LISTENING TOUR 2010: MEETING WITH THE CHANCELLORS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
AUGUST 6TH 2010

This note represents a summary of the meeting held with the Chancellor’s Executive Committee on August 6th 2010 as part of the 2010 Listening Tour to prepare for the development of the next UH Hilo Strategic Plan. 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:

- **External relationships**
  - Particularly positive relationships with federal agencies and state legislators
  - Local community supportive and have pride in the University

- **Location**
  - The physical and cultural location of UH Hilo is embraced by the University. The University’s cultural location helps to foster international relations.

- **Student-faculty interaction**
  - One-on-one relationship between faculty and students perhaps facilitated by generally small class sizes - though it was noted that is not necessarily true for all students.

- **Academic strengths**
  - UH Hilo demonstrates a commitment to science whilst respecting the Hawaiian culture. For example, the University’s language revitalization program helps students to gain a unique cultural perspective
  - Particular academic program strengths including: Hawaiian language/studies, biology, marine science, pharmacy, business and political science

- **Local culture (in the broadest sense) is inclusive and collaborative, and there is strong cross-cultural sensitivity at UH Hilo**

- **Research productive faculty**
  - Although require improved coordination of external grant applications to support research productive faculty and help increase external revenue

- **Responsive to new opportunities**
UH Hilo responds quickly and nimbly to take advantage of new initiatives and opportunities with good interaction across lines, colleges and units.

Though note that although the University may be good at responding to new initiatives/opportunities, lack of long-term planning sometimes inhibits its ability to see things through in the long-term.

- UH Hilo is an affordable place to study

**Weaknesses of UH Hilo**

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

- Unclear identity
  - What defines UH Hilo? What is our focus? Who do we serve?

- Lack of long-term vision and planning
  - UH Hilo is able to take advantage of new opportunities (see strengths above) but not always able to approach those opportunities within a strategic context to ensure long-term sustainability of initiatives.
  - No clear process to grab opportunities – that is, no clear strategic framework within which to make decisions
  - Lack of clear goals and vision to take us forward
  - Too many programs that are not fully funded
  - Decisions made on dollars not philosophy

- Relationship with the broader UH System
  - Lack of support from UH System
  - Perceived as a maverick within the UH System – need better partnerships with campuses within the system

- Academic standards
  - Higher academic standards are needed but additional support – e.g. secretaries and student workers – is required to achieve that
  - Faculty lower standards to get better student evaluations in order to get tenure

- Employment
  - Lack of post-tenure review
  - No merit pay system

- Culture of resistance
  - Culture of resistance to accountability
  - Resistance to change and new ideas

- Cumbersome rules and procedures, and undocumented processes, slow things down and interfere with staff and faculty ability to do their jobs efficiently.
• Communication
  o Poor internal and external communication
  o UH Hilo doesn’t tell its ‘story’ well and with that is the added complexity of having an unclear identity so it is not easy to identify what the key stories should be.

• Infrastructure
  o Lack of student housing to support growth
  o Weak technological infrastructure
  o Inadequate parking on campus
  o There is poor vehicular access around campus and need for improved signage

• Accessibility
  o Lack of presence on other side of the Big Island
  o Lack of child care facilities and other things that would support those with children – faculty, staff and students.

Challenges for UH Hilo
The term ‘challenge’ covers both opportunities and threats and where possible this distinction is made. The group identified the following as challenges for UH Hilo:

• How to define UH Hilo’s identity and who we serve

• Ensure that UH Hilo continues to be respectful of the Hawaiian culture in pursuit of science

Opportunities
• Improve UH Hilo’s relationship with the UH system
  o To establish a viable place for UH Hilo within the system
  o System needs to be perceived as more effective
  o Define more clearly UH Hilo’s role within the System

• Infrastructure
  o Take advantage of UH Hilo’s unique location to make the campus as environmentally sustainable as possible – food, fuel and buildings

• Teach privacy rights to students given advent of social networking sites – making them aware of their own personal data and privacy laws/rights

