

SECTIONS ONE & TWO

Introduction to the Institutional Report: Institutional Context, Review under WSCUC Standards, and Response to Previous Commission Actions

Subsections include:

- The Island of Hawai'i: A Quick Profile of a Volatile Landscape
- *Kuleana*: The Mission and Vision of UH Hilo
- UH Hilo's Key Strengths—Working “for” a Diverse Community
- Looking at Our Own Strengths and Weaknesses: The Self Review Under the WSCUC Standards & the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators
- Previous Commission Actions and Our Responses
- Substantive Change Proposals Since Last Visit

Au umauma 'o Hilo i ka wai:

Hilo has breasted the water

-- 'Ōlelo no'eau meaning “to weather the storm”

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) is a state-sponsored institution that dates back to 1947 as an extension of the College of General Studies at the University of Hawai'i (Mānoa) in Honolulu—this was in addition to the already operational Hilo Technical School. UH Hilo became accredited by WSCUC as a two-year institution in AY 1959-1960. Between 1969 and 1970, the Board of Regents authorized the transformation of “Hilo College” into a four-year institution, and by AY 1970-1971, our first four-year graduates were exiting. In 1972 the student enrollment grew to 1,483 students seeking 14 different majors.¹ In 1989, when the administrative functions of both UH Hilo and Hawai'i Community College (HAWCC) were still combined, the University of Hawai'i at Hilo boasted three colleges—the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Continuing Education and Community Service, and the College of Agriculture—with twenty-three (23) baccalaureate programs serving a total FTE headcount of 2,417.² By the 2001-2002 Self Study for the Re-affirmation of Accreditation, UH Hilo grew to 2,874 students and had added the College of Hawaiian Language.³ As of AY 2019-2020, the University of Hawai'i at Hilo is

¹ Blake W.H. Smith et al., “University of Hawaii at Hilo, Hilo College, Accreditation Self-Study Report,” October 1972, 15 & 39.

² Edward J. Kormondy et al., “The University of Hawaii at Hilo Fifth Year Accreditation Report,” February 1989, 3, 5.

³ April Komenaka et al., “[Self-Study Report Submitted to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Reaffirmation of Accreditation](#),” July 13, 2001 (rev. January 17, 2002), accessed November 22, 2019, 1.

home to the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Natural and Health Sciences, the College of Business and Economics, the College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resource Management, Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani (College of Hawaiian Language), and the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy for a combined total headcount of 3,372 graduates and undergraduates.⁴ The institutions now offers four (4) doctoral degrees (including the PharmD), seven (7) master's diplomas, and thirty-eight (38) undergraduate majors along with a number of minors and certificate programs.⁵ While we have much to look back on with pride, we begin this introduction by acknowledging the 60th anniversary of our first steps towards accreditation and the "rough waters" both our community and our institution have had to weather in recent years.

The Island of Hawai'i: A Quick Profile of a Volatile Landscape

UH Hilo is located on the southernmost and largest island in the Hawaiian archipelago. Also known as the Big Island, the Island of Hawai'i has undergone radical economic and social changes over the past fifty years, much of which is reflected in the growth and contractions experienced by the institution. Conceived during the latter end of the sugar era, UH Hilo served a community that was experiencing regular economic growth; however, by the 1970s through the 1990s, that industry came to a halt when many of the mills started to fold due to cheaper competition from overseas. Per historians Dorrance and Morgan, "In 1936 the 16 mills then operating on Hawai'i [Island] produced 318,163 tons of sugar, 34.66 percent of the Territory's total production. In 1990 Hawai'i's three remaining mills produced 212,524 tons, 25.93% of the state's total production. The last of the Big Island's plantations was shut down in 1996."⁶

It is not surprising that since the demise of the Island's largest employing industry, the community at large has experienced ongoing socio-economic challenges. In 2001, our Self-Study reported some of the highest levels of poverty given that "Hawai'i Island fared worse than the state as a whole during the 1990s."⁷ Twenty years later, the following comparison between Hawai'i Island (County) and the State paints a stubborn, unchanging picture. The following table shows that Hawai'i Island is still relatively a rural community that generates less income per individual and has both a higher level of poverty while simultaneously posting less educational attainment in comparison to the overall State.

⁴ Institutional Research & Analysis Office, "[Headcount Enrollment, Multi-Year, University of Hawai'i](#)," UH Hilo, accessed, November 20, 2019.

⁵ UH Hilo, Catalog 2019-2020, "[Degrees and Certificates Offered](#)," accessed November 20, 2019.

⁶ William H. Dorrance and Francis S. Morgan, *Sugar Islands: The 165-year Story of Sugar in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 2000), 81-82.

⁷ April Komenaka et al., "[Self-Study Report Submitted to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Reaffirmation of Accreditation](#)," July 13, 2001 (rev. January 17, 2002), accessed November 22, 2019, page 5.

TABLE 1.1.
*Right, Socio-
 Economic
 Indicators for
 the Island of
 Hawai'i per
 the 2019
 Hawai'i State
 Data Book.*

2019 State of Hawaii Data Book	Hawai'i County	State
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2018 ⁸	92.4%	92.0%
Bachelor's Degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2010-2015 ⁹	29.6%	33.5%
Per capita income, 2018 (dollars) ¹⁰	\$44,449	\$55,418
Median household income, 2016-2018 ¹¹	\$54,684	\$74,659
Persons in poverty, percent ¹²	15.4%	9.3%
Families with female householder, no husband present with related children under 18 years (percent listed below poverty level) ¹³	42.7%	26.9%
Population per square mile ¹⁴	45.9	211.8

Ironically, agriculture remains relatively low in terms projections from the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; greater numbers and/or higher levels of growth are predicted for: (1) government (federal, state, and county), 14,160 to 14,940; (2) retail trade, 8,990 to 9,280; (3) health services, 6,810 to 8,020; and (4) hotel and hospitality combined, 10,970 to 11, 830.¹⁵

⁸ Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, *2019 Hawaii State Data Book*, [Table 3.04](#) – Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years Old and Over, by County: 2018.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, *2019 Hawaii State Data Book*, [Table 13.12](#) – Personal Income, Total and Per Capita, And Population by County.

