SUMMARY NOTE OF TOWN HALL SESSION 2 FOR THE DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION – STUDENT SESSION

April 13th 2011

1. Overview

Attendees = 29

Attendee stakeholder groups: 29 x student

This note is a summary of the second town-hall session held for UH Hilo stakeholders on April 13th 2011, in relation to the draft strategic plan. 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 referred to the draft strategic plan. Participants were then asked for their feedback on the plan, split into two sections. Section 1 covered the mission, vision, who we are, and what we stand for parts, and Section 2 the goals and actions. Each section was taken at a time and participants asked for their feedback – particularly in terms of what they liked, and what they recommend changing or clarifying. The resulting summary is organized around these two questions for both Sections.

3. Summary Comments – Section 1: Mission, vision, who we are, and what we stand for

3.1 What, if anything, do you like about this section?

It is inclusive

The usage of Hawaiian words and ‘Olelo No’eau

It sets a high bar

3.2 What, if anything, do you think should be changed/added to this section?

Vision

The first sentence of the vision statement sounds like it relates to everyone, but then the second sentence makes it seem like students are excluded from the first. It also seems like the second sentence is an assignment for students.
What does ‘every student’ mean? Does it mean that applied scholarship experiences will be required for every course, or be required to enable students to graduate from a course?

‘connects to the people, culture and environment of Hawai’i’ – is that referring to the Island or state of Hawai’i?

Could a collaborative angle with faculty be added so that it reads ‘Every student will collaborate with faculty to…’

What we stand for

Under ‘access to education’ what does ‘high expectations’ mean? Does it mean academically? Is it referring to conduct? Also, what about high expectations for faculty? Students are paying for their education and is high expectations are held for them then the same should be true for the faculty who are teaching students.

Under ‘community partnerships and economic impact’ what will the community partnerships be on?

4. Summary Comments – Section 2: Goals and Actions

Participants were asked for their comments on each of the goals and their supporting actions.

4.1 Goal 1 – Provide every student with applied scholarship experiences that prepare them to thrive, compete, innovate and lead in their professional and personal lives

Goal heading and supporting text - what does ‘scholarship’ mean? It seems to imply or be related to money i.e. scholarships. Also, if there is this requirement on students, will that mean that all faculty will have had to have applied what they’ve learned?

Action 1.1 – the focus on freshman in terms of providing an overview of general university academic and conduct expectations seems too narrow and implies it will only occur in orientation week which not all freshman attend. Could it be broadened out to include all students?

Action 1.2 – the word ‘entrepreneurial’ promotes an image of business focus. This action needs more attention. Also, it’s good to promote critical thinking and the development of ideas, but in terms of moving on to graduate study faculty need to support students’ ideas and areas of interest.

Action 1.3 – if there are going to be more internships etc then those need to be better advertised and promoted than at present so that all students have opportunity to apply for them. Also, what will be cost of this applied scholarship? Does UH Hilo have the funds to support it?

Action 1.5 – the inclusion of childcare is good. For future development of this action it would be good if there was the option to have your child cared for through the Hawaiian language.

Action 1.7 – what does ‘student mentoring’ mean? This question was opened up to participants:

- It’s not clear whether it’s students mentoring other students and faculty monitoring that, or faculty mentoring students.
- It implies that students would get paired up with faculty to help students keep on track with their studies
- It isn’t clear how ‘mentoring’ is different from ‘advising’
It means that faculty would be more available to students
Is it referring to mentoring for individual students or does it include student groups as well, because it is difficult for student groups to find faculty advisors.
Is it going to be another part of faculty’s job or will be a separate position within colleges?
Would it include study groups that could bring different disciplines together?

4.2 Goal 2: Inspire academic excellence through scholarship in teaching and research

Goal heading, supporting text, and some actions – again, what does ‘scholarship’ mean?

Action 2.1 – make it clear that this action is referring to improving faculty teaching by saying ‘support excellence in faculty teaching’

Action 2.4 – if research is to be more integrated into the classroom then faculty need to give as much credit to research as they do to regular class work because at the moment that is not consistently the case. Sometimes research isn’t given as much credit as regular class work (issue of transferability).

4.3 Goal 3: Foster a greater sense of campus community through a vibrant, sustainable, and well-maintained environment within which to study, work and live

Action 3.6 – ‘sustainability’ is a buzz word at the moment. Is this something that the university is going to make a strong commitment to do, or is it more of a recommendation to try to be more sustainable? The former would be better and in that case the action needs strengthening.

Action 3.7 – this is good because it would be good to have somewhere to study later at night.

Action 3.8 – a focus on improving food option is good and it would be particularly good to demonstrate the university’s support for the local community by buying food that is grown and produced locally.

Areas potentially missing – reference to more lockers for commuter students to store their belongings, improved parking, better road access through campus, and covered walkways. Also potential missing is a reference to the alumni and how they, as a body of people, can have a positive impact on the campus environment.

4.4 Goal 4: Build and sustain a distinctive identity that cultivates and celebrates our diverse, multicultural university, and radiates out from the unique core of our officially bilingual state

General – this goal seems a little contradictory as it references multiculturalism but within the context of Hawaiian culture. It’s therefore not clear if the focus of the goal is multiculturalism or on perpetuating the Hawaiian culture.

General – as the goal seems to trying to achieve two things it may be better to split it out so that it’s clearer and focus can be given to each one. Alternatively, the issue could be resolved by making it clearer in the goal that two things are trying to be achieved so make reference to that and this.

Action 4.1 – how will Native Hawaiian values etc be infused into the university?
Action 4.1 – is the aim for students to come here and understand UH Hilo as a ‘Hawaiian university’? Will all students, faculty and staff be required to take a course in Hawaiian? What does a ‘Hawaiian university’ mean?

Action 4.2 – what does ‘host’ culture mean? Is that just the Native Hawaiian culture or does it refer to the local, more diverse cultures of Hawaii?

Action 4.6 – focusing on more study abroad opportunities is good but in implementation the university needs to be clear about how credits will transfer between the institutions.

4.5 Goal 5: Strengthen UH Hilo’s impact on the community, Island and state of Hawaiʻi through responsive higher education, community partnerships, and knowledge and technology transfer.

This goal was not addressed due to lack of time.

4.6 Goal 6: Facilitate organizational excellence by fostering a culture of continuous innovation, responsible resource development, and effective communications

This goal was not addressed due to lack of time.

5. General Comments

Participants raised the following general comments about the draft strategic plan:

- Could there be a priority list of the actions or a shorter list of actions? At the moment it seems like a lot to achieve.

- It would be good to ensure student input to the implementation of this plan.