

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Office of Undergraduate Education

External Review

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Thank you for the opportunity to spend time with the remarkable team members from the units housed in the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. The members of the WASC External Review Team undertook two days of meetings with the representatives from the fifteen OUE units we were asked to review as well as with the central business and administrative office team. We experienced tremendous hospitality from the team in the office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and were looked after thoroughly at every turn.

We have found, overall, that there are two stories about the units of the Office of Undergraduate Education and the office as a whole. One is sunny: dedicated staff, innovative programs, and a strong sense of community and appreciation among the 42 professionals. The other is, unfortunately, quite dark. That story is one of many small and under-resourced units, universally (except for athletics advising and tutoring) dilapidated facilities, over-stretched staff and programs, and a pervasive sense that things are just not going to get better.

We have heard that there is cause for optimism because undergraduate graduation rates have increased over the past ten years. We believe, however, that this achievement should not be an endpoint, but rather a milepost on the road to comparative graduation benchmarks set by successful research universities. There are opportunities for improvement since various models suggest that a six-year graduation rate of 70% and higher is a reasonable goal compared to the current rate of about 56%.

Serious investments of time and money are critical for the success of any program that improves the retention and graduation rates of a diverse student population. Furthermore, improvements in retention will generate significant new funds through increases in tuition collections and eventually with improved graduation levels there will be greater alumni giving and more positive community relations across the state. The Office of the VCAA should run a few simple models to calculate the gain in tuition from a single student persisting to the gains from each 1% improvement in retention. This information should be widely shared so that all members of the Mānoa community (faculty, staff, and administration) understand

the increase in funding that can be expected from an increase in retention. The gain in human capital is just as important, particularly to Hawai'i, and this goal should also be emphasized (and explained if necessary).

Pride in place matters as environmental conditions have a significant effect on human behavior. The physical conditions of most of the student success support areas associated with the OUE are unacceptable and must be addressed in spite of legislative restrictions on use of funds. If something has a high enough priority, solutions can be found. (Since student support services are housed in other campus units as well, we must question whether these units are housed in equally problematic facilities or if there exists a second status for those units within the OUE.)

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has built a number of world-class research programs, which have been a high priority for the university and apparently, the system. Its research funding places the campus in the top 10% of U.S. universities. Unfortunately, its retention and graduation rates place it in the bottom half of U.S. universities. It is now time to put the same focus, energy, and funding that has gone into building world-class research programs into improving retention and graduation rates for undergraduates.

Within OUE there is a dedicated and talented staff associated with the many independent units supporting aspects of student success. They are to be congratulated for their commitment and success under difficult circumstances. They have significant potential to do much more with the right leadership, facilities, and support. We have, as a result, taken our job as reviewers very seriously. We are working with the assumption that the university would not have brought us here—to confront these dire circumstances we observed within OUE—if it was not willing to deal seriously with these issues and make concrete changes. Yet, we are aware that the last external WASC review, which pointed out most of these same issues, seems to have made no difference except for the influx of instructional funds for the Honors Program. It is with this in mind that we have opted to be very clear in our language and direct in our findings. We want our words to lead to the changes requested by OUE faculty, staff, and administrators and that UH Mānoa students need and deserve to promote their academic success and personal growth.

This report is divided into two parts. The first addresses cross-unit issues. These are at the top of our lists, individually and collectively, as these are changes that must be made on this campus if undergraduate students are to have greater levels of academic success. While these issues may touch on individual OUE units, they cannot be addressed simply within any one unit. These require the attention of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and the Assistant Vice Chancellor. They will likely also, in some cases, require conversations with and resource commitments from the President. The second part of the report addresses the fifteen individual units we were asked to review. There are unit specific issues to address as well.

We want to note that WASC accreditation renewal will be taking place in four years. This makes right now the ideal time to take our concerns seriously. There is little doubt in our minds that many of our concerns would be echoed in a future WASC team review.

