UH Hilo embarks on enrollment strategy to boost retention

by Ken Hupp

Improving retention has been a long-time goal for the University’s divisions of Academic and Student Affairs as a means of increasing academic success, enhancing student services and managing enrollment. But higher retention may also hold the key to meeting UH Hilo’s current and future financial challenges. And Chancellor Don Straney is now asking top administrators to develop a comprehensive plan to make those goals a reality.

“While reaching out to new students, we need to do everything possible to support those already here to help them fulfill their educational objectives,” Straney said. “When they succeed, everyone wins.”

As expenses continue to climb, state funding support has remained static or declined, and tuition and fees have become UH Hilo’s primary source of revenue.

Internal budget worksheets for Fiscal 2014 now project tuition and fees to outpace general fund revenues by as much as $7.2 million. But with expenses projected to exceed resources by about $930 thousand, the campus is facing the need to reduce expenses by that amount for the current year. That difference could be more than offset by retaining 63 more resident students and another 34 non-resident students, which would produce $1 million in additional revenue.

“I find it quite clarifying that our fate is intertwined with the fate of our students,” said Dr. Matthew Platz, vice chancellor, academic affairs. “We are going to succeed or fail together, and I think that’s the way it should be.”

UH Hilo currently has an overall retention rate of 62 percent, which is largely driven by an unexplained exodus that occurs between spring and fall. Nowhere is this more evident than among transfer students.

Seventy-four percent of those students who arrive in the fall

Statewide federal program boosts STEM research and educational activities

by Chancellor Don Straney

I recently attended the annual Hawai’i Statewide EPSCoR Conference in Honolulu. Hawai’i EPSCoR, or the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, is a statewide program funded through the National Science Foundation.

Hawai’i EPSCoR was initiated by the University of Hawai’i in 2001 to boost scientific research and workforce development throughout the entire State of Hawai’i. I currently serve as co-principle investigator of the program.

EPSCoR funds both research and education activity. Let me share some examples of current programs at UH Hilo funded through EPSCoR.

In the area of research, UH faculty researchers working with EPSCoR funds, along with undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral students, are working on interdisciplinary research in the fields of evolutionary genetics, ecosystem studies, and the cyber infrastructure of related studies. Over the years, the program has generated tens of millions of dollars in Statewide research projects.

EPSCoR funds the UH Hilo Spatial Data Analysis and Visualization Lab, which serves the community through web-based mapping and visualization tools. The lab specializes in advancing Hawai’i-based scientific research through professional collabora-
Retention  
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return in the spring. But between spring and the following fall, that number drops to 53 percent. Likewise, 90 percent of the fall freshman class returns in the spring. But that number is reduced to 70 percent by the time the new school year begins.

The reasons for leaving are not entirely clear. Administrators have just completed a Departure’s Survey sent to more than 700 students who attended classes this past spring, but did not return in the fall or graduate. While interested in why students are leaving, Dr. Luoluo Hong, vice chancellor, student affairs, says their emerging strategy relies on a more proactive approach.

“The reasons students give you for why they leave are often the last in a series of events that led to their decision, so you’re never really sure why they left,” Hong said. “What we’ve chosen to do is to focus on what research has shown has a good, predictable, positive influence on retention.”

Hong and Platz described a number of steps being undertaken by the two divisions to provide greater academic support, which include:

- Creation of Academic Maps which spell out an eight semester plan of course requirements and electives to help students graduate on time
- An Early Warning System to identify and provide academic advising for no-show students
- Intrusive Advising, a partnership between Academic and Student Affairs, in which students are contacted throughout the semester to monitor their progress, offer assistance and remind them of important, upcoming deadlines

“The past model has been, ‘if you are a student in trouble, come find us.’ But they don’t always know that (a) they can find us, (b) know that they are in trouble, or (c) they are afraid to come to us because they are embarrassed,” Hong said. “Under the new model, we’re going to go out of our way to get to you and not wait for you to be in trouble. We’re not only going to be there to celebrate your successes, but to help you if you are struggling.”

