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MĀNOA

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education

**MEMORANDUM**

May 21, 2018

TO: Michael Bruno  
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
and Vice Chancellor for Research

FROM: Ronald E. Cambra  
Assistant Vice Chancellor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ronald E. Cambra'.

SUBJECT: Program Review Response

There were two tasks requested of this program review team—an individual assessment of the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) and a unit-by-unit assessment of the programs that compose OUE. The program review team accomplished both tasks. Their assessment was specific and timely. Most of the larger issues are not new issues for OUE, and issues like positions, space, and additional resources could be addressed in the new re-organization if designated as priorities.

The program review team reported that they found two different stories. On one side, a very dedicated staff with innovative programs focusing on a “strong sense of community and appreciation” primarily among the people working in OUE. They also found major reasons for optimism in the areas of student success, especially improved graduation rates and a renewed dedication to retention issues. On the reverse side, however, they found four major concerns, some of which were very obvious to them from their experiences on their campuses and some of which are in the process of being addressed in the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) re-organization.

In their opening comments, the program review team suggested that basic needs be addressed, such as additional office space for OUE and assistance to guide major student success initiatives under OUE. Organizationally, the program review team offered six structural change recommendations. First, they suggested the need for some mid-level leadership in OUE. They observed that “there is currently no administrator who provides oversight within and insures planning takes place across the unit.” The feeling is that the current unit structure lacks coordination, allows duplication, and often fosters a sense of isolation. It is easy to draw that conclusion because the department units are different, have different primary missions and tasks, and serve slightly different student populations. It is accurate to conclude that a structure with one administrator working with 15 units would be vastly improved with an assistant or associate in charge of some unit planning, assessment, and promotion and tenure activities.

Similarly, on the second point, OUE was critiqued for not augmenting its business and personnel services. All 15 units rely on one person for budget and personnel needs. At one point in the past, it was suggested that both services could be served by the central Vice Chancellor's office. The daily and ongoing needs of the units would mean nearly every unit would be spending additional time at the

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central Vice Chancellor's office and a person or two would need to be assigned to the demand anyway. However, the request for additional assistance has been made numerous times, and the future growth of the office is an ongoing concern. Hopefully this will be addressed in the future re-organization of the unit.

The third recommendation suggests creating an inventory of programs within OUE with a special view of bringing common interests together to ensure greater student success, to which no one on campus would take exception.

Several specific suggestions with regard to this broader recommendation: four that most in OUE completely agree, one with which OUE entirely disagrees or would suggest further discussion.

- (1) OUE supports the eventual movement of the current Honors Program into an Honors College. The belief is that establishment as a college will allow Honors to play a larger role in the recruitment of students to UHM. The Honors Program has developed a solid faculty support group, and a clear four year plan that addresses retention concerns. This program is productive, engaging, and attracts some of our best, brightest, most creative and productive students to UHM. The other program that needs to be moved to a college or school is the Interdisciplinary Studies Program (IS). While the IS program has been steady and supportive of its central mission, it has lacked the supportive atmosphere of working within a college discipline and the interaction of sharing ideas with a broader faculty unit. OUE believes several landing spots should be discussed such as College of Arts and Humanities, College of Social Science, College of Natural Sciences, and Honors College. IS could also play a major role in bringing together campus-wide initiatives such as Sustainability, Public Engagement, and Climate Change.
- (2) The program reviewers also suggested that both Army ROTC and Air Force ROTC programs should move to other colleges on campus. OUE discussed that proposal with both programs, and both programs strongly disagree. The cadets are in a variety of academic majors and receive advising in various colleges; however the level of support it receives with all of the undergraduate initiatives through OUE demonstrates that both programs agree that they benefit best in the current structure.
- (3) The idea of OUE having direct oversight over academic advising on campus is not new. It currently has a number of offices that deal directly with advising students here on campus and in our community colleges. The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education was responsible for the creation of the Council of Academic Advising (CAA) in 2003, and has been the administrative connection to the VCAA's office ever since. CAA recently discussed a model of centralizing advising responsibility, without "moving" every office into one main office, but allowing the current college based model to exist with a central office responsible for mission, goals, and enforcement of common academic policies. This topic has been identified in the proposed re-organization as a high priority.
- (4) It was also recommended that the Office of the Scheduler be moved to the Registrar's Office. This recommendation is also not supportive of our future goals of registration and student progress to degree. The ability to generate a schedule two years into the future that guarantees students the correct number of sections of courses will be offered in their majors is the work of an academic office. While progress in this area has been slow primarily due to other competing priorities, within the next two years this critical responsibility will be a major contributing factor to ensure student



success, and the Scheduler should remain in the OUE or a Student Success Office until action is focused on addressing this need.

Facilities continue from the last review five years ago to be a source of frustration and challenge to many in OUE. There was no disagreement among the units that some facilities of OUE are in need of renovation and expansion. Some of these requests are being addressed, but the pace for others has been frustrating. A master plan of space needs for the OUE is long overdue. It is the hope of all in the unit that at least a common functional plan will be agreed upon as part of a re-organization.

The program review team also made some specific suggestions regarding an organizational model with a Provost at the lead, and an Office of Undergraduate Education, or a similarly named office, reporting directly to the Provost or chief academic officer to “establish goals for undergraduate student success and metrics for ensuring those goals are achieved.” The conclusion they reached is that “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 (that) lacks visibility and importance in the president’s administrative portfolio.” OUE believes this is an accurate statement. We are extremely hopeful that the current conversation and discussion on the recently proposed re-organization of the campus will address this structural issue, regardless of who is selected to lead this new office.