¹¹ Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, *2019 Hawaii State Data Book*, [Table 13.23](#) – Estimated Median Household Income and Poverty Status, By County, 2016-2018.

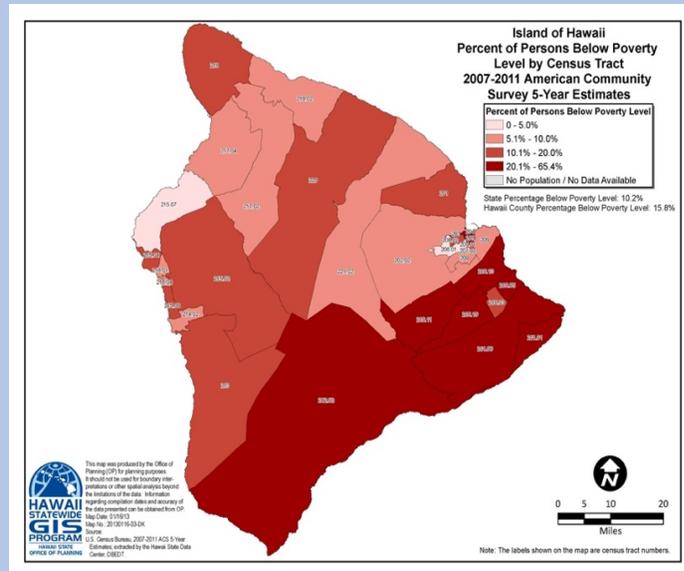
¹² Ibid.

¹³ ¹³ Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, *2019 Hawaii State Data Book*, [Table 13.27](#) – Poverty Status, for the State and by County, 2014-2018.

¹⁴ Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, *2019 Hawaii State Data Book*, [Table 1.10](#) – Population, Land Area and Population Density, by County and Island: 2010

¹⁵ County of Hawai'i, Department of Research and Development, [Hawai'i County Data Book, 2015](#), Table 1.3.15, Economic Projections: Hawaii County 2010 to 2040, 24.

FIG 1.1. *Right*, Percent of Persons Below Poverty by Census Tract, 2007-2011. Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.



A scrutiny of educational statistics shows our economic climate along with the challenges in public education:

TABLE 1.2. *Right*, Local Big Island High School 11th Grade Assessment Passing Rates

High School	Statewide assessments: Language Arts	Statewide assessments: Math	Statewide assessments: HCPS Science	Percent receiving free or reduced cost lunch (2018-2019)
State Average	59%	30%	35%	NA
Kohala ¹⁶	55%	33%	64%	56.9%
Kealakehe ¹⁷	55%	26%	36%	50.5%
Konawaena ¹⁸	59%	31%	35%	57.2%
Ka'u ¹⁹	38%	7%	27%	CEP (100%)
Kea'au ²⁰	40%	27%	28%	CEP (100%)
Waiākea ²¹	68%	40%	44%	43.7%
Hilo ²²	60%	31%	26%	52.9%

¹⁶ Hawaii State Department of Education, Assessment and Accountability Branch, [Kohala High School: School Status and Improvement Report, 2019-2020](#).

¹⁷ Hawaii State Department of Education, Assessment and Accountability Branch, [Kealakehe High School: School Status and Improvement Report, 2019-2020](#).

¹⁸ Hawaii State Department of Education, Assessment and Accountability Branch, [Konawaena High School: School Status and Improvement Report, 2019-2020](#).

¹⁹ Hawaii State Department of Education, Assessment and Accountability Branch, [Ka'u High & Pahala Intermediate School, School Status and Improvement Report, 2019-2020](#).

²⁰ Hawaii State Department of Education, Assessment and Accountability Branch, [Keaau High School: School Status and Improvement Report, 2019-2020](#).

²¹ Hawaii State Department of Education, Assessment and Accountability Branch, [Waiakea High School: School Status and Improvement Report, 2019-2020](#).

²² Hawaii State Department of Education, Assessment and Accountability Branch, [Hilo High School: School Status and Improvement Report, 2019-2020](#).

UH Hilo data (which will be covered later in this report) mirror DOE statistics; many of our students come from communities where [25-65% of households fall below federal poverty rates](#) and may be underprepared for college (See FIG 1.1). Our distribution of first-time, full-time freshmen shows the bulk of the entering class for 2018-2019 coming from Hawai'i Island high schools (56%), followed by Big Island private schools, including the Native Hawaiian serving Kamehameha School-Kea'au Campus (25%), and Leeward O'ahu public schools (24%).²³ Fifty-five percent (55%) of our student body are Pell Grant Recipients.²⁴

Also reported in earlier Self-Studies is this Island's vulnerability to regular natural disasters. In 1946 and 1960, Hilo was hit by devastating tsunamis that caused hundreds of fatalities and millions of dollars in damage.²⁵ The last Visiting Team in 2014 noted: "the team was on the Big Island as the immediacy of the lava crisis came to a head. A new lava flow, threatening to cut off the southern portion of the island from Hilo, changing a 30-40 minute commute to one of more than two hours, would, at the institution's best intimation leave nearly 400 faculty, staff, and students in the challenging position of trying to figure out how to get to and from the campus. This of course is following the hurricane that brushed the island just prior to the team's arrival, the second one to hit the area in less than six months."²⁶ Recently, the 2018-2019 eruption that exploded from underground without warning in Puna inundated within months Leilani Estates, Hawaiian Beaches, Kapoho, and other areas south of Pāhoa—areas that were already hard hit by lower economic conditions. The County of Hawai'i reports that 716 structures (including 200 homes) and 8,488 acres destroyed affecting some 3,000 residents; \$236.5 million in damages to infrastructure (roads, waterlines, telephone cable, etc.) and \$27.9 million in agricultural losses were recorded.²⁷ It is estimated that the County experienced up to an additional \$99 million in lost revenue from decreased tourism that directly impacted subsidiary industries—hotels, restaurants, tour outfitters, and retail outlets.²⁸

Additional economic loss has been felt given the most recent protest against the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on Maunakea that began in the Summer of 2019. Local media reported local tour companies were losing revenue with the closure of the road to the summit and were in the process of laying off employees.²⁹ Apart from concerns from the business community, this conflict has left the local

²³ University of Hawai'i Institutional Research & Analysis Office, "[High School Background for First-Time Students, University of Hawai'i, Fall 2018](#)," Table 3: Hawai'i Recent High School Graduates Enrolled at the University of Hawai'i by High School District and High School, Fall 2018, 19.

