

**Program Review Update**  
**Responses to Major Findings and Recommendations from**  
**2008 Comprehensive Program Review of the**  
**College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR)**

*1. Develop a long term staffing plan to assure that the appropriate faculty composition is in place especially in view of the anticipated retirement of senior faculty in the near future.*

CTAHR has adopted a Priority Staffing process in which all departments, county offices, and college administration periodically submit priorities for filling faculty and staff positions. CTAHR's Priority Staffing Process is transparent and formalized (the preamble, overview, and factors influencing priority staffing decisions are posted on a website accessible by all CTAHR faculty and staff). Under the Priority Staffing Process, CTAHR administration invites all units in the college to identify staffing needs; staffing priorities identified by the various units are discussed at CTAHR's Leadership meeting (which includes all Department Chairs, County Administrators, Center Directors, and college administration); and CTAHR administration approves positions to be filled. Though the Priority Staffing process has been put on-hold for the near term, the college presently has a fairly lengthy list of staffing priorities and the college will resume the Priority Staffing process as funds become available. In the college's current strategic plan, CTAHR identified bioenergy, invasive species, and sustainable agriculture as key areas that the college should pursue aggressively. CTAHR has hired new limited-term faculty in these areas using special grants, and will continue that practice as special grants are available. These hires play an important role in CTAHR's longer-term staffing plans.

*2. Provide opportunities to help faculty develop and implement a program of assessment and appropriate learning outcomes across the College using data to make proactive programmatic and curricular improvements addressing impact on planning and budgeting.*

In November and December 2008, the college hosted three webinars on program assessment, "Assessing Student Learning: 2008." All CTAHR faculty members were invited to participate. Around 20 faculty and staff attended one or more of the webinars. A survey of those in attendance showed positive impacts from the webinars.

In 2009, one or more assessment coordinators from each CTAHR department were asked to evaluate the assessment programs (hereafter simply referred to as "assessments") for CTAHR's nine undergraduate academic programs. The purpose of this exercise was to gain an in-house evaluation of the assessments and trends in the assessments, and to encourage assessment coordinators to review assessment tools and practices being used in other academic programs so that they can learn from others and, in turn, strengthen their own assessments. Using three ratings (does not meet expectations, meets expectation, and exceeds expectations) and four criteria, the faculty evaluated the assessments of each academic program for the years 2007, 2008, and 2009. The overall trend of assessments within the college was viewed to be improving over time (see Figure 1), though even in the most recent year (2009) the quality of assessments were viewed to vary widely across the college, with the strongest assessment for an externally

accredited academic program having an overall rating of 2.8 (on a scale from 1, does not meet expectations, to 3, exceeds expectations), which strongly exceeds expectations, and the weakest assessment in another academic program having an average rating of 1.25, which falls far short of expectations. We are working with those academic programs that have weak assessments to bring their assessments to a more satisfactory level.

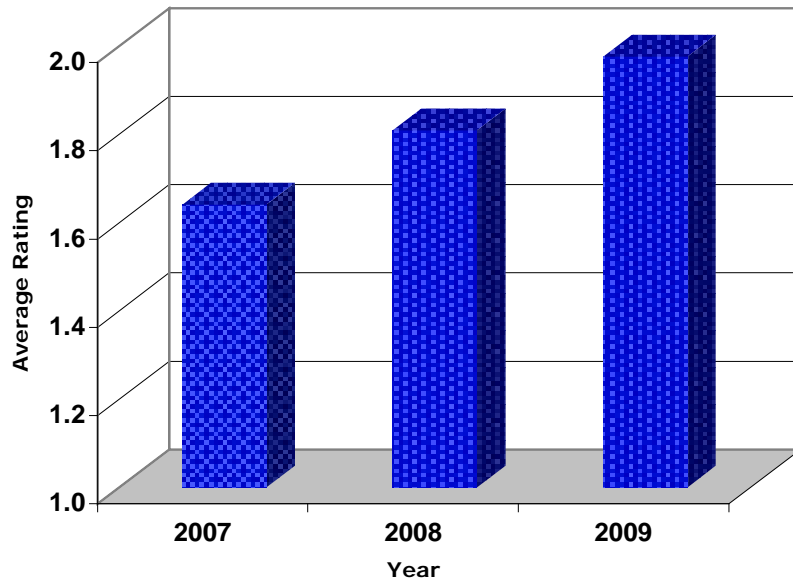


Figure 1. Averages of ratings of assessment programs for all nine CTAHR undergraduate programs over three years (ratings performed by selected Assessment Coordinators of CTAHR’s academic programs).