We do want to note, at the outset, that the review experience did not allow us to have ample and equal contributions from each OUE unit. Meetings frequently had multiple participants across units. Different members from the same unit appeared in different meetings. Students were intermingled with professional staff. Because of this, we were unable to arrive at a complete story for all units based upon our time on campus, though we did have reports provided to us in advance to review and additional materials as requested upon arrival on campus. We were asked to review each unit, in spite of these limitations, and we have done so.

We found great value in the opportunity to interact with the team from OUE. We offer this report with mixed feelings. We recognize that nearly each concern identified here was shared in the previous report and yet, in the many years that have passed, little has changed. At the same time, we are hopeful that with new campus leadership and new imperatives for US public universities to achieve equitable educational outcomes for all students the necessary changes will come this time. We strongly suspect that in spite of much that we saw, the UH Mānoa leadership does value the success of undergraduate students and wants to offer them an academic experience of which everyone can be proud.

I. Major Concerns (4)

1. Organizational Structure

The Office of Undergraduate Education at UH Mānoa is a unit of skilled professionals who are dedicated to the work of ensuring undergraduate students experience academic success. There are many exciting innovations happening within the 15 units we reviewed. At the same time, it is *essential* that the campus administration understand that this work is out of alignment with best practice for research universities. This is not due to the fault of individuals within the unit of the Assistant Vice Chancellor. This is due to the actions of the administration. This organization does not have the correct units within it, nor are the UHM programs charged with promoting undergraduate education structured (beyond this unit) in the manner supported by the national consensus of what is best practice. This concern must be addressed. There can be no further innovations in the OUE unit without reorganization. And those innovations that have been implemented will lose effectiveness without reorganization. There are also substantial risks to the university that only reorganization will mitigate. Most prominently among these risks is the university's accreditation which is up for renewal in 2022.

Recommendations for within Undergraduate Education

1. Create some mid-level leadership. There is currently no administrator who provides oversight within and ensures planning takes place across units. As a result, there is a lack of coordination, efforts are duplicated, and units often feel a sense of isolation. It is not best practice to have fifteen units reporting to an assistant vice chancellor—especially with a concern as core to a research university as undergraduate student success. Create at least one mid-level academic leadership position, in addition to the new executive director of academic advising position detailed below.
2. Augment business and personnel services. One person should not be supporting 15 units with the majority of their budget and personnel needs. Substantial opportunities are left on the table because of no clear proactive budgeting efforts. The work is simply impossible to do effectively or efficiently, and yet one heroic staff member is charged with the lion's share of these duties. The responses from the faculty and staff who were interviewed suggest that the status quo does not work well functionally. Furthermore, best practice found in comparative research institutions must lead one to question the practice of support of undergraduate education programs and operations as provided in this administrative manner.
3. Exploring the inventory of programs within OUE, many converge around the mission of ensuring that all students have a successful academic experience. These units are proactive in reaching out to students, helping them have the tools required to succeed and navigate the university, and ensuring that their education is of high quality. Yet this cannot be considered a mission (with goals, strategies, and formative/summative evaluation), because not all of the units have been given this charge or hold the necessary interest. Those units that do not meet this mission should be moved because in order for this office to focus directly on the most important work of supporting students' academic success, units with other macro-level missions should be in academic or student services homes. We propose that the following units should be housed in units more akin to their missions:
 - a. ROTC/AFROTC. Moving these excellent programs to an academic unit (perhaps social science) would have the added benefit of giving them peers within academic programs and greater visibility with the UHM community. This action could also enable a leadership minor open to all UHM students to be developed—more fully utilizing the team's talents.
 - b. Scheduler. This hard working and talented single staff member is nearing retirement. There is no succession planning taking place. As has happened with peer institutions, this function should be moved to the registrar's office. One might make the same argument for the catalog office, though on some campuses because it is the last step in the curriculum process this office reports to the academic/OUE office and not the registrar.
 - c. Interdisciplinary Studies. This should be moved to a college or shifted to be an "independent major" offered within all colleges.

