

July 11, 2022

Dr. Bonnie Irwin
Chancellor
University of Hawai'i at Hilo
200 West Kawili Street
Hilo, HI 96720-4091

Dear Chancellor Irwin:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 24, 2022. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to University of Hawai'i at Hilo April 5-8. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by University of Hawai'i at Hilo prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's May 23, 2022 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Seri Luangphinith, ALO, and Kristen Roney, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit team report
2. Reaffirm accreditation for a period of six years
3. Issue a Formal Notice of Concern
4. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2027 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2028
5. Schedule a Special Visit in spring 2024 to address:
 - a. Integration of all strategic plans
 - b. Improvement of assessment of student learning and program review
 - c. Building IR capacity to develop a data-informed culture

The Commission commends University of Hawai'i at Hilo in particular for the following:

1. Its strong sense of place and the mindfulness with which it respects the institution's historical and situational context, including embedding the mission and value statements in the self-study, with Hawaiian epigraphs, and welcoming the WSCUC team to campus with a native Hawaiian ceremony.

2. Its commitment as a community to renormalizing and promoting the study of indigenous languages and cultures through the Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language.
3. For building and maintaining strong programmatic connections to the community and grounding the institution's scientific and applied work in the region's cultural backgrounds, as exemplified by the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center, the Agricultural Farm Laboratory, the Pacific Aquaculture and Coastal Resource Center, and research at the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy that focuses on local health concerns.
4. Its emphasis on high-impact practices, including service learning, Hawai'i Pan Pacific courses, and Global and Community Citizenship integrative requirements.

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following issues:

1. Embrace authentic and transparent communication across the campus to improve shared governance that engages all constituents. (CFRs 3.7, 4.6)
2. Reconcile the 2021-2031 Strategic Plan with the UH Hilo Community-Anchored Strategic Vision for 2030. Ensure the forthcoming academic plan is aligned with the reconciled campus plan. (CFRs 1.1, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)
3. Develop a shared understanding of student success and track disaggregated metrics that reflect this understanding to better support students and identify and address barriers to graduation. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 4.1)
4. Institutionalize a culture of data-informed decision making and expand the capacity and role of the Office of Institutional Research. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)
5. Develop and implement a comprehensive enrollment management plan that reflects the institution's mission and is based on research and analysis of current and prospective students. (CFRs 2.10, 3.4, 4.6, 4.7)
6. Continue the institution's progress in program review and implement program learning outcomes assessment across all degree programs, to make informed decisions for program improvement. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5)
7. Adopt a proactive approach to financial planning to ensure greater fiscal sustainability. (CFRs 3.4, 3.7, 4.7)
8. Increase transparency in the budgeting process to communicate priorities and clarify the bases upon which decisions are made. (CFRs 3.4, 4.6, 4.7)

A Formal Notice of Concern provides notice to the institution that, while it currently meets WSCUC Standards, it is in danger of being found in noncompliance with one or more Standards if current trends or findings continue. In the case of University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Standards 2, 3 and 4 are in danger of being found out of compliance, in particular CFRs 2.4 and 2.7, CFRs 3.7 and 3.2, and CFRs 4.1 and 4.6 related to shared governance, assessment of student learning, program review, use of data-informed decision making, enrollment management, and financial planning. Institutions issued a Formal Notice of Concern are scheduled for a Special Visit. If the issues are not addressed, a sanction could be imposed as described in the 2013 Handbook of Accreditation. A Formal Notice of Concern is public information and will be posted on the WSCUC website.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirmed that University of Hawai'i at Hilo addressed the three Core Commitments and successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, University of Hawai'i at Hilo should strive for ongoing improvement with adherence to all Standards of Accreditation and their associated CFRs to foster a learning environment that continuously strives for educational excellence and operational effectiveness.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter is being sent to the chair of University of Hawai'i at Hilo's governing board. A copy of this letter is also being sent to President Lassner, University of Hawai'i. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the University of Hawai'i at Hilo's website and widely distributed throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in these documents. The team report and the Commission's action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response on the WSCUC website.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that University of Hawai'i at Hilo undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Jamienne S. Studley
President

JSS/mbg

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair
Seri Luangphinit, ALO
Randolph Moore, Board Chair
David Lassner, President, University of Hawai'i
Members of the Accreditation Visit team
Mark B. Goor, Vice President