

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources External Report

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### College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources External Report

The College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa has a great deal to offer to the campus, the community, and the state. The external review team was impressed with the passion with which faculty, staff and students shared both their love of the college and its people, and their dreams for a future driven by the ideas expressed in the 2022-2027 CTAHR Strategic Positioning and Visioning document. Given their place within the fulfillment of the land-grant mission and their unique ability to contribute to the institutional strategic plan, CTAHR is well positioned to excel in teaching, research, and extension. Their vision statement clearly articulates their desired role moving forward, and we applaud their continued efforts to excel in all areas.

The review team appreciated the openness and candor of everyone with whom we spoke. Within these pages are the collective perceptions of strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities (SWOT) raised by faculty, staff, students and administrators. We chose this approach because a SWOT analysis succinctly identifies those factors that can impact your ability to move forward strategically based on your introspection and our external data review and observations. We do, however, recognize the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and other external factors outside everyone's control which impact their work.

We begin by focusing on the strengths of the college which center around the people involved, the work you have done around student and faculty success, and programmatic excellence. We then review areas of weakness which have been broken down into the following categories: leadership; facilities; staffing/administrative support; communications; marketing and branding; faculty success; and student success. These weaknesses open the door for threats to the viability of the college which will be reviewed in the areas of external threats beyond the control of the college and internal issues over which you have some influence. The final section of the report discusses opportunities which are available to you as you address your weaknesses and threats. A new strategic plan and vision are the foundation of these opportunities and provide you with a roadmap for success. We

expand upon the work you have done and offer actionable items that can greatly enhance your college.

A final note is that some of the weaknesses and challenges that we discuss were also present in the previous external review. Continuing issues were mentioned in multiple meetings during our time on campus leaving people feeling unheard and unsupported by parts of upper administration. As items linger, their impact intensifies and further serves to impact the morale of the college and its members. Thus, we suggest moving quickly towards improvement in areas where you can, and showing action plans for movement toward longer term goals in order to increase morale and improve the outlook of your hard-working faculty, students and staff.

### **Strengths**

- Commitment to the land grant mission: by faculty and staff across all 3 mission areas
  - Everybody pitches in to get the work done
  - Dedicated faculty and staff
  - Strong commitment to CORE values
- Recognition of the importance of CTAHR to Hawai'i (legislative, clientele) in the context of recovering from the pandemic
- Dramatic increase in research funding, especially considering the FTE dedicated to research
  - Distribution of Hatch funds to departments has enabled investment in initiatives/equipment/facilities
- Increasing student enrollment
  - Commitment by faculty to student success
  - Students are happy that in-person classes have resumed
  - Students are eager to learn and excited about their programs of study
- Connections to the community through extension, research, programming, internships, service, partnerships with USDA and other external organizations
  - Advocacy for the community and by the community
- Student success measures as shared by students
  - Student loyalty to their departments/programs
  - Undergraduate students find faculty and TAs to be supportive
  - Professional advisors are perceived as helpful and knowledgeable
- Chairs meet monthly to discuss issues which helps with communication transparency
- Programmatic and curricular strengths
  - Relative ease of cross-listing courses encourages multidisciplinary offerings
  - Experiences available to undergraduate students in research, hands-on learning, internships, volunteer experiences, Magoon facility if functional
  - Some cutting edge programs
  - Unique niche in tropical systems
  - Strong placement of graduates from many programs (MBBE, TPSS, NREM)
  - Teaching contributions to broader campus programs (e.g. Biochemistry)
  - Reputation of individual faculty
- Recent strategic positioning process involved a broad range of input, has been well received in the units and aligns closely with University and System strategic priorities
- Significant hiring between 2015 and 2019; productive younger cadre of faculty; enabled growth in many graduate programs; interest in transdisciplinary work