4. One unit currently under the oversight of the OUE (i.e., the Honors Program) should be granted the academic status of a college. Hence, we support current endeavors to upgrade the Honors Program to the level of a college as is found in numerous research universities across the nation.
5. One unit currently not in OUE should probably be moved under the lead administrator of this unit—the teaching and learning center/faculty development unit. We cannot definitely say this because we did not meet with that director or learn about that center as part of this process. Yet, many research universities have found success in integrating efforts supporting 1. faculty to improve their pedagogy, 2. professional advisors to improve their support of student growth and development, and 3. academic learning specialists to facilitate student academic success programming (e.g., tutoring/peer instruction/first year curriculum/targeted population student academic support). Moving the teaching center to this portfolio would provide the third part of that triad and create much needed integration of curricular/faculty issues with direct student support.
6. Advising units within OUE should be brought together, perhaps some still as independent units, but under the support and direction of a senior advising administrator (an assistant vice chancellor/vice president of academic advising or an executive director of academic advising). This action would allow for cross-collaboration and best professional practices to be established within OUE advising units such as Pre-Health-Pre-Law Advising, Transfer, Student Center, and the Mānoa Advising Center. This individual should also be charged with chairing the Council of Academic Advisors and working collaboratively with those members to establish best practices within colleges, developing training modules for advisors and peer-advisors, and coordinating with Academic Technology/STAR in undertaking new projects such as developing or revising technology in support of the advising mission. This individual might also take on oversight of the First-Year Programs/ACE program as this would enable it to move from its current reliance on peers as instructors to a model of advisor facilitation in which peers assist in the instructional delivery and process.

Recommendations for structures external to OUE

The members of the team believe that the UHM should adopt an organizational model with a Provost at the helm—a fact that we noted immediately given our extensive experiences as faculty professionals who administer or have administered successful undergraduate education programs and efforts. Such an opinion was voiced a number of times during the review by various stakeholders. Interim leadership at the VCAA has compounded this sense of urgency. The system-wide leadership and interim presidency, jointly held by a non-academic, compounds it yet again.

By placing a Provost under the President, the positions and roles of the current Vice Chancellors could be then stabilized—and focused appropriately on the

academic needs of students—by adding two new Vice Chancellor (or Vice Provost) positions to the total. These would be, most critically, a Vice Chancellor/Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education and still important, but less critical at this juncture, a Vice Chancellor/Vice Provost for Enrollment Management. The Vice Chancellor's Office of Undergraduate Education (VCOUE) should be built out of what is now the position of Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education (AVCUE). The successfully recruited candidate who fills this VCOUE position should bring the ability to, in coordination with the Provost, establish goals for undergraduate student success and metrics for ensuring those goals are achieved. Research universities that are meeting their ethical obligation to ensure that students graduate in a timely manner and that ameliorate students' preparation gaps during the degree experience are doing so by having a chief academic administrator in an elevated position who focuses on academic success and who is accountable directly to the Provost. It is impossible for the current AVCUE—who is very skilled and dedicated to his staff as they are to him—to achieve this goal now, because it is not his charge and his position lacks visibility and importance in the president's administrative portfolio.

Further, the addition of a VC/VP of Enrollment Management would give the VP of OUE a key collaborator in the areas of admission planning and recruitment, strategic financial aid operations promoting student academic success and persistence, and registrar/course/classroom planning. This person could help the campus shift from its current orientation model which is optional and poorly attended to one that scaffolds all students from the beginning of their relationship with UHM via a culture and support system across the entire undergraduate experience, leading to persistence and student success in meeting the four-year graduation (Do-It in Four).