²⁴ UH Hilo at a Glance, Pell Grant Recipients, Fall 2018, <https://www.hawaii.edu/campuses/hilo/>.

²⁵ Vanessa Sim, "[Three tsunamis that changed Hilo and Hawai'i's Big Island](#)," *Hawai'i Magazine*, November 25, 2009, accessed December 6, 2019.

²⁶ Leroy Morishita et al., [Report of the WSCUC Visiting Team Accreditation Report](#), October 22-24, 2014, 30.

²⁷ County of Hawai'i, *Kilauea Eruption Recovery*, "[Frequently Asked Questions](#)," How Much Damage was Caused by the 2018 Eruption? (Second link under "Impacts"), accessed January 25, 2021.

²⁸ U.S. News (Associated Press), "[Hawaii-Volcano Money Loss Story](#)," May 28, 2019, accessed November 22, 2019.

²⁹ Jim Mendoza, "[As protests continue, Mauna Kea closure crippling tour companies](#)," *Hawaii News Now*, July 19, 2019, accessed December 4, 2019. For more insight into the overall sentiment among the business community, see

community feeling fractured and the University of Hawai'i System at the center of the controversy with "faculty members and students . . . divided on the project."³⁰ We at UH Hilo remain cognizant of opposing sentiments related to the this issue as this directly concerns our institution's simultaneous goals related to the advancement of the sciences and the promotion of indigenous language and cultural revitalization.³¹

Despite lingering problems, Hawai'i Island takes great pride in its diversity of people and culture. Our Island has long hosted a plethora of immigrant populations. Large-scale sugar operations necessitated the importation of labor, the first largest group were the Chinese in the 1880s.³⁴ Japanese started arriving in 1885, and by 1920, 50% residents of the Big Island were said to be of Japanese ancestry.³⁵ The next group were the Filipinos, who by the 1930s made up 70% of the total plantation workforce.³⁶ They were followed by Okinawans, the Portuguese, Koreans, Puerto Ricans, African Americans from the American South, and Spaniards from Malaga and Granada.³⁷ In more recent times, while some Asians have out-migrated, peoples from other parts of the Pacific (including the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, and Samoa) and Latino/as from Spanish speaking regions in North America have been settling on the Island.

The 2019 census estimates the following ethnic breakdown:

TABLE 1.3.
Right, US Census estimates, July 1, 2019.

Race and Hispanic Origin (July 1, 2019)	Hawai'i Island³²	City and County of Honolulu³³
White alone, percent	34.0%	21.6%
Black or African American, alone	0.8%	2.8%
American Indian & Alaska Native, alone	0.6%	0.3%
Asian, alone	21.2%	42.9%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone	12.8%	9.6%
Two or more races	30.5%	22.8%
Hispanic or Latino	12.9%	10.0%
Foreign-born persons, 2013-2017	11.9%	17.9%

Mahealani Richardson's "[Hawaii Island businesses 'somber' over TMT stalemate at Mauna Kea](#)," *Hawaii News Now*, November 7, 2019.

³⁰ Colleen Flaherty, "[More Than a Fight for the Heavens](#)," *Inside Higher Ed*, July 25, 2019, accessed December 4, 2019.

³¹ A statement by the UH System Office of Mauna Kea Management dated October 3, 2019 outlines the administration's views on the project on their website, "[Maunakea and TMT misinformation fact check](#)." The local Hilo media has covered the views of faculty, students, and staff who oppose the project; see "[UH faculty group demands Lassner's resignation](#)," *Hawaii Tribune Herald*, July 28, 2019.

³² United States Census, 2010, [QuickFacts: Hawaii County](#), Hawaii.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Sophia V. Schweitzer, *Big Island Journey: An Illustrated Narrative of the Island of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 2009), 81.

³⁵ Ibid., 82.

³⁶ Ibid., 86.

³⁷ Ibid., 84, 87.

However, these figures do not tell the full story. First, additional census data gathered for the 2010 State Data Book reports Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders who were of mixed race-actually totaled 55.8% of the population of the Big Island in comparison to O‘ahu (34.0%) and Maui (37.7%).³⁸ Second, hidden in the numbers for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders is a growing population of Micronesians and Marshallese, who make up visible percentages at the local high schools: Kealakehe (12.3%), Konawaena (6.7%), Ka‘ū (10.6%), Kea‘au (4.4%), Hilo (8.4%), and Waiākea (3.2%).³⁹ Likewise, Filipinos are shown to be the largest Asian community in DOE statistics: Kealakehe (13.5%), Konawaena (9.3%), Ka‘ū (23.2%), Kea‘au (19.3%), Hilo (12.9%), and Waiākea (14.5%).⁴⁰ Both of these latter groups are cited as having lower levels of secondary and tertiary education completion.⁴¹

Kuleana: The Mission and Vision of UH Hilo

The distinctive nature of our community is reflected in the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo’s profile. While many from the outside might see the plantation past as simply a “nostalgic” image of multiculturalism, that heritage—including the local creole’s association “with the minimal intelligence assumed necessary for manual labor” and one-time ban against the Native Hawaiian language—has been tinged with racial tensions that have long played out in education.⁴² This explains part of our mission (as part of the larger University of Hawai‘i System) as described in the Hawai‘i Revised Statutes § 304A-102 (2016) to provide an education as good as any university on the mainland:

[§304A-102] Purposes of the university. The purposes of the university are to give thorough instruction and conduct research in, and disseminate knowledge of, agriculture, mechanic arts, mathematical, physical, natural, economic, political, and social sciences, languages, literature, history, philosophy, and such other branches of advanced learning as the board of regents from time to time may prescribe and to give such military instruction as the board of regents may prescribe and that the federal government requires. The standard of instruction shall be equal to that given and required in similar universities on the mainland United States. Upon the

³⁸ Percentages are based off of raw data given in the State of Hawaii Data Book, 2018, [Table 1.33](#) – Race and Hispanic Origin, by County: 2010.

