LISTENING TOUR 2010: MEETING WITH THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
SEPTEMBER 29TH 2010

This note represents a summary of the meeting held with the Division of Student Affairs on September 29th 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:

- Cultural diversity
  - Local and international
  - The university builds on the strengths of the Hawaiian culture

- Location
  - The land, environment
  - Hilo town
  - Access to hands-on teaching and learning resources

- Small class sizes
  - Facilitates student-faculty interaction
  - Faculty are accessible to students

- Increasingly highly qualified faculty

- Student services and resources for a small campus

- Good communication to faculty/staff about the financial/budgetary situation from both UH Hilo and the System

- Good internal analysis of issues that affect faculty, staff and students

- UH Hilo fills a niche in higher education within the state and globally
Weaknesses of UH Hilo
The group identified the following as key weaknesses of UH Hilo:

- Lack of university pride and spirit
  - Perhaps affected by a lack of student life activities (although it was noted that these have recently improved)

- Lack of identity
  - We don’t agree who we are

- No classes in the evenings for working adults

- Lack of efficiency in the procurement process

- Infrastructure
  - Transportation
    - No shuttle between the two campuses
  - Lack of student housing
  - Generally, insufficient infrastructure and facilities to support growth

- Not attracting as many students from the Community Colleges

- Lack of diversity in the faculty and curriculum

- Retention
  - No assessment to determine why students leave UH Hilo semester to semester

- Location
  - Hilo itself doesn’t currently have the infrastructure to build/support a strong college-town feel

- Lack of undergraduate-level advanced STEM programs
  - Specifically engineering

- Relationship with broader Hilo community could improve

- Lack of strong student presence in decision-making

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

- How to encourage students from the Big Island/Hilo consider UH Hilo as a 1st choice university for them to study and graduate at.

- Infrastructure to support:
- New programs
- Overall growth
  - This is a particular challenge because new infrastructure seems to take too long to build

- Some university policies limit our ability to develop and grow

- What will happen when federal monies end

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

- Stream-line purchasing and procurement

- Get to know our students
  - Students, as a sub-group of the population are changing so we need to better understand their needs and expectations in order to provide them with the education they require

- Infrastructure
  - Address infrastructure issues by making sure that infrastructure (physical and human resources) catches-up to the current needs first
  - Invest in more student housing
    - In terms of revenue, increasing student housing could encourage more out-of-state students which in turn would increase the tuition received.

- Establish an identity

- Improve retention and graduation rates
  - Ensure that student experiences of UH Hilo are ‘good’ ones
  - Particularly enhance the established strength of supporting first generation

- Improve recruitment
  - Focus on UH Hilo’s resident potential student population

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

Specific points:
- In goal 1 (well-rounded mix of liberal arts and professional programs), ‘taking full advantage’ could be better worded as ‘maintain’

General points:
- The current goals are too general and do not point to how they could be measurable

- They lack reference to:
- Improving student experiences
- Improving retention and graduation rates

- The goals would benefit from referencing connection to a more global perspective