### **Weaknesses**

### Leadership

- Administrative instability (five deans or interim deans in 12 years) combined with a disproportionate loss of faculty and staff due to retirements while under a hiring freeze has created significant gaps in expertise and staff and weakened morale across the college
- Lack of trust between faculty/staff and administration
- UH-M budget model is perceived as unfair and/or exclusionary to some units
- Rotating chair model can limit visionary thinking, bold initiatives and fundraising efforts and may also encourage favoritism
- Consistent, regular training is needed for chairs and for succession planning for future chairs and other leadership positions
- Perception in some units that individual faculty are respected by the industry but CTAHR is not due to unfulfilled promises
- Combined departments are still struggling to find a common vision

### Facilities

- Lack of funds for upkeep of facilities has created a huge backlog of deferred maintenance and rendered many facilities, particularly outside Manoa in disrepair and a safety risk
- Need assistance from central campus for upkeep of all CTAHR facilities
- Unable to effectively manage research and teaching farm and greenhouse spaces due to loss of staff
- Researchers are charged bench and location fees to provide funds for upkeep of research facilities but inadequate staffing results in delays in repair if maintenance issues are addressed at all

### Staffing/Administrative Support

- Cumbersome administrative processes combined with inadequate staffing leads to significant delays in processing requests, inability to spend grant funds, and delays in paychecks for the most vulnerable employees (e.g., temporary staff, graduate students)
- Bottlenecks exist in fiscal services and in identifying approved vendors; \$2500 limit on p-card purchases creates an unnecessary administrative burden at all levels for large purchases

### Communications, Marketing and Branding

- Websites across CTAHR and units are difficult to navigate, don't communicate well to external audiences and lack consistency
- Lack of consistent regular meetings between Deans, Associate Deans and Department Chairs and visits to CTAHR units by administration limits communication opportunities

### Faculty Success

- Lack of leadership at college level to bring together collaborative teams together around new initiatives, no central support for faculty effort toward large transdisciplinary grants
- Lack of formal faculty mentoring program
- Breadth without depth in faculty expertise leaves programs and units vulnerable and puts pressure on existing faculty to cover gaps
- Lack of resources to support and encourage innovative pedagogy, universal course design, distance education, curriculum enhancement; perception that teaching isn't rewarded
- No consistent process for onboarding and support of new faculty

- Without annual evaluations, faculty lack input on progress toward promotion and tenure

### Student Success

- Retention of undergraduate students: while first-year retention is consistent with overall UH-M rates, CTAHR retention of FTIC students to year 3 drops off significantly. Factors may include costs, low sense of belonging, opportunities at other institutions closer to home. Some graduate students perceive an issue with retention of graduate students although data were unavailable.
- Timely graduation at all levels: FTIC, transfer students, graduate students
  - Availability of courses due to faculty vacancies, overload of existing faculty,
  - Course scheduling practices that don't account for student needs; core courses offered at the same time in the same program
  - Inadequate or inaccessible advising personnel at the departmental level
  - Confusion and inconsistencies in transfer credit acceptance
  - Lack of specific transfer admission requirements that position students for success
- Lack of a regular curriculum review/revision process that would
  - ensure curriculum is addressing current needs, both of students and future opportunities; for example, students are seeking more courses in agribusiness management and entrepreneurship
  - minimize redundancy and ensure prerequisite knowledge is aligned with expectations
  - enable timely graduation
  - identify gaps that can be filled either by priority new hires or through collaboration with other units within CTAHR or across campus
- Inadequate resources for developmental advising of undergraduate students. CTAHR advisors are overloaded and can't provide the depth of advising needed by upper-division students to understand program requirements and options, evaluate appropriate electives, and understand career opportunities and professional development needed; lower-division students especially do not feel well connected to their department or program. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) provides resources for colleges to determine appropriate levels of staffing for academic advising depending on student profiles and roles and responsibilities of advisors.
- Inadequate support resources for graduate programs impacts their ability to respond effectively to prospective student inquiries, assist in onboarding and connecting students, maintain effective and complete information in handbooks and websites, and assist in development and delivery of professional development
- Loss of the CTAHR Student Research Symposium limits opportunities for students to gain experience in professional presentations and limits opportunity for networking, collision conversations and potential future collaborations
- While many students were positive about their experience in the college, others expressed concern about a department/program climate that wasn't inclusive and supportive of differences

