Update on Essay Three: Defining and Promoting “Student Success”

Moving forward, we continue to learn and introduce ideas to aid student success. As those programs and initiatives introduced in Essay Three have continued to mature, we continue to search for ways to improve. Assessment of many existing programs has been limited and plans for this process will be expanded and formalized. The following presents an update, and introduces additional plans as we grow.

**Freshman Guaranteed Academic Schedules (FreGAS)**

The Freshman Guaranteed Academic Schedules initiative is currently in its fourth year with the Fall 2014 cohort of entering freshmen. Many improvements have been made since the Fall 2011 pilot, to increase efficiency and effectiveness, and to address concerns regarding sustainability and implementation of this program.

One of the most notable changes has been the shift of duties from a single-person to an implementation team that oversees all aspects of FreGAS. This team was initially formed to address the needs of the Fall 2013 cohort. With this shift, many of the processes had to be reconsidered. A team approach provided greater continuity and support for the program and its students. At the core of the FreGAS Implementation Team are members from the Admissions Office and Advising Center. These individuals work together in collaboration with other units across Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to better provide students with schedules that meet their academic and co-curricular needs.

With these partnerships and the diligence of the implementation team, all incoming freshmen from Fall 2013 onward, and regardless of major, are being provided with full-time (12-credit) schedules. Schedules are built based on the 4-year academic maps, placement assessments, and class availability.

**Evidence:** Initial data indicated slight increases in GPA and persistence when comparing the Fall 2011 pilot participants with non-participants and data from previous cohorts. As the FreGAS moves forward and there is more consistent implementation, evaluation and assessment efforts become more straightforward. When a full-time, permanent Institutional Research Analyst, is hired at UH Hilo, it is imperative that analysis of the 2012-13 and 2013-14 cohorts be completed to determine the impact of FreGAS.

The following table compares the performance of pre-FreGAS cohorts with those entering since FreGAS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Cohort</th>
<th>Census Adj Cohort N</th>
<th>End of Semester Cohort N</th>
<th>Mid Semester Withdraw</th>
<th>Semester Persistence Start to Finish</th>
<th>Average of Semester End Semester GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>98.0%</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above data on UH Hilo First-Time, Full-Time Freshman persistence and GPA does not suggest a noticeable increase in persistence or academic performance with implementation of the FreGAS initiative. There are many factors that may have impacted the above, including the economic climate and demographic differences in the admitted freshman cohorts. As noted, FreGAS has undergone significant changes in implementation since its pilot and greater efforts are being made to provide incoming freshmen with a full-time schedule. Courses provided via FreGAS differ from those students may have registered for in absence of this program, due to limited seat availability and increased advisor contact with the FreGAS initiative.

**Next Steps:** There are currently no formalized assessment efforts in place for FreGAS. This is in part due to its decentralized structure, with functions spanning across multiple units and the recent change to a team-based approach. The recent changes to FreGAS implementation has allowed for greater consistency and efficiency in schedules created for incoming freshmen. To meet the needs of future cohorts, greater support and cooperation between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs units is required to address demands in seat and course availability.

Future plans include a more formalized assessment process by which to monitor student retention, success (GPA, credits completed, attainment of academic milestones), and satisfaction possibly through surveys, focus groups, and institutional data. With the initial cohort of FreGAS participants enter their fourth year in Fall 2014, examination of graduation, as well as retention, data will be undertaken. As FreGAS is currently a joint effort, leadership and oversight will be identified to best determine how to move forward with assessment plans. Further disaggregation and examination of available data will be undertaken to better determine the impacts of FreGAS, its effectiveness, future direction and form.

