Retention seen as key to meeting enrollment goals

by Ken Hupp

The University of Hawai‘i at Hilo has embarked on an important initiative to boost enrollment through a combination of stepped-up recruitment and increased retention. The campus missed its enrollment target for the second year in a row last fall, but it wasn’t alone.

“This is a problem that has hit many campuses across the country,” explained Chancellor Don Straney. “Many schools face an enrollment challenge to recruit, retain and graduate more students.”

A recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education cited a survey of 368 small, private colleges and mid-sized state institutions that reported 38 percent of the schools met neither their goals for freshmen enrollment, nor their goals for net tuition revenue for Fall 2014. All this comes at a time when tuition revenue accounts for a growing percentage, and in some cases, the largest percentage of their respective operating budgets.

The University is now taking action on several fronts to step up efforts to recruit, retain and graduate more students. A campus-wide call for ideas from faculty, staff and students generated a number of suggestions that were reviewed by the Long Range Budget Planning Committee, and led to a set of recommendations.

“These initial steps include outreach and recruitment of students from Hawai‘i Island and other neighbor island high schools, along with recruitment and advising of transfers from Hawai‘i Community College and other UH community colleges,” said Dr. Marcia Sakai, vice chancellor for administrative affairs. “We’re also planning spring yield receptions for the fall semester and international recruitment utilizing English Language Institute capacity.”

Sakai added that the initiatives will be supported with investments in UH Hilo website communication and increased funding for student employment. Additional proposals that may be implemented as additional funds become available or as the initial investments begin to show a return include development of online and digital learning and recruitment of students at California community colleges.

WASC accreditation report: We are going in the right direction

by Chancellor Don Straney

Last fall, the accreditation team from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission (SCUC) made their scheduled visit to the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo and conducted an on-site review. We have now received the team’s report, and I’d like to share with you some thoughts about the findings and recommendations. The visiting team found our campus very welcoming and engaging and they thoroughly enjoyed their visit. Impressed by the level of commitment and passion exhibited by our students, faculty, staff, and alumni, they commended us on knowing our mission and vision well and in using both to inform what we do.

The overall impression of the team was that we know where we are going, and we are going in the right direction. But they did identify several areas they thought we could improve.

While the visiting team was greatly impressed with our applied learning activity, they felt we could improve by hiring a coordinator and adopting campus-wide guidelines. It was our alumni’s enthusiasm for our “living-laboratory” campus that really showed the reviewers that this is the feature at the heart and soul of UH Hilo and what makes
Retention
Continued from page 1

The roots of the initiative date back to last year’s emergence of a comprehensive Enrollment Management approach to enhance student success by recruiting students identified as a “good fit,” and retaining a higher percentage of those who are admitted.

To refine and carry out the effort, the Enrollment Management Implementation Team (EMIT) has been altered in both process and structure from the large group of faculty and staff it was comprised of for the past five years.

“We now have a much smaller EMIT team led by the Vice Chancellors for Academic and Student Affairs,” said Dr. Chris Frueh, special advisor to the chancellor. “There are also three small committees on data-mining, recruitment and retention who report to the team,” added Frueh, who chairs the panel on retention.

EMIT’s approach to increasing retention zeroes in on improving and developing practices with a proven track record of producing a successful student experience. They include existing programs like Orientation, University 101 and 102 classes, the Applied Learning Experience (ALEX), and development of a Freshmen Village, where all first-year students would reside on campus. Programs that help Hawai’i Island students prepare for and transition to college like Running Start and Summer Bridge are also being expanded and developed.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Accreditation Review Team weighed in with some recommendations of its own during last fall’s campus visit. Among the issues raised in its written follow-up that are currently under discussion are examinations of distance learning classes/programs (DL).

As increased retention leads to higher graduation rates, additional emphasis is being placed on initiatives to support the UH System’s 15 to Finish campaign, whose goal is to boost the number of students earning their degrees in four years. Kainoa Ariola, executive director, Career and Academic Advising and recruitment committee chair, says a number of recent initiatives indicate a shift toward a focus on retention at UH Hilo.

“We’ve made great strides to help students graduate in a more timely fashion with initiatives like Freshmen ‘Eeleu (Intrusive Advising), Freshmen Guaranteed Academic Schedules (FreGAS), and four-year academic plans for all undergraduate majors,” she explained. “We’re also capitalizing on the newly improved STAR online degree audit, which is expected to impact retention by updating students in real-time on their progress toward graduation.”