### Threats

Items the College cannot impact directly but must consider (along with upper administration) in planning

- Direct pressure from legislators
- Competing programs in agriculture at other institutions
- Lack of alignment of curricula by community colleges so credits will transfer seamlessly
- Budget constraints throughout the system
- Unionization of faculty reduces flexibility and bolsters resistance to change
- Availability of qualified applicants for staff positions
- Continuing issues with definition of “small programs”

#### Items that the College could and should address

- Morale is not high among faculty, staff, and students.
  - Lost sense of community; gaps in faculty and staff support limit opportunities to do simple things to build community
  - Lack of stability in leadership
  - Insufficient communication at all levels (senior leadership, CTAHR, department chairs) perceived as a lack of interest in involving departments in College decisions and ultimately affects trust
  - Lingering tensions due to departmental mergers have negative impact on students and their success in programs; will damage ability to recruit
- Faculty and staff
  - Deficit of faculty and staff in most departments
  - Teaching workloads perceived as inconsistent with emphasis on maintaining high research productivity
  - Increased faculty participation in University governance is needed to raise the profile of CTAHR and reduce the feeling of “otherness” in the system
- Facilities
  - Facilities that have so much deferred maintenance they are no longer functional or safe
  - Poor relationships with Facilities Management
- Graduate students
  - Graduate programs lack support staff to assist Graduate Chair in managing applications, student communications, orientation, policies, and procedures
  - The feeling of “nowhere to go” when issues arise affecting progress to graduation
  - Graduate student stipends should be consistent with the cost of living in Honolulu to reduce stress induced by second jobs, private loans, etc.
  - Lack of a graduate program in FCS
- Undergraduates
  - Outdated curricula in some programs; no regularly scheduled curriculum reviews and/or individual departmental reviews
  - Threat of reducing UG enrollment when/if new GenEd requirements are instituted
  - The stated goal of redesigning GenEd requirements is to apply them to all system campuses. This may discourage students from transferring early enough to meet

departmental graduation requirements but should reduce the problem of transfer credit assignment.

- Failure to ensure availability of required courses results in longer time to graduation.
- Poor advising of transfer students; inconsistent transfer credit assignment
- Student placement is not tracked, leading to lack of alumni engagement possibilities

## **Opportunities**

The overarching opportunity is to bring the CTAHR Strategic Plan and vision to life. Faculty in CTAHR see their work in the strategic plan and feel they were part of the plan development process. CTAHR should celebrate this as a success. But the work doesn't stop there – much work remains. What follows is a summary of opportunities and ideas, aligned with the operational goals of the strategic plan and the grand challenges identified therein. Key high-level recommendations include:

- We encourage CTAHR to assemble a broad team to pull together updated departmental plans and to advance the plan and vision using a growth mindset approach
  - Imagine if..., What would it look like if..., We learned from the pandemic that....
- Add 'Employee Success, Support and Retention' as an operational goal

## **Operational Goals**

- Develop a brand then communicate and market it effectively.
  - a. Showcase the incredible costume collection to the community
  - b. Improve the quality of the college webpage to be more uniform, easier to navigate, and to provide the types of information potential students seek such as curriculum and what you can do with the major
  - c. Consider a name change for the college to better reflect the programmatic elements
    - i. Consider the HR in CTAHR (Human Resources vs Health, Resiliency or Human Resiliency)
- Improve internal communications for students, faculty and staff, and improve external access to information for stakeholders and the general public.
  - a. Improve communication within the college by ensuring information from the Provost's and Dean's offices is shared with all faculty
  - b. Demonstrate transparency between administration and faculty/staff, especially with regards to budget
    - i. Could also invite CBO to do Budget 101 presentation to college to explain how university budgeting works and follow up with the college budgeting process
  - c. Hold college meetings more than once a year - even if some are by Zoom
  - d. Form a committee of faculty and staff to solve issues within the college
  - e. Form a student advisory committee comprised of undergraduate and graduate students and representative of all programs, and entry points (FTIC, transfer, master's, PhD); consider implementing an exit survey for graduating students
  - f. Communicate regularly about responses to feedback so that responsiveness is apparent (otherwise not transparent)