2. Facilities

Given the number of units housed within the OUE it is not surprising to find that they are in a number of different locations on campus. One of the unifying issues that came to our attention from the vast majority of faculty, staff, and students was the nature of the facilities provided to these units by the institution. The points being shared were not simply the regular hue and cry of faculty and staff that we want more space. Instead it was that our work with the university student success initiative is seriously undermined given the amount and nature of the space we have been granted. The Assistant Vice Chancellor's office is wholly inadequate and frankly embarrassing. The common area where two support staff sit is cramped and crowded with files for which there is no storage. There is no conference room or meeting space. The AVC's office is crowded and wedged into a corner. Overall, among units, we heard about advising and peer advising being undertaken in common spaces where personal and confidential student information can be heard by others in the room. Not only is this a FERPA violation, it also discourages students from frankly discussing their academic and personal concerns that can lead to greater support and academic success. We saw and heard of situations where the

office space itself was not only substandard for the 21st century but likely also in violation of ADA and OSHA standards. The current space quality and configuration for these units (except for athletics advising) creates a morale problem for staff. Certainly, it discourages students from using these services to their full capacity. The spaces likely also communicate to students that they are not valued by the administration, regardless of how valuable the academic support staff and services are inside.

We commend the institution's initiative in seeking monies from the legislature to develop a new academic student success hub. The team suggests that this new facility, in Sinclair Library, is a key element in shifting from an ad-hoc, distributed and confusing approach to student academic support to an intentional, centralized and effective one. These funds should be argued for vigorously with the legislature and if funds are not forthcoming, development should be engaged. It would be a game changer to renovate this space and co-locate a number of OUE's current units here, while augmenting them with other related units. One could even perhaps combine units and provide more effective support, were a space available to bring components of academic success together. To plan for this space, a working group comprised of faculty, staff, and students should be created. The upper administration should directly charge this group, and its work should be driven by the new VC/VP of Undergraduate Education.

It is clear to us that the Honors program has inappropriate space. It was shocking to find this Plexiglas, make-shift corner structure in the library with signage reading "Honors Program." We know of no other honors program housed in such a poor manner. With this space, this program will not recruit the best and brightest students, regardless of the strength of its curriculum. If this is to be a program that reflects Mānoa pride, it must be provided with an office that is equal to what a respected academic office on campus receives.

Let there be no mistake, the physical space and environment dedicated to student success programs are related to recruitment and retention, which is ironically a primary goal of virtually all of the programs within the purview of this review. Perhaps the movement of units associated with the overall reorganization of the University will assist with the issues raised here. We fully understand that providing units with appropriate facilities will be a challenge in the current environment. We also believe that the leadership team is up to this challenge.

3. Campus Culture

Campus culture is a critical aspect of student success. How students view the campus is often expressed in their casual conversation. Many years ago, before one of us entered administration we overheard a student say, "What do you expect? This is Florida State." That was pretty painful for a faculty member who believed he was committed to students. Unfortunately, it was also true. Another campus worked with was referred to as UCF (even though this was not the initials of the campus) and the students said this meant, "You can't finish," because there were never

enough seats in required courses to accommodate their needs. A third campus was referred to as “Boomerang University,” one where students who attended were back on the streets of their neighborhoods by the end of a year. These were terrible messages that the students had received, unintentionally from the administration, simply by looking around and de-coding their everyday campus landscape.

A few of the characteristics shared by these institutions included: the physical plant was neglected and facilities looked shabby; there was a sense among the students that staff and faculty were not committed to their success and this led to a belief among students that graduation was going to be difficult or unlikely.

On two of the campuses, a very public and very serious campaign was initiated to improve student success. At the same time, some very visible projects were initiated to demonstrate the institution’s commitment to students. For example, one campus invested in a beautiful student success center that housed all of the new academic advisors. A ribbon cutting ceremony led by students was held and the new staff were introduced.

The casual conversation there among students is now along these lines: “This institution values me and is committed to my graduation.”

We don’t know the content of the casual conversations among Mānoa students but those students with whom we spoke were clearly concerned about the condition of the physical facilities housing critical student success units, such as the Learning Assistance Center and Honors. As reviewers, here only briefly, it was hard to avoid the impression that undergraduates are just not a priority at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa. Virtually every student support office is understaffed and housed in terrible facilities.

It does not take much to begin to change a campus culture. Giving students a clean, freshly painted area where they can meet in private with an advisor would be a good start. The planned renovation of Sinclair Library along with the addition of some advisors, especially in pre-health, pre-law and transfer support (focusing on students’ post-arrival at Mānoa), and a rehousing of Honors in a valued campus space would be major visible signals to students and staff that the campus leadership values students and is committed to their success.