*3. Improve use of technological innovations for a more contemporary web presence for recruitment and community engagement, for instructional programs, and for improvement of extension delivery across the state.*

CTAHR unveiled its new website in November 2009 (<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/site/>). The last major revision to CTAHR’s website occurred eight years ago. Changes includes major revision of CTAHR’s website for academic programs (<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/site/Academics.aspx>), which is still being fine-tuned. Upgrades to the academic website include the addition of revolving photographs and testimonials of CTAHR students, restructuring of the webpages for prospective students, which now includes career videos (three have been produced and a fourth is in the works), that are being condensed for rapid viewing by prospective students.

The websites of individual departments and related academic, research, and outreach programs within the college are also being upgraded. Within the past year, most of CTAHR’s units made significant changes to their websites. Following is a summary of the upgrades reported by the various units.

Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Sciences (HNFAS; [www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/hnfas](http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/hnfas)) Major revision:

Scrolling photographs depicting research, outreach and academic programs were added. On the home page, two “widgets” were added: a daily nutrition tip from the “Got Nutrients?” web site, produced by HNFAS faculty members, Drs. Joannie Dobbs and Alan Titchenal. On our home page, links to HNFAS’s downloadable brochures were added to the undergraduate and graduate degree programs, including specific information about the pre-Veterinary and Dietetics programs. Links to HNFAS’s two student clubs – the Pre-Vet Club and the FSHN Council – were added. Scholarship information was also added. HNFAS upgraded its faculty and staff pages, including individual faculty web pages and links to individual faculty members’ research portfolios. On the home page, HNFAS has links to its “HNFAS Awarding Winning Faculty and Staff” and links to HNFAS Impact stories – individual stories that feature the research or outreach activities of its faculty. On the research page is a link to the entire HNFAS Research Portfolio, and articles featuring its faculty in CTAHR Research News. There are also links to individual research faculty lab pages. For extension, HNFAS has listed each of its major cooperative extension programs, from 4-H, to Nutrition Education and Wellness, to the Taste of the Hawaiian Range, all of which have HNFAS faculty as active participants. In addition, direct links to individual programs under larger umbrella programs have been added. HNFAS has added a virtual tour of its major facility, the Agricultural Sciences Building. Finally, on each of HNFAS’s pages, contact information and a button linking the Department to the UH Foundation have been added so that alumni and friends can make donations.

Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering (MBBE) Significant revision:

MBBE’s Bioengineering program was renamed Biological Engineering in Fall 2008. Accompanying the name change was a significant updating of the BE Program website (<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/be/welcome.html>) which provides better descriptions of the curriculum and students’ projects.

Natural Resources and Environmental Management (NREM) Major revision:

NREM Department Website, General (<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/nrem/>)

- Revised the navigation bar.
- Front page features information about classes for the semester.
- Google analytics tracking code was added to the academic portion of the NREM department website.

Undergraduate Program ([http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/nrem/students/undergraduate\\_komo\\_mai.html](http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/nrem/students/undergraduate_komo_mai.html))

- Undergraduate program webpages are updated every summer, including updating links, making changes or clarifications in degree requirements or program operations, and new advising handouts.
- FAQs added for prospective students.
- Jobs webpage moved to "Career Information" and reoriented toward career help, with more links to online information, including career videos.
- Images and captions revised to appeal to undergraduate students.

Graduate Program ([http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/nrem/students/grad-e\\_komo\\_mai.html](http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/nrem/students/grad-e_komo_mai.html))

- Detailed descriptions of the application process were added to assist students in successfully completing their application to NREM program and UH Graduate Division.

- NREM Graduate Student Guide was posted online to guide both current and prospective students.
- Descriptions of our graduate degree programs were added to align with recent important changes in the department's graduate program.
- Images and captions were revised to appeal to graduate students.
- New graduate student organization featured ([http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/nrem/students/NREM\\_GSO.html](http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/nrem/students/NREM_GSO.html)).