The second part of this review dealt with assessing individual units or departments for the purpose of identifying future growth and direction. For the most part, the assessments are complete and productive. All of the units will be individually reviewed to determine the value of the recommendations to the unit.

Briefly, the program review team recognized the value of the Honors Program, but challenged its current space and potential for future growth if not addressed. OUE reviewed the section remarks on the Catalog Office and the Scheduler but disagreed with the program review team’s observations. OUE does not agree with the program review team to move the Catalog Office and Scheduler to the Registrar’s Office, but one can make a solid argument for these two offices to be more closely connected or even made into one. The greater concern is seeking the funding to update all of the computer needs of both of these offices and to find adequate space for both offices to be combined into one.

Several advising offices were recognized for their contribution to changing the student climate on campus. The Mānoa Advising Center (MAC) for example plays a critical role in assisting students in discovering their passion and an academic major, supports active involvement of undergraduates in advising, and focuses on the critical Sophomore Year when, unless critical decisions are made, consequences will be serious and financially impacted. It also makes program sense for the MAC to continue to run the Mānoa Peer Advisor (MPA) program, because the person running MPA must be an advisor in an office that stays updated with all advising changes. MAC makes sense because the advisors are trained on over 100 majors offered by UHM, can advise students in all these majors, work with all colleges and schools, and can provide a cross-campus perspective to training. Separating MPA would require funding for a position(s), operational funding, space, and connection to an office. Furthermore, our current structure works and the proof is that this year we will welcome our 9<sup>th</sup> summer cohort of students into our very active and well sought after MPA training program. Of course, the MPA Program could be better funded, but so could most of the OUE programs.



The Mānoa Transfer Coordination Center (MTCC) is one of our most productive, engaging relationship building advising offices on the UHM campus. The detailed data on the unit and its growing reach to transfer students is documented in the Year End Reports provided to the program review team. It was our goal from the beginning to reach into all seven of our UH Community College campuses to offer advising and education about majors to all community college students. With the addition of Kauai Community College and Hawai'i Community College in Hilo, every campus will have a UHM advisor assigned to work specifically with students from their campus. The strong relationship building and the hosting of counselors from the community colleges to visit the UHM campus has been amazing and extremely productive. More initiatives are planned, but space and budget constrictions are already limiting growth. The demand for more transfer services is extremely high from students when they arrive at UHM, but given our budget and its limitation, plans for expansion are on hold until our budget is clarified. Plans have been developed and budgets proposed. At this time we have a very well-managed office, with some major space needs, doing some extremely exciting and productive things to reach out to transfer students in all of our UH System campuses.

The Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) advisors were pleased to see that the evaluation acknowledged the collective work and productivity of the unit. Members of SAAS expressed interest in opportunities to have a larger voice and to feel more connected with not only the OUE departments but the rest of the campus. The unit has a space that is both professional and welcoming and is an excellent model for future advising offices. It is essential that SAAS be in close proximity to the Athletics Department and to the student athletes since they work in close partnership.

OUE's STAR and Academic Development and Technology office has been outstanding not only in its contribution to the academic success on the UHM campus but the entire UH System. Developing a permanent and adequate funding budget is a major concern that is being addressed and hopefully put in place before the beginning of the new academic year. Several other offices, while cited for their excellence are also understaffed and with less than ideal space to address their work. The Pre-Health and Pre-Law Advising Center, the Civic and Community Engagement program, and the First Year Programs (FYP) all are in need of a larger budget and additional space.

OUE believes, as does the program review team, that the First Year Programs can play a major role in building a stronger retention experience. The end of the year report of FYP clearly reflects a very rigorous self-assessment which includes peer leaders that instruct in our one-credit learning communities course. The feedback from students has been extremely favorable, and requires that we find ways to expand FYP to even more first year students. The current model of our peer leader one-credit course is being reviewed, because of the positive feedback, as a model for all introductory courses on campus.

OUE does not support the integration of the FYP and the Manoa Advising Center because the two offices have very different missions, one dealing with assisting students in declaring a major and the other with assisting students with services that allow students to successfully strive to persistence and student success excellence. Perhaps at some point in the future, the recommendation can be adapted, to form a smoother transition for students looking for a major.

OUE does strongly agree with the program reviewers regarding the need for funding and permanent staffing for the Student Success Center (SSC) in Sinclair Library. SSC needs funding to provide furniture and equipment that would make the facilities more usable and appealing for faculty, staff and students.

Should SSC further develop, then permanent staffing would be required since as of now, both SSC positions are temporary

Finally, the Learning Assistance Center (LAC) plays a key role in providing needed tutoring services for students. There is a need to have a central consultation area to coordinate the listing and sharing to all students on and off campus to improve our outreach to students. We have many different offices doing good work, but the explanation of where to seek assistance for specific needs must be clarified.

In conclusion, most of what was presented in this program review was already common knowledge in the Office of Undergraduate Education, and to some extent has already been discussed as part of the re-organization. The frustration is that key issues such as an adequate budget, basic space to work, and support positions in key offices were also discussed in the last program review. Hopefully, these concerns will become higher priorities as part of the campus wide re-organization.