



To: Mazan Hamad, Chair of the Chemistry Department

From: Kris Roney, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Subject: VCAA Feedback on Chemistry Program Review

CC: Bonnie Irwin, Chancellor
Brian Wissman, Interim Dean of the College of Natural and Health Sciences
Seri Luangphinith, Accreditation Liaison Officer

This document is intended for the department's reflection on their review and the subsequent feedback as they prepare the Academic Plan for the next 5-year cycle for review. Based on the scope of feedback for Chemistry, the following covers the critical areas of focus for the next 5 year plan, some of which are within the direct span of control of the faculty, and some of which are University-held. The key recommendations provided by the reviewer are excellent, and this program is encouraged to follow those within their span of control. The efforts there described should assist the department in their enrollment growth goals handily.

First, the assessment planning and processes must continue to grow and improve, both in terms of the engagement with campuswide assessment practice and in the program assessments. The ALO notes that this has been improving, and the external reviewer speaks well of the data provided, so this should continue to be a growth area for the department. As Chemistry is a core discipline in the sciences (I am inclined to agree with the reviewer's assertion that it is the core to all natural sciences), its role in institutional assessments cannot be overstated—it is critical that the department weigh in heavily in this work, given their span of reach, outpaced only by Math and English. A portion of the five-year plan should be devoted to how Chemistry will plan to assess at the core competency and the programmatic outcome levels. The plan, of course, needs to include time and opportunity to engage with partners across campus with the aim of student learning improvement broadly.

Second, the reviewer notes that the department should outline a hiring plan with two areas in mind, one being any impending retirements within this five-year cycle. Begin to provide to the College arguments that go beyond the one-to-one replacements from these coming and prior retirements. What is the vision for Chemistry in the future? How does the department look to market itself, particularly with respect to why students should come to Hilo to study—what is it we offer that others cannot? There is much to be made here, and future hiring plans should be informed by that vision and those possibilities—connections to Marine Science, Environmental Sciences, Agriculture, Geology, to name a few in addition to those already present with Pharmacy—may provide for growth areas currently underserved and that can be connected to the rich environment within which the University is located. In concurrence with the department and reviewer, an instrument technician is being reassigned to CHNS.

200 W. Kāwili St.
Hilo, Hawaii'i 96720-4091
Telephone: (808) 932-7332
Fax: (808) 932-7338
hilo.hawaii.edu/uhh/vcaa

Finally, careful assessments of curricular changes already made are critical to drafting a far longer plan, and the department is encouraged to think in the very long term (to the extent realistic to remain flexible). While I share in the recognition that improvements in Pharmacy enrollment are critical to Chemistry, I caution the department in too much focus in that area. Clear bridges into the other medical programs in the state should be cultivated and/or maintained, and a more coherent Pre-Medicine program (or Pre-Health Sciences) should be advanced with Chemistry at the core and possibly lead. These programs should involve bridge programs to JABSOM at minimum, meaning the cultivation of relationships is essential. This is true of the more traditional bench sciences in biomedical fields.

This program review marks a good first step in these plans, and I urge the department to continue with them, even in the face of changes in administrative levels.

Mahalo for your work in this substantial and essential effort.

Yours,

Kris Roney

Kris Roney
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs