I. Executive Summary

We are pleased to submit our proposed themes for the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR). We are confident that this approach will provide the opportunity to accelerate our progress in implementing our Strategic Plan and address previousWSCUC recommendations while moving the campus forward in ways that align with our mission and vision. [1.1]

Following our reaffirmation review and Interim Report, the WSCUC Commission recommended that our next review provide an update on four areas: 1) Progress in enhancing the university as a Hawaiian Place of Learning; 2) Results of the assessment of undergraduate institutional learning objectives (ILOs) and a description of how data were used to improve learning; 3) Plans to address and strengthen undergraduate retention rates; and 4) Changes in the campus as a result of the strategic plan. You will find that our proposed themes directly address these recommendations.

Through the thematic approach to reaffirmation, we combine our strengths in research and Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific area studies with our commitment to sustainability and resilience. Our proposed overarching theme is Aloha ‘Āina. We have two ancillary themes: Transformational Student Success and Academic Innovation and Engaged Learning.

We interpret the Hawaiian concept of Aloha ‘Āina to be the reciprocal care we provide for the resources, land, people, knowledge systems and practices to ensure sustainability for future generations. Through Aloha ‘Āina, we address the Commission’s recommendation to further our progress in becoming a Hawaiian Place of Learning in ways that support student success and drive academic innovation and engaged learning. Our selection of Aloha ‘Āina as the overarching theme is informed by the results of town hall discussions, campus climate surveys, and the 2016 Ka Ho’okō Kuleana Report. [1.1, 2.3, 2.7, 4.1, 4.6]

Transformational Student Success builds on the significant progress we have made with our retention and graduation rates by expanding and intensifying our efforts to address the holistic intellectual and affective development of our students to prepare them to be resilient and engaged members of society. Transformational Student Success initiatives are informed by our internal assessments and external reviews of academic advising and units under the Office of Undergraduate Education. [1.2, 2.3, 2.7, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4]

Academic Innovation and Engaged Learning builds on our success in defining the undergraduate degree through our Institutional Learning Objectives (ILOs) by expanding opportunities for students to engage with them in the areas of research and creative work, civic and international engagement, and stewardship of the natural environment. This focus addresses our priority to deepen the engagement of our undergraduate students with our world-class researchers across the campus. Academic Innovation and Engaged Learning initiatives are informed by the external reviews of the General Education Program, the units under the Office of Undergraduate Education, and campus research organizations. [2.2, 2.2a, 2.3, 2.7, 2.8, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4]

Our proposed themes are directly aligned with the mission and vision of our Strategic Plan in ways that utilize the reaffirmation process both to gain traction on achieving our goals and initiatives for 2021 and to extend and refine those efforts through to 2025. [1.1, 4.6]

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1 Numbers refer to Criteria for Review in the WSCUC Handbook of Accreditation.
II. Overview of the Institution

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UH Mānoa), founded in 1907, is a premier research university of international standing. UH Mānoa is the flagship of the 10-campus University of Hawai‘i System, the state’s sole public university system governed by a 15-member Board of Regents. [1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 3.9]

A land-grant, sea-grant, space-grant, and sun-grant institution, our special distinction is found in our Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific orientations, unique location, and geography. The Carnegie Foundation classifies UH Mānoa as a Research 1 institution with “very high” research activity, and the National Science Foundation ranks UH Mānoa among the top 30 public universities in federal research expenditures for engineering and science. Extramural funding averaged $400 million over the last five years. UH Mānoa offers 101 bachelor’s degrees, 87 master’s degrees, 54 doctoral degrees, and first professional degrees in law, medicine, and architecture. Sixty programs are professionally accredited. Of the 17,710\(^2\) students enrolled, approximately 73% are undergraduates, 57% are of Asian or Pacific Islander ancestry, 16.5% are Native Hawaiian, and 56% are female. [4.2]

III. Process for the development of the theme

We convened our reaffirmation steering committee in the Fall of 2017 after submitting our application to pursue the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR). The committee, composed of students, faculty, staff, and administrators, began their work with a self-review under the WSCUC standards. After receiving approval to pursue the TPR, committee members worked through 2018 and spring 2019 to identify and refine our themes, initiatives and outcomes. Members of our campus community were given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on our themes to inform our final submission. This document is the result of that work and represents a collaborative effort that aligns with the mission and vision of our Strategic Plan. [1.1, 3.10, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6]