• Form collaborative and innovative public and private partnerships

• Target workforce needs and help students find jobs after graduation

• Improve student support
  o Outreach and accessibility to better meet the needs of students outside of the Hilo area
  o Need support for those who qualify for admission to help them succeed
**Threats**

- **Meeting student needs**
  - The challenge is how to meet the changing expectation of college students – to understand the changing environment in terms of supporting different students with different learning needs
    - Possible part-solution: increase distance learning opportunities

- **Declining finances**
  - National trend for less state support of higher education. There has been an shift back to seeing education as a private benefit instead of a public good and as a result education is starting to be seen as an expenditure
    - Possible solution: secure more financial aid for low income students as well as securing more scholarships.
  - How to maintain a climate of innovation and change with declining finances
    - Possible solution: better academic planning

- **More uninformed federal interference without an increase in resources to implement federal requirements**

- **Market competitors**
  - UH Manoa is now actively trying to recruit students from the Big Island
  - West Oahu new four-year campus at Kapolei and Maui college, and other campuses within the state competing for students and resources from the UH System
  - University’s offering online/distance learning degrees who may appeal more to non-traditional students
  - Hawaii Community College – need to do more to effectively leverage UH Hilo’s relationship with this college

- **Faculty turnover**
  - Faculty aging
  - Faculty recruitment – investigate reasons why many turn-down job offers

- **Continue to be respectful of the Hawaiian culture in pursuit of science**

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

- **Identify who we are, what we do and share it**
  - Particularly identify where we want to be excellent recognizing that we can’t be all things to all people
  - Define UH Hilo’s role in relation to Hawaii Community College

- **Meeting alternative needs of students**
  - Focus on outreach, specifically with regards to distance learning and how to better serve the West side of the Big Island
Need to be more focused on non-resident students – some come for a semester or year and then drop out and that takes up room/seats. Need to understand reasons why students leave to help solve retention issues.

- Retain and graduate larger number of students
- Infrastructural support for activities
  - Student housing
- Rebuild morale on campus
  - Improve communication
  - Document processes and priorities not just state what they are (transparency and clarity of processes)
- Workforce needs
  - Focus on agriculture, engineering and health care as critical to help meet state needs – for example, develop agricultural access points across the island to reach more people
- Pursue selected growth through properly funded graduate programs with Teaching Assistant support

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

- Goal 1 should be expanded to include graduate programs
- Goals 1 and 2
  - could be refined to give a clearer idea of who we are – needs to be consistent with UH Hilo’s mission and vision which need to be reviewed
  - balance graduate and undergraduate remit
- Strategic plan should not be a statement of everything we do – it should clearly stipulate a handful of priority areas that we are committed to achieved over a particular period with relevant strategies to achieve those goals and measures to determine if we get there
  - Needs to guide resource allocation – be the basis within all decisions are made
  - Needs to identify new ideas
  - It was recognized that current plan had to be in a particular format stipulated by the System
  - Needs to identify actionable items under goals and definitions (e.g. what is success?) to know when we have succeeded
- There should be something in the current goals about scholarship and research
- Goals 3, 4, 5 and 6 should be retained in some manner
Questions raised by the group
The group asked what the next steps would be following the listening tour. Siân Millard, facilitator, answered that for the listening tour:

- A summary note of this and all meetings would be written and posted onto the UH Hilo strategic planning website to support transparency of process.
- Listening tour meetings will continue until the end of October 2010.
- Following completion of all meetings and summary notes, a report will be written to pull together common themes and issues across groups. This will include all written submissions to the listening tour received via the online survey companion to the tour.

Next steps with regards to the broader planning process were, at the time of this meeting, unclear as a discussion had not been held with the new Chancellor. Siân Millard advised though that it was anticipated a Strategic Planning Committee would be formed in fall 2010 to consider all evidence from the listening tour, survey consultation and other evidence to inform development of the next UH Hilo Strategic Plan.