- Strengthen collaboration, build partnerships and generate opportunities for revenue and resource diversification.
  - a. Expand distance delivery of teaching and extension programs to increase those served and provide additional revenue (note: faculty expressed little enthusiasm for distance education without additional support resources, motivation, and incentives)
  - b. Re-energize and build opportunities to connect with alumni
  - c. Consider forming external advisory boards for individual departments and for the college
  
- Employee success, support, and retention
  - Conduct an annual climate survey with faculty, staff, students – share results broadly and monitor progress
  - Establish a new faculty orientation for the college
  - Include a faculty mentoring program
  - Revive leadership training program for faculty
  - Provide training for chairs in administrative processes
  - Establish a process for nominating faculty for local and national awards
  - Implement a shared services approach to administrative management to improve consistency, ensure adequate training, provide back-up support
    - Move vacant HR and fiscal positions into shared services but housed in departments
  - Thaw the hiring freeze

#### Grand Challenge Initiatives

Tremendous opportunity exists within CTAHR to leverage state priorities, state budget surplus, and common interests among UH and external entities to partner for advancement of the grand challenge initiatives. Ideas and recommendations to advance the initiatives are offered below, collectively across the grand challenge topics. Additional recommendations are provided that focus on CTAHR's opportunities in workforce development through its own students and lifelong learners.

- CTAHR can lead building a sustainable, self-sufficient Hawaii with OneHealth as a foundation
  - Showcase the relationship between CTAHR and the President's priorities for sustainability and serving the needs of Hawaiians
  - Expand existing CTAHR programs and connections through transdisciplinary investments in people and programs
  - Capitalize on interest in connecting more broadly and deeply across UH
    - Incentivize cross-disciplinary collaboration through seed grant funds
    - Leverage the relationships and impact of Extension to increase visibility and reputation of UH and CTAHR
      - While oversight of Extension is best managed through a single college, expand the Extension footprint through new hires with split appointments across colleges
  
- CTAHR could be the connector between other UH units and students across Hawaii
  - Expand opportunities for students to meet GenEd requirements through CTAHR courses



- A consistent, robust CTAHR presence in the first-year program could bring in undergraduate students earlier
- Embed design thinking in biological systems into curricula earlier to allow students to be better prepared for capstone experiences
- Expand writing intensive courses within the CTAHR curriculum
- Meet ethics requirements through CTAHR courses
- Huge opportunity for major curriculum review and assessment of delivery methods across CTAHR to position coursework for the future
  - Capitalize on ability to use funds to hire I2s to teach introductory courses with high caps in both semesters
  - Invest broadly in systems and people to address student development and placement
    - Internships and jobs
    - NREM graduate program cohort model is a good example of developing supportive culture for students
  - Develop non-thesis master's programs in several departments to serve workforce development needs, particularly if offered via distance delivery
  - Investigate opportunities for combined BS/MS programs
  - Develop articulation agreements with two-year colleges to increase pipeline of students into the college
  - Address experiential learning needs, including hands-on learning labs (animal)
- Through facility investments at other locations, and bolstering resources for instructional design and faculty support, offer remote degree opportunities in select tracts that further increases enrollment and keeps students in Hawaii post-degree (Workforce Development initiative)
  - Need UH investments in county facilities (research centers), building remote majors, instructors
    - Place-based infusion of Hawaiian culture; native plants; natural resources
    - Potential onsite experiential learning and exposure to research
    - Need investment in professional advisors specifically for remote majors, but also for campus programs; consider a comprehensive advising assessment to determine appropriate staffing ratios
    - Opportunities for lifelong learning partnerships with online program and Extension