IV. Description of Each Theme

A. Overarching Theme: Aloha ‘Āina

Aloha ‘Āina embodies two Hawaiian concepts. “Aloha” refers to the active, relational, and reciprocal care between all parts of our world to sustain well-being. “‘Āina” refers to the land and natural resources of our environment. Through observation and experience, we recognize that integral to ‘āina are the people, the knowledge systems, and the practices that are inextricably connected to the sustainability, well-being, and resilience of that ‘āina over time. Jon Osorio, Dean of our Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, observes that this worldview brings critical lessons to our lives, our experiences, and our knowledge — not just for Native Hawaiians but to all inhabitants of the world. [1.4]

In our Interim Report, we discussed our progress in assessing our undergraduate Institutional Learning Objectives (ILOs) related to “Know” (Breadth and Depth of Knowledge) and “Do,” (Intellectual and Practical Skills). Through our overarching theme of Aloha ‘Āina, we seek to increase opportunities for students to engage with ILOs related to “Value” (Personal and Social Responsibility) in the areas of continuous learning and personal growth, civic participation, respect for people and cultures, international engagement, and stewardship of the natural environment. Our approach invites students to engage in these aspects of personal and social responsibility through global and Native Hawaiian-grounded worldviews. By focusing on Aloha ‘Āina within the academy, we combine our strengths in research with our commitment to sustainability and resilience in order to create engaged, compassionate, global and Hawai‘i-grounded citizens who can take lessons gleaned from their experiences at UH Mānoa into every sector of our communities in Hawai‘i and throughout the world. [2.2, 2.2a, 2.2b, 3.3]

\(^2\) Fall 2018 enrollment.
The Importance of the Aloha ‘Āina Overarching Theme

We draw from the rich heritage and histories of our diverse cultures to inform and ensure a sustainable future for Hawai‘i and our communities while providing a model of value to our global neighbors. We posit that planetary crises facing humanity today are rooted in the lack of understanding of and engagement with the deeper meaning and value of place. Many world cultures and their systems and structures offer ways of thinking, being, and doing that can restore and sustain balance. For example, the knowledge and practices that long allowed the Native Hawaiian culture to flourish in harmony with the available natural resources continues to offer a powerful and timely model for mutually beneficial relationships between human and natural systems in Hawai‘i and beyond. [1.4]

Our Aloha ‘Āina approach invites innovation and creativity in our academic and scholarly enterprise to transform students and create engaged, global citizens who care for our people and places in order to serve our islands and our planet. Our approach also requires us to consider how we, as an institution, develop and promote the success of Native Hawaiian faculty, staff and students. Such a consideration is also a key question in our ongoing, campus discussion of the different meanings and intentions of becoming a Hawaiian or Native Hawaiian Place of Learning. [1.4, 2.2a, 2.2b]

Aloha ‘Āina Initiatives and Desired Outcomes

Our first overarching initiative supports opportunities for students and faculty to engage in stewardship of the natural environment through the campus-wide Institute for Sustainability and Resilience (ISR). To date, the ISR has organized curricula, with more than 80 courses related to sustainability and resilience, identified learning outcomes for these courses, and facilitated research and civic engagement for our students and faculty. By 2021, we will have implemented sustainability and resilience undergraduate and graduate certificate programs, and concentrations within our degree programs. Working with the Assessment Office, the ISR will assess the achievement of learning outcomes related to our ILO of stewardship of the natural environment.

Our second overarching initiative is the advancement of UH Mānoa as a Hawaiian or Native Hawaiian Place of Learning. To date, two important steps have been accomplished:

- The completion of the 2016 Ka Ho‘okō Kuleana Report that guides the campus on advancement and implementation steps; and
- The hiring of the Native Hawaiian Affairs Program Officer who has established the Native Hawaiian Affairs Office.

The goals from the Ka Ho‘okō Kuleana Report are clearly articulated in the Strategic Plan in the area of Native Hawaiian student success (discussed under Transformational Student Success) and include development of Native Hawaiian staff and faculty, along with the development of a campus environment that embraces Native Hawaiian people and places; cultivation of awareness of our Native Hawaiian environment through both curriculum and attention to the built environment of our campus; and engagement with the Native Hawaiian community. The Native Hawaiian Affairs Office will continue to partner with campus units to achieve the Strategic Plan goals. [1.4, 3.1, 3.3, 4.6]

B. Ancillary Theme 1: Transformational Student Success

Our first ancillary theme is Transformational Student Success. For us, this entails the holistic intellectual and affective development of our students through which they acquire the skills that will empower them to thrive in their communities and to achieve their fullest potential.
The Importance of our Transformational Student Success Ancillary Theme

While UH Mānoa has enjoyed considerable success in improving retention, doubling our 4-year graduation rate and winning the Association of Public Land Grant Universities Degree Completion Award in 2017, we are not yet where we need to be. We believe the Transformational Student Success ancillary theme aligns our recruitment, enrollment, retention and graduation goals in ways that provide world-class instruction, mentoring, and co-curricular experiences that are grounded in the holistic development of students to facilitate the emergence of their best selves. [1.6, 2.2, 2.2a]

Transformational Student Success Initiatives and Desired Outcomes

- Implement recommendations from the external review of academic advising; and
- Expand student support systems to strengthen retention and graduation efforts.

In order to continue to improve student retention and enhance the student experience, we focus specifically on academic advising, including early interventions when a student is struggling, and supporting the experiences that students have in their first year. [1.2, 1.6, 2.13]

UH Mānoa was selected as one of 12 institutions nationwide to join the first cohort of the Excellence in Academic Advising comprehensive strategic planning process. Funded by the Gardner Institute and NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, Excellence in Academic Advising is designed to advance student learning, success, persistence, retention, and degree completion through a comprehensive, standards-based assessment process. We will receive the recommendations from this sweeping review by the end of the August 2019. By 2021, we will have made progress in implementing the recommendations and assessing our efforts to improve student success.

To support our overall retention and graduation efforts, we are developing an early alert system to track student academic performance during the semester to facilitate early intervention to increase retention and student success. We successfully piloted a similar program with our student athletes in 2015, and saw improved performance and higher grades as a result. Through investments in our homegrown and nationally award-winning STAR system (a recipient of the 2017 Complete College America President’s Award), we will expand STAR to include early alert and intervention functions. We plan to extend this capability campus-wide by 2021. Continuing the strides we have made in shortening time to degree, we will also enhance STAR to improve scheduling of the courses students need to graduate. [1.2, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13]

In 2018, we piloted the Learning Assistant Program to support the implementation of quantitative reasoning as a new requirement in our general education program. The Learning Assistant Program, which uses peer Learning Assistants to engage students in active learning, was initially designed as a creative approach to address high student-faculty ratios in math courses. Our assessment of this program revealed that student performance in courses with learning assistants outpaced the performance in courses without them. We are in the process of extending the Learning Assistant Program across courses that have historically experienced high failure rates, and we continue to assess the program’s contribution to increasing student success. The program, piloted under the Mathematics Department, will be administered centrally by 2021. [1.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.13, 4.3, 4.4]

The Office of Native Hawaiian Student Services (NHSS) in the Hawai‘i‘inui‘ākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge provides programs designed to improve institutional access, student-faculty engagement, research, leadership, and success for undergraduate and graduate students by fostering Native Hawaiian identities and cultivating Native

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3 Between 2010 and 2018, IPEDS data show that UH Mānoa’s 4-year graduation rate increased from 17.5% (cohort 2006) to 35.2% (cohort 2014).
Hawaiian scholarship. The office supports roughly 1,900 undergraduates and 600 graduate Native Hawaiian students, including 136 PhD students. NHSS was instrumental in the dramatic increase in our four-year graduation rates for Native Hawaiian students. We hope to model this successful program to serve other under-represented Hawai’i communities including Filipino students, Pacific Islanders, and neighbor island populations. [1.2, 1.4, 2.10]

Mentorship opportunities are available through peer mentoring programs across campus and through our learning communities. Effectively improving retention and student performance, learning communities provide freshmen with peer mentorship, ease college transition, and fulfill general education requirements in a cohorted environment. Our data show that first-year students who participate in learning communities persist at higher rates than non-participating students. Moreover, participation in the peer-led course (included in the learning community) results in half a letter-grade higher across all courses included in the program. We will increase the number of freshmen who participate in learning communities by 2021. [1.2, 2.5, 2.13]