Hong and Platz now plan to take the “students first” and “data driven, evidence-based approach” to the next level through the development and implementation of Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM). The SEM concept looks at the entire student cycle from entry through graduation to help institutions obtain and retain optimum enrollment and graduation rates.

“What we’re talking about here is a total paradigm shift,” Platz said. “This is going to require everybody buying into the concept and pitching in to achieve our goal.”

Both emphasized that an actual plan is not in the immedi-ate offering, and that rushing into a plan would be a mistake. They’re currently in the early stages of educating the campus community one presentation at a time. It’s a lengthy, methodical approach, but one born out of necessity.

“What we acknowledge is that to become a Strategic Enrollment Management Campus, there are some changes we have to make and those are not things that the Council of Vice Chancellors, for example can just decide on their own,” Hong said. “We have to go out to the campus, share them, then get feedback and input.”

One of the key changes cited during her recent presentation at the Division of Student Affairs town hall meeting would be reduced emphasis on individual divisions and more emphasis on the common good. Under Strategic Enrollment Management, budgetary decisions would be less division- or department-based and weighted more heavily on how they would contribute to advancing SEM. The initial reaction from the town hall meeting was positive, and there seemed to be a consensus that the concept is a good one, regardless of how it came about.

“We want to do the right thing, because it is the right thing to do,” Hong said. “I think the bottom line is that the fiscal crisis has provided an opportunity for us as an institution to re-align with what I think we already feel good about and care about, which is we care about our student’s success.”

Once the buy-in is achieved, the real hard work begins. Developing an effective plan will require a thorough examination of all the issues surrounding the current rates of retention, including contributing factors, institutional strengths and weaknesses, real and potential challenges, and possible remedial actions.

Both Hong and Platz agree that improving retention is a methodical process that will be achieved over time. A yearly increase of one percent is considered remarkable for a public institution, and is typically the result of a disciplined, focused and coordinated effort. But they say if everyone remains focused and united toward achieving a common goal, the University will have a good shot at maximizing those gains.

“We’re not satisfied with a 62 percent retention rate. We’d like to get it up to 90 percent,” Platz said. “That obviously won’t happen anytime soon, but we do believe that over the long-term, that can be a realistic, aspirational goal.”

(Ken Hupp is a public information officer.)
DKICP continues biomedical research in joint project with UH Manoa

Researchers at the UH Hilo Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP) will receive more than $800,000 a year for five years in federal funding that will strengthen a collaborative research program with UH Manoa.

The IDeA Networks for Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) program in Hawai`i, which has been supported for more than 10 years by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has recently received an additional $18.4 million over five years of support. The renewal allows the collaboration to continue expanding and improving biomedical research in Hawai`i.

John M. Pezzuto, dean of DKICP, leads the UH Hilo effort, and works with UH Manoa Principal Investigator Robert Nichols, professor of Cell and Molecular Biology and Program Coordinator David Easa, both at the John A. Burns College of Medicine (JABSOM).

“This is important because it’s a competitive renewal, which means the grant wasn’t automatically extended. We had to compete with top research facilities throughout the country,” Pezzuto said. “And because one of the focuses is on fostering biomedical careers among students, we can pay it forward for years to come.”

In addition to core functions and support for undergraduate research projects, the UH Hilo component of the grant will support studies being conducted in DKICP laboratories.

“The hope is that work conducted under the auspices of INBRE will be leveraged into larger projects supported by extramural funding agencies,” Pezzuto said.

The grant also supports researchers and student enrichment programs at Chaminade University and Hawai`i Pacific University. It also funds projects and programs at outreach institutions Kapiolani Community College, Leeward Community College, UH Maui College, and Windward Community College.

STEM
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In one of the new K-12 programs, a traveling STEAM Team works with afterschool and summer fun programs to deliver engaging, hands-on STEM activities. The program is staffed with the assistance of UH undergraduate students looking to engage in service learning opportunities in the community.

The other new K-12 program is called Manowai o Hanakahi, and exposes local Filipino and Native Hawaiian students in high school to conservation and natural resource management through hands-on experiences in the field interacting with community agencies and partners.