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Departmental Snapshots

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College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources External Report  
Departmental Snapshots

This addendum to the Final External Report provides a brief snapshot in time of the reflections and observations of the review team on the departments with which we visited. It should be noted that our time within individual departments was brief, and our focus was primarily on the college level observations that could lead to improvement for all departments therein. The information included here is based on our time spent with students, department chairs, and

faculty within these departments, and should be seen as our perceptions of how these departments are functioning during the time at which we visited. It should also be noted we were unable to visit all facilities for each program discussed. Some programs, such as those struggling with low enrollment, might benefit from a more thorough review focused specifically on providing guidance on the factors impacting their ability to be successful.

## **Family and Consumer Sciences**

### Strengths

- Faculty who are committed to the land grant mission of the university and to student success
- Strong presence within the community through internships, extension, research, and other forms of outreach
- HDFS undergraduate enrollment is one of the highest within the college
- Research output is impressive given the amount of FTE designated for research
- Students report feeling connected to their faculty and their department, and feel supported by their faculty in reaching their career goals
- The yearly fashion show is great publicity for the department and the college and a good opportunity to showcase student work

### Weaknesses

- No graduate program which could help alleviate some of the issues related to lack of support for large class sessions as well as help support an increase in research productivity
- Space is a big issue for multiple areas
  - faculty are spread out across the campus- can result in faculty feeling disconnected from their disciplinary peers and eventually their department
  - the current building for some of them is not ADA compliant and there is no men's restroom
  - the space for cutting patterns is not big enough for students to work and the wifi is not good; classroom spaces are also small for FDM
- FDM curriculum is challenging- too many niche classes, too many course releases are given, and concern was expressed by students that they are not adequately prepared for today's workforce (i.e., digital pattern software)
- Lack of integration of the various units within the department- are operating in silos

### Threats

- Faculty feel as if upper administration doesn't understand their relevance which is contributing to their being underfunded
- Students are leaving to attend private schools because of the lack of a Marriage and Family Therapy program

- Faculty experience overloads and many classes are taught by part-time instructional faculty due to lack of sufficient faculty lines which leads to low morale and inadequate instructional ratios
- Center on the Family is exploring leaving the department which would impact the funding of the department because of lost revenue from grant dividends as well as impact instruction within the department
- Faculty in HDFS are divided on whether or not going to another college would better suit their needs

### Opportunities

- Development of interdisciplinary degrees
- If you cannot get a graduate degree in MFT, explore an area such as Prevention Science that would support the college's strategic positioning and vision and meet the needs of Hawaiians
- More interconnection across units within the department could increase the visibility of all areas and help external audiences better understand their value to the college and the campus
- Encourage the growth of the HDFS student club which is inactive at this time to increase student attachment to the college
- Build better connections between the merchandizing students and the design students to increase the success of the fashion show program
- Find opportunities to showcase the incredible costume collection held on campus.
- Increase integration between extension and the other units in FCS which would increase the success of each area
- HDFS students would like the ability to choose their own internship sites so they can have experience that better aligns with their future career goals
- Explore the pipeline of students in high school and community colleges for potential students and see if you can align your programs in ways that meet the needs of those students

## **Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Sciences**

### Strengths

- Faculty committed to student success while balancing growing research success and community engagement
- Students that feel a part of something bigger than themselves and feel welcome
- Performance metrics are improving, including vet school placement
- Dietetics program enrollment is expanding

- Good lab space and classroom space

### Weaknesses

- Lack of animal facilities to provide hands-on student experience
- Courses aren't offered that then delay graduation for students, or make graduation impossible for some students (military students) – this was an articulated concern from students in each program within HNFAS
- Students feel that some courses contain redundant, and even outdated, content making it difficult to justify the courses as requirements

