REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To University of Hawai'i at Hilo

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Accreditation History

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) is a comprehensive regional institution that grew out of an extension campus founded on Hawai'i Island in 1947 by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH Mānoa). The campus began as a two-year institution, with the first four-year degrees awarded in 1971. UH Hilo initially shared facilities and administrative functions with Hilo Technical School, a vocational school that eventually transitioned into Hawai'i Community College. The two institutions still share some facilities. They are also both members of the University of Hawai'i system, which includes six other community colleges, the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu, and UH Mānoa. The UH system is overseen by the Hawai'i state legislature and the University of Hawai'i board of regents. David Lassner is the president of the UH system and leads UH Mānoa.

UH Hilo is comprised of six colleges: 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. The spring 2022 headcount was 2,979, with 70% of students enrolled full-time. Undergraduates make up 85% of the student body and can choose from 38 majors. Students pursuing a master's degree (6% of total headcount) can select from seven different programs, while four programs are offered for doctoral students (8% of headcount).

A majority of students (52%) are residents of Hawai'i Island. An additional 22% of students reside on other Hawaiian islands and 21% reside on the United States mainland; 4% of students are international.

The student body at UH Hilo is claimed to be more racially and ethnically diverse than at any other higher education institution in the United States. The largest racial/ethnic group consists of students who identify as partially or wholly Hawaiian, comprising 34% of all students. Other large

racial/ethnic groups include students who identify as Caucasian (23% of the student body), as Filipino (7%), as Japanese (5%), or as having mixed heritage (14%). About two thirds of the students (64%) are female. Half of all students are Pell grant recipients and 18% are the first in their immediate family to attend college.

UH Hilo received full accreditation from WASC in 1976. Reaffirmations were awarded in 1984, 1989, and 1994. A special visit was conducted in 1997, followed by a capacity and preparatory review in 2003 and an educational effectiveness review in 2004. Special visits took place in 2008 and 2009. The most recent reaffirmation review was completed in 2014, with a Commission action issued in 2015 that required UH Hilo to file an interim report in 2017. Twenty substantive changes have been approved since 1998. The two most recent were for an MA in Heritage Management (granted in 2015) and a BS in Aeronautical Sciences (granted in 2020). Details regarding the Commission's recommendations following the 2014 reaffirmation review, the 2017 interim report, and the 2015 and 2020 substantive change reviews are described below in the discussion of Component 1.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The review team's process followed the formal guidelines of WASC. An offsite review was conducted in May 2021, resulting in the submission of Lines of Inquiry and requests for additional documentation prior to the site visit. The site visit was conducted in person. It was originally scheduled to take place in October 2021, but was postponed until April 2022 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The team reviewed UH Hilo's institutional report and the accompanying appendices, as well as documents and web pages that included:

- WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements worksheets

- Messages sent to the confidential email account

- Institutional organization charts

- Enrollment trends and forecasts

- Summaries of student complaints

- Program reviews and documents summarizing assessment of student learning

- Documents describing UH Hilo activities designed to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Documents summarizing needs and services for marginalized student groups

- Representative syllabi for distance learning courses

- The 2021-2031 Strategic Plan and the UH Hilo Community-Anchored Strategic Vision for 2030

- Documents relating to capital planning and long-term infrastructure costs, including information technology

- FY 2020-2021 budget and budget versus actual reports

- Independent auditors' reports and financial statements for 2019-2021

- Documents relating to student success initiatives

- Findings from recent internal surveys regarding campus climate, quality of faculty worklife, and student health

- Curriculum maps and assessment rubrics for program learning outcomes for all majors, and for the undergraduate and graduate learning goals

- Collective bargaining agreement for faculty

- Examples of how assessment data were used in course and program revision

- Graduate program assessment plan and schedule

- Co-curricular/Student Life assessment plan and schedule, and resource planning (fiscal and personnel) to support these efforts

- Summary of student complaints and disposition since the 2017 Interim Report

- Summaries of post-graduate student and alumni outcomes

- Agendas for orientations for new students, staff, and faculty

During the site visit, the team conducted open meetings with UH Hilo students, faculty, and staff. Additional meetings were scheduled with select university members, including the following groups and individuals:

- The chancellor and Council of Vice Chancellors

- The WSCUC Steering Committee

- The Chancellor's Maunakea Administrative Team

- The Assessment Support Committee

- The General Education Committee

- The Curriculum Review Committee

- The Academic Program Review Advisory Committee

- Faculty Congress officers and committee chairs

- Department chairs

- College deans/directors

- The Long Range Budget Planning Committee

- Faculty, staff, and students working on diversity, equity, and inclusion

- The Student Success Leadership Team

- Student Association leaders

- The Student Affairs Leadership Council

- Distance learning and instructional support faculty and staff

C. Institution's Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

The institutional report was written well and demonstrated UH Hilo's commitment to the community it serves through the inclusion of Hawaiian epigrams and other Hawaiian text. The report acknowledged several significant issues, including declining enrollments, problems introduced by

resource limitations, and a continued reluctance among some campus members to engage in assessment. The transparency and candor evident in the report were supported with extensive documentation. The review team was especially impressed by the UH Hilo web site, which provides public access to a remarkable amount of content that speaks to the institution's strengths and challenges.

The institutional report briefly outlined plans that UH Hilo has in place to address the issues identified in the report. Initial steps have been taken to implement some of these plans; additional progress requires a more sustained effort and, in some cases, added personnel (such as a permanent hire for the director of institutional research). However, the report was silent on a number of significant issues – including those highlighted recently by the Commission, such as professional development and shared governance. The review team also found it surprising that the report made almost no mention of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UH Hilo community, and how the institution responded to this impact.

The overall impression of the institutional report was that it provided several useful insights but was incomplete, suggesting that UH Hilo had not fully engaged in self-study. Plans for responding to some institutional challenges lacked detail, and at times the report painted UH Hilo as resigned to its situation rather than poised to address problems head-on. The review team came away from the report concerned that UH Hilo was not fully committed to continual improvement.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

UH Hilo underwent a reaffirmation review in fall 2014, as a member of the second group of institutions that piloted the 2013 revision of the Handbook of Accreditation. The institution was therefore one of the first to conduct a self-study that incorporated several novel elements: addressing the meaning, quality, and integrity of the degrees offered by UH Hilo (Standard 2); demonstrating that

UH Hilo graduates are proficient in core competencies (Standard 2); and describing how UH Hilo planned to address the changing environment of higher education (Standard 4).

The Commission's 2015 action letter praised UH Hilo for its openness during the review process, for its "commitment to continuous learning," and for implementing a substantial number of new initiatives to address both persistent, historical challenges and the requirements that were newly introduced by the 2013 Handbook. The institution was commended for its demonstrated sense of place, for embedding applied learning experiences throughout the curriculum, for linking the meaning of its degrees to its mission, for assessing the core competency of written communication, and for employing faculty, staff, and administrators who were committed to meeting the institution's externally imposed challenges. Recommendations included strengthening the applied learning program, addressing the "alarming statistics" regarding student success, stabilizing the institution's financial situation, engaging all departments in program review, and providing essential resources to support developing and delivering online degrees and courses.

