



July 6, 2007

Clyde Sakamoto  
Chancellor  
Maui Community College  
310 Kaahumanu Avenue  
Kahului, HI 96732

Dear Chancellor Sakamoto:

At its meeting on June 20-22, 2007, the Commission considered the report of the team that conducted the visit on March 7-9, 2007, for Initial Accreditation of the Bachelor of Science Degree program in Applied Business and Information Technology (ABIT) offered by Maui Community College (MCC). The Commission also had access to the report prepared by MCC prior to the visit and a supplement to the team report, which was prepared by the team after its review of your supplemental report on the assessment of the work of the first graduating class of ABIT students. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to talk with you and David Grooms, ABIT Professor and Program Coordinator. Your comments were helpful to the Commission in understanding the context for the ABIT program at MCC and your plans for growth of the program.

MCC's report for Initial Accreditation of the ABIT program presented a thorough and well-organized review and analysis of MCC and the ABIT program under the four WASC Standards and Criteria for Review (CFR). It was supported by evidence and supplemented with documentation concerning recommendations of the Commission in its previous action letters and of previous team reports.

The Commission found that MCC has been very responsive to issues raised by previous teams and cited in action letters. Among the improvements in the three years since the ABIT program came under WASC Senior Commission review in July 2004 are the appointment of three full-time faculty members and a counselor; securing of permanent financial support from the state; enhancements to general education; and a healthy and productive discussion about the kind of applied research that is appropriate to build a baccalaureate culture in a community college. The strong support for the program in the community and the involvement of business leaders in assessing the program's effectiveness and advising the program faculty are laudable. The initiative of

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leaders at the system, college and program levels to create a four-year program that meets the needs of the community is commendable. As noted by the team, “The organization and all of its members have shown levels of openness and commitment to learning and continuous improvement that is exemplary of WASC’s ideal of a university as a learning organization.”

The Commission acted to receive the team report, endorsed its recommendations and cited the following areas as needing continuing attention:

**Assessment of Student Learning.** The program has carefully drawn program learning outcomes and aligned student learning outcomes at the course level. The ABIT assessment program includes examination conducted by the faculty and industry representatives of work presented by graduating seniors in a capstone course, using rubrics that were developed by the faculty. The results are compiled to produce program-level assessment and recommendations that flow from the results. While only three students participated in this key capstone experience and graduated in May 2007, the results of learning were evident in that report. The Commission endorses the recommendations made by the team in its supplemental report, in which the team recommended that the program improve the analysis and reporting of the capstone experience by providing a more thorough discussion of the results and by expanding the representation of the stakeholder group that reviews portfolios. Annual assessment reports of the program are conducted, and will be followed by a comprehensive five-year program review. Because the program is new and has only a few graduates, and because it may serve as a model for future baccalaureate programs at MCC, careful attention should be paid to building a strong and replicable assessment program that will demonstrate achievement of student learning outcomes and form the basis for change and improvement. (CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, and 4.7)

**Program Capacity, Growth, and Sustainability.** The ABIT program has strong support from the college, the University of Hawaii system, the legislature and the Maui community. This support has served the program well and has resulted in an infusion of resources to build capacity. While this support is solid, expectations for the growth of the program are evident. Steps should be taken to build enrollment to meet the capacity that has been created and to further assure the future of the program going forward. (CFR 3.5) Related is the matter of faculty sufficiency and diversity. Because of small enrollments, building a sufficient core of qualified full-time faculty members has had the practical result of limiting the number of faculty members to which students are exposed. This situation should be carefully examined and solutions sought that will in the short-term and long-term expose students to more faculty members. (CFRs 2.1 and 3.2)

**Faculty Scholarship, Creative Activity and Evaluation.** MCC has addressed earlier concerns about faculty scholarship appropriate for a baccalaureate-level program by engaging in meaningful and productive discussions about the character and nature of applied research and how it can best be supported in the community college setting. The idea of faculty research outcomes has been developed, and the full-time faculty members

have embraced the idea of engaging in scholarship and research that adds value to the program and links with student work. As noted in the team report, expectations for faculty scholarship and creative activity have not yet been formalized. The College should move forward with its plans to institutionalize the role of scholarship by incorporating these expectations, where appropriate, for example, in policies, evaluation procedures, and plans for individual faculty members. (CFR 2.8, 2.9, 3.3, and 3.4)

**Curriculum Issues.** MCC has built a strong upper-division curriculum within the major, supplemented by upper-division general education courses specifically developed for ABIT students and taught mainly by one of the new full-time faculty members hired to build capacity in the ABIT program. A campus general education philosophy has been adopted. Assessment of the general education component of the program, in light of the expectations set forth in CFR 2.2, should be conducted to provide the basis for further improvements to and expansion of general education. As suggested in the team report, the faculty may want to ask if graduating students have “breadth ... in all areas of cultural and aesthetic, social and political, as well as scientific and technical knowledge expected of educated persons in this society.” A related issue that has arisen as the program has been built is the progression of student learning from the lower to the upper division within the major. An examination should be made of the transition from the lower to upper levels in the ABIT major and changes made as needed to ensure coherence and continuity as students progress to degree. (CFR 2.2).

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Initial Accreditation Visit team report and grant initial accreditation to Maui Community College for the Bachelor of Science Degree in Applied Business and Information Technology of Maui Community College.
2. Pursuant to the policy on Initial Accreditation, set the effective date of Senior College Commission accreditation as May 12, 2007.
3. Schedule a combined Capacity and Educational Effectiveness visit for fall 2012 to be held jointly with the WASC Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. MCC’s report to ACCJC with a supplement on the ABIT program is due 12 weeks before the visit.
4. Request that five copies of a progress report be submitted by May 1, 2009, addressing the issues raised in this action letter and the major recommendations of the team report, including results of assessment of student learning for graduates of the ABIT program since this date and progress in addressing the other areas cited in this letter. Enclosed is a memorandum providing guidance on the format and content of a progress report.

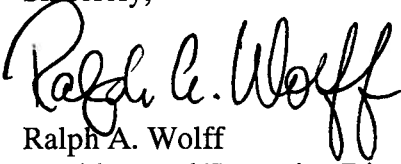
This action is for the ABIT degree program only. In accordance with Commission policy, should the College intend to offer a second bachelor’s degree, prior approval from

the Senior College Commission would be required and the College would need to be reviewed under separate procedures.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the President of the University of Hawaii system and the Chair of the UH Board of Regents within one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in them.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comment about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff  
President and Executive Director

RW/aa

cc: John D. Welty  
David McClain, President of the UH System  
Kitty Lagareta, Chair of the UH Board of Regents  
Diane Meyer  
Barbara Beno  
Members of the team  
Teri Cannon

Enclosure