³⁹ Data reported in the State of Hawaii Department of Education School Status and Improvement reports cited in footnotes 15 to 21.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ For discussion on the educational gaps between Filipinos and other Asian Americans in Hawai‘i, see Kevin L. Nadal et al., “[Overcoming the Model Minority Myth, Experiences of Filipino American Graduate Students](#),” *Journal of College Student Development* 51(6); for a discussion on the challenges facing Micronesian students in the State of Hawai‘i, see Kaleihōkū Kala‘i et al., “[Feasibility Study for a Micronesian Culture Based Charter School and Other Educational Programs](#),” University of Hawaii at Mānoa College of Education, November 21, 2015.

⁴² Charlene Sato quoted by Scott Saft, *Exploring Multilingual Hawai‘i: Language Use and Language Ideologies in a Diverse Society* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019), 100. For more on the legal banning of the Hawaiian language in public education starting in 1896, see the Hawai‘i State Department of Education’s website, [History of Hawaiian Education](#).

successful completion of prescribed courses, the board of regents may confer a corresponding degree upon every student who becomes entitled thereto.

The specific mission of UH Hilo has been overseen by external stakeholders for some time, reaching back to the late 1970s and early 1980s, when “the County Council, a long supporter of the school, voted to urge the UH Administration to ‘ . . . actively pursue undergraduate and graduate degree programs in areas of scientific development suited to the Island of Hawai’i.’”⁴³ In fact, the 1960 tsunami which devastated Hilo town was said to have spurred then Hawai’i Island Chamber of Commerce Executive Secretary Mits Akiyama to “seek economic opportunities for Hilo. He was the driving force along with Governor John A. Burns and [other] state and local officials to establish a new industry that was astronomy atop Mauna Kea [sic].”⁴⁴

The need to simultaneously offer a varied set of academically sound programs on par with mainland institutions while also pursuing research and education that is informed by if not directly connected to the specific socio-economic needs of the local community might appear as divergent goals; however, this is the mandate under which we were established and this informs our specific mission: **“A’ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho’okahi (One learns from many sources): The purpose of our university ‘ohana (family) is to challenge students to reach their highest level of academic achievement by inspiring learning, discovery and creativity inside and outside the classroom. Our kuleana (shared responsibility) is to improve the quality of life of the people of Hawai’i, the Pacific region and the world.”**⁴⁵ (CFR 1.1)

UH Hilo’s Key Strengths—Working “for” a Diverse Community

Our placement within this at-risk community means our research and our teaching often has large interface with the community. For example, the community turned to UH Hilo’s educational farm in Pana’ewa to provide refuge for 23 horses and other animals when the 2018 eruption started overrunning farms in the lower Puna district. This, in turn, provided the College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resource Management (CAFNRM)’s pre-vet students with an opportunity to gain hands-on experience with larger animals.⁴⁶ The college continues to engage in fundraisers by working with community leaders (such as Chef Alan Wong) to maintain their new resident animals.⁴⁷

⁴³ Frank T. Inouye et al., *The University of Hawai’i at Hilo: A College in the Making* (Honolulu: UH Press, 2001), 26.

⁴⁴ Hawaii News Now, [“A Look at TMT’s potential impact on Hawaii Island’s economy,”](#) accessed December 5, 2019.

⁴⁵ University of Hawai’i at Hilo, [“Mission,”](#) 2020-2021 Catalog.

⁴⁶ Stephanie Salmons, [“UH Hilo Equine class pairs students with lava-displaced animals,”](#) *Hawaii Tribune Herald*, October 9, 2018, accessed December 6, 2019.

⁴⁷ *Nihopeku: A blog about UH Hilo’s preparing students and the community for the future of agricultural sciences*, [“Fundraiser for UH Equine program to benefit displaced animals from lava flow now living at ag farm,”](#) September 12, 2018.

As we reported in our 2013-2014 Institutional Review for Reaffirmation of Accreditation, such activities reflect UH Hilo's continuing leadership in providing our local community access to our research via interactive partnerships which can often be of vital critical health and economic importance:

- Sustaining and contributing to Community Health is a key mission for the College of Pharmacy, which maintains a [Rat Lungworm project](#). Also embedded in CoP is active research on improving [cost-effectiveness in rural community health education outreach](#) and [physician recruitment](#).
- Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani (College of Hawaiian Language) maintains an active publishing site called Hale Kuamo'o, which was established by the Hawai'i State Legislature in 1989 to provide materials for primary and secondary instruction across the State; they are also the proliferators of key historic texts such as *Ke Ka'ao O Lā'ieikawai* (1997), a longer complex retelling of a legend originally printed in 1834 in a Hawaiian language newspaper, and *He Mo'olelo no Kamapua'a* (1998), a rendering of G. W. Kahilo's telling of the myth that ran in *Ka Hae Hawaii* from 1856 to 1861. Such efforts were cited as ensuring locally important publishing in the face of global universalization of multi-national publishing endeavors.⁴⁸
- Starting in 2012, Sodexo Dining Services at UH Hilo embarked on a campus-wide program "helping local farmers while providing quality food and services to the UH Hilo community."⁴⁹ The program interfaces with 42 local vendors and provides meals comprised of 65% on-island sourced ingredients, with the first Wednesday of each month devoted to 100% "Local First" meals.⁵⁰ This has since been complimented by a student-led food waste collection project that aims to "model a sustainable food system that island communities can implement to reduce impact on the environment."⁵¹

This and other community-serving research and learning will be covered in more detail as they relate directly to the specific meaning of degrees at UH Hilo and the quality of student learning in Section Three: Degree Programs; Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees. We will show how assessment of service learning, which is at the core of many of our majors, reflects our high expectations for student performance. (CFR 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, & 2.6)

Our campus is a mirror reflection of the people we serve. We are considered the most diverse institution in the United States for the very reason that we are an educational institution that hosts a majority of

⁴⁸ Seri I. Luangphinit, "[The View from Another Shore: An Island-Specific Approach to Literary Criticism](#)." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*. Oxford University Press (2019), doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.843>, 6-7.