Accreditation was reaffirmed for seven years (until 2021). An interim report was to be submitted in 2017, providing updates on five areas of concern: student enrollment and retention, review of academic and co-curricular programs, financial stability, capacity to make decisions informed by data, and ability to support distance learning. Upon receiving this interim report the review panel noted progress in the area of academic program review, but was "disappointed" by the lack of improvement in all other areas. Turnover in key personnel was cited as one reason underlying the overall lack of progress. UH Hilo was urged to revisit the 2014 team report and 2015 action letter, as "the same concerns remain," and assign the remediation of these concerns "the highest priority." Similarly, the Commission urged more progress on assessing program learning outcomes in its responses to the 2015 and 2020 substantive change proposals.

Despite these entreaties, UH Hilo made little progress on the issues highlighted by the Commission. The Student Success Leadership Team was formed to address student enrollment and retention, and increased emphasis was given to assessing undergraduate and graduate learning outcomes, particularly in the area of core competencies. However, when UH Hilo compared responses to a survey administered in 2012 and again in 2018, it found that many of the institutional problems identified in 2012 had persisted or worsened six years later.

This lack of progress may be attributed in part to external factors, such as funding limitations imposed by the state legislature and challenges introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is also evident that UH Hilo has not demonstrated a sustained commitment to address problems cited by the Commission. This may be the outcome of an emerging issue evident in some responses to the 2018 survey: lack of stability in leadership positions, coupled with high rates of turnover and too many key personnel hired on an interim basis. Furthermore, questions about shared governance were noted in the Commission's response to the 2020 substantive change proposal, raising concerns about the effectiveness of communication between administrators and faculty.

Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that there was sufficient evidence for the team to determine whether UH Hilo is in compliance with Standard 1.

The institution is legally mandated to provide an education "equal to that given and required in similar universities on the mainland United States," but UH Hilo exceeds this obligation by embracing its role as an institution that is simultaneously responsible for helping to shape the future of the diverse community it serves, and honoring and preserving the historical roots of that community. The team saw evidence of this *kuleana* (shared responsibility) throughout its visit:

- ʻĀina (the land) serves as one of the four thematic goals in the 2021-2031 Strategic Plan that will guide UH Hilo's decision-making over the coming decade

- Faculty and students in the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy conduct research on local health concerns

- Members of the Ka Haka ʻUla o Keʻelikōlani College of Hawaiian Language preserve important historical texts and use performance art to celebrate Hawaiian culture

- The Pacific Aquaculture and Coastal Resource Center engages students in breeding local oysters, corals, and fish

- The Agricultural Farm Laboratory maintains a trail to educate schoolchildren about the role of bees in Hawaiʻi's ecosystem

High-impact practices such as active learning opportunities are embedded in the curricula at UH Hilo. Many of these opportunities involve community-based applications, helping to reinforce the institution's role as a provider of essential services for the region. General education outcomes are widely recognized and assessed. However, the institution needs to make considerably more progress on assessing program learning outcomes (as detailed below in the discussions of Components 3 and 6), restricting the ability to make evidence-based decisions about program delivery. Similarly, retention and graduation rates are publicly available, but lack of understanding how the rates vary with student characteristics prevents the development and implementation of specific plans to remediate these rates. (CFR 1.2)

Faculty, staff, and students enjoy an appropriate level of academic freedom at UH Hilo. Two recent instances tangibly illustrate this. One concerns faculty discontent with strategic planning, which ultimately led the Faculty Congress to prepare and release the UH Hilo Community-Anchored Strategic Vision for 2030. This document, which presents an alternate vision of UH Hilo's future than the strategic plan released by the chancellor, is testimony to the academic freedom of faculty. (It also highlights other

issues that are detailed below in the discussion of Components 7 and 9.) A second example concerns the University of Hawai'i's plan to construct a 30-meter telescope on Maunakea. The cultural significance of Maunakea for indigenous Hawaiians led to demonstrations against the telescope throughout the Hawaiian islands. On the UH Hilo campus, students and faculty who support the telescope found themselves questioned by colleagues who oppose it or feel tighter regulation is required – but both sides have been able to express their views openly. Dialog, debate, and education are encouraged.

UH Hilo prides itself on serving a diverse student body. This extends beyond racial/ethnic diversity; UH Hilo has established several co-curricular programs in recognition of student needs, such as the Women's Center.

Decisions regarding daily operations, strategic planning, service delivery, and many other local functions are made autonomously by UH Hilo. However, the institution is overseen by the Hawai'i state legislature, the University of Hawai'i board of regents, and the president of the University of Hawai'i system, who is also the chancellor of UH Mānoa. These lines of authority require UH Hilo to seek external approval for decisions that on many other campuses would be handled internally, such as approving new searches and hires for high-level administrators and tenure-line faculty. One direct consequence of this is an over-reliance on interim and temporary appointments, which fosters turnover and instability. Decisions regarding the establishment or discontinuation of academic programs are also ultimately made externally. (CFR 1.5)

UH Hilo posts costs, services, expected learning outcomes, and student success metrics on its public-facing website. Programs are structured to enable timely completion. Services provided to students include financial aid, counseling, disability testing and accommodations. The institution maintains a federally compliant institutional review board.

UH Hilo is candid in reporting its operations. The institution's public-facing website includes summaries of enrollment trends, finances (which undergo regular independent auditing), and key

performance indicators. Local policies are posted on the UH Hilo website, while links are provided to external websites for policies established by the University of Hawai'i system. Processes are in place to ensure timely responses to complaints and grievances.

UH Hilo is forthcoming and honest in its communications with WSCUC. Preparations for the current reaffirmation review began several years before the institutional report was due. The report itself openly discusses challenges faced by the institution, especially in the areas of program review and assessment of student learning. UH Hilo files substantive change proposals in a timely manner and errs on the side of caution: Seven proposals were submitted since the previous reaffirmation, and only two of these were ultimately found to require WSCUC approval.

The team concludes that UH Hilo is mostly compliant with Standard 1, but could improve on CFRs 1.2 and 1.5. Final determination of compliance with Standard 1 rests with the Commission.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that there was sufficient evidence for the team to determine whether UH Hilo is in compliance with Standard 2.

In reviewing UH Hilo's compliance with Standard 2, the team paid particular attention to follow-up on recommendations made by the Commission in 2015:

- "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 includes the integration of the core competencies throughout the major programs offered at the undergraduate level."

- "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."

The team also sought evidence of a response to issues noted in the Commission's 2017 action letter:

- "The panel urges that UHH not wait to continue addressing these issues until just before the 2021 WSCUC reviews take place but that they be a major priority both for those being placed into Interim or regular longer-term appointments. The panel considered asking for a Progress Report but decided to allow the institution to spend more time focusing on these issues now through 2021 rather than spending time on writing another report; however, this assumes that administration will make these issues the highest priority."