C. Ancillary Theme 2: Academic Innovation & Engaged Learning

Academic Innovation and Engaged Learning connects our research and teaching with high-impact practices in ways that build on our strengths and international reputation. As a theme, it reflects our commitment to actively engage our students in our unique research mission to address the changing needs of our state and the planet. [2.2, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.8, 2.10]

The Importance of the Academic Innovation & Engaged Learning Ancillary Theme

At UH Mānoa, innovation represents not just a strategy to make education more compelling but also is part of our kuleana, our duty and responsibility. Higher education is consequential for the well-being and enhancement of the people of Hawai‘i and beyond. We teach students to be aware of the future across all disciplinary areas. As an institution, we are dedicated to engaging with the world as it changes before us through innovative solutions and social commitments. Local problems serve as a platform and model to address global issues. Students engage with diverse methods of inquiry and develop skill sets that transfer to critical issues within their specialized fields.

Academic Innovation & Engaged Learning Initiatives and Desired Outcomes

- Redevelop and strengthen Interdisciplinary Studies;
- Attract highly motivated undergraduate students to our graduate programs; and
- Fully commit to undergraduate research and civic engagement opportunities.

One key to strengthening interdisciplinary studies at UH Mānoa will be redeveloping our Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) Office and academic program under new leadership, now in recruitment. We envision that IS can be positioned more clearly as an “incubator” for the strategic development of innovative, interdisciplinary programs driven by student interest and passion, and faculty expertise in areas in which UH Mānoa is positioned to excel. These new curricular collaborations may include programs initially anchored in areas emerging from UH Mānoa’s Strategic Investment Initiative, including sustainability and resilience, and data science. By 2021, we will have appointed a new director charged to elevate the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies and its work, beginning with the implementation of innovative new interdisciplinary programs. [2.2a, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.6, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4]

In 2017, the Faculty Senate and the Chancellor approved guidelines and procedures to encourage the development of combined bachelor’s and master’s degree pathways to attract highly motivated undergraduate students to our graduate programs. Combined pathways allow high achieving students the opportunity to begin graduate-level course work in their senior year by counting up to 9 credits of graduate-level course work towards the undergraduate degree. To date, programs have been developed in 13 areas, including Computer Science, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Travel Industry Management, and Political Science. By 2021, we will
increase the number of opportunities available, assess undergraduate performance in graduate-level coursework, and review retention and completion rates.

Elevating and advancing meaningful undergraduate research and civic engagement experiences for students across disciplines is also a high-priority, campus-wide effort. This commitment will promote the meaningful integration of our educational and research missions and build on the common recognition among top institutions nationwide that students engaged in faculty-mentored research and civic engagement achieve better outcomes long-term, as evidenced by greater student satisfaction, completion rates, and fulfillment well beyond graduation. [1.1, 2.8, 2.11, 4.1]

To promote this initiative campus-wide and to elevate faculty-mentored undergraduate research and creative work experiences, we have transferred the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) from the Honors Program to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research. UROP has already achieved the following: a $225,000 grant for the development of the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) program, including a highly, successful, inaugural SURE Symposium.; increased undergraduate student participation in faculty-mentored research and creative work projects and presentations; and stronger and more engaged faculty representation on UROP’s advisory council. By 2021, we will develop and implement a transactional and analytical database to monitor institutional and student achievements in research and creative works, and increase the number of academic and research units engaged in faculty-mentored undergraduate research and creative work projects and presentations. In keeping with our unique strengths in Asia-Pacific studies, we will significantly expand student research and experiential learning opportunities related to the exploration of the impacts of climate change in the Pacific.

The Office of Civic and Community Engagement (OCCE) and the Institutional Learning Objectives Implementation Committee (ILOIC) are committed to increasing opportunities for students to meet our civic engagement institutional learning objective. Per our 2015 NSSE results, UH Mānoa seniors reported higher rates of civic participation than students from our peer institutions. Moreover, 62% of our undergraduate programs report that at least one of their program learning outcomes is directly related to civic participation. By 2021, we will engage faculty in exploring innovative ways to build more opportunities into existing courses, within the major, and through co-curricular experiences that augment our general education program. We will administer the NSSE survey in 2020 to measure our progress in increasing engagement. [2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.9, 2.11, 4.3, 4.4]

V. Integration with Complementary Institutional Activities

We are presently engaged in several major organizational changes and campus-wide initiatives that have strong potential to transform the university in ways that are aligned with the themes described herein.

