March 5, 2010

Virginia Hinshaw
Chancellor
University of Hawaii at Manoa
2500 Campus Road
Hawaii Hall 202
Honolulu, HI 96822

Dear Chancellor Hinshaw:

At its meeting February 17-19, 2010, the Commission reviewed the report of the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) team which visited the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) on December 7-10, 2009. The Commission also had available to it the institutional report prepared for the visit and your letter of January 26, 2010 responding to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the report with you and your colleagues. Your comments were helpful.

The Institutional Proposal submitted by the University to frame this accreditation review identified several important themes for the University: Building a Mānoa Community in Support of Student Success; Campus Renewal to Support the Mānoa Experience; and Reform Campus Governance to Promote Communication and Student Success. Within each of these themes, the University identified specific goals and objectives, supported by a timeline and clear milestones for each stage of the review process. The proposal itself was a product of widespread consultation, and though developed prior to your assuming the chancellorship, it has continued with your support as the basis for this review process.

The team found the University’s Capacity and Preparatory Review report similarly well organized and presented, well aligned with the proposal and supported by effective data and analysis. There was widespread institutional involvement in the development of the University’s CPR report, and it demonstrated that significant progress had been made in each of the areas identified in the proposal. As stated by the team:

The CPR Report articulates clearly how engagement with the issues had led to genuine improvements. UHM has put in place significant new structures and a series of strong programs to support student success: redesigned new student orientation, residential learning communities, the ACE program, a Student Success Center, the First-Year Experience efforts and an invigorated council of academic advising. These new initiatives along with the attention to the physical student community spaces make the prospects for success excellent.
Contained in the CPR Report as well are indicators of quality assurance especially in the external measures for student success and physical plant.

Of particular note was how the CPR report also linked to what will be done further in each area for the Educational Effectiveness Review, thereby connecting almost seamlessly the two reviews. In addition, the Commission wanted to acknowledge the value of Appendix A in relating the University’s actions to Commission Standards and Criteria for Review.

Since the time of the last comprehensive review of UHM, there has been considerable change. The team found that the University had responded effectively to all of the issues previous identified by the Commission and teams, even with the transitions in leadership. The research productivity of the campus has expanded tremendously. Among the many strengths cited by the team, they found:

The team had the distinct impression of a sense of community across the campus, a willingness to collaborate, to facilitate partnerships at all levels and a keen realization that this collegiality was essential to help weather the current economic crisis. We sensed a great deal of excitement and pride about the unique place of Hawaiian Learning and what an extraordinary opportunity the campus has to highlight Hawaiian Knowledge.

The Commission commends the University for its extensive engagement in the CPR report and the progress that the University has made. In accepting the team report, the Commission endorsed the findings commendations and recommendations of the visiting team, and highlighted several issues for further attention:

**Strategic planning.** The University has worked well under the 2002-10 Strategic Plan. It was based on an inclusive process that will need to be replicated for a new plan. The team found the current process for prioritization to be “compelling.” As a new strategic planning process is undertaken, it will be important to build on the work already done and continue to identify key priorities and indicators of success. Two areas to address, as identified by both the University and the evaluation team, would include further defining the meaning and the measurable attributes of the “Manoa experience” so that it can be linked to the strategic plan, and reviewing the many University processes that seem to create delays and cause an unnecessary burden in decision making processes. (CFR 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4)

**Student success.** One of the primary goals of the University for this review cycle has been to improve student success. A significant number of initiatives are underway across the University to foster community and to achieve better results. It will be important for the University to align these initiatives with one another, track results and set specific targets with timelines for improvement, particularly in terms of retention and graduation, and to link actions explicitly to the newly adopted enrollment management principles and goals. As these efforts continue, the University also should communicate them more effectively to students. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10 – 2.14)

**Educational effectiveness.** The University has laid a good foundation for the Educational Effectiveness Review through its work on student learning assessment at the University and departmental levels, and through changes to the program review process. It will be important
to continue and expand these efforts, extend them across all undergraduate and graduate programs, and integrate the findings for improvement. Efforts for continuing development of faculty are also needed to deepen faculty engagement with all aspects of student learning. (CFRs 2.2, 2.4, 2.6 and 2.7)

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the report of the Capacity and Preparatory Review team and continue the accreditation of the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

2. Continue with the scheduled Educational Effectiveness Review in spring 2011.

3. Request that the institution incorporate its response to the issues raised in this action letter and to the recommendations of the CPR team report into its Educational Effectiveness Review report. You may include this analysis in an appendix to your Educational Effectiveness report or incorporate it into the report.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copies of this letter will be sent to UH President M.R.C. Greenwood and the chair of the UH Board of Regents in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement, and to support the institution’s response to the specific issues identified in them.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the University undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WASC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while assuring public accountability, and we are grateful for your continued support of our process. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Ralph A. Wolff
President and Executive Director

cc: Sherwood Lingenfelter, Commission Chair
Reed W. Dasenbrock, ALO
Howard H. Karr, Board Chair
M.R.C. Greenwood, President of the University of Hawaii
Members of the CPR team