- "Rather than providing details for each of the five areas in this review, the institution is encouraged to focus on its self-study on the May 6, 2015 Commission Action Letter to Chancellor Donald Straney backed up by the Accreditation Visit Team Report from the September 10-14, 2014 visit. The panel finds that the same concerns remain as highlighted in the letter and team report. They expect that the institutional report prepared for the spring 2021 Offsite Review will include an update on all five areas, including progress as noted in the Interim Report."

The team finds that UH Hilo has not made the significant progress that was called for by the Commission. Very little data or direct evidence exists to show how UH Hilo students are achieving educational objectives. The lack of progress is most acute in the assessment of program learning outcomes. A large majority of programs have not, to date, conducted any data driven assessments. While most programs appear to have developed learning outcome statements and rubrics for the purpose of assessing those outcomes, the team was informed that actual assessments have not been completed because of budgetary constraints, and the COVID-19 pandemic. (CFRs 2.4, 4.1) A lack of consistent academic leadership over the years was also noted, including turnover of deans, the director of institutional research, the chief academic officer, and the chief executive officer.

Few program reviews have been completed since 2016. The team was informed that memoranda of understanding (MOUs) previously prevented faculty from engaging in program review, because such activity was in conflict with the collective bargaining agreement. UH Hilo removed this

barrier in 2019 by replacing the MOUs (which were not implemented at other campuses in the University of Hawai'i system) with more flexible descriptions of faculty expectations in the area of program review. Despite this change, budget cuts, the COVID-19 pandemic, and turnover in key personnel continued to create challenges for conducting program reviews. Many department chairs stated that budget limitations rendered program review futile. While a small number of programs went through program reviews beginning in 2017, the large majority of these lacked data to support evidence of student learning, such as assessment of program learning outcomes (PLOs). In AY 2020-2021, prior to the WASC review, it appears that UH Hilo engaged in a flurry of program review preparation, including writing self-studies for many degree programs. Most programs had been scheduled for external reviews during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years, but the plan was perhaps too ambitious with so many program reviews happening simultaneously in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic; only a few of these programs completed their external reviews and very few included reliable assessment data in their self-studies. (CFR 2.7)

The status of co-curricular program review is equally disappointing. UH Hilo has not routinely engaged in a cycle of review for student support service units, although plans are in place to utilize tools developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). Some indirect evidence of the efficacy of distance learning offerings was provided in the institutional report. However, the team felt there was much more to be done in terms of compiling direct evidence and disaggregating data to better understand whether learning differences occurred across online, hybrid, and in-person modalities. (CFR 2.11)

The team was encouraged to see that UH Hilo has made some progress in assessing core competencies. The university conducted almost two full cycles of review dating back to 2013-2014 for each of the core competencies, assessing one competency almost every year and generating some helpful data and information about student attainment. It was unclear when the university will begin the

next cycle of review, and whether the efforts they have made to close the loop are achieving the desired impact. Other good assessments were provided for the Hawai'i Pan Pacific and Global and Community Citizenship integrative requirements, as well as the service learning requirements of the general education program.

The team observed that the UH Hilo accreditation liaison officer (ALO) – who graduated in the first cohort of WASC's Assessment Leadership Academy – provides the institution with solid expertise in matters relating to assessment. The ALO provides strong support for faculty and helps familiarize them with best practices in the areas of program review and assessment. However, the ALO has been challenged over the years by a lack of support from senior administrators and deans, a resistant faculty, budgetary short-falls, challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and declining faculty morale. (CFRs 2.4, 4.1)

The team's overall conclusion is that significant concerns remain about the institution's commitment to, and implementation of, assessment and program review. The lack of progress in this area is particularly troubling given the clear directives that were provided to the institution in previous Commission actions. Given this background, the team concludes that UH Hilo is in partial compliance only with Standard 2. Final determination of compliance with Standard 2 rests with the Commission.

Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that there was sufficient evidence for the team to determine whether UH Hilo is in compliance with Standard 3.

UH Hilo has a long-standing organizational structure for its leadership, administrators, faculty and staff, and is overseen by the UH board of regents. The campus is led by the chancellor, who assumed leadership in 2019, and a vice chancellor for academic affairs appointed in 2020. Leadership demonstrated a deep knowledge of the institution, expressed a vision for its future, and were working

strategically to ensure the university's success during difficult times, such as the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Faculty have a role in governance through the Faculty Congress and the reporting structure for department chairs and instructors. The administrative team is completed by a vice chancellor for student affairs and an interim vice chancellor for administrative affairs. Key student service positions ranging from disability services, financial aid, counseling, student housing, and employment coordinators were occupied by dedicated staff members. In team meetings, the staff expressed their commitment and sincere gratitude for their fellow employees and the university at large and the role UH Hilo plays in their lives and that of the broader community.

The team heard numerous concerns about staffing levels and the inability to fill vacant positions in a timely manner. (CFR 3.1) As has been pointed out in previous reports, public institutions such as UH Hilo exist under continuous budgetary pressures resulting from declines in tuition revenue and uncertainty regarding state funding levels. At UH Hilo this has resulted in a campus-wide sense of insecurity, which is amplified by a lack of communication from administrators regarding the status of requests to hire new personnel or convert interim or temporary hires to permanent. (CFR 3.2)

Communication problems impact other elements of the university's operations as well. Members of the Long-Range Planning and Budget Committee were unable to fully articulate their role or function, and were not clear how they shared budgetary discussions and decisions with the larger campus community. The budgeting process is opaque to department chairs, and faculty struggle to plan for upcoming courses due to uncertainty about instructor positions. (CFR 3.7) The large number of administrators, staff, and faculty who hold interim or temporary positions adds to the general sense of uncertainty on campus and prevents efforts to plan and maintain sustained progress on institutional initiatives. (CFR 3.2) Those faculty who engage in program review feel that their findings do not drive institutional planning or decision making; others decide that there is no point in conducting program reviews.

Campus leaders may find that disseminating a clearer picture about the budget reduces the pervasive, demoralizing sense of insecurity that surrounds decision making. A review of the university website shows that budget allocation information was widely shared as recently as 2016. Restoring this practice and providing engaging visuals or thoughtfully tailored communications that increase transparency may foster a sense of shared purpose and a better understanding of the complexity of UH Hilo's financial structure. (CFR 3.7)

The UH Hilo campus has a few newer facilities, such as the pharmacy building, with research facilities currently being remodeled. The university has a unique array of physical and land resources evidenced by its aquaculture, agriculture, and astronomy programs. The admissions, registrar, and financial aid offices are inviting and centrally organized. The university was able to purchase or upgrade technology and make remote learning possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are a number of deferred maintenance projects on the campus. The team was informed of multi-year plans to upgrade and repair facilities, which appear sizable and likely to involve significant costs. However, the campus appears to have sufficient resources and physical facilities to serve its current students.

