University of Hawai'i

MAUI COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Molokai Education Center
Office of the Coordinator

MEMORANDUM

TO: Suzette Robinson
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

FROM: Donna Haytko-Paoa
UH Center Program Review Team Convenor and
MCC Molokai Education Center Coordinator

SUBJECT: Commendations and Recommendations for 2001-2006 UH Center
Comprehensive Program Review

The Program Review Team met and discussed the UH Center’s Comprehensive Program Review Report. Team members are Derek Masaki, Michael Reiley, and myself. Mr. Masaki is the Information Technology Specialist for the USGS Pacific Basin Information Node program on Maui and a student in the Neighbor Island MBA program. Mr. Reiley is our community representative and serves as Chief Operating Officer for Textron Hawai’i, a defense contractor located in the Maui Research and Technology Park. UH Center Director Karen Muraoka was also in attendance to offer explanations and answer questions as needed.

The document itself is highly organized using a template provided by Maui Community College. The narrative is very well written using numerous figures and tables to illustrate key points. The data provided in these tables clearly shows that the UH Center is carrying out its mission and vision by providing a variety of bachelors and masters degree programs to the residents of Maui County. These programs are reasonably priced and made accessible through innovative delivery methods such that students can remain on their home island of residence.

Overall, we found the UH Center successful in meeting its goals and objectives. We submit the following summary of commendations and recommendations for your consideration.

1. UH Center Organization, Functions, and Goals

   • Commendations:

   The review team agreed that the UH Center’s goals, strategies, and outcomes were well aligned. The benchmarks set by the Center -- such as the number of degrees offered, the number of course registrations, the number of unduplicated students enrolled each semester, and the number of students graduating -- are documented in Table 1 and Appendix A. The review team found it interesting that there was a clear correlation between enrollment and budgetary resource shifts and the team found evidence throughout the report indicating budget and staffing shortfalls contributed to stress on core staff, program enrollments, and student learning outcomes.
• Recommendations:

Given its mandate by the BOR to provide bachelor’s and graduate program access to underserved neighbor island residents, the Center is meeting its goals and functioning in accordance with BOR and UH policies. At the UH System level, system leadership should take a stronger role in facilitating proactive, statewide distance learning and extension program planning. System and campus leadership should work to maximize the reach and impact of distance learning programs and provide a broadly understood planning framework that: 1) builds the UH brand in the area of distance learning, 2) creates economies of scale and scope, 3) responds quickly to industry and workforce development needs, and 4) creates internal funding incentives for multi-site, statewide program delivery to UH campuses, University Centers, and Education Centers.

2. UH Center Effectiveness

• Recommendations:

Benchmark data in the report indicate the UH Center is effective in comparison with other UH Centers. The number (i.e., scope) of high-demand programs delivered and the numbers of students served during the five year review period are significant. The review team commends the University Center as an effective facilitator on behalf of students and industry in creating access to desired degree programs. One team member shared his personal experiences in overcoming barriers to distance education and noted that the partnership between industry and the UH Center was an important component in the effort. Also noted was the necessity of “buy-in” from top leadership at the delivering institutions. Top leadership must be willing to consider providing programs of study via distance delivery modes to neighbor island students.

• Recommendations:

The UH Center should continue its research on best operational practices and benchmark measures at other University Centers across the nation. That information could be used to improve the Center’s current practices and determine the feasibility of developing formula-funding models. The team also felt student retention measures as well as cost/benefit analyses comparing distance learning and traditional “bricks and mortar” programs would help determine the Center’s effectiveness. These analyses would help verify that the Center provides the greatest flexibility in program delivery and the best use of funding.

3. UH Center Staffing and Budget

• Recommendations:

Upon review of the budget, the review team commends the UH Center Director for providing a high quality program within the constraints of budgetary cutbacks and resource
shifts. The pursuit of in-kind contributions and cost-sharing strategies has allowed for some much needed equipment and a minimum level of technical support services that would otherwise go unfunded. Nonetheless, budget reductions and personnel vacancies have had a negative impact on staffing levels, operating funds, and enrollment. The UH Center is currently recovering from budget reductions and personnel vacancies through the hiring and training of new staff.

- Recommendations:

The review team recommends greater overall support of the UH Center, from budget funding levels to advocacy and solutions at the UH System level. The linkage between program enrollments and facilities costs should be reviewed and adjusted if necessary. We also agree that funds for marketing must not only be restored, but must be increased substantially in order for the Center to continue promoting programs across Maui County. The team concurs that the Center should focus on its hiring and training activities for the next year. The team also recommends defining enrollment capacity based on the current budget and identifying incremental staffing and budget increases necessary with enrollment increases beyond a defined base capacity.

4. UH Center Marketing and Image Development

- Recommendations:

The UH Center needs a stronger public image and greater name recognition. The Center should continue its work to raise its public image and improve its marketing activities. The programs offered need to be coordinated in terms of campus branding and visual identifiers. Therefore, the review team recommends an even stronger association between the flagship campus at UH Manoa and UH Centers across the state. A mutually beneficial and healthy partnership between the two units will extend the reach of both. The team also recommends the UH Center pursue degree programs at the highest level in curricular areas where UH stands to gain some competitive advantage by delivering the program off-campus in a distance learning format. These activities can be developed in coordination with the Manoa, Hilo, and West Oahu campuses with adequate funding being shared by all.