Public statements by the senior leadership should accompany any and all efforts at shifting the culture from one of neglect of undergraduates to valuing and supporting them.

4. Advising

There is much to celebrate at the University of Hawai’i when it comes to advising. The Mānoa Advising Center is undertaking creative programs with exploratory students that are aligned with research university best practices. Small units with big hearts, like the transfer and pre-health/pre-law advising teams, are doing great work on small scales. Colleges like Natural Sciences have leadership that prioritizes

academic advising, and good advising structures with strong professionals who are examples for the whole to follow. And, new technologies emerging from the ADT team are helping advisors do better work.

Yet, and it is an important “yet,” the moment has come to step back from celebrating these individual successes and look collectively at advising on campus. OUE, and the university as a whole, has an opportunity to turn these small innovations into a scalable, campus-wide academic advising plan that would place it at the top of research universities nationwide. To do this the campus needs to hire a senior advising administrator who is a recognized leader in the field—nationally—to report to what should become the VC/VP of OUE. Benefits here are 1) advising technologies will be built with the appropriate users in mind, and they will be used uniformly across campus, 2) advising professionals will have best practices established and opportunities for development across colleges and units, 3) metrics and assessment can be done campus-wide, which will allow current resources to be used more effectively. There is tremendous talent on this campus. And we know that student probability of persisting at the institution improves on average 13% each time a student meets with an academic advisor. Further, the advising council is already considering this executive director sort of position—so the idea has traction. Someone, however, in the highest organizational level needs to say now is the time for this structure. This is what it will take for the impressive, yet siloed, advising gains to truly become the campus standard, and for all students regardless of college to see persistence and time to graduation rates improve as a result.

II. Unit Reviews:

Honors

Faculty and staff are passionate about the Honors Program, and they are committed to its success. However, there are concerns. There is insufficient space currently and upgraded facilities must include private areas for advising and student discussions. More attention from the senior administration is desired and that has started with discussions of forming an Honors College. The program would benefit from University/systemwide public relations about the mission and benefits from both students and faculty participating in the Honors Programs. Furthermore, the university should capitalize on this program for recruiting purposes. The Admissions Office should coordinate with the Honors Program in recruiting efforts, and together they should plan an invitation only Honors Day for parents and students. Student narratives and success stories need to be captured and disseminated widely to both internal and external audiences. The program should develop coordinated themes of liberal arts, critical thinking, service learning, and interdisciplinary studies. The addition of space, along with ensuring that greater enthusiasm is built among the faculty in various departments should result in a successful Honors College.

Scheduler & Catalog

These are small administrative offices that serve the institution and its stakeholders well, and the two administrative specialists seem capable of doing the demanding work needed in their portfolios in spite of few resources. Yet, given that these are one-person offices where both directors are nearing retirement, and these offices (individuals) provide critical functions to undergraduate students, there is a pressing need for succession plans as such do not exist at this juncture. As noted previously in this report, the discussion should take place about whether these offices should move to the registrar's team. An argument in favor is there could be back up/cross training and support so others would know about the work and be able to help when retirements come. There could also be best practices perhaps in technology systems more closely bound to the work as it is currently done. This is also best practice generally for research universities. However, we caution that the current staff seem to do their jobs very well, and one wouldn't want to see their performance adversely impacted by such a shift in portfolio location at this time.

The Mānoa Advising Center

The Mānoa Advising Center (MAC) is doing important work with undeclared/exploratory students that seems to have had positive impact on student academic success in recent years. It currently employs six advisors, including the Director along with eight peer advisors and some students who work the front desk. These advisors are knowledgeable about the thousand plus General Education course options and the over 100 majors across 13 colleges. As such they serve an important function for students who are trying to navigate the confusing distribution of academic options on campus. The review team finds value in the services of MAC but wonders whether the staff is currently stretched too thin with numerous programs, including:

- 1 Direct exploratory student advising along with associated programing to help students select a major.
- 2 Mānoa Peer Advising Program consisting of a training program for about 28 Peer Advisors, of which 20 are assigned to colleges.
- 3 Mānoa Sophomore Experience which offers panel discussions of interest to exploratory students.
- 4 Some less formal but still important activities.

