

March 8, 2022

Dr. David Lassner
President, University of Hawai‘i and CEO, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
2500 Campus Road
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96822

Dear President Lassner:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa (UHM) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 25, 2022. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) Accreditation Visit to UHM November 8-12, 2021. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by UHM prior to the Accreditation Visit, and the institution’s January 28, 2022, response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Michael Bruno, Provost, Wendy Pearson, Senior Advisor to the Provost/ALO, Laura Lyons, Interim Vice Provost for Academic Excellence, Lori Ideta, Vice Provost for Student Success, Nikki Chun, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, Christopher Sabine, Interim Vice Provost for Research and Scholarship, Alexandra French, Chief Business Officer, and Kaiwipunikauikawēkiu Lipe, Director of the Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Advancement Office. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission’s deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution’s new status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit team report
2. Reaffirm accreditation for a period of ten years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2031 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2031
4. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by November 1, 2025, to address progress in the three thematic priorities:
 - a. For becoming a Native Hawaiian Place of Learning, confirm the qualitative and quantitative goals that embody the greatest significance and meaning for the community and pursue them through the strategic allocation of resources. (CFRs 4.1, 4.3)
 - b. For transformational student success, establish clear, time-bound goals for retention, degree completion, and equity. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 3.4)

- c. For the promotion of engaged learning, set expectations for gains in both student achievement and the extent to which academic innovations have been implemented successfully on campus, with a special focus on closing achievement gaps. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 4.4)

The Commission commends the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa in particular for the following:

1. Its approach to the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation, with its ambitious themes, tackling challenging areas of inquiry with a commitment to a collaborative and inclusive self-study process.
2. The Wayfinding Project, which demonstrates an observable commitment to incorporate Native Hawaiian language and navigation in the interest of the university of becoming a Native Hawaiian Place of Learning. This project may prove to be a model for other institutions of higher learning as they grapple with how to render “place” as they acknowledge that the lands upon which their campuses are built were forcibly taken from indigenous peoples.
3. The Institute for Sustainability and Resilience (ISR) for its smart approach to the simultaneous advancement of UHM’s teaching, research, and service missions on topics of critical importance to the state and its communities. Specifically, ISR’s development of “SUST” [Sustainability] courses are noted as a high-quality yet expeditious curricular innovation.
4. The STAR project, a constellation of data-informed applications that assist with campus planning, enrollment management processes, and student support intervention. The STAR apps are likely to be critical for aligning new General Education requirements and improving degree completion pathways.
5. The campus culture through which the faculty, staff and administration take seriously their commitment to support UHM’s students with academic advising, engaged learning initiatives, and responsive student services.

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following issues:

1. Engage in a systematic and concerted effort, over the course of consecutive budgets, to align resource allocation with the priorities of the institution to minimize the overreliance on soft money and volunteerism in implementing programs and services in areas that otherwise are best supported with permanent institutional resources. (CFR 3.4)
2. Working with the Board of Regents, develop a policy for UHM that clearly defines conflict of interest and a process for resolving conflicts should they arise, given the unique executive structure under which the UHM CEO serves as the UH System president. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7)
3. Tie its thematic priorities to a set of measurable targets and timetables that are visible, accessible, and actionable.

- a. For recognizing progress toward becoming a Native Hawaiian Place of Learning, confirm the qualitative and quantitative goals that embody the greatest significance and meaning for the community and pursue them through the strategic allocation of resources. (CFRs 4.1, 4.3)
 - b. For transformational student success, establish clear, time-bound goals for retention, degree completion, and equity. By pursuing student outcome data disaggregated by academic unit and demographics including race/ethnicity, UHM can guide resource allocation, institutional policy, and practice. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 3.4)
 - c. For the promotion of engaged learning, set expectations for gains in both student achievement and the extent to which academic innovations have been implemented successfully on campus, with a special focus on closing achievement gaps. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 4.4)
4. Regularly survey the broader campus environment on issues relating to a supportive climate for the diverse campus community. (CFRs 1.4, 2.10, 4.3, Equity and Inclusion Policy)
 5. Continue the journey of becoming a Native Hawaiian Place of Learning through greater transparency, inclusion, consensus about defined initiatives, and parallel high-level resource support. Invite Native Hawaiian students, staff, and faculty to engage in a critical reconsideration of the stated tenets of the Native Hawaiian Place of Learning aspiration and generate a mutually agreeable vision. (CFRs 1.1, 4.6)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirmed that the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa addressed the three Core Commitments and successfully completed the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, UHM should strive for ongoing improvement with adherence to all Standards of Accreditation and their associated CFRs to foster a learning environment that continuously strives for educational excellence and operational effectiveness.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter is being sent to the chair of UHM’s governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the UHM website and widely distributed throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in these documents. The team report and the Commission’s action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response on the WSCUC website.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa undertook in preparing for the accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Jamienne S. Studley

President

JSS/bgd

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair
Wendy Pearson, ALO
Randolph Moore, Board Chair
Members of the TPR Accreditation Visit team
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President