**4-Year Academic Plans**

The UH Hilo 4-Year Maps are in their second iteration with the 2014-15 Academic Year. Maps have been updated to reflect the most recent changes in academic requirements as well as scheduling limitations with FreGAS. These adjustments provide students with a more realistic plan by which to plan their schedules.
Living-Learning Communities

In Fall 2013, the Hale Kanilehua Living and Learning Community (LLC) entered its inaugural semester. This initiative provided UH Hilo with its first cohort of LLC students, with 31 participants, including 21 freshmen. In Spring 2014, the Kanilehua LLC reached capacity at 40 students, 28 of whom were attending UH Hilo and 2 enrolled at Hawaii Community College.¹

Of the 40 slots available in the Kanilehua LLC, 20 are reserved for Native Hawaiian freshmen, with preference for the remaining given to students in Hawaiian Studies and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors. The Kanilehua LLC is overseen by the Kīpuka Native Hawaiian Student Center, and is staffed by one Resident Assistant, a Senior Resident Assistant, student tutors and peer mentors. Kanilehua LLC freshmen take multiple courses together during their first semester in the program, and participate in service projects within the residence hall and greater community.

UH Hilo’s LLC options will expand in Fall 2014 with the addition of the Freshman Village pilot communities. Each of these LLCs will include 20 freshmen students who will be housed together in the Hale Kehau Residence Hall. Residents are grouped into one of several predetermined interest areas to form a community. In addition to living together, members of a Freshman Village LLC are required to enroll in a selected shared course each semester and are invited to participate in exclusive events that are designed to fit the theme of each community.

Resident Assistants were specifically chosen for each community to provide customized co-curricular programming within the residence halls. Co-coordinators, one each representing Academic Affairs and Student Affairs co-coordinators serve as liaisons with the greater campus community while a Resident Manager/Living Learning Community Coordinator oversees both the Freshman Village and Kanilehua LLCs.

Evidence: An assessment plan is in place to track and compare the retention and academic performance of first-time, full-time freshmen living in these learning communities and compare them with students not living in residence halls. National Survey of Student Engagement responses will further be used to gauge LLC impact and results will be disaggregated to better determine effect on at-risk populations.

The Kanilehua LLC provides UH Hilo with an initial cohort of LLC participants. In Fall 2013, the average GPA of Kanilehua students was at 2.67, compared with 2.61 for full-time freshman and 2.84 for undergraduates institution-wide. LLC participants had a higher average GPA than other freshmen, but lower than the overall UH Hilo undergraduate population. This could, in part, be due to the coursework required of...

¹ University of Hawaii at Hilo, Biennium Academic Report July 2012-June 2014: Hale Kanilehua Living and Learning Community.
majors targeted by this program. Continued tracking of this, and future Kanilehua LLC cohorts, is planned.

To further examine the impact of LLCs on the UH Hilo campus, data will be disaggregated to allow comparisons between LLC students and those who reside in the residence halls, but did not live in an LLC.

**Next Steps:** In order to assess the impact of Living Learning Communities on the UH Hilo campus, the Freshman Village initiative will be revisited to identify its mission, goals, and outcomes. These will then be used in the creation of a formalized assessment plan to determine the effectiveness of this program.

If first-time, full-time, freshmen LLC students significantly outperform counterparts not living in residence halls, or those living in residence halls but not participating in LLCs, the university will consider requiring all freshmen to live on-campus.

**Transfer Students**
The needs of UH Hilo’s Pacific Islander population are being targeted thorough programs created through funds received via a five-year federal grant. These activities were introduced in Essay Three: Defining and Promoting “Student Success”. In year 2012-13, further efforts were made to improve existing Pacific Islander programs.\(^2\) Summer Bridge participants more than doubled; a higher education summit was held, and a website created, to disseminate information to interested faculty and staff to facilitate their work with this group of students.

Preliminary figures indicated a drop in retention and increased numbers not making satisfactory academic progress, these results are currently being explored to better determine how to adjust programming to better meet the needs of this group of students.

**Evidence:** Assessment and evaluation for Pacific Islander programs are housed and being conducted within the unit, and is a requirement to continued federal grant funding. In 2012-13, participants in programs targeted towards Pacific Islander students increased, and this population reported an increase in the number of students engaged in high impact activities. To evaluate program effectiveness data from the National Survey of Student Engagement, GPA and academic action, as well as retention and graduation rates will be used.

