LISTENING TOUR 2010: MEETING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE, PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL (APT) STAFF
NOVEMBER 4TH 2010

This note represents a summary of the meeting held for administrative, professional and technical (APT) staff on November 4th 2010 as part of the 2010 Listening Tour to prepare for development of the next UH Hilo Strategic Plan. The summary reflects the collection of individual comments made, not necessarily the consensus view of the entire group or the official view of UH Hilo. The order of the note may not necessarily reflect the order of the discussion.

Strengths of UH Hilo
The group identified the following as key strengths of UH Hilo:

- Unique programs
  - Particularly in the natural science and Hawaiian language programs that capitalize on the natural and cultural resources offered by the Big Island
  - College of Pharmacy is making a huge impact on the university and local community

- Unique way of teaching
  - Being able to teach many classes in a hands-on learning environment offered by our location
  - More likely to be taught by someone with a PhD here rather than a teaching assistant
  - Undergraduates have opportunity to participate in faculty research projects

- Generally good, small class sizes
  - Small enough to enable development of good student-faculty relationships/personalized learning, but large enough to yield different points of view in class discussions

- Small campus
  - It’s relatively easy to get to know many people on campus and there is therefore a small campus community feel

- High spirit of cooperation across departments, despite differences

- Staff and faculty
  - Some outstanding faculty
  - Excellent staff
• Location (general)
  o On the Big Island/in the state of Hawaii – attractive
  o The university has land resources to grow into

• Diversity
  o Across the board, there are different people representing different people and backgrounds

**Weaknesses of UH Hilo**
The group identified the following as key weaknesses of UH Hilo:

• Lack of a clear vision and mission setting out who we are and where we want to go

• Lack of recognition and reward
  o Staff contributions not always recognized
    ▪ Staff voices sometimes not 'heard' as much on committees (compared to those of faculty) regardless of their expertise/experience
  o People who do well are not rewarded whereas those who don’t work well appear to be rewarded (no action is taken against them) - this is linked to an ineffective appraisal system. There is an appraisal system currently but there appear to be no consequences for those who are not performing
  o No merit-pay award system

• Lack of staff career development
  o No staff training and development
  o Sometimes, the jobs people are in do not match their skills set
    ▪ It may be useful to conduct a skills inventory

• Little organizational development
  o That is, little effort to improve the overall efficiency and viability of the university
  o Many institutional systems are ineffective and paper-based – they should be reviewed and made electronic wherever possible
    ▪ E.g. archaic hiring practices. It takes a long time to both create a position and then to advertise and complete the hiring process. There appears to be a practice of external recruiting rather than internal recruiting to fill posts
    ▪ Incredible amount of bureaucracy in general (e.g. procurement)

• Generally poor management and leadership skills
  o We need to clarify what these skills are and what is expected of people in managerial/executive/leadership posts. Identify good examples of management/leadership at the university and not so good examples so we can determine our baseline – then provide training and development to address the gaps
  o Good leadership needs to filter down from the top and there should be evaluation at every level
• Staff should have opportunity to evaluate their managers/directors/deans/VC’s with 360° feedback to help improve management/leadership skills and practices
  o Senior leaders (i.e. Chancellor and VC’s) should walk around the campus more and talk to people in their everyday work – that is, they should be more visible and accessible

• A lot of employees are not as engaged in institutional activities as they could be (e.g. strategic planning) because they think their feedback will make no difference

• Too much division across the campus
  o Even though there is a general spirit of cooperation (see ‘strengths), there is a lack of integration of services/initiatives/activities

• Poor communication
  o Duplication of effort because of poor communication
  o There is no place/initiative/group that provides a forum for staff/faculty to share ideas and make links – no staff lounge
  o Lack of fun, social networking opportunities
  o No feedback box for staff/faculty/students to post their ideas for improved working

• Sense of an ‘us and them’ relationship between staff and faculty, and faculty and the administration
  o We are lacking a sense that we are one community working together to maximize our students’ experience and learning potential at UH Hilo

• Sometimes difficult to encourage and achieve appropriate change

• Not enough sections of classes to meet student demand

• Lack of leadership experience opportunities for students to help prepare them for the workforce

Challenge for UH Hilo
This question was skipped due to lack of time.

Priorities for UH Hilo
The group suggested that UH Hilo should focus on the following priorities over the coming years:

• Determine who we are – resolve our identity

• Reduce bureaucracy (e.g. streamline travel and procurement processes)

• Improve and increase physical, technical and personnel infrastructure
  o More student housing
  o More staff
  o More parking
  o Improved technology (to improve systems and processes)
• Build an improved community feel and community spirit of working on campus

• Improve communication
  o Internally and externally

• Focus on the programs we already have and be excellent in them
  o Determine what we are best at
  o Weed out those programs that we don’t really need/have limited impact

• Bring salaries up to standard
  o The university needs a compensation strategy

**Appropriateness of the Current UHH Strategic Goals**
The group discussed the current UHH strategic goals and made the following comments:

*General points:*
- Promote professional programs and those programs with recognizable workforce opportunities (as this is where students’ concerns tend to lie)

- The goals are all ok in general but they need to be more specific and backed up with specific strategies/objectives

*Goal specific points:*
- Goal 2 – needs reference to graduate programs

- Goal 4 – needs to reference graduation, retention and advising
  o This is particularly critical because of the budget-linked performance indicators – but we need to ensure that we don’t just chase the numbers