All of these changes have proved to be extremely useful to both students (current and prospective) and faculty in our department.

#### Plant and Environmental Protection Sciences (PEPS, <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/peps>)

##### Significant revision:

PEPS continued to update and maintain the department website. In addition, several faculty have created research/extension websites addressing specific department activities, which are modified/updated regularly. These include

- University of Hawaii Insect Museum (Dr. Daniel Rubinoff) <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/peps/museum/index.htm>.
- Insect Systematics and Biodiversity (Dr. Daniel Rubinoff) <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/rubinoffd/>.
- Termite Project (Dr. J. Kenneth Grace) <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~entomol>.
- Noni Website (Dr. Scot Nelson) <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/noni/>.
- Banana Bunchy Top (Dr. Scot Nelson) <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/banana/>.
- Hawaii Plant Pest and Disease Image Galleries (Dr. Scot Nelson) <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/nelsons/galleries.htm>.
- Hawaii Host Pathogen Database (Dr. Scot Nelson) <http://www.plant-doctor.net/site/index.php?page=dbsearch>.
- HAW-FLYPM (Fruit Fly Management) (Dr. Ronald Mau) <http://www.extento.hawaii.edu/fruitfly/>.
- The Plant Doctor (Dr. Scot Nelson) <http://www.plant-doctor.net/>. Dr. Scot Nelson created this extension website in 2008-2009. It represents a major effort to consolidate plant disease management information in an easily accessible manner, and engage clients through a regularly updated "News" section (an "Ask the Plant Doctor" section) and "Forums" devoted to specific plant disease concerns. User statistics indicate that this is a very successful effort, with more than 58,000 hits during the month of September 2009 alone, and new "Community" members joining regularly (six in September 2009).

#### Center on the Family (COF) Major revision:

The COF website includes comprehensive databases on Hawaii's children, families, aging, and communities, which a range of users utilize to inform and develop policies, programs, budgets, proposals for funding, curricula, reports, and other purposes. In the last two years, nine new publications have been posted on the website. The most recent, the 2009 Homeless Service Utilization Report, has generated media and public support for Hawaii's homeless. Two others – Managing Job Loss and Financial Stress and Raising Resilient Children During Tough Economic Times – address the downturn in the economy and provide helpful resources as well as positive actions that can be taken by those experiencing financial distress. The former is being disseminated throughout the state by the Hawaii Department of Labor to individuals facing

unemployment and work furloughs. Through its Kids Count project, COF's databases have had a more prominent national presence in the last two years. The Hawaii profile on the national Kids Count Data Center is populated by COF. It presently consists of the latest available data on 22 indicators relating to children, including definition, data sources, and notes. For each indicator, data are presented at the state and county levels.

Extension Major revision:

Recently, the CTAHR Extension website was completely revamped to make navigating and locating information more logical and simpler. One of the four counties (Maui) also came on-line with its county-specific website. Unfortunately, because of limited resources, the other three counties have made little progress in developing their county websites. Individual faculty in those counties, however, have made significant improvements to their individual websites, including forestry/agroforestry (descriptions of major tree species, field demonstrations, etc.), plant diseases/plant doctor (up-to-date pathogen/host checklist), invasive species (videos of ongoing trials), sustainable/organic farming (training videos, posting of workshop proceedings, etc.). All of these sites have incorporated the use of videos to enhance viewer understanding of the information. Several new features have improved access to information, e.g., a depository for presentations that include PowerPoint slides with audio, and a link to UH Scholarspace where many CTAHR out-of-print publications have been scanned and posted (this was done in collaboration with the UH Manoa 's Hamilton Library) to make these otherwise unavailable publications available to all.

Research (<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/AspNet/Projects.aspx>) Significant revision:

The CTAHR Research website presently is being upgraded and will be launched soon. New features include descriptions of CTAHR research projects and individual researcher pages as well as listings of new patents. To highlight research projects and publicize the excellent and high impact research being conducted by our faculty and students, CTAHR has established an on-line newsletter, CTAHR Research News Magazine (<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/ctahr2001/Research/ResearchNews.html>).