### Threats

- Curriculum needs a thorough review and updating to avoid risk of ill prepared students and declining enrollment
- Some graduate students feel overworked relative to compensation and peer workload, threatening reputation, and ability to attract future students
- Absence of placement data for graduating students resulting in uncertainty in outcomes/progress as improvements are made

### Opportunities

- Overhaul curriculum to consider how to address student desires of hybrid course delivery in a way that increases (remote) enrollment, improves course content relevancy without redundancy, and makes good use of faculty time while providing experiential learning opportunities
    - Not an easy task, but one that could have tremendous benefit to the program and its people
    - Leverage current experience of military family students to develop programs that offer an opportunity to such students anywhere
    - Consider how HNFAS courses could further contribute to gen ed requirements
- Aligned with the first recommendation, consider strategic investments in facilities (animal and otherwise) and partnerships with the private sector in order to offer students hands-on learning experiences

## **Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering (MBBE)**

### Strengths

- Undergraduate and graduate programs have strong students who earn campus and external recognition and are successfully placed after graduation

- Undergraduate students find the variety of courses and flexibility of MBB curriculum appealing, also mentioned that faculty were supportive and assist in helping students find research experiences
- MBBE graduate program draws faculty and students from outside the college
- MBBE courses (e.g. biochemistry) are taken by students across the campus
- Faculty have been successful in grantsmanship and external awards
- Chair involves faculty in developing ideas for using discretionary funds
- Under CTAHR Grand Challenge Initiative #4 (Workforce and Economic Development), the MBBE faculty set a goal to “Maintain excellence in undergraduate and graduate programs and leadership in the field of Molecular Bioscience and Bioengineering whose students and graduates make recognized impacts” with six action steps (note: this was in a document provided by the department chair)

### Weaknesses

- There seems to be a disconnect or divide in the faculty, not necessarily along disciplinary lines, but in terms of alliance with and/or respect for the Department Chair; the graduate students also sense this divide in the faculty and lack of community
- Faculty seem to be hardworking, but stretched thin
- Loss of faculty positions was concerning
- Quality of space is inconsistent across buildings
- Processing contracts and grants through the Office of Research is slow and impacts ability to spend funding
- Funding for the MBBE graduate program from the Dean’s office doesn’t account for students who are mentored outside of CTAHR
- No interest, at least from the chair, in distance education, stating, “during COVID this made students corrupt”
- Although students like the flexibility of the MBB degree, they also voiced concerns that planning is difficult because there are so many electives, and didn’t feel supported by CTAHR advisors in that process
- Undergraduate students in BE were appreciative of their BE advisor (Ryan K) but voiced concern that at times the BE advisor and CTAHR advisors don’t agree
- Some undergraduate students voiced concerns about being alone, not knowing anyone; that it was hard initially to find people in your major
- BE students felt there was a need for earlier exposure to design principles and activities rather than waiting until the 4<sup>th</sup> year
- Some graduate students voiced frustration with unexpected and unnecessary obstacles, difficulty making connections and finding mentors; lack of clear communication and outdated information online
- Graduate students felt the curriculum was behind the curve on data sciences.

### Threats

- Decline in percentages of faculty FTE assigned to teaching; disinterest in teaching as perceived by the chair
- Low enrollment in Biological Engineering program
- While graduating students are finding jobs, it is hard to keep them in Hawaii without a biotech industry

### Opportunities

- Strengthen the relationship with the college of engineering
- Build on already good relationships with community colleges to make sure transfer students are ready for program demands when they transfer
- Introduce small scale design experiences in early (freshman/sophomore) classes
- Explore opportunities for students to connect and build community either via student organizations or department activities
- Freshman experience workshops have been successful in the past to attract new students to departmental programs
- Work to develop a common vision as a department; potential for more integration of engineering with biosciences to develop unique programs
- Faculty and students would like to bring back the CTAHR Student Research Symposium
- Several graduate students mentioned the value of the professional development seminar to look at life beyond graduate school and the possibility of it being mandatory