EPSCoR also supports the Pacific Internship Program for Exploring Science, commonly called PIPES. Currently, EPSCoR funds are being used to coordinate 42 paid undergraduate PIPES internships for summer 2014. Each of these students completed an independent research project or worked with an agency to experience natural resource management. Over 30 agencies Statewide partnered with PIPES to host interns, including private, state, federal, and non-profit agencies.

In addition, EPSCoR has trained and employed over 60 students in the STEM workforce over the last four years. UH will be applying for the next round of EPSCoR funding in 2014.

Aloha,

Donald T. Knapp
Supakit Wongwiwatthananukit, Associate Professor, Pharmacy Practice, has two recent publications: “Prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and association of serum vitamin D level with anthropometric and metabolic factors in metabolic syndrome patients,” published in *Asian Biomed*, and “Effect of vitamin D2 supplementation on insulin sensitivity and metabolic parameters in metabolic syndrome patients,” published in *J Endocrinol Invest*. He also presented a research poster he co-wrote, entitled “Prevalence of diabetes and hypertension among Marshallese identified in pharmacist-led health screenings in Hawai’i,” at the 2013 American Pharmacists Association Annual Meeting and Exposition in Los Angeles, CA.


Terrance Jalbert, Professor, Finance, co-authored “Marginal Tax Rates around the Hawai’i Itemized Deduction Cliff,” to appear in *Accounting and Taxation*.

Adam Pack, Associate Professor, Psychology & Biology, co-authored “Trends in collisions between vessels and North Pacific humpback whales (Megaptera novaeangliae) in Hawaiian Waters (1975-2011),” published in the *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*.

Bryan Kim, Professor, Psychology, authored a chapter on “Two Journeys toward Multicultural Competence: Different Beginnings but Heading Toward the Same Destination” in *Developing Cultural Humility: Embracing Race, Privilege, and Power*, published by Sage.

Jon Goebel, Assistant Professor, Art, recently exhibited his artwork in the Shy Rabbit International 4 juried exhibition. More information can be found at: shyrabbit.com/Exhibits.html.

Cheryl Ramos, Associate Professor, Psychology, completed the Cancer Exercise Specialist certification training program at the Rocky Mountain Cancer Rehabilitation Institute in July 2013. The RMCRI is a part of the College of Natural and Health Sciences at the University of Northern Colorado and is a comprehensive cancer rehabilitation institute that focuses on research, education, and clinical practice to improve the quality of life for cancer patients through exercise interventions.

Charmaine Higa-McMillan, Associate Professor, Psychology, co-authored two papers: “From distal to proximal: Routine educational data monitoring in school-based mental health,” *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, and “Engineering youth service system infrastructure: Hawai’i’s continued efforts at large-scale implementation through knowledge management strategies,” *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*. Both are in press.

Jiren Feng, Assistant Professor, Chinese, recently had his article on “An examination of the content and literature value of the *Mujing Classic of Timberwork*: A concurrent study of

**Michael Marshall**, Professor, Art, was one of 50 artists selected to exhibit in the 21st National Satellite exhibition, “Another View III,” sponsored by the Los Angeles Printmaking Society, at Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, CA. Each artist is represented by one work selected from over 1,200 submitted images. The exhibit is on display until November 15, 2013.

**Faith Mishina**, Assistant Professor, Spanish, presents her research paper on “The Crumbling of Imperial Peace: The Violence of External Acquisition Is Turning Internal” at the Harvard Conference of the International Journal of Arts and Sciences in May 2014. She will also present her research paper on “The Ominous Strings of Neoliberal Puppet Masters: Washington, Allende and Pinochet” at the Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona in June 2014.

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**The Spoon River Project celebrates Hilo Community Players!**

In honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Hilo Community Players, the UH Hilo Performing Arts Department presents *The Spoon River Project*, a collaboration between UH Hilo and Hawai‘i Island’s oldest community theatre organization. Showtimes are for one weekend only: Thursday, Friday & Saturday, November 7, 8, 9 at 7:30 pm, and Sunday, November 10, at 2 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center.