We have “re-set” the most recent Strategic Plan to accommodate longer-term, aspirational (and measurable) goals with a target date of 2025. The Plan has been utilized as an opportunity to engage with the university community around updated vision and mission statements that will inspire and guide the work ahead in four distinct areas: 1) strengthening our commitment to become a Hawaiian or Native Hawaiian Place of Learning, and a model indigenous-serving institution; 2) achieving excellence in student success; 3) creating excellence in research and advancing the research and creative work enterprise; and 4) building a sustainable and resilient campus environment.

As the Strategic Plan continues to take shape, a fundamental reorganization of the university is also underway. This reorganization focuses on function rather than titles and hierarchy, with the goal of breaking down traditional siloes and enabling the creation of new knowledge and understanding while delivering a world-class education to our students. By 2021, the pending reorganization of the administrative offices of the campus will be completed. The reorganization includes a Provost position (new to UH Mānoa), Vice Provosts for Student Success, Educational Excellence, Enrollment Management, and Research, Scholarship & Graduate Education. It also
formalizes, for the first time, the Office of Global Engagement, and the Office of Native Hawaiian Affairs. [3.6, 3.7, 4.7]

We have also established a new Mānoa Campus Framework Steering Committee to advise professional consultants retained to develop the university’s 2019–2029 Long Range Development Plan, which enumerates and defines the university’s capital priorities. The new Long Range Development Plan will be completed by 2021 and will represent the first major vision for the campus in decades. More information is available at manoaframeworkfuture.info. [4.6, 4.7]

VI. Resources

We have made numerous investments to date aimed at accomplishing the goals described above, including but not limited to:

- The creation of the Office of Native Hawaiian Affairs, which reports directly to the President and works with units across campus to develop meaningful programs and initiatives aimed at realizing our goal of becoming a Hawaiian or Native Hawaiian Place of Learning.
- A Strategic Investment Initiative provided $2.2 million in funding awarded via a competitive process for projects with collaborators in multiple colleges that take advantage of existing strengths and are responsive to who and where we are. The eight successful projects, all entering their second year, speak to Aloha ʻĀina, caring for the resources, the people, and the knowledge systems and practices that are deeply rooted in Hawaiʻi to ensure our sustainability for future generations. [3.4, 4.6, 4.7]
- The creation of the Institute for Sustainability and Resilience (ISR). With an initial investment of approximately $100K and ¾ release time for the faculty director, the ISR is an institute that will implement several of the initiatives discussed under Aloha ʻĀina. [3.4, 4.7]
- Several initiatives aimed at recruiting and retaining a larger community of learners including investments of $250K in the early alert system, and more than $500K in Peer Mentors and Learning Assistants (discussed under Transformational Student Success) to improve student learning in historically challenging courses in mathematics, chemistry, and physics. [2.10, 3.4, 4.7]
- The creation of the Undergraduate Research Office with initial support of $600K for student stipends and staffing, discussed under Academic Innovation and Engaged Learning.

As we introduce our theme of Aloha ʻĀina, and the ancillary themes of Transformational Student Success and Academic Innovation and Engaged Learning, we are mindful of both the many investments and projects in these areas already underway and the continued and additional resources our efforts will require.

VII. Conclusion

We appreciate that the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation affords us the opportunity to focus on areas for improvement during our institutional period of review. In choosing Aloha ʻĀina as our overarching theme, we have considered how an ethic of reciprocal care for our land, our peoples and our resources can frame our ancillary themes in powerful ways relevant to students today. Transformational Student Success and Academic Innovation and Engaged Learning are both areas in which we have had significant successes but know we need to do more. Our achievements in these areas will gain greater impact when placed within a framework that helps students develop multiple understandings of how their education at UH Mānoa helps them to address local and global problems and opportunities that are critical to the Hawaiian islands, the Asia-Pacific region, and the planet.

We draw roots from the traditional culture and sustainable practices of the Native Hawaiians who came before, and as perhaps the most diverse research university in the country, also draw on the many cultures and traditions, primarily of Asia and the Pacific, that have helped shape Hawaiʻi today. This diversity is a hallmark of Hawaiʻi and one of the strengths of UH Mānoa.