placement data—if the data is discouraging—should prompt a serious discussion about doctoral programs in the College, and a reduction in program size may well be warranted if the graduates of these programs are not finding employment. If these discussions lead to smaller graduate programs, there are issues surrounding faculty workload which will need to be addressed. As other parts of your report point out, there are pressing needs at the undergraduate level, and it may be that if “right-sizing” is “downsizing”, then we will be able to improve the quality of our graduate programs and shift some human resources to badly needed parts of the undergraduate curriculum at the same time. I am not presupposing the results of such a conversation, but such a conversation needs to be had before the next Program Review.

In terms of the comments on the undergraduate experience, the changes in advising in the College are fundamental and will need your close attention for their potential to improve the undergraduate experience to be realized. You say that you “would encourage” every department in the College to track its number of undergraduate majors: you need simply to require it and have a serious conversation with departments whose numbers are declining. You mention scholarship support in the College, and your College is one of the ones with substantial carryforwards in scholarship accounts: you may need to be much more proactive to make sure that this money is spent in a timely fashion.

The concerns about space in the report fall into two categories, potential new spaces and the issues surrounding spaces you already have. The Sakamaki renovations—unmentioned in the report—are a marvelous upgrade to a building you occupy the majority of, and I hope the faculty take full advantage of the new classrooms they will have scheduling priority for. The next potential new space is, as you point out, the PBS building. We have met with ACM to discuss their plans for the building, and as that develops, it will probably fall to you to ascertain what the real likelihood of that space becoming available and then working to realize the plans of ACM as they seem to make sense and are practicable. In terms of existing facilities, the problems are most acute in Kennedy Theatre.

To move to specifics concerning individual departments:

- ACM is asking for an equipment budget. Departments which have above average instructional expenses of this kind should be proposing reasonable course fees. You may have other units in this situation.
- Communicology, not having seen your overall summary, is still planning to ask for authorization to plan a doctorate. I would agree with you and not with them that this is premature at this time.

- I do not find the response of the History department to the issue concerning the mentoring of junior faculty fully responsive. The suggestion in the Program Review is that History needed to focus on this issue; their response describes the activities of others outside the department. Outside mentoring—no matter how valuable—cannot take the place of professional mentoring inside departments. The department also discusses what it is doing to attract more majors without saying anything about whether these efforts are bearing fruit or not. Given the present budget situation, it will be very hard for you to maintain a History Department of the present size without more majors, and I hope this issue has their genuine and sustained attention.
- Theatre and Dance ends with comments on the physical state of Kennedy Theater. I understand the disappointment felt in the Department that their ambitious plans for a new building (developed before either of us arrived) have not been realized, but I see little reason to be optimistic that this plan will move forward anytime soon. This means we need to improve the facilities they have. Whenever I have toured the building, a number of concrete improvements have always been suggested, and I think you need to take lead on the task of getting those improvements done, as a persistent Dean is harder to ignore than a department Chair. Health and safety funding should be available to tackle some of the most urgent of these issues, and some progress on some fronts—although not completely satisfactory—will be better than the current picture of no progress on any front.

Currently, Arts and Humanities is scheduled for its next Program Review in 2014-2015. However, the Board of Regents policy that governs program review provides some flexibility in terms of the timeline to be followed. I think we are in agreement that we will have the next Program Review in 2015-2016 instead, and this should give the College the time to make progress on the issues identified in your report and here.

c: Interim Associate Vice Chancellor Aune
Program Officer Goodwin