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Ralph A. Wolff

July 5, 2011

Virginia S. Hinshaw
Chancellor
University of Hawai'i at Manoa
2500 Campus Road
Honolulu, HI 96822

Dear Chancellor Hinshaw:

At its meeting June 22-24, 2011 the Commission considered the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team that conducted the visit to the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (UHM) March 14-16, 2011. The Commission also had access to the Educational Effectiveness Review report prepared by the University prior to the visit, the institution's thoughtful May 17, 2011 response to the team's report, and the documents relating to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) visit conducted in fall 2009. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Reed Dasenbrock, and Academic Affairs Program Officer Myrtle Yamada. Your comments were very helpful.

UHM's institutional proposal (2006) outlined three themes for its comprehensive review: Building a Manoa Community in Support of Student Success; Campus Renewal to Support the Manoa Experience; and Reform of Campus Governance to Promote Communication and Student Success. The CPR report (2009) was well aligned with the proposal and supported by effective data and analysis. Similarly, the team observed that the EER report was consistent with the proposal, supported by data, and "accurately reflected the incredible distance the campus has come in reaching its goals."

The CPR team and the Commission action letter of February 2010 recommended that UHM focus on three areas: (1) putting in place a new strategic plan, with special attention to defining the "Manoa Experience" and to identifying ways of minimizing procedures, policies and processes that hinder decision making; (2) aligning student success initiatives and tracking results, with special attention to retention and graduation rates; and (3) continuing to make progress in assessing student learning and program review, with special attention to deepening faculty engagement.

With respect to the strategic plan, the team noted that "the mission, goals, values and proposed metrics represent a solid start." In addition, "the university has made significant progress in what the team [came] to realize is no simple task – clarifying the Manoa Experience." In terms of student success, the team noted that "the EER provided a wealth of information related to student success initiatives moving the campus toward a fully integrated evidence-based learning environment." The team also commended the University for routinely collecting, analyzing, and interpreting extensive data on retention and graduation, disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, residency, and other variables. Regarding educational effectiveness, of special note is UHM's academic program review process which the team called "a total success," "well articulated," "highly developed...linked to WASC standards, and broadly supported as worthwhile by the

faculty.” The team praised the University for “faculty ownership of the assessment effort.”

UHM selected six ambitious themes for its EER: Manoa identity, student learning success, campus master planning and facilities management, student and faculty housing, long term relationships with stakeholders, and student/faculty engagement. The team found much to commend on the progress the University has made on its themes, and especially singled out the “strong strides in creating a culture centered on assessment and evaluation.”

The Commission endorses the recommendations of the EER team and wishes to emphasize the following areas for further attention and development:

Defining the Undergraduate Degree. The University has done an excellent job in establishing departmental student learning outcomes, documenting the extent to which outcomes are achieved, and using the results to make improvements. The team reported that the University has underway a project to define competencies at the undergraduate degree level: what students should be expected to know and be able to do, regardless of their major, once they have earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. The Commission recommends that the University continue its efforts to articulate the learning outcomes that define the expectations for an undergraduate degree from UHM. (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.6)

Fostering Student Success. The University is under mandate from the University of Hawai'i System to increase the number of degrees awarded and overall degree attainment. From 1999-2000 to 2008-09, UHM realized a 17-percent increase in the number of bachelor degrees awarded. However, UHM's overall six-year graduation rate is 51 percent, which is lower than the graduation rates of many comparable comprehensive research universities. The Commission supports the System's goals of increasing the numbers of students earning bachelor's degrees and recommends that the University continue to work to raise its undergraduate retention and graduation rates. The Commission further recommends that UHM continue to identify and implement programmatic strategies to address identified disparities among student subpopulations, and benchmark retention and graduation data against similar institutions. In addition, in keeping with newly adopted federal regulations, UHM should ensure that it has clear policies on student workload and credit hours, particularly for distance education courses. (CFRs 1.5, 1.7, 2.5, 2.10)

Enhancing the University as a Hawaiian Place of Learning. The University is committed to creating a campus based on values grounded in Hawaiian culture and has undertaken a number of successful initiatives to engage the entire campus community in embracing concepts like a Hawaiian Place of Learning. The team noted that “great momentum has been generated.” The Commission recommends that the University continue to articulate the measurable attributes of a Hawaiian Place of Learning and promote this as a core distinction of education at UHM. (CFRs 1.1, 1.5, 4.1)

Given the above, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review report and reaffirm the accreditation of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.
2. Schedule UHM's next comprehensive review visit for spring 2021. As you know, the Commission is in the process of considering major revisions to the current three-stage institutional review process. It expects these revisions to be adopted by June 2012 and implemented during the following two years. Once the revised process is adopted, WASC staff

will communicate with you and your ALO to explain the impact of any changes on your next comprehensive review and on the interactions you may have with WASC before that review.

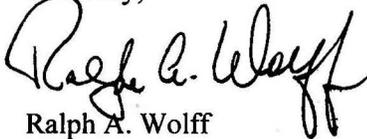
3. Request an Interim Report to be due on March 1, 2015. This report should address changes in the campus as a result of the 2011-2015 strategic plan; progress in raising undergraduate retention and graduation rates and in increasing the number of students receiving bachelor's degrees; progress in articulating the learning outcomes for a bachelor's degree from UHM; and progress in enhancing the University as a Hawaiian Place of Learning, including updates on hiring of faculty.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that the University of Hawai'i at Manoa has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness, and has successfully completed the three-stage review conducted under the Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review, the institution is expected to continue its progress, particularly with respect to educational effectiveness and student learning.

In accordance with Commission policy, copies of this letter will be sent to the chair of the University of Hawai'i governing board and President M.R.C. Greenwood 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

RW/bgd

cc: Linda Johnsrud, Commission Chair
Reed Dasenbrock, ALO
Howard H. Karr, Board Chair
M.R.C. Greenwood, President, University of Hawai'i System
Members of the EER team
Barbara Gross Davis