LISTENING TOUR 2010: MEETING FOR UH HILO GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS
NOVEMBER 1\textsuperscript{ST} 2010

This note represents a summary of the meeting held for UH Hilo graduate and professional students on November 1\textsuperscript{st} 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, intimate class sizes
  - This enables students get to know their professors
  - There are larger class sizes in the College of Pharmacy but there is still good interaction with the professors

- Faculty and staff are accessible – when students have questions/are dealing with issues they are able to speak to a ‘real person’ rather than relying on email

- Student activities
  - First week of orientation is an excellent way to meet people and get familiar with the campus – it is well run
  - There is a lot going on and many events for students to get involved with
  - The Student Life Center

- Library
  - Helpful staff
  - Good hours

- Good expansion of facilities (e.g. Student Life Center, Science building)

- Community interaction and resources
  - Pharmacy and nursing students in particular benefits from a network of community resources which enables interaction with the community – though there could be more.
Weaknesses of UH Hilo
The group identified the following as key weaknesses of UH Hilo:

- Physical and technical infrastructure
  - Lack of parking and processing of parking permits
    - The parking office oversells parking permits which adds to the problem of parking congestion.
    - Suggestion: Have open parking and rather than charging students separately when they arrive, add the charge to the tuition
  - Lack of classroom space
    - In some instances, this means that classes run longer because it’s difficult for faculty to find rooms on different days
  - Lack of student housing
  - Poor wireless access – wireless is not available at all places on campus and in same places the connection is variable (e.g. library third floor)

- Lack of graduate programs
  - Suggestion: the administration/faculty should seek feedback from the undergraduate programs on a regular basis to determine need for graduate programs in particular areas.

- Facilities
  - Library
    - Need longer opening hours
  - Food services
    - Sodexho has a monopoly on campus in that they are the only food provider meaning there are limited food options
      - It was suggested that the university instead encourage food kiosks to set-up around campus to support local businesses
  - The bookstore
    - Ineffective ordering of books (i.e. not enough books ordered which means that some students are waiting weeks to obtain their course texts)
    - It was suggested that the bookstore hire extra staff at the beginning of the semester to ensure that students purchase the correct texts for their courses. That way, the bookstore can better control their stock and ensure that the right books are available for the right people
  - No child care facility
  - Lack of large lockers on campus
    - Larger lockers should be provided at different locations on campus
      - It was suggested that the university buy second-hand lockers from the local high schools to supplement the lockers already available

- Lack of inter- and intra-departmental communication
  - Specifically, there is a lack of coordination within and across departments on course curriculum so there is repetition in some classes
- Lack of availability of administrative leaders
  - The suggestion was for leading administrators to improve their visibility on campus and to hold an event each semester (like a tabling day) where students can ask questions and find out what is going on. It was suggested that would not only improve understanding about the university but would also help to ‘reduce grumblings’ as more people would be aware of key things happening and the reasons for them.

- Ineffective evaluations of professor teaching competencies
  - Student evaluations of professors are under-utilized and the questions on the evaluation forms do not allow for more qualitative responses
    - Consult students on changes required to the evaluation forms

- Financial support/issues
  - Tuition for graduate programs
    - Only half of the tuition can be covered by the maximum financial aid allowance due the number of credits that are required to graduate. This is putting extra financial pressures on graduate students.
  - The university’s health insurance is very expensive and there is only one option
    - It was suggested that the university seek to offer students more options in health insurance and look for ways to make it cheaper.

- Timing for scholarship applications did not fit with the admissions timetable for admission to the Pharmacy program which meant that some people missed out

- Lack of teaching assistantships/research assistantships on campus

- Lack of understanding by student employees of the university’s processes and procedures meaning they are limited in how much they can help to solve problems
  - Improve student-employee training in university jobs to ensure they fully understand processes and procedures

- Security/safety concerns
  - Lack of presence of campus security at night
  - Poor lighting
    - Increase security visibility and have them make more rounds in the electric car

- The Flow
  - Although ‘The Flow’ has been moderately successful, some students suggested that more input be made to it to maximize its reach and appeal to more students

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

- Clarify the role of research at UH Hilo
• Capitalize on our diverse student body by maximizing integration

• Develop infrastructure
  o But, how to accommodate growth and balance that against the ‘nice, small campus’
  o Focus on improving existing infrastructure first before building new

• How to ensure that funds are fairly disbursed to departments

• Finding sites for practicums
  o The university needs to seek more connections with the local community to increase the number and variety of places where students can undertake practicums relating to their studies

• Improve the process for credit transfer within the UH System – it currently is not easy to do

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

• Improve infrastructure
  o Increase student housing capacity
  o Focus on maintenance and renovation of the existing buildings
  o Solve the parking issue

• Improve financial aid
  o Get the administration up-to-date on different financial aid packages/opportunities
  o Solve the issue of financial aid for graduate students (there appears to be discrepancy between the maximum number of credits financial aid will cover, and the number of credits required for graduate study)

• Improve internal communication
  o Have administrators more available to students
  o Improve intra- and inter-departmental communication, particularly with regards to collaborating on curriculum development to minimize potential for unnecessary duplication

Appropriateness of the Current UHH Strategic Goals
This question was not asked of the group due to lack of time but members were invited to submit any comments on the current goals direct to the facilitator, Siân Millard at uuhplan@hawaii.edu, or through the companion survey to the listening tour (www.surveymonkey.com/listening).