Memorandum of Understanding
External Program Review
Department of Communication
College of Arts and Sciences

Members of the Communication Department faculty, the Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Humanities Division Chair, and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs met on January 31, 2014 to review and discuss the Department’s program review by Dr. Rona T. Halualani, Professor of Communication, San Jose State University. The group agreed upon the summary points and action plan that follow:

Summary Facts:

1) The Communication Department consists of six tenure-track faculty members (Catherine Becker, Iva Goldman, Ronald Gordon, Yoshitaka Miike, Steven Miura, and Jig Yin) and one instructor (Rayna Morel). CAS Dean Randy Hirokawa also has an appointment in the Communication Department.
2) The Communication Department averages (Fall 2009 – Fall 2012) 149 majors per year; 47 graduates per year; and 2,592 SSH per year. This ranks the Department first on all three categories in the Humanities Division, and near the top overall in CAS.
3) The Communication Department has an FTE Student/FTE Faculty ratio of 22:1, and an SSH/FTE Faculty of 327, compared to the Humanities Division averages of 14:1 and 210 respectively.
4) The Communication Department offers a B.A. degree.
5) Based on the National Communication Association’s “General Data on Communication Programs,” the UHH Communication Department rates favorable in terms of the quality and range of course offerings, though comparable programs (e.g., CSU – San Marcos; Central Washington University; Cal Poly Pomona) have twice as many faculty for the same number of student majors.

External Reviewer’s Recommendations:

1) Strategic Faculty Hires. The Department needs to consider impending retirements and new growth trends to formulate a hiring plan for the future. This hiring plan should include the addition of 1-2 new faculty positions that address student interest and demand, and help the department improve on its already excellent retention and graduation records.

2) Professional Development Support. The university and college should provide more research and professional development in teaching, especially as they pertain to skill sets in pedagogical techniques, dialogue training, online learning approaches, and concept mapping.

3) Strengthen Department Assessment System. The Department should incorporate more direct measures of assessment such as the evaluation of actual student work/performance in their
assessment system. The Department’s current relies primarily on assessment narrative and documents are self-report and indirect measures. While self-report surveys are important, direct measures of student learning outcomes should be collected as samples and coded by multiple groups for high inter-rater reliability as well as rigorous assessment evaluation. The integration of indirect and direct measures of student learning will help document the impact the department is truly making on students and in ways that perhaps are not fully charted out.

4) **Strategize New Course Models.** I encourage the department to strategize new course model formats for their offerings. The department should consider offering more online, and/or large lecture sections at the introductory or lower-level, in order to preserve the small-sized class seminars at the upper division level. One does not need to replace the other; small size seminars must exist but they must do so in combination with larger student offerings (online course sections and large lecture sections).

5) **External Grants.** The Department should pursue external grants (U.S. Department of Education Native Hawaiian Education Grant Competition) to help create Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian Communication courses and or academic offerings to help Pacific Islander retention and graduation at the university.

6) **Website.** The Department should improve its departmental website. The current website is one-dimensional and needs to contain more information about faculty research and community work. It should also incorporate social media technology like Facebook, Twitter, and so forth.

**Department Action Plan:**

1) **Hiring Plan.** The Department agrees to develop a long-range hiring plan that prioritizes new hires in light of anticipated retirements, current and anticipated trends in the field of Communication, existing faculty expertise, and student interest and demand. 2) **Assessment System.** The Department agrees to develop more direct measures of departmental assessment involving the actual evaluation of student work/performance. For example, In the Spring 2014 semester, a direct comparison of student papers from the DL and F2F versions of COM 270 will be conducted using multiple observers. These types of direct measures will be integrated with self-report and narrative assessments from students to obtain a more holistic assessment of student learning and achievement in the Communication program.

3) **Advising.** The Department agrees to work with the CAS Dean’s office to develop and pilot test a student peer-advising program to supplemental faculty advising. This program will involve training Communication majors to serve as peer mentors to assist students in selecting courses to best fit their college and career paths, obtaining information about UHH resources and opportunities, connecting with their faculty advisor when necessary, and simply adjusting to life as UHH students.
4) **Career and Professional Pathways.** The Department agrees to work on ways to make the Communication program more relevant to workforce development. This may include developing curriculum tracks for specific kinds of jobs, working with the community to provide internship opportunities, and developing a speaker series that introduces students to alumni who have used their Communication degree to achieve successful career opportunities.

**Administration Action Plan:**

1) The Dean of CAS agrees to take the Department’s hiring plan, as well as the Department’s strengths and needs, into advisement in developing the College’s future hiring plans.

2) The Dean and Associate Dean of CAS agree to support the Department’s efforts to improve its assessment system by providing whatever assistance it can.

3) The Dean and Associate Dean of CAS agree to work with the Department to develop and pilot test its peer advising system.

4) The Dean will continue to allow the Department to retain its share of the CCECS summer funds that it earns through its summer courses.

**Departmental Approvals:**

Yoshitaka Miike, Chair
Catherine Becker
Iva Goldman
Ronald Gordon
Steven Miura
Jing Yin
Rayna Morel

**Administration Approvals:**

Seri Luangphninith, Humanities Division Chair
Randy Hirokawa, CAS Dean
Matthew Platz, VCAA