## **Natural Resources and Environmental Management (NREM)**

### Strengths

- The Department has made a concerted, successful effort to increase the proportion of female faculty to reflect their student population
- Faculty research output and generation of research dollars is increasing despite a significant decrease in research FTE
- Students feel that they are in a welcoming environment and are passionate about their fields of study; persistence of students is >90% averaged from UG to PhD
- Professors and students win awards, increasing the visibility and reputation of the department
- Integration of social and natural sciences into the curriculum is valued
- Undergraduate enrollment has increased more than 2.5x since 2014
- The Chair is widely respected and regarded as a leader; departmental retreats are viewed as highly salutary

### Weaknesses

- Students, in particular, perceive cCourse scheduling conflicts and lack of personnel to teach required courses thus creating delays in graduation
- Insufficient faculty FTE for current teaching load due to high UG enrollment even with recent 12 hiring



- Lack of support staff to help with spending grant money; office assistant position not replaced
- Curriculum does not reflect evolving thoughts on the future of the field; plans to revise are not being followed-up
- No extension position at present to address climate change; essential for a native-serving institution. This situation may be remedied soon.
- Faculty and students are not always on the same page about distance delivery of courses; students want to be on campus with the option to take courses remotely at their discretion. Hybrid delivery of courses is challenging for instructors

### Threats

- Pressure on faculty workload has increased significantly with increasing UG enrollment, contributing to perceived faculty exhaustion
- Graduate students do not appear to often serve as co-PIs on grants, which reduces their competitiveness for positions after graduation
- Lack of understanding of the University and College budget and fiscal systems

### Opportunities

- Explore the opportunity to provide instruction in data analysis and other quantitative skills which could be offered beyond the Department
- Knowledge of and interest in climate change among Hawaiian citizens presents an enormous opportunity to extend current understanding and allow students to develop public communication skills
- Take advantage of training opportunities for the development of instructionally sound and engaging courses through distance education
- Participate in development of the new GenEd requirements and develop/revise courses to meet those requirements within the College and Department

## **Plant and Environmental Protection Science (PEPS)**

### Strengths

- Faculty research output and generation of research dollars is, on average, comparable to those of similar departments in the peer institutions and high within CTAHR.
- Students are enthusiastic and dedicated to their particular major professors
- Professors and students win awards, increasing the visibility and reputation of the department
- One of the few places in the United States where quality training in research on tropical systems is available

- Entomology museum collection is an impressive resource even though underfunded
- Department members feel they are having a positive impact on food security in Hawai'i and have a leading role in this Grand Challenge

### Weaknesses

- The departmental name does not communicate the scope of the department
- Greenhouse facilities are shockingly poor; facilities for field research are reportedly poor as well
- Students perceive of course scheduling conflicts and lack of personnel to teach required courses creates delays in graduation
- Both faculty and students are resistant to distance delivery of courses; no good plan exists for delivery of courses requiring labs
- Support staffing is too low, requiring some faculty to fulfill staff roles and reducing their availability for teaching and research
- Large gap between extension FTE and extension needs; highlighting this gap, the legally required Pesticide Safety Training Education Program has no permanent PI, and there is no one designated for the IR4 program

### Threats

- Graduate student stipends are insufficient, especially given the cost of living in Honolulu, resulting in extreme financial stress
- Graduates are not tracked in an organized way, limiting engagement of alumni in recruitment and departmental support
- Lack of funding for repair and maintenance of facilities;
- Absence of key faculty for graduate training (i.e., Mycology) and attracting partnerships and funding through One Health initiatives (i.e., Medical/Veterinary Entomology)
- Remaining strain due to consolidation of two departments interferes with a sense of community; the "sections" and "co-chairs" arrangement, while effective day-to-day, leaves the department feeling rudderless and helpless to effect change
- The blanket disallowance of three-way split appointments and two-way E and I splits exists despite complete justification for such in certain cases
- Continued concern regarding needing to increase enrollments in "small programs"

