LISTENING TOUR 2010: MEETING WITH THE DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ALL UNITS EXCEPT DEGREE GRANTING COLLEGES)
AUGUST 13TH 2010

This note represents a summary of the meeting held with the Division of Academic Affairs (all units except degree granting colleges) on August 13th 2010 as part of the 2010 Listening Tour to prepare for the development of the next UH Hilo Strategic Plan. Units invited were: College of Continuing Education and Community Service, Edwin Mookini Library, English Language Institute, Institutional Research Office, Kilohana, North Hawaii Education and Research Center, and Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs staff. 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:

- **Strong personal relationship with students**

- **Relatively small**
  - nimble to react and respond to opportunities
  - students feel comfortable as campus is relatively intimate compared with other larger institutions

- **Location**
  - UH Hilo utilizes natural and cultural environments
  - A ‘living laboratory’ facilitates hands-on learning

- **Broad range of majors which appeal to different populations and different students**

- **Integration of Hawaiian cultures and values in students services and classrooms**

- **Diversity**
  - Students
  - Staff
  - Faculty
Weaknesses of UH Hilo

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

- There is a perception that the feedback staff, faculty, and others give on UH Hilo is not listened to— that what people think makes no difference.

- Decision making
  - Decisions are made without considering differences in units/colleges/students
  - Key decisions don’t get made by leadership
  - Data and documented evidence are not utilized in decision making

- Mission statement
  - The statement says a lot but doesn’t really say anything at the same time.
  - Is trying to be too many things to too many people

- Lack of Vision
  - UH Hilo pulls in too many different directions – there is no consistent vision to bring everyone together
  - Too many different ideas about who is our primary student body

- In our diversity lie challenges

- Accessibility
  - Location of UH Hilo is a strength but also a weakness as it is relatively remote and therefore difficult to access for people on the West of the island
  - It can be difficult for students at UH Hilo to access basic needs as transportation to and from campus into town is inadequate
  - Off-site/satellite offices are a good way to enhance UH Hilo’s presence in different parts of the island but they are often forgotten in decision making and resource allocations

- Pursuit of growth without adequate or appropriate resources
  - Affecting particularly undergraduate education

- Infrastructure
  - Lack of space – particularly lack of classroom space
  - Not enough informal meeting spaces for faculty, staff or students

- Relationship with Hawaii Community College
  - UH Hilo is failing to maximize the relationship with this college
  - There is ineffective planning regarding transfer students from the Community Colleges
    - Need to re-evaluate transfer equivalency between UH Hilo and Hawaii Community College
    - Need to consider how bureaucracy is impacting on transferring students

- Lack of accountability and supervision
Some people not knowing what they are supposed to be doing, what their role is, and not effectively supervised so not supported

- UH Hilo is reactive rather than proactive
  - There is an inherent lack of effective planning and inappropriate/inadequate consultation on key issues/new policies

- Poor communication
  - Internal – no clear organizational processes to help people do their jobs efficiently and effectively
  - External – no clear description or story about who we are or what is important to us

- Bureaucracy – at UH Hilo and within the UH System – hinders effective working
  - Lack of guidance for procedures and processes
  - Lack of protocols

- Need to address why local students are choosing to go somewhere other than UH Hilo

- Units are not clear on how other units work leading to misunderstandings and misleading assumptions about who is responsible for what
  - This also links to the isolation of some of the units that are situated outside of the main campus

- Need to be student-centered in our activities and decision making

- Community engagement
  - Not enough is done with local community to build a strong network
  - Most people within the community don’t know what goes on at UH Hilo

- Lack of technologically supported learning
  - UH Hilo is losing potential students because it can’t offer learning in a technologically advanced environment

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

- Developing effective assessment and accountability systems
  - This needs investment and training – need to move away from the ‘same old’ standardized assessment tools
  - Assessment systems at the program level

- UH Hilo should seek to become more self-sustaining energy-wise
• **Leadership**
  o There is an opportunity to benefit from new leadership through a new Chancellor - effective leadership starts from the top and trickles down
  o The new Chancellor has a real challenge on his hands – he should ‘get out there’ and listen to campus without relying on filtered information from his leadership team
  o There are current issues with both top-down and bottom-up leadership but the biggest issue is with the top-down leadership
  o Leadership roles are not always clear and therefore it is difficult to determine sometimes if a decision should be a faculty or an administrative one
  o Leadership needs to listen to the views of the campus

• **Funding and a poor economy**
  o How to meet increased demand with limited resources
  o How effectively are we currently using our money – are we making the best of what we have at the moment? Are there internal efficiencies we can make?
  o UH Hilo should not rely on the legislature – when the economy does start to improve there is no guarantee that we will be ‘given back’ an increase to our budget. The University should pro-actively seek alternatives sources of funding

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

• Improve internal and external communications

• Define a clearer sense of who we are, where we are going and who we serve
  o Clearly define UH Hilo’s mission and vision and work towards those
  o Establish what our core academic mission is – is it still undergraduate degrees? If not, specify what it is

• Develop more student opportunities
  o For example, more internships, working with faculty on research projects, working on community collaborative projects

• Improve unity and collaboration between units

• Improve technology and technology support

• Ensure that the university has a strategic plan from which to base resourcing decisions, and accountability to support our mission
  o Key deliverables under the plan need to be clearly defined and progress towards them regularly assessed

• Identify and capitalize on UH Hilo’s strengths

• Ensure that the broader community is engaged in discussions about UH Hilo’s future
• Ask the community (all members) what they think the University’s priorities should be
• Nurture relationships with the Big Island community

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

- Goals 1 and 2 – the university is not following these and they do not reflect the pull towards research and graduate programs
- Goal 4 – what is ‘sufficient’ in terms of resources?
- General comments:
  - In the first place, did we make any steps to achieving these goals?
    - How would we know if they have been achieved?
  - The current goals are too broad – they sound nice but have no substance
    - Goals should be recognizable as achievable
  - It is unclear what some of the terms mean e.g. ‘human capital’?