LISTENING TOUR 2010: MEETING WITH THE UH HILO FACULTY CONGRESS
OCTOBER 22ND 2010

This note represents a summary of the meeting held with the UH Hilo Faculty Congress on October 22nd 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:

- Small class sizes
  - Faculty get to know the kids and this not only benefits their learning during their degree studies but also means that faculty can write detailed letters of recommendation for jobs that students may apply for, giving them an edge over their competitors.

- Faculty
  - Nice, down-to-earth, approachable professors
  - Quality of faculty is excellent
    - It is notable that professors teach classes not teaching assistants

- Student-centered environment for learning
  - Focus is on teaching – no big football team to serve as a distraction
  - Faculty work hard at developing strong curricula

- Being part of the UH System
  - Although also seen as a weakness in some areas, being part of the UH System means that UH Hilo benefits from shared resources, manpower and policies

- Location
  - Natural environment that offers a ‘learning laboratory’
  - Pretty campus, and easy to walk around
  - Being part of a unique social community

- Cultural diversity of the school in general
  - Diversity is valued on campus and different views are welcomed and accommodated
• World-leading center for indigenous language revitalization

• Partnerships
  o Good research partnerships with federal and state agencies – particularly in the sciences

• Good undergraduate research/scholarship opportunities

• Good at supporting non-traditional and first generation students

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

• Unclear mission
  o Who are we?

• Location
  o Although a major strength, the location of the university in the middle of the Pacific is isolating

• Lack of diversity among faculty
  o The current make-up of the faculty population does not reflect the diversity of the community

• Physically split campus
  o The Art department is still on the Manono campus

• ‘Growing pains’
  o How to handle more research
  o How to keep our liberal arts roots whilst balancing the development of graduate programs
  o Cramped and ageing infrastructure
    ▪ Insufficient office space
    ▪ Lack of teaching space
    ▪ Insufficient dormitories
    ▪ Inadequate parking
  o Community-based learning sites are becoming saturated
    ▪ E.g. the local hospitals host both pharmacy and nursing students. There are only a limited number of such sites on the island to support a growing number of students.
  o Technology
    ▪ Improved wireless access is required across the campus – there are particular areas where wireless access is problematic

• Not enough internship/community service opportunities for students
• Poor research support system
  o No statistician to assist researchers

• Limited access to journals at UH Manoa
  o There should be System-level funding for all System libraries to ensure that faculty/students get access to the same resources at all campuses

• Lack of funding for travel
  o Both to bring people to the island and to travel to the mainland/international destinations

• Low faculty morale
  o Lack of pride in programs, curriculum and the university – though this is not across the board
  o Lack of development opportunities for faculty

• Faculty siloized by department
  o A faculty gathering space or pub would help forge relationships across departments and encourage a more university-wide view among the faculty

• Lack of faculty participation in faculty governance
  o And uneven faculty governance in the colleges (i.e. CAS has no faculty senate)

• Faculty evaluation
  o No/limited post-tenure review process
    ▪ No penalty for doing a bad job
  o Insufficient peer review of faculty
    ▪ Too much focus on student evaluations which are not an effective measure of faculty performance
    ▪ It would be useful to have a teaching support unit for faculty to help promote teaching standards and different teaching methods

• Insufficient mentoring support for faculty

• No support for partners of faculty/staff recruited to UH Hilo
  o The university could look to do multiple-hires where appropriate (of the targeted faculty/staff member and their spouse) or perhaps allow partners to access UH Hilo career services

• Faculty recruitment and retention
  o Recruitment of faculty is passive (put an avert out and see who applies) rather than active (targeted recruitment)
  o There is generally low faculty retention (especially when partner can’t find work)

• Cost of the Student Life Center is too high for faculty to join
• Low student retention and graduation rates

• No childcare facility on campus for students/faculty

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

• How to establish a unique identity for our university that we can be proud of
  o We need to narrow down and focus our efforts – stop trying to be everything to everybody

• How to meet new WASC accreditation standards
  o How to get faculty buy-in on assessment requirements, and how to find the resources to support meeting the requirements

• How to balance the tension between the need to do research and to publish papers, versus the current teaching load

• How to keep up with our growth (infrastructure – physical, monetary and personnel)
  o We are already stretched to capacity
  o We need to more innovative with what we have

• How to tailor UH System policies to individual campuses

• How to foster a more collegial atmosphere among faculty and between faculty and the administration

• How to align units with the broader mission, vision and goals of the university
  o Develop unit-level plans that will support the institutional-level plan

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

• Figure out who we are and who we want to be

• Increase and improve resources
  o Ensure every student has a desk
  o Create more office space
  o Seek additional revenue streams

• Develop reasonable, fact-based expectations for growth

• Communication
• There should be a listserv for all students so that they can communicate with each other on broad issues without having to go through the administration first.

• Improve transportation for students
  o E.g. getting students to the UH farm
  o Work with the county to improve public transport links to and from the university

• Better understand our student body
  o The student demographic is changing and student expectations of higher education are changing. We need to be aware of these changes and adapt as necessary

• Improve support for faculty
  o E.g. development opportunities, mentoring scheme (for junior faculty)

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

General points:
• The goals are too vague and require metrics

• Focus on what we’re doing right and build on them. Don’t always look to do ‘new’ things

• There should be something in the goals about improving retention and graduation rates

Goal specific points:
• Goal 1 – the ‘liberal arts base’ should be maintained regardless of the direction that we want to more in. It should be retained as the core of UH Hilo

• Goals 1 and 2 require revision as the university appears to be moving towards a comprehensive university with liberal arts roots