Under the purview of the Kipuka Native Hawaiian Student Center is the Ho’okele program, which began in July 2012 and provides transfer support to Native Hawaiian students as they transition from Hawaii Community College to UH Hilo. Students transferring to UH Hilo from Hawaii Community College accounted for over 25% of total

\(^2\) University of Hawaii at Hilo, *201 Annual Performance Report*. 
transfers in Fall 2013 and Spring 2014. The program is staffed with one advisor, student mentors and tutors. Some of the services that Ho`okele provides to transfer students while at UH Hilo are:

- 2-day Summer Bridge program;
- Assigned Peer Mentor;
- Personalized academic support;
- Student Development and Career Workshops;
- Connecting students to community and campus resources.

The Ho`okele program provides incoming transfer students with support, academically, socially, and developmentally, to ease the transition to UH Hilo. This support network is maintained throughout the student’s tenure at the University to improve their chances of academic success.

**Evidence**: Assessment and evaluation for the Ho`okele program is ongoing. Evaluations are collected at each event and results are reviewed to better inform future program offerings. In addition, student participation, persistence and academic performance are analyzed. At the end of Spring 2014, 88.9% of program participants were still enrolled, with 2 of the remaining 6 dismissed due to poor academic performance. Students served by the Ho`okele program is increasing, with advising appointments nearly doubling from Spring 2013 to Spring 2014.

**Next Steps**: As data is available, programs are being adjusted to better meet the needs of these transfer populations. Future programs should address the needs of the broader community of transfer students at UH Hilo, due to their relatively high attrition rates. A survey conducted in Fall 2013 of students who did not reenroll indicated many students made the decision to leave UH Hilo after initial attendance. A relatively large proportion of these students transferred to another institution. Their reasons for not returning need to be explored in greater depth and in a more formal manner, to better determine those factors which impact student persistence. As additional data becomes available, these should be evaluated and transfer student programming adjusted.

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5 A survey of Spring 2013 students who did not reenroll in Fall 2013 was distributed via email in October 2013. Over 40% of respondents were transfer students. Results of the survey have not been made publically available.
In addition to programs targeting specific student groups, it is planned to expand intrusive advising activities to first-semester transfer students, to better address the unique needs of this population.

**Intrusive Advising**

Since Fall 2013, UH Hilo Advising Center has become the advising home for all incoming freshmen through their first academic year. Students are assigned to an Advising Center advisor based on their academic major and are required to check-in with their assigned advisor in each of their first two semesters. Check-in sessions are focused on the student’s developmental needs and geared towards helping first and second semester freshmen successfully transition to UH Hilo and college, in general. Students who do not check-in before a predetermined deadline have registration holds placed on their accounts and are unable to register for upcoming semesters until a check-in is completed.

In addition to targeting first and second semester freshmen, the Advising Center conducted outreach to students placed on academic action after the Fall 2013 semester, to help these students identify and implement strategies for success. The Advising Center also makes a first contact with all incoming freshmen prior to their first semester via phone calls. These are intended to keep students on-track with assessments and to proactively address any questions that may arise; students are also informed of FreGAS and queried for information that may affect their first-semester schedule.

After the initial first year as freshmen, these students are handed off to an established faculty advising structure within the individual Colleges and Schools, with the exception of General/Undeclared students who remain assigned to the Advising Center. Colleges and Schools may conduct their own intrusive advising activities. Within the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, the Office of the Dean has conducted phone outreach to students who do not register in a timely manner.

**Evidence:** In both Fall 2013 and Spring 2014, approximately 90% of first and second semester freshmen completed check-ins with the Advising Center, the majority through in-person or phone advising sessions. The Advising Center collects evaluations of advising sessions and reviews end of semester performance for their students (GPA, academic actions, enrollment) to better inform planning for future semesters. However, there is currently no formal assessment process in place for current advising activities. A more comprehensive assessment plan for first-year freshmen, including an advising syllabus, is being developed. The introduction of EBI MAP-Works should help with this process.