*4. Take steps to improve student concerns related to frequency of course offerings and better coordination across departments and colleges.*

Though from time-to-time a small number (fewer than 1%) of students have complained about not being able to graduate in a timely manner because of the unavailability of required courses within or outside their majors, infrequency of course offerings has not been identified as a general problem by CTAHR students. Because CTAHR has had a policy of mandatory advising for many years, difficulties stemming from the unavailability of courses generally have been averted. Also, recent cross-listing of courses among CTAHR departments and some departments outside the college has prompted better coordination of course offerings.

All undergraduate students are surveyed in the semester in which they plan to graduate. Two of the items in the exit survey are relevant to students' perception of the availability of courses that they need and want: (1) availability of courses in my major; (2) organization of the curriculum in my major. The cumulative responses over the last four semesters are summarized in Figure 2.

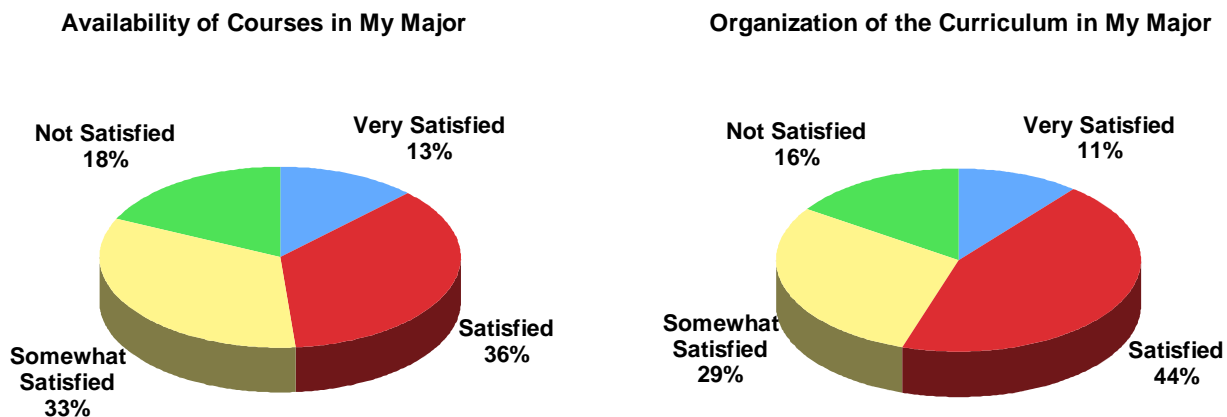


Figure 2. Summary of exit survey responses by graduating CTAHR seniors (total of 208 responses collected over last four semesters).

The survey suggests that students are generally satisfied with the availability of courses in their major and the organization of the curriculum in their major.

CTAHR chairs were queried on whether the frequency of course offerings was a problem in their academic program(s). The chairs generally responded that prior to this academic year, infrequency of course offerings was not a problem for their academic programs; however, in light of the 50% cut-back in lecturer counts throughout the college in the 2009-2010 academic year, the Family and Consumer Sciences Department expressed concern that offering the necessary courses and sufficient numbers of class sections is becoming a problem for the two academic programs in that department. The college is striving to make sure that our students are not negatively impacted by reductions in lecturer counts by working with the departments to ensure that support for lecturers is available to offer required courses. All of our departments have made special efforts to cull courses that are offered infrequently or have not been offered recently, and all programs continuously revisit their curricula to ensure that students have a clear and timely pathway toward graduation, and to the extent practicable, academic programs have eliminated graduation requirements tied-to historically under-enrolled courses.

The chairs of smaller academic programs noted that some courses are offered only once every two years, so students need to be mindful in scheduling their courses, but with proper advising, students have been able to enroll in all required courses in the appropriate sequence and for the most part, students have not faced problems graduating in a timely manner because of infrequent offering of required courses. Problems have occurred, however, when students fail required courses. In some instances, under-enrolled courses have been offered and in rare instances, curriculum committees/advisors have resorted to course substitutions or have offered 499 (directed research) courses in place of required courses so that students could graduate in a timely manner. One chair indicated that owing to the current difficult fiscal situation, staffing likely will suffer and course offerings could become tighter in the near term.