Ariola, Frueh and Sakai all agree that ultimate success will be largely influenced by the faculty’s involvement and campus environment.

“It’s important that all of our faculty and staff understand the importance of their contributions to retention, which many do, based on their involvement with the committees and efforts we’ve described,” Frueh said. “We hope to build on this momentum by holding forums this semester to share information and explore opportunities to innovate and improve how we serve and educate our students.”

(Ken Hupp is a public information officer.)

Accreditation
Continued from page 1

us different from many other institutions.

We need some fine tuning in the areas of curriculum, institutional research capacity, and distance learning:

• Faithful adherence to the published program review schedule, and see that departments receive constructive feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, and studies. Departments can then use this feedback to improve student learning.

• Extend assessment of the core competencies outside of the General Education program and incorporate in the disciplines and majors through continued assessment and review. This will allow us to better understand the competency level of our graduates and to improve teaching and learning across campus.

• Develop a strategic and long-range plan for institutional research, and create a campus data warehouse that both interfaces with the UH System and meets local needs.

• Develop a clear strategy for distance learning, specifically for online courses and degrees, with special attention to adequate resources to support faculty and learning.

The review team encourages us to focus our attention on retention. We are making progress and will continue with our efforts, particularly for transfers and continuing students. (See this month’s cover story to learn more about current retention efforts.) Next steps include examining more about demographic factors that affect retention and graduation rates and why.

Many people on campus helped with the WASC review. I want to give a special mahalo to the people on UH Hilo’s WASC Accreditation Committee who worked hard preparing the institutional report that served as the basis for the visit. Special thanks to Seri Luangphlinth who serves as accreditation liaison officer.

I also want to thank our alumni who met with the team. Their description of UH Hilo as a “transformative educational experience” greatly impressed the review team.

I encourage you to read the entire Report of the WSCUC Visiting Team. I will schedule several “town hall” meetings over the next several weeks to consult with the various campus communities about how we will proceed to address the team’s recommendations.

Aloha,

Donald E. Shanley
Curtis presents “Homegrown Terrorists” in next UH Hilo Faculty Lecture Series

The UH Hilo Faculty Congress and the College of Continuing Education and Community Service (CCECS) invite the public to a presentation by Dr. Thom Curtis, UH Hilo professor of sociology, on Wednesday, February 18, 6:30-7:30 pm in UCB Room 100.

Curtis’s topic on “Homegrown Terrorists” will address the new Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant connection and the radicalization process, his findings regarding the motivations and criminal pathways of homegrown terrorists, and the steps that security and intelligence agencies are taking to counter this threat.

“Over the past year, concerns have grown regarding the number of young Americans, Canadians and Europeans who have travelled to the Middle East to fight with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant,” Curtis said. “National security agencies on both continents are concerned about the increased potential for homegrown attacks when these ‘veterans’ return from the battlefield.”

For disability accommodation, call 974-7664 (V) or 974-7002 (TTY) by February 8.

The talk will also be live-streamed at: http://hilo.hawaii.edu/news/live/.

UH Hilo Open House is Feb 7

Faculty, staff, and students are invited to UH Hilo’s Open House on Saturday, February 7, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., on the Campus Center Plaza.

Sponsored by UH Hilo’s New Student Programs and Admissions Office, there will be information about the University’s various academic programs, residence halls, student support services, and an opportunity to meet with faculty and students. Campus tours will also be given.

For any questions, email nsp@hawaii.edu or call 932-7384.

UH Hilo Distinguished Alumni & Service Awards Banquet honors three

Tickets are currently on sale for the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo’s 15th Annual Distinguished Alumni and Service Awards Banquet, scheduled for Saturday, February 28 at Nani Mau Gardens at 5 p.m. Tickets are $85 each or $680 for a table of eight.

This year’s Distinguished Alumni honorees are retired UH Hilo Athletic Director and Associate Professor Ramon Goya, Dr. Patsy Fujimoto, dentist and assistant professor at UH Manoa, and Dr. Boyd Castro, veterinarian and owner of Hilo Veterinary Clinic.

Organized by the University’s Alumni and Friends Association, the public is invited to attend this signature event, which includes a buffet dinner, live and silent auctions to benefit the alumni scholarship program and alumni activities, and the opportunity to meet and network with University and community leaders and supporters.

To purchase tickets or for more information, contact UH Hilo’s Marketing and Alumni Office at 932-7670 or 932-7671.
Hats off to...

Kainoa Ariola, Executive Director, Career and Academic Advising Center, was conferred the distinguished title of kumu hula by her kumu, Dr. Taupouri Tangaro (UNUKUPUKUPU) after going through the culminating rites of ‘uniki in December. Ariola was a member of the Unuolehua cohort, groomed to proficiency in hula and related cultural protocols derived from Tangaro’s extensive hula genealogy. The cohort was trained to facilitate cultural leadership through hula, utilizing the principles of leadership development and community engagement found in Hawai’i Papa O Ke Ao, the UH Systemwide initiative to transform into a leader in indigenous education.

Kurt Dela Cruz, Senior Advisor, Career and Academic Advising Center, was selected to present “The Four Fishes: An Island Perspective Designed to Enhance Your Advising Practice” at the National Academic Advising Association’s (NACADA) Region 9 Conference, to be held next month in Honolulu, HI. Additionally, Jodilyn Kunimoto, Senior Advisor, Lyssa Sakamoto, Academic Advisor, and Kainoa Ariola, Executive Director, will present “The Urge to Merge! The Realities of Integrating Career Development with Academic Advising Services.” NACADA promotes high quality academic advising globally in institutions of higher education.


Christina Mnatzaganian, Assistant Professor, and Victoria Rupp, Assistant Specialist, Pharmacy Practice, passed and received Board Certification for Ambulatory Care Pharmacy from the Board of Pharmacy Specialties, an autonomous division of the American Pharmacists Association (APA).

Dianqing Sun, Associate Professor, Pharmaceutical Sciences, is the corresponding author on the following papers: “Synthesis, structure-activity relationship studies, and antibacterial evaluation of 4-chromanones and chalcones, as well as olympicin A and derivatives” published in Journal of Medicinal Chemistry, and “Recent advances of natural and synthetic β-carbolines as anticancer agents,” published in Anti-Cancer Agents in Medicinal Chemistry. He was also invited to serve as a review panelist for the National Science Foundation.


UH Hilo joins Organization for Tropical Studies

UH Hilo has obtained permanent membership in an international organization comprised of more than 50 universities in the U.S. and abroad involved in the study of tropics. The Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS), founded in 1963, has developed programs acknowledged to be world-renowned models for tropical education and research.

“This is an important milestone in the growth of our programs in conservation and tropical biology,” said Chancellor Donald Straney. “We join the best in the world who are preparing the next generation of stewards of our lands and waters.”

OTS is managed by Duke University and based in Costa Rica, which has served as “the laboratory of the tropics,” for thousands of researchers and students from across the globe for over four decades. Its three biological field stations feature state-of-the-art research facilities that have made critical advances possible in the study of tropical systems. As the ‘classroom of the tropics,’ OTS’ experiential education approach has equipped multiple generations of students with the tools to understand how natural and man-made processes have shaped the tropical world.

“The University’s permanent membership in the OTS program will allow our graduate and undergraduate students enhanced opportunities to take courses and conduct research in Costa Rica,” said Dr. Donald Price, director, UH Hilo Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Science (TCBES) graduate program and professor of biology. “UH Hilo also plans to develop similar courses here in Hawai‘i for both UH students and international students attracted to this program.”

Price was selected along with Dr. Patrick Hart, associate professor of biology, as UH Hilo’s two delegates to represent the University at OTS. Dr. Rebecca “Becky” Ostertag and Dr. Elizabeth Stacy, professor and associate professor of biology, respectively, will serve as alternates.

For more information on OTS, visit http://www.ots.ac.cr/?gclid=COXL4MPBg8MCFQaDfgod9YAvw. To learn more about the University’s TCBES program, visit http://tcbes. uhh.hawaii.edu/.

International Nights 2015 is Feb 6 & 7

The UH Hilo International Student Association presents International Nights 2015 on Friday, February 6 and Saturday, February 7, at 7:30 pm in the UH Hilo Performing Arts Center. This annual event features performances from around the world and is a favorite among students, the community, and visitors.

This year’s shows feature a unique first-ever performance from Burma, taiko drumming from Japan, and American contemporary hip hop. Other performances will showcase the cultures of Samoa, the Philippines, Micronesia, Timor-Leste, Ireland, Tahiti, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Palau, Japan, Papua New Guinea, and the Marshall Islands.