### Opportunities

- Advocate for a focused, comprehensive departmental review to help clarify goals and pathways to achieve them
- Find ways, perhaps with external mediation, to improve the sense of community among faculty, whose attitudes and behaviors will be reflected by students
- Increase the visibility of plant pathology and entomology within the One Health initiative by participation and advocacy

- Participate in development of the new GenEd requirements and develop/revise courses to meet those requirements within the College and Department
- Review and revise the list of institutions regarded as peers

## **Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences (TPSS)**

### Strengths

- Relatively new chair is working to build a positive environment for faculty and enhanced departmental participation; chair is cognizant of need to honor Hawaii as a Place of Learning and starts every faculty meeting with a Hawaiian concept
- New faculty hired since 2015 are productive and can build the future for TPSS; interested in transdisciplinary work
- Strong programs in plant genomics and indigenous cropping systems; unique niche in tropical agriculture
- Good support from industry
- Shifts in federal funding emphases to include biocultural concepts, local/regional agriculture are positive for the department
- Large number of faculty with Extension appointments, very productive; chair is working to reengage them with the department and integrate with teaching/research faculty
- Undergraduate students appreciate hands-on experiences including greenhouses, field work and research laboratories; students find the professors to be helpful and excellent teachers
- Graduate students note attempts to improve the program – faculty handbook, graduate handbook, early orientation pau hana; feel the department has been receptive to feedback

### Weaknesses

- Loss of expertise in multiple aspects of soil science; potential for collaboration with NREM, but perception that the institution doesn't promote collaborative work
- Loss of office staff, and understaffing in CTAHR has lowered morale; slow fiscal and human resource processes
- Lack of adequate staff to maintain farms, facilities, instructional greenhouses; have great land and facilities, but not enough staff to manage them and utilize effectively
- Faculty are charged bench and location fees to be used when things break, but there is no one to fix anything
- Lack of support for teaching innovation at the college level, perception that teaching is not rewarded; only one college award for teaching
- Little enthusiasm for distance delivered programs
- Some undergraduate students don't see much connection in TAE or CTAHR to native Hawaiian studies, including studying native plants
- Lots of undergraduate courses on the books, but many aren't being taught because of lack of faculty

- Undergraduate students were frustrated by limited availability of CTAHR advisors and perception that advisors aren't listening to students needs
- Some graduate students felt the on-boarding process was difficult, especially if were not already in CTAHR as an undergraduate; lack of clear communication about funding availability and support through entire program
- Large variation in faculty commitment to mentoring graduate students; some younger faculty with too many; some senior faculty doing very little mentoring; the pressure younger faculty feel trickles down to students; students perceive that most faculty are not passionate about teaching

### Threats

- Lingering resistance to merged undergraduate program (TAE) across two departments (PEPS and TPSS)
- Lack of leadership at college level for collaborative grants, building teams; not a lot of college integration; faculty see silos of departments and disciplines
- Graduate student stipends aren't enough to live on; many students have second jobs; costs, such as health insurance aren't disclosed clearly upfront
- Some graduate students felt the department wasn't welcoming to those who are different or those who speak out

### Opportunities

- Department is in the process of refining its vision and mission and can build this with connection to the CTAHR Strategic Positioning and Visioning document
- Systematic curriculum review of TAE undergraduate program to avoid duplication and develop new modern courses
- Recent reorganization of PhD program combined with recent faculty hires can position PhD program for success, especially if able to add a few more faculty to TPSS
- Build on the experiences of active student organizations (Horticulture Society, SOFT) to engage more students and build community
- Undergraduate students would like more opportunities for courses in agribusiness and entrepreneurship