⁴⁹ Kara Nelson, "[Eating with Aloha at UH Hilo, putting sustainability and local farmers first](#)," *UH Hilo Stories*, February 24, 2015.

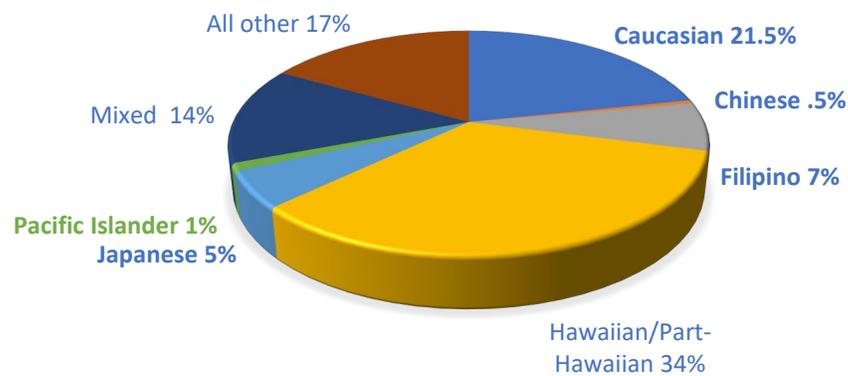
⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Anne Rivera, "[UH Hilo launches food waste collection program, adding another component to sustainable food system on campus](#)," *UH Hilo Stories*, November 21, 2017.

students who are not Anglo-American.⁵² We are committed to not only tracking and reporting of federally established ethnic groups, but also providing an academic and co-curricular support to help the more under-represented groups on campus. We are also proud to report that the vast majority of our students are female (63.6%) and Pell Grant Recipients (49.4%).⁵³ (CFR 1.4) We will discuss in greater depth in Section Five: Student Success—Student Learning, Retention, and Graduation how we aid this multi-faceted body of learners (including historically underrepresented minorities) in meeting learning targets, staying engaged in academics, and completing their degrees.

FIGURE 1.2.
Right, Student
 Diversity at UH
 Hilo (Full Time
 Students Only,
 Fall 2020)

UH HILO ENROLLMENT BY ETHNICITY



Looking at Our Own Strengths and Weaknesses: The Self Review Under the WSCUC Standards & the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

Apart from our obvious diverse environment, other strengths were duly noted in the Self Review Under the WSCUC Standards that we conducted as a wide-scale survey in AY 2018-2019. The survey was sent out in the fall of 2018; 102 people answered—73 faculty, 27 staff, and 2 administrators. The following were the top three strengths identified by the faculty, staff, and administrators who participated in the survey:

- CFR 2.2 All degrees—undergraduate and graduate—awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of entry-level requirements and in terms of the levels of student achievement necessary for graduation that represent more than simply an accumulation of courses or credits. Competencies required for graduation are reflected in course

⁵² Hawaii Tribune Herald, "[UH Hilo selected most diverse campus by national publication](#)," September 11, 2019, accessed December 6, 2019.

⁵³ [UH Hilo at a Glance](#), updated Fall 2020.

syllabi for both General Education and the major. (71.8% identified this as an area of strength)

- 2.5 The institution’s academic programs actively involve students in learning, challenge them to meet high expectations, and provide them with appropriate and ongoing feedback about their performance and how it can be improved. (63.6% identified this as an area of strength)
- 1.4 Consistent with its purposes and character, the institution demonstrates an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in society through its policies, its educational and co-curricular programs, its hiring and admissions criteria, and its administrative and organizational practices. (61.4%)

This strength is especially noted in our faculty and staff, who represent a diverse mix of different backgrounds. (CFR 3.1)

FIGURE 1.3. *Right,*
Demographic
Background of Full-time
Faculty (Female) as of AY
2019-2020

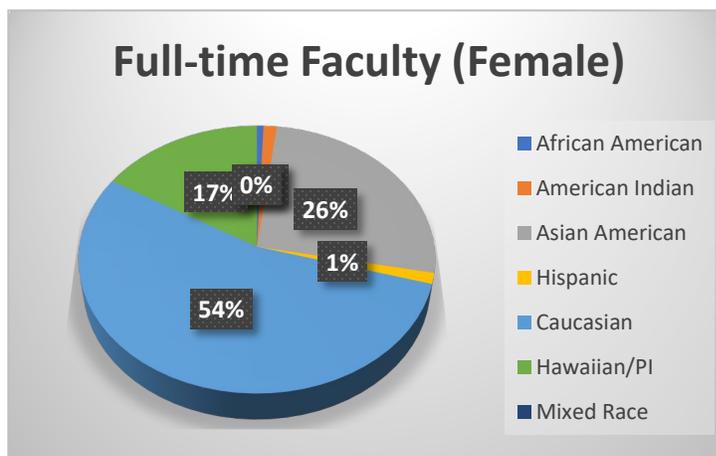


FIGURE 1.4. *Right,*
Demographic
Background of Full-time
Faculty (Male) as of AY
2019-2020