The show was adapted into script form by Tom Andolora, a composer and voice teacher in New York City. UH Hilo Professor Jackie Pualani Johnson has welcomed community director Jake McPherson to co-direct the adaptation of Edgar Lee Masters’ free-form poems. McPherson served as president of the Players and has appeared as an actor at UH Hilo and in numerous Players’ productions.

The play focuses on the departed residents of Spoon River who speak from the grave, examining life and their longing for what might have been. As the post-Civil war community reflects on the dreams, secrets and regrets of their lives, they paint a gritty and honest portrait of the fictional town. Actors include UH Hilo students and veteran community performers: Juli Dobbs, James Elliott, Erin Gallagher, Le‘a Gleason, Dick Hershberger, Willyam Hudson, Sharon Justice, Pedro Ka‘awaloa, John Marcus Love, Randal McEndree, Catherine McPherson, Lewis Moore, Jin Piper, Brian Wild, Denyse Woo-Ockerman, and Corey Yester. Musical Direction will be by Christopher Tomich, who fulfills his Senior Project for a degree in Performing Arts, Music Concentration.

Open Seating tickets are priced at $12 General, $7 Discount & $5 UH Students with valid ID and Children 17 & under.

To order by phone, call 932-7490, or order online at artscenter.uhh.hawaii.edu.

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Aloha everyone. The Strategic Plan Progress Review Team is pleased to bring you the third installment in our series of articles explaining some of the various initiatives the University has undertaken toward achieving the goals set out in the UH Hilo 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. The current article features activities related to Goal # 3: Foster a vibrant and sustainable environment within which to study, work and live.

**Implement Freshman Village to enhance the first-year experience**

Hale ‘Alahonua successfully opened on time and under budget in August 2013, and is currently about 2/3 full. We also await the opening of the new Student Services Center, anticipated for January 2014. When we move some of the units in Campus Center over to the new SSC, we will then also renovate and move programs/services around in the Campus Center to improve quantity and quality of gathering spaces for students. Finally, Campus Recreation Department continues to make strides in offering one important “piko” on campus through its programming. Plans are underway to pilot Freshmen Village starting Fall 2014. The Hale Kanilehua, Living Learning Community (“LLC”) Phase I construction project was also completed on schedule (May 31, 2013), and available for student occupancy well before the Fall semester. Construction contracts were awarded for the LLC Phase II and IIA projects, with construction completion estimated to occur by the end of November, 2014. The LLC Phase II and IIA projects will further enhance the Living Learning Community concept with a new dormitory wing (17 additional beds), an open air classroom pavilion, and an enclosed second floor lanai for use as a multi-purpose room.

EMIT will begin planning discussions at its February 2014 meeting. A new Assistant Director for Orientation & Transition Programs (who will be one of the lead facilitators on this initiative) has been appointed and begins February 1, 2014. Consultation with various shared governance / organizational entities will occur throughout Spring 2014. The preliminary plan for a pilot will be drafted by June 2014, and recruitment for the Fall 2014 pilot will begin in August 2014. The pilot will be instituted Fall 2014. Potential donors to fund residential scholarships need to be identified and cultivated.

**Energy management and recycling**

UH Hilo energy efficiency measures are advancing well. To date, UH Hilo installed utility submeters in 98% of campus facilities to measure building energy usage. This measurement tool will be used to assess the impact of current and future energy savings activities.

A separate detailed baseline measurement of energy consumption and systems for nine major UH Hilo buildings is underway and will be included in the energy performance contract solicitation.

Photovoltaic systems (“PV”) installed as part of the new Student Services Center and Hale ‘ōlelo Building construction projects also includes ancillary rooftop PV system installations at the Library, Theater and old Student Services Building. These two construction projects added a total of 486kw to UH Hilo’s existing PV system, for a total aggregate UH Hilo PV system size of 569kw. The estimated annual utility cost savings resulting from a 569kw PV system is $345,000. Plans for an additional 24kw PV system for the new Hale Kanilehua wing currently under construction will be bid out in January 2014, and installed following the completion of the new dormitory wing.