We caution the program's advisors from expanding the services beyond those that can be successfully delivered and assessed by the staff. We wonder if data would be helpful to the team in developing strategies to narrow down the number of students with which the program attempts to work, given the narrow bandwidth of staff. In addition, we caution the team about maintaining continued sole responsibility for a

growing peer-advising training program. On other campuses this is managed by advisors across colleges. It is irregular to have a small team like this responsible for helping all exploratory students select and commit to majors and also developing peer-training for the campus.

Mānoa Transfer Student Center

We were not able to locate detailed data on the number of transfer students and the number from each community college. The graduation data that is available suggests that about half of all graduating undergraduates are transfer students. It is well known that transfer students often have difficulty navigating the transfer process and adjusting to a new environment, and this leads to attrition. The university is to be congratulated for the establishment, staffing, and funding of a transfer center.

There are 3.25 staff who are dedicated to increasing both the numbers and success of transfer students and by all accounts they are doing a terrific job.

The position of the staff is to be located on other campuses working embedded with teams within the community college. This is an important function that is leading to greater levels of community college to UHM matriculation. We believe, however, that there is also great need to support community college transfer students once they reach the Mānoa campus. If the strong initial support provided by the current transfer advisors is to have the optimal impact on persistence and completion, additional support needs to arrive for students so they can navigate the challenges of their last two years.

Student Athletic Academic Services

There are six advisors, one support staff, and five total graduate assistants. The complexities of NCAA regulations require a large advising staff that can cover compliance, eligibility, and other NCAA regulations, in addition to the academic needs of the student athletes. The staff members appear to be doing an excellent job serving student athletes, and they have developed innovative programs. This is clearly a gem in the OUE. SAAS demonstrates what services staff within the OUE are capable of delivering when their programs are well funded and housed in high-quality facilities.

STAR-Academic Technology

STAR is a superb and still developing tool that assists students with registration, course selection, and assessment of progress toward their degrees among other student-related activities. Courses taken by students that did not count toward their degrees dropped from 22% to 8% after implementation of the GPS module.

Three issues concern us. First, is the instability of the funding for the project as about half the funds come from external sources each year, and such funds are not guaranteed.

Second, in utilizing the system the advisors do not currently have appropriate software to communicate with each other or capture both documents and confidential notes. STAR right now has a notes function, but all such notes are visible to students. This is a major problem. Advisors require a confidential and secure notes function to be able to share information between themselves as professionals, and this information is not always appropriate for students to see. What is currently happening, because these notes are “public” is that advisors are being imprecise in their language and often leaving out important information that other advisors who will work with their students next would benefit from being able to read. This must be addressed. The advisor should be understood to be the client if the software is for advisors. If the software is for the students, and they are the client, the project needs to be defined with two users and two distinct views for those users. Currently there appears to be no easy way to resolve this difference: advisors say they want private notes, the STAR leadership says no, students should be able to see everything, and the notes feature stays public. The same seems to be true of the current incapacity to share documents within STAR. STAR is clearly a wonderful resource. However, without frank conversations between advising leadership and the STAR team and a defined service function, STAR will not be facilitating maximum student academic success.

The third and, perhaps most important, is that the program depends on a team of two individuals, with one person clearly driving decision-making. A core campus unit that is running tools that are essential for student success efforts across (and beyond) the campus requires better succession planning than was observed by the review team.

Pre-Health Pre-Law Advising (PAC)

This unit has a single faculty member along with some number of Peer Advisors. They serve, not only Mānoa students but students in the UH system along with drop-ins from the community. They report 8100 pre-health and 2500 pre-law advisees.

In addition, the director is very active developing new projects, such as early admission agreements with medical schools. Many individual student needs can only be met by the director (help with letters for professional schools, reading/advice on transcripts, etc.), and it often takes a week or longer for an appointment. We were told at the time of our visit in late February that appointments were currently unavailable with the director until April.