UH Hilo's institutional report indicates that a dedicated team is diligently working to address complex financial challenges. The institution has managed to sustain its operations over time, despite experiencing declining enrollment and limitations and uncertainty around state and extramural funding. During the campus visit, the team learned of an anticipated, dramatic cost-cutting measure that would have eliminated several programs. This measure was not implemented, due largely to an unexpected economic recovery by the state of Hawai'i and higher tuition and fees revenues than were forecast. The FY 2020-2021 operating expenses were reduced by roughly 5% over FY 2019-2020. Additionally, UH Hilo received grants from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund under the CARES Act in both 2020 and 2021. The institution has a growing reserve fund that provides for financial security in uncertain times, and UH Hilo was close to drawing upon this reserve. Even so, the reprieve from the cost-cutting measure

was profoundly relieving to UH Hilo. At the same time, it revealed the ongoing need to expand revenue sources and address persistent concerns about enrollment management and budgetary shortfalls.

There are occasional modest signs of improvement in enrollment numbers at UH Hilo. For example, fall 2021 enrollment increased 2.5 % over fall 2020. However, this was offset by a 2.9% decrease in spring enrollment, and the general trend has been a steady decline in enrollments, averaging 2.5% each year since the last reaffirmation review. Similar downward trends are evident in tuition revenue, which decreased 12% from FY 2019-2020 to FY 2020-2021 (net of scholarship allowances). However, the UH board of regents approved a three-year freeze of undergraduate tuition rates beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year, to ensure affordable higher education for the people of Hawai'i. One potential benefit of this freeze may be improved student retention and recruitment, which could generate additional tuition funds for UH Hilo.

State appropriations provide over 30% of UH Hilo's revenue. The institution also benefits from extramural funding, creating opportunities for further diversification of its revenue stream. In 2021 UH Hilo's unique cultural and scientific activities resulted in more than $16 million of external grants.

The team heard repeatedly from administrators, staff, and faculty that UH Hilo is focused on improving retention as a solution to its financial challenges. However, UH Hilo lacks a realistic enrollment model and specific plans to improve retention. Data regarding attrition are limited. (CFR 3.4) To better understand their enrollment potential, UH Hilo would benefit from a well-researched plan that is grounded in data and analysis of current and prospective students.

The team encourages the campus to implement actionable plans to address student retention and new enrollment through an enrollment management plan and continue its efforts to strengthen its financial future through its diverse revenue sources. Absent these plans, the institution risks falling out of compliance with Standard 3. The team also encourages UH Hilo's leadership team to improve

communications campuswide regarding budgetary decisions, with the aim to increase transparency and alleviate a sense of instability.

Final determination of compliance with Standard 3 rests with the Commission.

Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that there was sufficient evidence for the team to determine whether UH Hilo is in compliance with Standard 4.

In reviewing compliance with Standard 4, the team paid particular attention to issues noted by the Commission in 2015 regarding the "alarming" retention and degree completion statistics at UH Hilo. These issues were cited as violating CFRs in Standards 1 and 2, but the remedy urged as "one of the highest priorities for Hilo" by the Commission is fully grounded in Standard 4: establishing a system for collecting and analyzing relevant data, and engaging in data-based decision-making to improve retention and degree completion rates.

UH Hilo operated without a strategic plan for several years after 2015. A new plan, titled the 2021-2031 Strategic Plan, was eventually released by the administration in July of 2021. However, the delayed release of this document, coupled with concerns regarding the content of draft versions, led Faculty Congress to develop and release their own plan. This document, titled the UH Hilo Community-Anchored Strategic Vision for 2030, was released in November of 2021. The administration's strategic plan began implementation in January 2022, with a nascent action plan under development to monitor action items and deliverables. However, the strategic plan and strategic vision have different goals, pointing to the need for the administration and faculty to work collaboratively in reconciling the two documents into a single campus plan. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6) This reconciled campus plan should be the first step toward the development of an academic plan, which the team learned is scheduled to be drafted during the academic year 2022-2023.

The UH Hilo institutional research office (IRO) is currently staffed by an institutional research analyst. The IRO routinely engages in institutional effectiveness and learning outcomes assessment. Data are disseminated through dashboards and reports on a public-facing website, which provides an impressive array of information regarding enrollment, retention and graduation, and degrees and certificates awarded. Faculty/course evaluation results are available for public viewing, but these have not been updated since spring 2018. The national survey for student engagement (NSSE) is administered regularly, with data from the 2019 survey and previous surveys dating back to 2001 available on the website.

During the team visit there was an open job posting for the IRO director. Having a director in place is needed to support UH Hilo's administration, faculty, and staff in utilizing data to inform organizational planning and decisions, conduct systematic assessment of teaching and learning, and gauge the campus environment. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2) Filling the IRO director position is particularly critical for establishing a data-informed, comprehensive enrollment management plan that reflects the institution's mission and is based on research and analysis of current and prospective students.

As the institutional report acknowledges, faculty engagement in assessment and program review has been problematic. UH Hilo has made limited progress in this area since the 2014 reaffirmation review and the 2017 special visit. Some programs have conducted self-studies and posted their findings online, but core competencies are assessed more consistently than PLOs. Overall, the team found little evidence of using data to improve academic and non-academic programs. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

An infrastructure is in place to support institutional learning. The Faculty Congress has combined the Assessment Support Committee with the Academic Program Review Advisory Committee. The ALO leads this combined committee, but the team's impression is that the institution relies too heavily on the ALO to drive assessment across academic programs. (CFRs 4.4, 4.5, 4.6) UH Hilo appears to continue

to struggle with developing a culture of assessment with sustained, evidence-based, and participatory self-reflection about how effectively educational objectives are being achieved. This is discussed in more detail below in the sections on Components 3, 4, and 6.

The team concludes that UH Hilo is compliant only partially with Standard 4, falling short in CFRs 4.1 through 4.6. Final determination of compliance with Standard 4 rests with the Commission.

Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI)

UH Hilo provided information for their Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI). WSCUC no longer requires this information, but it is worth noting that UH Hilo has sound practices in place for assessment of institutional learning objectives (ILOs), which mirror the general education learning goals and are fully aligned with the WSCUC core competencies. Calendars have been developed to assess the ILOs on a regular, rotating basis over a 5-year cycle, drawing upon both direct and indirect evidence of student learning. Rubrics have been developed for many of the artifacts used in the assessment process.

All programs at UH Hilo claim to have learning objectives in place, although in several instances these are not posted on the corresponding department's webpage. (CFR 2.4) Each academic program is required to undergo a program review every five years; however, a large number of programs do not comply with this requirement and there are no formal consequences for failing to assess student learning or conduct a required program review. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7, 4.1) The assessment instruments identified by most programs include direct indicators of learning that are specific to their program, such as portfolios or embedded assignments; however, six programs rely entirely upon core competency indicators and have no program-specific assessments of student learning.

Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of the degrees

Previous teams have commended UH Hilo for clearly defining the meaning of the degrees it offers, and for articulating how each degree relates to the university's mission. The current team was

similarly impressed to find that the meaning of degrees at UH Hilo is grounded in a sense of place and indigenous principles that are explicitly defined and publicly available, with clear certification standards for courses and experiences. Furthermore, the team lauds UH Hilo for specifying learning outcomes not just for individual programs, but for all six colleges as well.

Component 3 of UH Hilo's institutional report provides little information regarding degree quality and integrity. These issues concern matters such as the content of degree programs and what the institution hopes students will attain by completing each program. (CFRs 2.3, 2,4, 2.6) Much of the essay for Component 3 focuses instead on assessment and program review, which determine if the institution has *succeeded* in helping students attain the desired learning outcomes. This focus is more appropriate for Component 6. However, the team was able to draw a limited number of conclusions about degree quality and integrity from supplemental materials submitted by UH Hilo and from information available on the institution's website.

High-impact practices are embedded throughout the curriculum at UH Hilo, and assessment of core competencies suggests many students are performing at desired levels (see discussion of Component 4 for more details). The Hawai'i Pan Pacific and Global and Community Citizenship requirements ensure that all students who complete a degree have opportunities to participate in service learning and civic engagement. Many classes present students with unique, active learning experiences that are grounded in the region's cultural background and scientific needs.

Curriculum maps for undergraduate majors demonstrate intentionality in providing structured learning environments that begin by introducing students to fundamental skills and concepts, then develop these skills and concepts in more courses taken later in the major, and finally provide opportunities to demonstrate mastery in the most advanced courses. Capstone experiences are commonly included in undergraduate degree programs.

Most of the graduate programs at UH Hilo are accredited by professional associations that mandate curricular content and verify compliance with these mandates. However, the curricula for undergraduate programs at UH Hilo are rarely examined by external evaluators or other stakeholders, because undergraduate programs are rarely reviewed. Program reviews often solicit input from individuals outside the institution; in the absence of this independent feedback, the quality and integrity of undergraduate programs is not assured. (CFRs 2.1, 2.4, 4.1)

<u>Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation</u>

UH Hilo has aligned WASC's core competencies with its institutional learning outcomes and general education program. Two cycles of core competency assessment have been completed since the institution first began these efforts in 2012-2013:

- Written communication was assessed in 2013-2014 and 2017-2018

- Quantitative reasoning was assessed in 2014-2015 and 2018-2019

- Oral communication was assessed in 2016-2017

- Information literacy was assessed in 2015-2016 and 2020-2021

Assessment of the critical thinking competency was embedded in the assessments of the other four competencies. For example, "line of reasoning" appeared in the rubric for written communication assessment, and UH Hilo used these data to conduct analyses of critical thinking achievement in addition to written communication.

Critical thinking and written communication skills improved between the two assessments of written communication. The team found it curious that UH Hilo did not report aggregate analyses of critical thinking skills using similar data from assessments of quantitative reasoning, oral communication, and information literacy. These analyses might provide useful information that could guide future improvement efforts.

The University of Hawai'i system has a writing intensive graduation requirement that UH Hilo assesses using an interesting approach that aligns well with the institution's mission but is separate from the written communication assessment. The team felt that combining the two assessments would seem to be efficient and result in a better overall understanding of students' writing skills.

UH Hilo's 2015-2016 assessment of information literacy demonstrated that students needed help with evaluating the validity of sources. Further investigation of these data led to the discovery that student reading levels were below normal and needed significant improvement. Accordingly, UH Hilo took measures to remediate student reading and information literacy skills. Analyses of the 2020-2021 information literacy assessment were not available to the team, so it is unclear whether these efforts have been successful.

Quantitative reasoning skills were assessed in 2014-2015 using a true/false test that was developed by the institution. UH Hilo noted that the results from this assessment were not particularly helpful given the limiting nature of true/false questions. The test was revised for the 2018-2019 assessment and the results were more meaningful. The institution appears to be targeting improvement efforts with changes at the program level.

Oral communication skills were assessed only once, in 2016-2017. UH Hilo provided some insightful analyses for student achievement in this area. A second cycle of assessment has not yet taken place to determine the effect of recommendations made after the first assessment.

Overall, the team concluded that UH Hilo has conducted solid assessments of the core competencies for undergraduates, using best practices that often yield helpful data and analyses. UH Hilo also does an impressive job of making core competency and other assessment results publicly available on its website. It is clear that the institution has the capacity to conduct valid assessments that draw upon a variety of methods to provide useful information regarding undergraduate student

achievement. The team encourages UH Hilo to continue these efforts and consider accelerating their pace.

UH Hilo also assesses core competencies for its graduate students. This is interesting but not required by WSCUC. Since UH Hilo has a history of struggling with assessment of student learning, the team encourages the institution to direct its time and energy at the graduate level to assessing the achievement of program learning outcomes, which *is* a WSCUC requirement. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7, 4.1)

In addition to assessing core competencies, UH Hilo has assessed students' understanding of sense of self and place, and appreciation of meaningful cultural values associated with Hawai'i state in general and Hawai'i Island in particular. Outcomes from the Hawai'i Pan Pacific and Global and Community Citizenship requirements, and student perceptions of the ongoing debate over the 30-meter telescope proposed for Maunakea, have also been examined. These assessments honor the institution's indigenous-serving mission and have yielded many interesting findings. The team applauds UH Hilo for engaging the campus community in discourse around these topics. The institution appears committed to infusing the curricula with greater diversity content and fostering a dialogue designed to promote a shared understanding of UH Hilo's unique institutional issues.

Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation

UH Hilo has several definitions of student success. A qualitative version is provided by the institution's mission statement:

"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* (responsibility) is to improve the quality of life of the people of Hawai'i, the Pacific region and the world."

The institutional report defines success quantitatively: "Successful UH Hilo students earn their intended degrees from our campus or elsewhere within 150% of normal time and find employment or continue

their studies within one year of graduation." This definition uses four metrics: student retention and persistence; student engagement, learning, and development; degree completion; and post-graduation outcomes. UH Hilo's goal is to retain at least 75% of full-time students into the second year, regardless of enrollment status, location, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and admissions profile. The WSCUC Key Indicators Dashboard indicates UH Hilo is close to this target, with a first-year retention rate of 71% in 2020. However, the six-year graduation rate in 2020 was 38%. (CFR 2.10)

UH Hilo has experienced consistently declining fall-to-fall and spring-to-spring enrollment between 2012 and 2022. Overall, student headcount has declined 26%, from a high of 4,011 in spring 2012, to the current headcount enrollment of 2,979 for spring 2022. Administrators at UH Hilo believe that increasing retention is the key to increasing enrollment. Thus, retention is the primary focus of their data analysis and student success efforts. The Student Success Leadership Team is charged with developing and delivering an enrollment management plan to the chancellor that is centered on improving retention rates. However, neither this committee nor the UH Hilo administration could articulate the specific plans they had in place to improve retention. (CFR 3.7) The institution appears to have given scant attention to analyzing factors that contribute to students' decisions to leave UH Hilo. Identifying and addressing barriers to retention and degree completion is integral to improving student success at UH Hilo. (CFR 2.10) The team cautions that retention should not be the sole focus of the institution; a comprehensive enrollment management plan strategically and comprehensively integrates recruitment, enrollment, retention, persistence, and graduation.