**Next Steps:** EBI MAP-Works will be piloted with the Fall 2014 entering freshman cohort, to help with early identification of at-risk students. This early alert system will further allow academic advisors to outreach and provide support to students in order to make the greatest impact. This population was selected for the pilot as there is a current
intrusive advising mechanism in place for these students. Expanding the reach of EBI-MapWorks requires a broader discussion across divisions, which is ongoing.

Intrusive advising activities for First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen will continue through the Advising Center. Plans are to expand intrusive advising activities to include first-semester transfer students, as transfer students from all backgrounds account for a relatively large proportion of attrition. During their first semester in particular, transfer students face challenges as they navigate a new system and set of academic requirements. Intrusive advising for this population will better allow advisors to address the unique needs of transfer students in timelier manner.

In addition to the above programmatic offerings and updates, UH Hilo has continued to introduce new initiatives to address the concerns regarding student retention and success on our campus. As we look forward to our future, we further consider the paths our students embark upon after graduation, and the imprints they leave on the broader communities.

**A Further Definition of Student Success**

Although the factoring of graduation rates continue to drive the national agenda of student success, UH Hilo joins a growing movement in higher education to secure a broader definition of what such success means to our campus. Are our graduates getting satisfying jobs? Are they leaving college with as little debt as possible? The answers we find to these and other questions will certainly give us a better understanding of what it will take to define UH Hilo student success beyond graduation rates and retention. In order to succeed as a university, we must keep graduation as a guiding beacon for all students.

Yet as we continue to uncover new answers pertaining to our retention and graduation-related programs, the Division of Student Affairs embraces the importance of moving the student success discussion forward. In order to secure an expanded definition of success, it is important for us to provide ourselves with a better understanding of:

- UH Hilo Alumni Satisfaction;
- UH Hilo Alumni Employment Trends;
- UH Hilo Alumni Employment Studies,
  - As a contributor to the Big Island’s professional workforce,
  - Contributor to Big Island community,
  - Contributor to State of Hawaii,
  - National Contributions (if available);
- Student debt.

There is a glaring need to improve our data collection infrastructure in regards to our alumni. As currently configured, we have very limited information pertaining to the post-UH Hilo journey of our graduates. To no fault of the existing Alumni and Friends
office, UH Hilo has not provided the charge (nor support) needed to secure a more reliable approach for alumni reporting. While much of our efforts center around fundraising and providing an information hub for alumni, there have been little concerted efforts to gain larger understandings of our alumni. In the coming year (AY 2014-15), it is imperative for our campus to provide a greater commitment toward understanding the lives of our graduates upon completing their degrees.

Through the support of campus leadership, a Task Force on Alumni Satisfaction and Employment will be established. The sole purpose of this group will be to establish improved practice on our campus in securing alumni data. The Division of Student Affairs offers a collaborative role in the campus effort to

1. Establish directives and specific charge of the task force by November 30, 2014.

2. Assemble the task force comprised of members representing immediate stakeholders such as the Office of Alumni and Friends, Career Development Services, Institutional Research Office, and other members identified as those whose presence on the task force would be of value. To be completed by December 30, 2014.

3. Convene meetings of the task force.
   a. Establish Methodology for data collection.
   b. Seek all necessary approvals.
   c. Create survey instrument and considerations.

4. Provide a report of findings and recommendations to Chancellor by June 1st, 2015.

**Moving Forward: An Informed Campus Community**

Many of the initiatives above require campus-wide cooperation and support, and a broader discussion among the campus community. To facilitate this discussion and to open the lines of communication between campus participants, information in this report will be disseminated to faculty and staff via continual updates to our UH Hilo Council of Vice Chancellors.

The Council will be provided with updates to clarify or bring adjustments to plans moving forward. The Vice Chancellors will bring this information to their divisional leaders. Division-specific actions, along with specific completion dates, will be posted on their respective websites to keep information clear and accountable. Divisional leaders will further disseminate this information to their members and stakeholders. This model will ensure information is filtered down to front-line personnel and faculty and staff at all levels, as we move forward with our plans to further improve and support student success at UH Hilo.