



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAII®  
MĀNOA

August 10, 2010

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Richard Dubanoski, Dean  
College of Social Sciences

FROM: Reed Dasenbrock   
Vice Chancellor  
for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Social Sciences One Year Progress Report

Thank you for meeting with me and Interim Associate Vice Chancellor Aune on Friday, August 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss your one year progress report on your 2009 Program Review. As you know, we are endeavoring to make the program review process more substantive and to link it to various aspects of accreditation, especially the continuous improvement commitments involved in quality assurance. External peer review is an important part of that process, as evidenced in the 2009 review, but equally important is a continuing effort to implement the suggestions in the report that make continuing sense. This document will focus on that report and on what in our judgment needs to happen over the next year as part of our evolving implementation of the recommendations of the 2009 review.

Your May 28<sup>th</sup> report goes into a good deal of detail about the various departmental-level responses to the department-level recommendations in the review. I note that not all departments have responded with equal rigor to the suggestions in the review, and I urge you to develop a process for looping back to the departments to ensure continued progress on the full range of issues identified in the full range of departments. You mentioned that you planned to make the one year progress report a focus of your College retreat later this month, and this might be a good place to draw attention to this issue.

The report made a number of recommendations involving departmental structure within the College. I suspect that thinking about this kind of micro-level reorganization didn't make a lot of sense as long as the question of the big reorganization of Arts and Sciences was on the table, but when we closed down that discussion, we did say that not moving ahead on the big one meant that we might be able to consider 'reorg lite,' some smaller and perhaps more incremental changes. We encourage forward movement on the proposal for the Womens Studies Program to become a department, and we are happy to hear that conversations between Public Administration and the Public Policy Center are proceeding. I strongly believe that we need a stronger presence in the public policy arena, and we need to expand educational programming—particularly for undergraduates—in this area, so I look forward to hearing about the progress of these conversations. One consequence of not moving forward with the big Arts and Sciences reorganization is that we missed an opportunity to think about the lines drawn between the various components of Arts and

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Sciences. Have we, for instance, drawn the line between Arts and Humanities and the Social Sciences in the best way possible? I would welcome a conversation between the two colleges on this matter, as I believe that there is more intellectual overlap between—just to pick the two most obvious examples—American Studies and Ethnic Studies and Speech and Communications—than our current institutional geography and curriculum suggest. This is not a front burner issue, but I encourage it to be kept on the institutional agenda.

Less progress has been made on one of the review's suggestions that Geography and Anthropology work together to create a College-wide GIS lab, possibly in Dean Hall. I understand that efforts have been made to broaden the conversation, as many other units outside of the College of Social Sciences may also be interested in participating in such a facility. This broadening does make programmatic sense, but it may also hinder progress towards actual implementation of a solution. I think this is an urgent issue, given how central these GIS and GIT technologies are to a broad range of fields, so I look to the College for visible leadership on this issue soon.

We welcome the progress the College has made on implementing assessment across the board, and in a number of indicators, the College is ahead of Mānoa as a whole on implementing the use of assessment. However, assessment is not conducted for assessment's sake, but rather for program improvement, and the College falls below the Mānoa norm in the reported use of assessment data for program changes and improvement. I urge attention this year to “closing the loop,” to making sure that we are using the data we are collecting.

This summer, we have had comparable discussions with all of the constituent units in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, since Natural Sciences and Languages, Linguistics and Literature had 2008 program reviews and Arts and Humanities had one this spring. In each of those reports, concern was expressed about the state of advising in Arts and Sciences. While this was not mentioned in your report, I mention it here that we share those concerns and look forward to the colleges looking carefully about how to make best use of the resources they have already put into advising, how to move advising in the colleges into the modern tech-savvy world that our students already inhabit, and how to make sure that advising makes a positive contribution to our efforts to increase retention and graduation, especially on-time graduation. Students in Social Sciences now earn an average of 138.92 credits to graduate, almost 15 more than is needed. While this is below the Mānoa average of 146.23, it still represents a semester's worth of extra courses, and this is despite degree/major requirements that range between 24 and 37. As advising is a cross-cutting responsibility among the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, tackling this issue is an urgent responsibility for each and all of the four deans.

Part of the solution for improving student success is tackling “challenge courses” that students have difficulty negotiating, so I want to take this opportunity to commend the

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College for initiating a discussion about a possible College-wide course that would be part of the FS: Symbolic Reasoning portion of general education.

Finally, as the campus and entire university system moves towards a new comprehensive campaign, development and fundraising remain important priorities. I look forward to working with you and the UH Foundation on how we can staff up and provide more support for activities to increase donations to the College.