UH Hilo has implemented a number of initiatives to promote student retention, including establishing the Career and Academic Advising Center, partnering with Mentor Collective, providing guaranteed academic schedules for freshmen, introducing a guided pathway system, and creating living learning communities. These initiatives have had varying degrees of success, but retention rates for first time students have remained around 65%-72% for full-time students. (There are too few part-time

freshmen to draw meaningful conclusions from their rates, which vary markedly in different years.)

First-time students with lower admissions indicators (GPA below 3.0, SAT scores at or below 930, or ACT

scores at or below 18) had a retention rate of 52%, compared to 75% for students with higher

admissions indicators. For upper-level transfer students, first-year retention rates have ranged from

70%-80% over the past few years for full-time students and 54%-67% for part-time students. Since 2015,

the one-year retention rate for students from the United States mainland has averaged 57%, compared

to 64% for students from Hawai'i Island, 62% for other Hawaiian islands, and 78% for international

students. These disparate rates serve as reminders that it is important for UH Hilo to identify equity gaps

in student success and ensure that the needs of all students are addressed, including those who are

admitted with lower admissions standards and those who matriculate from non-Hawaiian institutions.

(CFRs 1.4, 2.10)

UH Hilo's NSSE data reveal that 91% of their students report having completed at least one high-

impact practice, with service learning reported as the most common experience. This is encouraging, but

the number of students completing at least two high-impact practices is declining. Additional indicators

of positive student engagement show that UH Hilo students average higher ratings than students at

comparison institutions in their exposure to diverse perspectives, and in describing their educational

experience as good or excellent.

During the team visit, students who self-identified as "super seniors" expressed frustration with

being unable to graduate in a timely manner because courses they needed were not offered. In some

cases, students responded to this problem by switching to majors that more reliably offered courses

needed to satisfy degree requirements. It is important to ensure that required courses for all majors are

adequately scheduled, and that students receive advising that enables them to plan ahead properly

when key courses are not offered every semester. (CFR 2.12) The challenges that UH Hilo faces in

scheduling needed classes may stem in part from offering a large number of academic programs relative

to the number of enrolled students at the institution.

Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and

evidence

UH Hilo has struggled to demonstrate an institutional commitment to program review. (CFR 4.1)

In the 2014 review of UH Hilo, Mathematics was cited as the only department to have conducted a

program review. Mathematics continues to engage in assessment and program review, and has since

been joined by several other programs (such as Astronomy and Sociology) that can articulate what they

have learned from their self-studies. However, only about half of the programs at UH Hilo are currently

in compliance with the program review schedule, despite a revision of the schedule in 2019 that was

designed, in part, to prompt greater departmental cooperation. By this time program review should be

ubiquitous at UH Hilo. The fact that it is not demonstrates that too many programs have abdicated their

responsibility in this area; instead, a common refrain is that assessment is the purview of UH Hilo's ALO.

(CFRs 2.4, 4.4)

In the absence of data, instructors do not know which pedagogical approaches are most

effective, department chairs do not know how best to allocate resources, and program coordinators

cannot identify gaps in their curriculum. (CFR 2.6) Furthermore, program review involves more than

assessing progress on PLOs. Because program review is so sporadic at UH Hilo, many faculty are

unaware of the success rates for their majors, let alone for subgroups of students within those majors.

(CFRs 2.7, 2.10) By forgoing regular program review, faculty and administrators at UH Hilo deny

themselves a full understanding of the students they serve. This same theme emerges in considering

remedies for the declining enrollment at UH Hilo (see discussion of Component 5), suggesting that the

institution struggles to make critical decisions grounded in data. (CFR 4.2)

The failure to engage in program review at UH Hilo is not because faculty lack the knowledge to conduct reviews. UH Hilo has the human capital to conduct program reviews: The ALO has substantial knowledge regarding assessment methodologies, and since 2020 has received sufficient reassigned time to assist faculty in assessing student learning. Several departments at UH Hilo have made notable insights from their program reviews and can advocate for conducting a self-study. However, what is lacking at UH Hilo is an infrastructure that *rewards* faculty for conducting program reviews. Some faculty complained to the team that submitting a program review was pointless, as there was no assurance this would result in timely feedback; others expressed frustration because no funds are available to make changes in response to whatever might be learned. Funding is indeed a concern, but not all changes that improve student outcomes require financial resources. For example, assessment can reveal that students in an upper division course would benefit from reviewing material presented in a lower division prerequisite, or that course sequencing requirements can be relaxed.

Commission actions stemming from the 2014 reaffirmation visit and the 2017 special visit emphasized in no uncertain terms the need for UH Hilo to demonstrate sustained progress in implementing program reviews across the entire curriculum. UH Hilo has made some progress in meeting this objective, but did not fully commit to the effort until fall of 2019 – about 18 months before the next reaffirmation visit was scheduled to begin. The delay in responding to the Commission's recommendations is concerning. Too little time has elapsed to determine whether the current emphasis on program review will engage the entire campus community and be sustained moving forward. This is clearly an area requiring further scrutiny.

Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment

UH Hilo looks to its unique natural environment, history, and culture to differentiate and define itself as an institution. The island provides a hands-on learning lab for those seeking an education in

agriculture, anthropology, astronomy, geology, Hawaiian studies, and marine science, to name just a few of many possible examples. Furthermore, UH Hilo has invested in its infrastructure for pharmacy and other laboratory research, grounded in its cultural core as a Hawaiian-serving institution. Moving forward, UH Hilo plans to explore and develop greater ties to communities throughout Hawai'i Island and the entire state, expanding its mission to serve the region.

The team notes that much of UH Hilo's future success is dependent upon solving or improving issues highlighted throughout this report that are impacting the community today. In the area of human resources, continuity by a strong and collaborative leadership is needed as well as addressing the sizable number of interim and temporary positions that have generated a sense of instability and uncertainty across the campus.(CFRs 3.1, 3.2) The team noted that the IRO director position was in transition at the time of the site visit. (CFR 4.2) The campus community clearly expressed their appreciation of the contributions made by the recent IRO director and could see the benefits of having meaningful data available. Developing and maintaining this capacity will most certainly continue to benefit the campus in its decision making around enrollment, retention, and graduation, and foster a better understanding of how to advance its programs over time.

UH Hilo is relatively confident that the state of Hawai'i will restore their budget into the next year, which will allow those planning for the institution's future to adopt a more forward-looking vision. The healthy financial reserve may be tapped to help the institution implement its highest priority action plans.

