LISTENING TOUR 2010: MEETING FOR THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
NOVEMBER 5TH 2010

This note represents a summary of the meeting held for the College of Business and Economics (CoBE) on November 5th 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:

- Good student-faculty interaction afforded by relatively small class sizes
- Strong faculty
- Emphasis on teaching rather than research
- Students benefit from being taught by terminally qualified teaching faculty rather than teaching assistants
- Location
  - Unique cultural diversity and natural resources
    - Access to world-class observatories
  - Good weather
  - Can be local (serving the island/state) and global (attract students from east and west) at the same time
- Some excellent programs
  - CoBE is AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accredited
- Diversity of the student body
- Supportive local community
  - Networked with the local business community
- Strong political/economic position compared to other institutions
• Limited number of graduate programs
  o This is a strength because it means that the focus of the university remains of teaching rather than research, which is a strong facet of graduate programs
  o However, it was also noted that targeted graduate programs can strengthen undergraduate programs

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

• Lack of a unified vision and mission for the university
  o This needs to be urgently developed and translated to the unit and individual level
  o Strategic goals that support the vision and mission need to be clearly defined and people rewarded for working toward them.

• Limited number of graduate programs
  o Identified as both a strength and a weakness

• Declining diversity of the student body
  o A member of the group reported that the percentage of foreign students has reduced from 30% to 8% in recent years

• Location
  o Identified as a strength and a weakness
  o The university, being in the State of Hawaii, is a long way from mainland USA and other land mass. This makes it difficult/expensive to get to and can be isolating making it difficult for out-of-state students to adapt.

• Lack of endowment
  o Dependency on state and government funding

• Lack of distinction from the community college system

• Bi-modality in the classroom
  o Faculty are increasingly being challenged by a bi-modality in the classroom. That is, teaching those students who are generally up-to-speed and those who require extra help.
  o The group discussed whether this was as a result of too low admission standards, or whether the university should be working to provide better remedial support for students (e.g. by working more closely with the community colleges).
    - It was noted that there is an issue in early identification of students who require remedial support – and as such, these students don’t get the extra support they require until later in their studies. It was further noted that there is a lack of
support for remedial support activities but that Kilohana is making good steps with the resources it has.

- Poor communication and marketing
- Tuition flat-rate
  - At the moment, tuition is the same whether a student is taking 12 credits or more. This encourages students to take more courses and spread themselves too thin.
    - Suggestion is to change the tuition cap so that students are charged extra for over 12 credits. This may encourage students to think more carefully about the courses they select.
- Lack of and poorly maintained facilities and instructional equipment
- Lack of faculty trust in the administration
- New programs developed without adequate resources
- Faculty pay compensation structure (in its entirety)
  - E.g. pension scheme. A new structure is required because the current system will put UH Hilo at a disadvantage when trying to recruit new faculty
- Lack of teaching development systems
  - Quality teaching is not celebrated (e.g. the staff/faculty newsletter celebrates research, but rarely teaching – it was noted that is also a function of what people submit to the newsletter)
- No faculty lounge

**Challenges for UH Hilo**
The group identified the following as challenges for UH Hilo:

- Improving graduation numbers with no additional resources
- Maintaining quality faculty
  - The challenge is to recruit and retain such faculty
- Tracking students
  - We need to improve how we track students once they leave UH Hilo – we need their feedback to help us improve
- Creating more realistic student expectations of university through improved marketing
- Ensuring students are a ‘good fit’ to the university
  - Improve/review admission standards
• Meeting the needs and expectations of a changing student population
  o E.g. by using more technological methods of instruction

• Aligning activities of the university with the mission (which needs to be reviewed)

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

• Seek smart growth
  o Focus on quality of such growth not so much the quantity

• Get faculty on-board with the revision mission/vision of the university
  o The mission itself should suggest measurable outcomes. That is, it should point to the goals of the institution and their related measures

• Pursue academic excellence
  o Promote, encourage and develop high academic standards and outcomes

• Prepare students for the workforce

• Establish an endowment by improved fundraising

• Maintain and increase the number of faculty

• Build mutual trust between the administration and the faculty

• Incentivize
  o E.g. merit pay, acknowledge teaching loads

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

• The current goals are meaningless – they are difficult to define and measure.
  o E.g. what does ‘more effective’ mean? What constitutes ‘sufficient resources’?

• Who is responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the strategic plan, and who is accountable if we don’t meet what we set out to achieve?

• The current mission doesn’t seem to match with what we currently do or what we are focusing on.