The unit cannot continue with such thin support at the professional staff level. It is not only failing to meet the needs of the many UH Mānoa students who are in the queue for services and not receiving them, it is also creating undue stress on the

student staff. Many of them seemed pained that they are unable to help the students that they serve during their appointments. So often they have to tell the student to wait to see the one professional advisor. This is true, even when they know the advisor will not be able to see the student in time to be of value to the issue at hand.

Civic and Community Engagement

There is a great creative and cooperative spirit among employees in this office. They serve students and receive lots of traffic in their area. However, their lack of office space interferes with production. This office should be involved with a university public relations campaign. Student success narratives and their significant contributors to the community and state need to be told to legislators and across campus. In the case of this program, the population of the entire state comprises the stakeholders. A permanent position for the director of financial literacy is needed, especially in this high time of student debt. Everyone on campus would benefit from a centralized website where all volunteer programs/civic engagement opportunities/service learning/internships can be easily found for students. It is impressive how many faculty are incorporating service learning into their curriculum. The university may want to consider adding a special notation for service learning courses on transcripts as this is becoming a common practice.

Interdisciplinary Studies

This program has enormous untapped potential to serve exploratory students as well as being a degree option for “super seniors.” The program should carefully reconsider the requirement that the student have a fully formed plan at the start of their major as this restricts the use of this major by students who come to the program late in their academic careers. The unit would benefit from being housed in an academic unit where the two current faculty would have colleagues. Being in an academic unit would also facilitate the formation of a community of interdisciplinary students. Students appreciate the efforts of the faculty involved, which is clear from comments like this one we heard: “It took me awhile to find my place, but now I appreciate my education.” Unfortunately, there are not enough students who know about this major. There is also a sense among some current majors that they cannot promote the major to peers because the current faculty are already overworked. Given that it is increasingly a critical major for today’s students who are interested in a variety of disciplines and seek to be marketable for different careers post-graduation, figuring out how to turn this program into one that is well known to the student population, is resourced appropriately, and does not have unnecessary barriers to late entry makes sense.

First Year Programs

The major focus of this office is ACE (Access to Excellence). This program invites new students to select an area of academic interest. The various interests (e.g., business) are arranged into clusters of courses for the student can preregister. Each cluster (referred to as a Learning Community) contains a one credit seminar led by a specially trained upper division student who will help new students navigate their first term on campus as well as introduce students to all of the resources available to help them succeed during this critical period of their education.

The program is led by one faculty member who recruits and trains the 40 Peer Mentors who are associated with the clusters. The director is data oriented and has analyzed the current data available. The results are quite positive with Learning Community participants earning higher GPA's than students not participating in the program. Interestingly, resident students performed better than non-residents suggesting that they benefited more from participation in the program. Similarly, at Mānoa, non-residents do not do as well as residents in both retention and graduation.

At the same time, the self-selection bias must be considered. It is possible that those students who put themselves forward to participate in the program have higher levels of engagement and perhaps even preparation than others. This is a good time for the university to look closely at this program and consider whether there are ways to enhance the important work this team has undertaken. One idea would be to pair the peers with academic advisors, thereby following a model used at many universities. The other option might be to pair students with faculty, again a model used at comparable institutions. What is certain is that this program is quite under-resourced, is performing well, and is likely the seed for something that could be scaled to impact persistence and graduation campuswide.

The Learning Assistance Center

The Learning Assistance Center provides a range of academic support services designed to aid students in achieving academic success often in high enrollment, low success courses primarily delivered within the institution's general education program for undergraduates. Primary services include discipline focused, appointment based, and drop-in tutoring as well as supplemental instruction, learning facilitation, and academic coaching. A key success strategy for the unit is its partnering with varied academic support services and disciplinary departments.