A strategic plan was recently developed by campus leaders and reviewed by the team. During the site visit, the team learned of, and reviewed, a second strategic plan document prepared by the Faculty Congress. The team strongly encourages those charged with implementing these plans to bring their visions together in a more united way, to ensure the plans succeed and engage the entire campus

community. (CFR 4.6) This will require improving the lines of communication between administrators and faculty. (CFR 3.7)

Given its relatively remote geographic location, UH Hilo must explore creative solutions to make its resources more accessible to a larger audience and ensure a long-term, sustainable future. Plans for the further development of distance education programs are not clear to the team, which could be an important factor to consider if UH Hilo intends to serve a broader demographic. Any expansion of distance learning offerings will likely require the institution to invest in additional staffing and other resources to support these initiatives.

Overlapping constituents are affected by any meaningful partnership. In public higher education this includes current and future students, alumni, faculty, staff, grantors, the state, and the local community. UH Hilo would benefit by bringing together its constituents and collaborating to develop sustainable plans to recruit, retain, and serve a growing student body, with an invested group of faculty and staff eager to serve "the people of Hawai'i, the Pacific region and the world." (CFR 4.6)

Component 8: Optional essay on institutional specific themes

UH Hilo did not submit an optional essay.

Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

Faculty, staff, and administrators at UH Hilo are well aware of the challenges the institution faces. The campus community is also cognizant of its assets, including ready access to the unique resources provided by UH Hilo's geographic location, the diversity of the community served by the institution, and the lessons that can be learned from drawing upon the region's past. However, what UH Hilo currently lacks is clarity in its vision: a fully realized plan for leveraging these assets and moving forward to remediate current difficulties and prepare for future contingencies. (CFR 4.7) This is exemplified by the final chapter of the institutional report, which is only two pages long and devoid of specific actions the institution will implement in the months and years ahead.

The strategic plan released by the chancellor articulates one vision for UH Hilo, while the alternate document released by the Faculty Congress articulates a different vision. The mere existence of two documents that express divergent futures for the institution highlights one of the most pressing issues facing UH Hilo: the lack of a shared sense of purpose. (CFR 4.6) The institution is urged to open lines of communication across campus and engage in authentic shared governance. UH Hilo must also strive to better understand its current and potential students, to redress declining enrollments and ensure that existing students are well served. (CFR 4.7) Financial planning must be strengthened. These efforts require that UH Hilo improve its systems for gathering and analyzing data, and involve all members of the campus community in evidence-based decision making.

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS (such as Substantive Change)

The team did not identify other issues requiring consideration.

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The team commends UH Hilo for the following:

1. The team commends UH Hilo for its strong sense of place and the mindfulness with which it respects the institution's historical and situational context. Examples of this commitment include embedding the mission and value statements, as well as the self-study, with Hawaiian epigraphs, and welcoming the WSCUC team to campus with a native Hawaiian ceremony.

2. The team commends the UH Hilo community for its commitment to renormalizing and promoting the study of indigenous languages and cultures through the Ka Haka ʻUla O Keʻelikōlani College of Hawaiian Language.

3. The team commends UH Hilo 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 ʻImiloa 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. The team commends UH Hilo for its emphasis on high-impact practices, including service learning, Hawaiʻi Pan Pacific courses, and Global and Community Citizenship integrative requirements.

   The team identified the following recommendations:

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, in order 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)

APPENDICES

A. Federal Compliance Forms

1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? X YES ☐ NO
	If so, where is the policy located? https://hilo.hawaii.edu/policies/credit-hour.php
	Comments: Review of credit hour is embedded in Curriculum Central, which is the UH System-wide database/program that is used to review new courses, course modifications, new programs, and program modifications.For new courses, Curriculum Central asks: #6: How many credits? (If you are changing the number of credits for the course, indicate the current number of credits and the new number of credits and state the rationale) #9: How many hours will the student spend per week in each of the following activities: lectures, laboratories, field trips, clinical, service learning? (For online courses, indicate that students do the equivalent amount of work as they would do in the equivalent face-to-face courses by stating that course learning outcomes, papers, exams, etc.are comparable in both venues.)
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits) ? X YES ☐ NO
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments: UH Hilo does not maintain a standalone audit on course hours, as ongoing tools attend to this need - program review and a model of scheduling that is approved through the dean are among these standard practices. The curriculum review process is the most essential. However, including both the faculty reviews and discussions and the module in Curriculum Central that assists faculty in calculating the credit hour from the expected instructional time.

Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses *Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.*	How many syllabi were reviewed? Six Undergraduate: ● POLS 100 (DL) ● MARE 201L (traditional science lab) ● HORT 262 (WI) ● ENG 345 (Summer/DL) Graduate: ● PSY 602 Research Methodology and Program Evaluation ● PHPS 752 Biochemistry II
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Both
	What degree level(s)? ☐ AA/AS X BA/BS X MA X Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Political Science, English, Horticulture,Psychology, Biochemistry
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) *Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.*	How many syllabi were reviewed? Eight
	What kinds of courses? Undergraduate: ● MARE 201L Oceanography Lab, ● AG 263 Composting and Vermicomposting ● HORT 262 (WI) Principles of Horticulture ● SOC 391 Internship ● LING 399 Independent Study ● CS 461 (face-to-face, flipped classroom) Graduate: ● KLAN 701 Semantics and Pragmatics of Indigenous Languages ● PHPS 736 PharmaceuticalImmunology
	What degree level(s)? ☐ AA/AS X BA/BS X MA X Doctoral

	What discipline(s)? Oceanography, Agriculture, Sociology, Linguistics, Computer Science, Indigenous Languages, Pharmacology
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments:
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? Seven
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? ● RN to BSN ● BS in Agriculture: Aquaculture Specialty ● Master of Education (M.Ed.) ● Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T) ● Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) ● Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Pharmaceutical Sciences ● Ph.D in Hawaiian and Indigenous Language and Cultural Revitalization
	What degree level(s)? ☐ AA/AS X BA/BS X MA X Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Nursing, Education, Pharmacology/Pharmaceutical Sciences, Hawaiian and Indigenous Languages
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments: Credit hours and program outlines with links to course descriptions are provided on program web pages.

Review Completed By: Gloria Niles
Date: April 10, 2022

2 - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's recruiting and admissions practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments: As a recipient of federal funding, UH Hilo abides by federal regulations governing the recruitment of students. No incentives or compensation are offered for recruitment.
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? X YES ☐ NO
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments: Statistics summarizing time to degree are posted at https://hilo.hawaii.edu/uhh/iro/StudentRight-to-Know.php Current and projected tuition costs are listed in the UH Hilo catalog and posted at http://hilo.hawaii.edu/uhh/bo/tuition_schedule.php A net price calculator is available online at http://hilo.hawaii.edu/financialaid/netpricecalculator.php
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? X YES ☐ NO
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments: The Career and Academic Advising office offers on-on-one professional counseling. Students can also access Focus 2 Career at no cost. UH Hilo's Disability Services office also maintains a career website tailored to students with disabilities.