Though perhaps not direct evidence that frequency of course offerings is not a major problem for CTAHR students, data provided by the OVCAA on average years to completion (Figure 3)

suggests that, while far from the four years goal of our college, CTAHR's students graduate in a relatively timely manner.

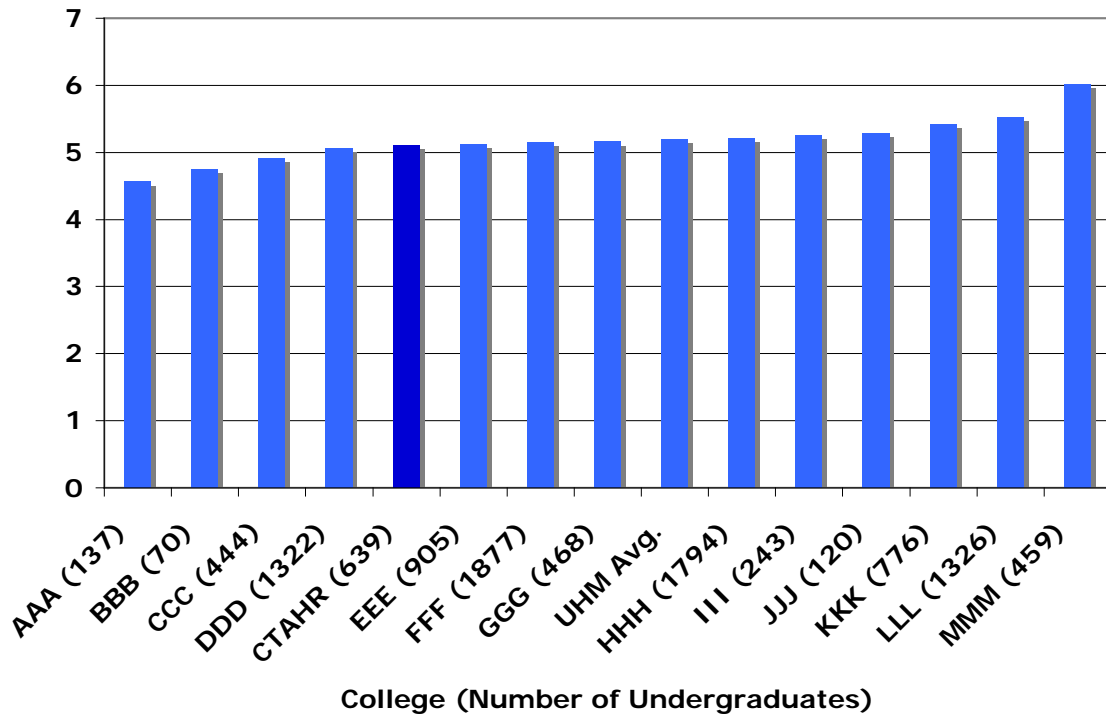


Figure 3. Average years to completion of undergraduate degree for UH Manoa colleges (data from OVCAA, August 20, 2009).

*5. Address concerns related to implementation and evaluation of mandatory advising and the impact of advising on faculty workload given the heavy instruction, research, and extension requirements of limited faculty resources.*

Academic advising imposes a significant tax on faculty resources, particularly in academic programs having large numbers of student majors. The burden will worsen as faculty resources erode over the next few years. CTAHR attempted to include advising responsibilities in the college's formal workload expectations, but has been unsuccessful in gaining adoption of the proposed formulas as workload factors.

This semester, all CTAHR chairs were queried on whether UHM's policy of mandatory advising has impacted faculty workload in their departments and the general response to that question was, so far, it has not. That response is not surprising because CTAHR has had a policy of mandatory advising for many years. The College discussed the option of hiring professional advisors (APTs) to support departments, but the departments generally have observed that Star Academic Journey/Planner has reduced (and in the future will further reduce) advisor workload, leaving more time for higher-level mentoring and career planning, which can best be carried-out

by faculty members, not professional advisors. All departments have the option of requesting professional advisers through the Priority Staffing process, but, so far, all have identified tenure line faculty as priorities over professional advisors. At least one chair expressed concern that the current fiscal situation will strain faculty resources, thus the quality of advising could be impacted in the near future.