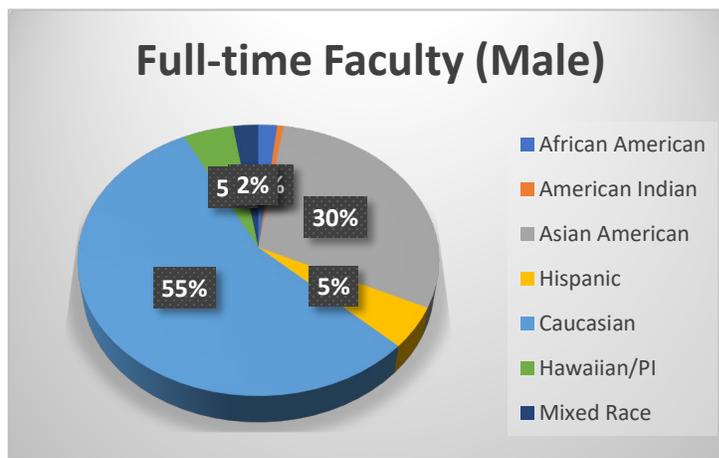
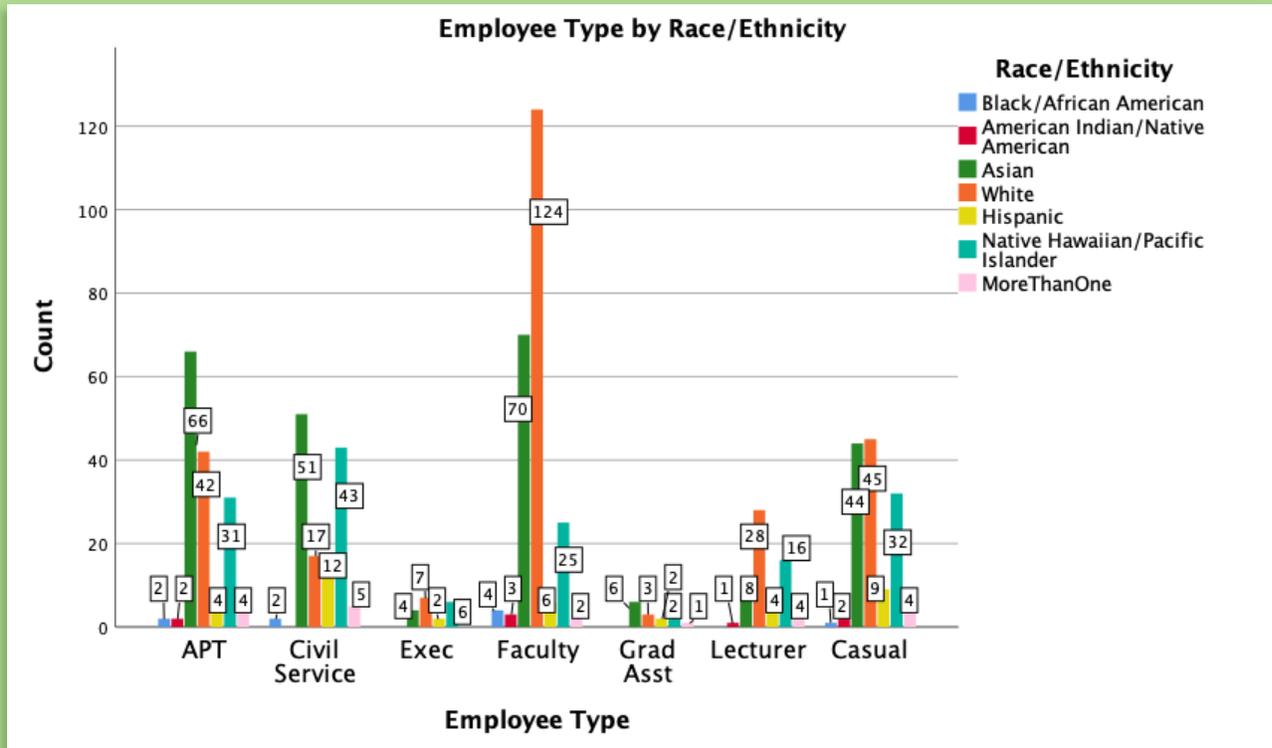


FIGURE 1.5. *Below, Race/Ethnic Background of All Current Employees*



How the institution delivers on its strength in terms of racial and cultural diversity while ensuring quality and rigor will be further discussed in the Section Four: Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation.

The survey also revealed that problems we identified in the 2012-2013 Self Review have become much more urgent. Because we redeployed the exact same survey in 2012, we were able to calculate percentage changes, which are noted below. CFRs used in the last survey have been cross-walked with current accreditation language (in red).⁵⁴ We have also included a few comments that were provided by respondents:

- CFR 3.1 The institution employs personnel sufficient in number and professional qualifications to maintain its operations and to support its academic programs, consistent with its institutional and educational objectives. (The institution employs faculty and staff with

⁵⁴ Note that to show a comparison between 2012 and 2018, the exact same questions using older CFRs were used. The language for these results of the CFRs that were identified as weaknesses were cross-walked so match the 2014 CFRs. The most current numbers and language for CFRs are noted in red).

substantial and continuing commitment to the institution. The faculty and staff are sufficient in number, professional qualification, and diversity to achieve the institution’s educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic and co-curricular programs wherever and however delivered.)

- Many departments are understaffed and cannot provide the number and variety of courses for the number of students within their major/minor.
- While my personal department is well staffed for the university's needs, other departments with large number of students have been chronically understaffed. While hires have been made in "in need" departments, I'd like the decision process to be more transparent.”
- “Cost savings through position attrition” isn't the best strategy.
- There is a significant shortage in areas on campus while others have ample staffing for their needs. We need to look at class enrollments and the needs of departments. This will require that we create a plan with our top priorities so that we can provide staffing in critical areas.
- Basic maintenance of facilities is problematic: from broken doors to air conditioning to lack of recycling and trash bins. Also purchasing for department and individual instructor needs seems nearly impossible; either the budget is not in place or the purchase process is so complicated that items do not get purchased. From basic needs like pens, printer ink, and batteries to larger equipment needs for laboratories, it is not clear if the university has any policy on what instructors should have in order to do their basic job.