	Some academic programs maintain department webpages devoted to educating their majors about career opportunities; the UH Hilo catalog also offers guidance for a variety of majors. Several professional degree programs track and disseminate post-graduation statistics, such as the percent of graduates passing licensure examinations.

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

**Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) prohibits Title IV eligible institutions from providing incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. Incentive compensation includes commissions, bonus payments, merit salary adjustments, and promotion decisions based solely on success in enrolling students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

Review Completed By: Harold Stanislaw
Date: April 27, 2022

3 - STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's student complaints policies, procedures, and records.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? X YES ☐ NO
	If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where?
	Comments: The policy for filing student complaints is at https://hilo.hawaii.edu/catalog/academic-complaints
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? X YES ☐ NO If so, please describe briefly:
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments: The policy for addressing student complaints is at https://hilo.hawaii.edu/policies/documents/AcademicComplaintPolicy.pdf
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? X YES ☐ NO If so, where?
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? X YES ☐ NO If so, please describe briefly:
	Comments: Complaints are filed and maintained in the office of record. Depending upon the complaint, this may be the Academic Affairs office, Disability Services, Title IX, Financial Aid, etc. Students are apprised of the relevant procedures and points-of-contact in the Student Handbook, which is available online.

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)
See also WASC Senior College and University Commission's Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review Completed By: Joe Slowensky
Date: April 27, 2022

4 – TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulations*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's recruiting and admissions practices accordingly.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? X YES ☐ NO
	If so, is the policy publicly available? X YES ☐ NO If so, where? The transfer policy for UH Hilo can be found at https://hilo.hawaii.edu/policies/transfer-credit.php
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments: The University of Hawai'i system maintains an online database that students can use to determine articulations for individual courses at https://hilo.hawaii.edu/admissions/transfercredits.php

*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--

    (1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and

    (2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission's Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By: Harold Stanislaw
Date: April 26, 2022

B. Distance Education Review

Institution: University of Hawaii at Hilo
Type of Visit: Reaffirmation
Name of reviewer: Gloria Niles
Dates of review: April 7, 2022

1. Programs and courses reviewed (please list)
    a. Programs reviewed:
        i. Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
        ii. Kahuawaiola Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Teacher Education Program
        iii. Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology
        iv. Master of Arts in Indigenous Language & Culture Education
        v. Master of Education (M.Ed.)
        vi. Registered Nursing (RN) to Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN)
    b. Courses reviewed:
        i. POLS 100 (DL)
        ii. MARE 201L (traditional science lab)
        iii. HORT 262 (WI)
        iv. ENG 345 (Summer/DL)
        v. KLAN 701 Semantics and Pragmatics of Indigenous Languages
        vi. PSY 602 Research Methodology and Program Evaluation
        vii. PHPS 752 Biochemistry II

2. Background Information (number of programs offered by distance education; degree levels; FTE enrollment in distance education courses/programs; history of offering distance education; percentage growth in distance education offerings and enrollment; platform, formats, and/or delivery method)

3. Nature of the review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)
    a. Materials examined
        i. [Distance Learning website](#)
        ii. [Distance Learning Faculty Resources](#)
        iii. [Distance Learning Student Resources](#)
        iv. [UH Hilo Distance Essentials Website](#)
        v. [Distance Learning Technical Support website](#)
        vi. [Distance Education Information and Policy - MA in Counseling Psychology](#)
        vii. UH Hilo Department Level Enrollment Data
            1. [Doctor of Nursing Practice](#)
            2. [Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education Program](#)
            3. [Master of Arts in Indigenous Language & Culture Education](#)
            4. [Master of Education](#)
            5. [Registered Nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)](#)
    b. Committees interviewed
        i. Distance Learning Team
        ii. Distance Learning Advisory Committee
4.

Lines of Inquiry (refer to relevant CFRs to assure comprehensive consideration)	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required
Fit with Mission. How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized?	Except for the RN to BSN degree, the online degree programs are graduate degree or certificate programs of a professional nature that have been planned and conceptualized as online programs to serve the needs of students who are simultaneously employed in professional careers while pursuing graduate degrees for career advancement. As UH Hilo proceeds with the development of an academic plan, and a comprehensive enrollment management plan, these plans should include the strategic planning of distance education courses and program offerings.	
Connection to the Institution. How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution?	The majority of UH Hilo's distance education programs offer courses synchronously via videoconferencing. Some programs, such as the Master of Counseling Psychology require occasional on-campus activity.	
Quality of the DE Infrastructure. Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to learning and interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups?	Management and coordination of distance learning at UH Hilo is conducted by a Distance Learning Team (DLT) that assists faculty with distance learning concerns and provides resources for professional development for faculty in the areas of distance learning pedagogy, Laulima Learning Management System (Laulima)	

	course design, and education technology integration. The DLT is led by the library director and a faculty member who serves as the distance learning coordinator. Additional members of the team include an online teaching and learning specialist, technology and web specialist, distance learning technologist, a distance learning librarian, and a faculty member. The DL Essentials website provides faculty with resources and information related to professional development for distance learning, and individualized services are provided for faculty by members of the DLT.	
Student Support Services: What is the institution's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? What do data show about the effectiveness of the services?	The DL Essentials website provides information for students about Laulima, and links online students to UH Hilo's academic support and student affairs department resources.	
Faculty. Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality?	The development of distance learning course offerings at UH Hilo appears to be driven by faculty with personal interest in online teaching and learning, including early adopters of educational technology. Decisions about individual course modalities are made by faculty and approved at the department level.	

Curriculum and Delivery. Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (Submit credit hour report.)	The curriculum for distance education programs and courses is a faculty-driven function. The Curriculum Review Committee is responsible for new course and program approvals for all modalities.	
Retention and Graduation. What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to other institutions' online offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed?	The UH Hilo departmental level enrollment data is publicly available on the Office of Institutional Research webpage. As with overall enrollment and graduation rates for UH Hilo, data indicate that enrollment has declined across distance education programs between fall 2018 and fall 2020.	
Student Learning. How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings?	According to the institutional report, indirect assessment of student learning in online courses is provided through course evaluation surveys administered for all courses at the end of each term (Section Four, page 16). Data provided for two sample questions from the survey related to student learning from fall 2012 to spring 2018 demonstrated that online learning was comparable to the aggregate scores for each of the colleges.	

Contracts with Vendors. Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on *Contracts with Unaccredited Organizations?*	There are no arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses. Laulima is administered and supported by the University of Hawai'i system's Information Technology Services (ITS) department and provides UH Hilo students and faculty with access to help desk support via phone, email and chat 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.	
Quality Assurance Processes: How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective?	Distance education courses are included in the assessment of WSCUC core competencies. As data-driven assessment cycles are improved, it will be important to strategically leverage data to ensure the quality of courses and programs offered through distance modalities.	