SUMMARY NOTE OF TOWN HALL SESSION 4 FOR THE DRAFT MISSION AND VISION CONSULTATION

January 28th 2011

1. Overview

Attendees = 15

Attendee stakeholder groups: Faculty: 7, APT staff: 4, Civil service staff: 3, student: 1

This note is a summary of the fourth open town-hall session held for UH Hilo stakeholders on January 28th 2011 in relation to the draft mission and vision statements. The summary reflects individual comments made and not necessarily the consensus of all present or the official view of UH Hilo.

2. Introduction

Attendees received an introduction to the strategic planning process and were then shown the draft mission and vision statements. Participants were then asked for their feedback on these draft statements by responding to two questions for each one – what, if anything, they liked about the draft mission/vision, and what, if anything, they would like to change/amend in the draft statements. The resulting summary is organized around these two questions for both the draft mission and the draft vision.


'A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi
One learns from many sources

UH Hilo is committed to interactive learning, discovery, and creativity to benefit our increasingly intercultural communities.

3.1 What, if anything, do you like about this draft mission statement?

Hawaiian phrase as ‘one learn from many sources’

The sentiment of the mission statement is good but some of the terms lack clarity (see below)
3.2 What, if anything, do you think should be changed/added to the draft mission?

‘committed to’

Is that the right verb to convey a ‘purpose’? How about ‘engaged in’ as an alternative?

‘interactive learning, discovery, and creativity’

The term of ‘interactive’ is unclear. It could just refer to computer-assisted learning. It also implies certain ways of teaching. If the mission statement is going to refer to ways of teaching it should refer to all different methods – a diversity of approaches

‘benefit our increasingly intercultural communities’

‘intercultural’ is too narrow. Communities are diverse in many ways, not just culturally. Perhaps just have ‘communities’. Are ‘mono-cultures’ excluded from this phrase? What about ‘multicultural’ instead? Or ‘local and global communities’

Other comments

The draft mission statement generally lacks clarity. It should (but currently doesn’t):

- Convey a clear purpose and then what we do to achieve that purpose
- Convey institutional values
- Help individuals understand their own role

There is a recognized difficulty in trying to incorporate reference to all stakeholders within the statement. It should however focus on just one stakeholder – the students, as the reason for the university is to offer them an excellent education. The mission should suit the needs of students.

Explicitly reference Hawai‘i.

The statement seems passive and uninspiring – it doesn’t seem to express the actual purpose of UH Hilo.

A key distinguishing feature of UH Hilo is quality learning and service provision with Aloha. The spirit of ‘aloha’ is powerful and dynamic. Meaning ‘hello and goodbye’ it suggests a journey as well as a manner of interaction and appreciation for others.


UH Hilo is a community of scholars working together across disciplines and differences to address real world issues. Every student engages in practical experiences connected to the
people and environment of Hawai‘i, preparing them to compete, innovate, and lead in their professional and personal lives.

4.1 What, if anything, do you like about this draft vision statement?

‘practical experiences’

That students will engage in practical experiences to augment their learning.

‘connected to the people and environment of Hawai‘i’

The connection to the people and environment of Hawai‘i is positive.

‘preparing them to compete, innovate, and lead in their professional and personal lives’

That our focus will be on preparing students for their professional and personal lives.

4.2 What, if anything, do you think should be changed/added to the draft vision?

‘community of scholars’

This phrase seems too limiting and elitist, implying only faculty and therefore excluding staff, students and the external community.

It implies that only scholars can participate in addressing real-world issues.

‘Scholar’ is an academic label that loses individuality. We want to graduate ‘thinkers and doers’ not just academic scholars

Alternative to ‘scholars’ could be ‘problem-solvers’

‘Every student has practical experiences’

The term ‘practical experiences’ is too limiting and implies primarily the sciences rather than the arts. It implies technical and vocational experience rather than experience that can help students become excellent learners, critical thinkers, communicators, citizens etc.

The mandate implied in ‘every student’ may not be feasible or appropriate for every program/student. Maybe replace with ‘opportunity’ – that is still an aspiration because at the moment not every student has opportunity for practical experiences.

‘Nothing is more practical than a good theory’ – there is an interdependency between theory and practice but only one of these concepts is referred to here.

‘preparing them to compete, innovate, and lead in their professional and personal lives’
The word ‘compete’ does not seem appropriate. ‘Compete’ implies winners and losers and we don’t necessarily want to prepare students for competition. Alternatives are to ‘collaborate’ or to ‘succeed’.

Other comments

As with the draft mission statement, the draft vision statement is trying to cover all stakeholders. The statement should though only be focused on the students and the vision that we have that can help them to succeed.

Could the notion of the educational adventure (linking to the marketing of UH Hilo as ‘seeking adventurers’) be woven into the vision statement/mission statement?

The vision statement is marginally aspirational but it does seem to focus of things that we already do to some extent. Also, as the draft statement is written in the present it’s not immediately apparent that we are talking about what hope to be in the future. One area that is missing that could be something aspirational for the university is to develop closer-ties with the local community. Reference to that opportunity is missing from the draft vision.

It also lacks an inspirational feel. Words like ‘adventure’, ‘challenge’ and ‘discovery’ may help to convey such inspiration.