	% 2012	%2018	% change
Importance to address at this time (High Priority)	86.8	85.9	-1%

- CFR 3.5 The institution has a history of financial stability, unqualified independent financial audits and has resources sufficient to ensure long-term viability. Resources are aligned with educational purposes and objectives. If the institution has an accumulated deficit, it has realistic plans to eliminate the deficit. Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and diversification of revenue sources.

CFR 3.4 The institution is financially stable and has unqualified independent financial audits and resources sufficient to ensure long-term viability. Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and diversification of revenue sources. Resource

planning is integrated with all other institutional planning. Resources are aligned with educational purposes and objectives.

	% 2012	%2018	% change
Importance to address at this time (High Priority)	79.3	81.1	+2%

- CFR 1.3 The institution’s leadership creates and sustains a leadership system at all levels that is marked by high performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability.

CFR 3.6 The institution’s leadership, at all levels, is characterized by integrity, high performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability.

CFR 3.8 The institution has a full-time chief executive officer and a chief financial officer whose primary or full-time responsibilities are to the institution. In addition, the institution has a sufficient number of other qualified administrators to provide effective educational leadership and management.

- I think we have too many interim administrators; leading to a lack of long-term goals and vision.
- Too many leadership positions are interim, which means that there is no long-term vision or commitment on the part of the interim administrators.
- Underperforming faculty are not addressed in a strategic way.
- We are trying to cut our way to success. That has never worked. Fewer classes, decaying facilities, fewer students, less tuition, whoops looks like we need another round of cuts. If we're being led anywhere, it's into a death spiral.

	% 2012	%2018	% change
Importance to address at this time (High Priority)	70.9	79.0	+9%

A review of the comments made it very clear that despite our best efforts, decision making and the rationale for decisions were still not being clearly communicated across all channels. These results helped us to understand some of the trouble we encountered in compiling the [Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators](#) for the [2016-2017 Interim Report](#)—many of the program and department chairs were unaware of past reviews much less when their next reviews were scheduled. Compounding this problem was the lack of an archive to help store past self-studies and external reviews—some chairs scrambled to find hard copies of these documents as not all were housed on the Vice Chancellor of

Academic Affairs' program review website. Revamping the calendar and reporting elements on a more robust [accreditation website](#) was an easy fix, but we had to confront a lack of communication about the meaningfulness of program review.⁵⁵ But the larger problem remained. Per the recent survey, the perception that decision-making was not seen as being "evidence based." The first step is currently underway—stabilizing leadership. A new Chancellor came on board in July of 2019 and a permanent Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs joined us in August of 2020. In Spring of 2021, permanent dean were appointed to the two units most effected by a recent reorganization—the College of Health and Natural Sciences and the College of Arts and Sciences.⁵⁶ (CFR 3.8)

Previous Commission Actions and Our Responses

The Commission in March of 2016 reaffirmed UH Hilo's accreditation for a seven-year period and noted areas in need of attention that were to be reported in a Spring 2017 Interim Report. These areas were again cited in a recent WSCUC communication:

- 1) The status of the enrollment management efforts, specifically new student enrollment goals and retention targets identified in the institutional reports;
- 2) Demonstration that the educational effectiveness and assessment efforts are ongoing and have advanced across all programs offered by Hilo and through the co-curricular programs of the campus. It is important that this effort also include the integration of the core competencies throughout the major programs offered at the undergraduate level;
- 3) An update on the financial strength of the institution particularly as it relates to enrollment management success and negotiations with the University of Hawaii system and state legislature;
- 4) The status of the institutional research office, development of a data warehouse, and use of data to inform decision-making; and
- 5) Demonstration of a commitment to fully support the distance education programs, including the need to provide learning outcomes assessment and faculty development and support to advance the online education objective.⁵⁷

The Commission also asked that the "assessment of core competencies . . . be extended beyond general education and into each disciplines" and that the Office of Applied Learning (ALEX): (1) adopt "clear

⁵⁵ The former website can be found at: <https://hilo.hawaii.edu/blog/accreditation/old-program-review-data-uh-cms-import/>.

⁵⁶ In AY 2018-2019, the College of Arts and Science was reorganized with Natural Sciences, Nursing, and Kinesiology becoming the College of Natural and Health Sciences and the remaining Humanities and Social Sciences remaining as the College of Arts and Sciences. These changes are noted in "[Interim chancellor gives update on reorganization of UH Hilo College of Arts and Sciences](#)," *UH Hilo Stories*, January 19, 2018.

⁵⁷ Mary Ellen Petrisko to Donald O. Straney, [WASC Action Letter to UH Hilo](#), March 6, 2010, accessed December 7, 2019.

definitions and guidance for applied learning activities, courses, and internships; and (2) by the development of criteria and process to assess the effectiveness of applied learning activities and contribution to student learning.”⁵⁸

In response to these directives, UH Hilo immediately undertook the following efforts:

- a) Formation of the Student Success Leadership Team (CFRs 2.10 & 2.13)
- b) [Creation of ‘Opihi](#) (CFRs 2.10 & 2.13)
- c) [Publicly post reports on Enrollment Management](#) (CFR 1.2)
- d) Continue core [competency assessment at the undergraduate level](#) that are reported on a public website (CFRs 1.2 & 2.2a)
- e) Initiate [graduate level assessment](#) which is reported on a public website (CFRs 1.2 & 2.2b)

Unfortunately, Spring term of 2016 was when UH Hilo started experiencing a large turnover of top administration. The Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Matthew Platz returned to faculty in August of 2016; the Chancellor Donald Straney was appointed as Vice President of Academic Planning and Policy for the UH System, leaving the Vice Chancellor of Administrative Affairs Marcia Sakai as Interim Chancellor, and the head of Human Resources, Kalei Rapoza, as Interim Vice Chancellor in her place. Due to a reorganization of the College of Arts and Sciences and due to departures in other colleges, all of the deans were internal appointments with many serving in interim capacity. Thus by the submission of our [Interim Report](#) in April of 2017, it became clear to our reviewers that “the greatest progress took place with areas of educational effectiveness and assessment. Each of the remaining areas were lacking in significant progress.”⁵⁹ By the academic year of 2018-2019, academic program review also began faltering with many departments failing to turn in their self-studies. But with the arrival of Bonnie D. Irwin as permanent Chancellor in 2019 and Kristen Roney as permanent Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs in 2020, the following have been undertaken:

- f) Initiating [Strategic Planning](#) to update the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan (CFR 4.6)
- g) [Restarting the Long-Range Budget and Planning Committee](#) (CFR 3.4)
- h) Hiring a Director of Institutional Research (CFR 4.2)
- i) Initiating direct assessment in DL courses (CFRs 2.4, 4.3, & 4.4)
- j) Initiating Writing Intensive (WI) assessment (CFRs 2.4, 4.3, & 4.4)
- k) Initiating service-learning assessment (CFRs 2.4, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, & 4.5)
- l) Restarting the academic program review calendar (CFRs 2.7, 4.1, & 4.4)
- m) Improving larger campus engagement with program self-studies (CFRs 2.7, 3.6, & 4.4)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ WSCUC, [Interim Report Action Summary](#), July 26, 2017, 1.

Substantive Change Proposals Since Last Visit

Since the last visit, UH Hilo has also submitted two substantive change proposals—the MA in Heritage Management and the BS in Aeronautical Sciences. While both new programs were commended for innovative curriculum and attention to community needs, both submissions made certain institutional shortcomings apparent.

In June 29, 2015, UH Hilo received Interim Approval for the MS Heritage Management that identified a larger institutional problem:

The program's fulfillment of WSCUC's assessment standards is minimal. The institution should strengthen its assessment framework with a clear, detailed and systematic institutional data collection plan including direct and indirect measures of student learning. A clearly articulated institutional assessment plan can be applied to all programs with specific program applications aligned with assignments and capstone experiences. The plan should also include how data is collected, where it is housed, how it is aggregated and disaggregated for analysis, and who and when program evaluation based upon the data will occur. (CFRs 4.1, 4.4)⁶⁰

The more recent BS in Aeronautical Science Substantive Change received a more comprehensive list of recommendations:

1. University administration must ensure that faculty governance protocols have been used to ensure wide understanding, acceptance, and support of the new program and particularly the outsourcing of program outcomes to an off-campus entity. (CFR 2.4, 3.10)
2. The institution at large and the proposed program specifically must make stronger, specific and timely progress toward assessment protocols using direct and indirect assessment strategies that demonstrate Program Learning Outcomes are clearly integrated into the program and students are meeting PLO assessment targets. The assessment protocol for the Professional Pilot concentration of the BS in Aeronautical Sciences must include specific strategies for documenting the achievement of PLOs satisfied while students are at ATP. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 4.1, 4.4)
3. Future substantive change proposals must include a comprehensive market needs analysis which includes national, regional, and local data/evidence of program need. (CFRs 1.7, 4.7)
4. Institution and Program administrators must closely monitor the financial sustainability of the proposed program to ensure that it supports rather than weakens institutional viability. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 4.6)
5. Program administrators must thoughtfully and thoroughly consider the steps to be taken if the ATP segment of the Professional Pilot concentration is unable to participate in the degree completion. (CFRs 1.7, 2.14, 3.6)

⁶⁰ WSCUC, [Substantive Change Action Report, June 29, 2015](#), 2.

6. The Substantive Change Panel’s recommendation is based on the institution’s confirmation that students in the 4th year of the professional pilot concentration of the BS in Aeronautical Sciences are not enrolled at the University, that ATP courses and flight training have been reviewed and approved by the UHH faculty and found to be clearly aligned with PLOs of the proposed program, and that UHH will transfer successful ATP program completion as course credit into the BS in Aeronautical Sciences degree. If the 4th year student status at UHH should change, the institution must notify WSCUC immediately. (CFR 1.8)⁶¹

These continuing comments on our assessment activities showed us that while we were undertaking comprehensive core competency assessment and while individual departments were also engaged in assessments, none of these efforts were communicated as a coherent, unified manner. Much of this stemmed from a lack of purposeful reporting of the Program Review process, which is the nexus for the collection of data at the program level. We thus developed a more comprehensive institutional accreditation page that links together our core competencies (undergraduate and graduate) with Program Review. (CFR 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.7, 4.3) We also went step further and asked each college to develop statements that are meant to communicate how systematic review of programs serve as evidence of a particular degree at this particular institution. This will be further discussed in Section Three: Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees.

Apart from [one-on-one training and certification of faculty](#), a wide array of resources and data collection have been developed on publicly accessible webpages, which have become even more vital in the last year given the COVID-19 crisis and the unilateral move of all courses to full DL platforms as of March of 2020:

- [Distance Learning Faculty Resources](#)
- [Course Design and Development](#)
- [Quality Online Course Design Guidelines Checklist](#)
- [UH Hilo Distance Essentials for Remote Delivery](#)
- [Remote Teaching Overview and Strategies for Common Tasks](#)
- [Enrollment trends and SSH data](#) (CFR 2.10)

What we have been less successful in fully advancing are increased capacity in IR and DL assessment. Due to budgetary difficulties posed by dropping enrollment (tuition revenue) and regularly imposed restrictions imposed by the Governor, we have been unable to increase staffing in IR beyond the hiring of a Director of Institutional Research as of January 2020, which has meant the goal of creating a stable

⁶¹ WSCUC, [Substantive Change Action Report, July 18, 2019](#), 1-2. The program received formal approval on July 27, 2020.

data warehouse has not yet been fully achieved.⁶² And while the level of DL assessment is not optimal, what data we have is being soundly utilized and will be discussed in Section Four: Educational Quality; Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation as it relates to the rigor and quality of courses.

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⁶² UH System Committee on Budget and Finance, “[University of Hawai‘i Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021](#)” notes projections take into account a “-10% Restriction on discretionary General Fund appropriations by State B&F/Governor” (see page 3).