Tickets are $12 for General Admission and $5 for Students, Children, and Senior Citizens. Tickets may be purchased at the UH Hilo Box Office from 9 am – 1 pm, Tuesday through Friday, or at the door if tickets are still available the night of the shows. As shows typically sell out, advance ticket purchase is recommended.

For more information, contact the UH Hilo Box Office at 932-7490 or visit http://hilo.hawaii.edu/international/IN.php.

Grammy-nominated guitarist Eric Bibb at PAC Feb. 11

Grammy-nominated guitarist Eric Bibb performs at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, February 11, at 7:30 pm.

“Eric Bibb has been appropriately described as ‘discreetly awesome’ and ‘a total original,’” noted PAC Manager Lee Dombroski. “His rich and sensitive vocals and lyrics provide a perfect balance to his fine finger-picking technique as he effortlessly blends various genres, melding a traditional, rootsy American style with a subtle, contemporary sensibility.”

Tickets are Reserved Seating and priced at $25 General, $20 Discount and $12 UH Students (with a valid student ID) and Children, up to age 17. On the day of the show, tickets are $30 General, $25 Discount and $17 UH Students (with a valid student ID) and Children, up to age 17.

Tickets are available by calling the UH Hilo Box Office at 932-7490 or ordering online at artscenter. uhh.hawaii.edu.
PAC welcomes Abraham. In. Motion’s *Pavement* Feb. 24

Celebrated choreographer Kyle Abraham brings Abraham. In. Motion’s *Pavement* to the UH Hilo Performing Arts Center on Tuesday, February 24, at 7:30 pm.

“Kyle Abraham’s work explores his diverse training in classical music, visual art, and a multitude of dance forms from ballet to hip-hop to give range and depth to his sleek, evocative style,” said PAC Manager Lee Dombroski.

“Abraham. In. Motion’s (A.I.M.) mission is to create an evocative, interdisciplinary body of work. Born into hip-hop culture in the late ’70s and grounded in Abraham’s artistic upbringing in classical cello, piano and visual arts, the Movement’s goal is to delve into identity in relation to a personal history.

“The work A.I.M. is bringing to UH Hilo draws its inspiration from John Singleton’s 1991 film *Boyz N The Hood* and W.E.B Dubois’ classic essay, ‘The Souls Of Black Folk.’ *Pavement* pays comedic homage to the bold Kris Kross/backward jeans and hightop fade era in hip-hop while reflecting on the growth and loss of Pittsburgh’s historically black neighborhoods, Homewood and the Hill District.”

Tickets are Reserved Seating and pre-sale priced at $30 General, $25 Discount and $15 UH Students (with a valid student ID) and Children, up to age 17. On the day of the show, tickets are $35 General, $30 Discount, and $20 UH Students (with a valid student ID) and Children, up to age 17. Tickets are available by calling the UH Hilo Box Office at 932-7490 or ordering online at artscenter.uhh.hawaii.edu.

---

**Campus Events**

**February**

- **2**  Last day to receive 50% tuition refund for complete withdrawals
- **5**  Vulcan Tennis vs. Linfield College, 1 p.m., Vulcan Courts
- **6, 7**  *International Nights 2015*, 7:30 p.m., PAC, Admission
- **7**  UH Hilo Open House, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., CC Plaza
- Vulcan Baseball vs. Alumni, 1 p.m., Wong Stadium
- **11**  *Eric Bibb*, 7:30 p.m., PAC, Admission
- **12**  Vulcan Baseball vs. Menlo College, 6 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission
- **13, 14**  Vulcan Baseball vs. Menlo College (DH), 4 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission
- **16**  Holiday: Presidents’ Day
- Vulcan Tennis (Men’s) vs. UC San Diego, 9 a.m., Vulcan Courts
- **18**  “Homegrown Terrorists” by Dr. Thom Curtis, 6:30 p.m., UCB 100
- **21, 22**  Vulcan Softball vs. Rollins College, Noon, Vulcan Field
- **24**  Abraham. In. Motion’s *Pavement*, 7:30 p.m., PAC, Admission
- **25, 26**  *Human Rights Watch Film Festival*, 5:30 p.m., UCB 127
- **27, 28**  Vulcan Baseball vs. Holy Names Univ (DH), 4 p.m., Wong Stadium, Admission