The unit is to be commended for undergoing the process of earning national certification for its tutor training program, having constituted an advisory board, the delivering of residence hall tutorial services, and finally, the developing of a "Fundamentals of Tutoring" course. The unit has expanded its services through the development of an academic coaching program that assists students with developing effective competencies and strategies for promoting academic success. At this time the initiative is driven by two graduate students who are also

responsible for other duties associated with the LAC. It is unclear if there will be resources and the commitment to continue such a service after these two individuals graduate.

The assessment activities at both the formative and summative levels are standard for the profession. Formative evaluation tends to focus on more qualitative data while summative evaluation draws upon descriptive data such as headcounts, grade comparisons, and enrollment and retention figures. The academic coaching services evaluation procedures are evolving, and hence, this function is somewhat immature at this early point in its short life span.

Outreach to the campus community is facilitated by a range of service functions to academic units and an Advisory Board whose primary function is to bring a new perspective to LAC programming which can include expanding collaboration with other departments.

The primary need for direct support from the institution is in the area of facilities and the policies associated with the use of current facilities. While the nature of the services provided would be comparable with centers at other major research universities, when the existing facilities assigned to the unit are compared with learning assistance centers at comparable research universities, the current facilities would be considered substandard. Finally, in a repurposed facility the LAC must have dedicated space (the Heritage Reading Room) that is specifically designed for the services provided at this time including tutoring, SI groups, academic coaching, and training of para-professionals from across the university. The program should not have to queue up to utilize the appropriate space. The LAC should be a selling point for the institution (both as a service and as a facility) when recruiting future students. State of the art LACs serve undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff. Resources must allow for such to happen.

The Student Success Center

The development of a campuswide Student Success Center has great potential to be the foundational element of an institutional academic student success initiative. Yet to be such there is a serious need to provide appropriate personnel resources, which at minimum would provide for a “Student Success Czar” who has the direct reporting line to the institution’s senior academic leader and as such has the power to bring diverse units (not just as now in OUE) together in service to the student, staff, and faculty populations so as to promote the most effective learning environment. The individual who might serve as such must have the appropriate academic credentials and an understanding if not a plan to design a physical space that is now a diamond in the rough into a national class student success hub. At this stage the unit is but a concierge service and a room assignment office. In reality it is a unit that simply is holding in place the dream of a former faculty leader. But to be sure, we believe it is a marvelous dream.

ROTC

In the spirit of promoting inter-service comradery this section will focus on both the Army ROTC and the Air Force ROTC unit together. These programs are more akin to academic units found on campus than the other units within the OUE. As such it might be more appropriate for accreditation activities to be undertaken at the time when academic units are reviewed. Nevertheless, both units appear to be meeting their respective missions and associated goals. Those in leadership roles fully understand mission, and they are committed to providing students from across the state with experiences that will lead to both academic and maturational growth providing each the personal foundation for a lifetime of national and community service. The curriculum appears sound, and the officers were able to explain the respective assessment protocols (admittedly we did not have time to attend classes or review samples of the students' work). Thank them for this service they provide to the nation, the state, and this institution.

Yet, both units face problems. Location is important. Facilities are important. The modular units that house these programs leave so much to be desired. These are substandard for a 21st century learning environment. The units (including faculty and students) are marginalized in that location keeps them out of regular and ongoing daily contact with the greater university population. Finally, simple policies that oversee the lower campus do not promote positive attitudes about the university by the cadets. There must be new policies developed associated with the parking situation for cadets. There is bitterness here.

Student Success Services

Student Success Services (SSS) serves 265 students that are either first generation college students and/or identified as high financial need. This is a grant-funded unit with a long history of being refunded and supported by the United States Department of Education. To demonstrate that the unit is meeting the student success goals associated with such federal funding, annual evaluations focus on good academic standing, student persistence, and graduation. The unit regularly surpasses the goals set for the team. In fact, the team has the talent and commitment such that they should consider a more ambitious set of goals (although given the data reported for each goal we assume even more strident goals would be easily achieved). Overall, the review team believes that the SSS program is serving the target population (that being those selected for participation) in a positive manner. There are no recommendations for structural or personnel enhancements at this time. It is clear that SSS does serve as a "one stop shop" that supports its student clientele for the duration of their time on campus.