The Local First initiative, spearheaded by the Chancellor’s Office in cooperation with our food service vendor Sodexo, continues supporting local agriculture by presenting a once-a-month menu of local-only produced foods.

**Campus technology infrastructure upgrades**

The first phase of VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) implementation occurred on October 21, 2013. VOIP will increase efficiencies in the use of UH Hilo’s data cabling as well as providing infrastructure to support classroom instructional technology, internet access, and wireless access. The conversion to VOIP is estimated to save UH Hilo $200,000 in annual utility expense.

UH Hilo is currently soliciting bids to implement campus-wide technology infrastructure upgrades to support a new video surveillance system and emergency call stations. This project will increase security camera coverage and expand recording capacity as campus activities encompass a larger footprint. In addition to addressing campus security needs, this project will also provide ancillary benefits, to include: 1) increased data speed at campus ports to support learning, teaching and research expansion; and 2) provide wireless coverage that will meet or exceed EduCause benchmarks. The anticipated completion date for this project is July 2014.
$60,000 gift boosts Vulcan Athletics

A Japanese businessman with strong ties to Hawai‘i Island has pledged $60,000 to create two funds to benefit the UH Hilo Vulcan Athletics Program. The gift will support student athletes and the Vulcans coaching staff.

How the gift will benefit UH Hilo Athletics:

The Hikozaemon Takahashi Coaches Fund for Excellence supports the UH Hilo Athletics recruitment program and will make it possible for coaches to travel throughout Hawai‘i and the nation to meet and recruit athletic talent. Currently, coaches rely on their own personal funds and other limited donor funds to pay for travel.

The Hikozaemon Takahashi Scholarship provides financial assistance for student-athletes and can be used for their tuition, books and equipment.

Chancellor Don Straney said, “We are most grateful to our donor for investing in our Athletics program. By growing our recruitment capabilities and scholarship opportunities, our program can flourish.”

UH Hilo Athletics Director Dexter Irvin added, “The UH Hilo Athletics program has 12 sports, including basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, tennis, and golf. Our goal is to ensure that all scholar-athletes receive scholarship support and that we have the means to recruit top talent. This generous gift will have an immediate, positive impact on the program.”

“The aloha from the people of Hawai‘i is special and unique,” noted the donor. “This gift is a small gesture of my appreciation and gratitude of Hawai‘i.”


Second Row: Athletic Director Dexter Irvin, Darnell Williams (MBK), Head Tennis Coach Karl Sloss, Kallen Mizutani (MT), Rachel Sugiyama (WT), Kristine Pasek (WS), Kassandra Talaments (WS), Keri Fujiiwara (XC), Golf/Volleyball Administrator Diane Wissing.

Third Row: Assistant Men’s Basketball Coach Tyson Sturza, Darius Johnson-Wilson (MBK), Certified Athletic Trainer Dick Koch, McKenzie Mangino (WBK), Assistant Cross Country Coach Alan Ryan, Danielle Koogman (WBK), Yonha Andrabdi (MS), Women’s Golf Coach Jim DeMello, Volleyball Coach Tino Reyes, Ikaika Fuerte (MS), Jordan Concannon (XC)

KEY: MBK – Men’s Basketball, MS – Men’s Soccer, MT – Men’s Tennis, WBK – Women’s Basketball, WS – Women’s Soccer, WT – Women’s Tennis, XC – Cross Country
Campus Events

November

1  “I” removal deadline: Student to Instructor
   Last day to apply for Credit-by-Exam for Fall
   Graduate thesis/dissertation to committee deadline

7, 8, 9  *The Spoon River Project*, 7:30 p.m., PAC, Admission

10  *The Spoon River Project*, 2 p.m., PAC, Admission

11  Holiday: Veteran’s Day

15  “I” removal and change of grade deadline: Instructor to Ofc of the Registrar
   Last day to submit Credit-by-Exam results to Ofc of the Registrar
   Graduate thesis/dissertation deadline

28  Holiday: Thanksgiving Day

29  Non-instructional Day