Appendix G. Academic and Support Initiatives 2002-2004

In Fall 2003, the degree-granting colleges, the Library, and the Office of Student Affairs were asked to report on recent activities and initiatives undertaken to improve student learning and co-curricular life. The list that follows is current only through November 2003 and will be added to as more departments respond to the request.

College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resource Management.

The college’s Agriculture Development Program has increased recruitment and retention of students from State high schools in rural communities. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian Educating Institutions, the ADP seeks to increase the role of under-represented minorities in agriculture by increasing access to a college education. Informational visits to more than 17 high schools has increased enrollment by more than ten percent in the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resource Management. See sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 of this report for details.

College of Arts and Sciences

Student resource centers (Places within departments that student can go to hold study group sessions, get special help and access PCs.): Geology Department, Computer Science Department, Math Lab, Nursing, Psychology, Sociology and Political Science, Education.

Humanities Division

The Art Department is sponsoring a Fall 2003 alumni exhibition of works by graduates of the program; the exhibition is at the campus center

The Communication Department:
- has instituted a minimum GPA requirement for majors in order to improve the level of instruction and to relieve enrollment pressure in its impacted major courses.
- has added a course in journalism in response to student demand
- has experimented with an innovative experiential learning format in the interpersonal communication course, the "wisdom circle"

The English Department
- has instituted a tutor-training course for writing center tutors
- with Linguistics, has launched at Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language
- has begun working with the VCAA to create a better pathway for students who score below English 100T on the placement test to get prerequisite writing instruction
- has instituted an introduction to the literature major to make sure students have certain basic skills and knowledge before they go into their upper-division major courses
is offering an asynchronous children’s literature course in the summer session so that all students needing this high-demand course can take it regardless of their schedules.

The Performing Arts department
- has launched a new major in Performing arts, including adding a dance track with a full time dance instructor and a full range of dance classes
- is expanding its technical theater course offerings by adding a 1/2 time technical theater instructor, to begin Fall 2004
- offers students performing opportunities including the Great Leaps Dance performance, the Christmas choral performance.

Natural Sciences Division
- Virtually all full-time natural science professors work with individual students in directed research projects that combine true research, field work, and writing. In the Biology department, these research projects are explicitly directed towards eventual publication.
- The Natural Science division has set up a student computer lab in Life Sciences 1 and will move it to a larger room in Spring 2004.
- The Biology club sponsors weekly field trips to such sites as the Hakalau Forestry Park, beach clean-ups, the slopes of Mauna Kea to study native plants such as the silversword.
- The Astronomy and Physics club sponsors field trips to the Mauna Kea telescopes, . . .
- The Marine Science department and the Marine Options Program sponsor turtle-tagging, sailing, and other activities.
- The Math department sponsors a seminar series, each presentation culminating in a barbecue or picnic enjoyed by faculty and students. See section 4.4 for a discussion of the Math department’s activities in support of student learning.
- The Physics and Astronomy department:
  - The department is currently reviewing both the Physics and Astronomy curricula through a review committee appointed at our first meeting this August. Based upon the recommendations from this committee, the department plans to alter the curriculum by adding some courses, deleting others, and expanding elective offerings.
  - The department has established a Thesis Review Committee consisting of three faculty members who review all senior thesis proposals and, when they are completed, review the final project report. This assures both quality and uniformity.
  - Having received a federal grant of approximately $475,000, the department is currently designing an instructional telescope facility which will be sited on the Mauna Kea summit. The telescope should be operational within two years and will represent a unique opportunity for UHH Astronomy majors.
  - Three members of the department faculty are involved in various aspects of the institutional STEM grant. Among the projects currently underway are the development of new courses with particular attention to native Hawaiian students and of expanded internship programs whereby students can study using facilities on Mauna Kea. Physics 197, Introduction to Natural Sciences, which is being team-
taught with other Natural Science faculty members, is one of the courses created within the Department.

• A new, optional Physics course in CHAOS theory and an almost-finished laboratory course in OBSERVATIONAL ASTRONOMY will be offered within the next semester.

• The department continues to collaborate with scientists in the UHH Technology Park who act as lecturers for some of our courses. Currently, Dr. Marc Siegar is teaching for us and next semester Klaus Hodapp, director of the IfA Hilo Center, will teach a course.

• The NOMISS project will continue for an additional year on a non-cost extension status. The project expands opportunities for Astronomy instruction throughout the entire P-G educational spectrum.

• The introductory Physics laboratory experiment sequence has been completely revamped into a web-based course using computer-interface sensors. All the laboratory instructions and experiments have been rewritten.

• The Computer Science department:
  • The Department was awarded a National Science Foundation grant under the CSEMS (Computer Science, Engineering, Mathematics Scholarship) program. This $203,000 grant will support 15 academically qualified and financially needy Computer Science majors through their four years of study.
  • Continuing a 15-year tradition, the junior and senior CS majors took the ETS Major Field Achievement Test in April, 2003. These 29 students, the largest group to date, achieved an average score of 157, which places UHH in the 79th percentile of the institutional scores making up the national norm.
  • The Department configured an additional computer lab, rebuilding many of the machines that were present, tying this facility into the departmental network, and upgrading all software.
  • A number of increased security measures for the Department network were implemented, including mirroring on RAID servers, a new firewall, more complete backup policies, and a registration procedure for the use of laptops.
  • Eight CS courses were offered via distance education to students on Maui, Oahu, and Kauai.
  • Almost all courses have migrated to WebCT as the online course support mechanism.
  • The course management software for CS 100 (Principles of Computer Science) was converted entirely to the new C# programming language.
  • The following custom applications for CS 100 were re-written in C# and improved:
    Logic Circuits (a CAD for logic circuit design),
    Turing Machine (represents Alan Turing's hypothetical machine),
    Character Recognition (AI, neural network processing)
    Faux Poetry (language processing)
  • CS 101 (Microcomputer Applications Software) was migrated to a totally web-based course with all 21 assignments (six versions of each assignment) converted from text-only assignments to web pages with supplementary data
• To prepare students before they try the hands-on lab assignments in CS101, WebCT online homework has been added to each assignment. If printed, these extra questions would amount to over 100 pages of additional practice questions.
• A practice module has been created for CS101 to provide automated feedback about the student's attempts to write syntactically correct SQL code. Likewise, self-scoring modules were added to some assignments so students could improve their skills during class instead of simply turning in faulty assignments.
• A new software module to allow students to perform integration and produce contour diagrams is being developed for CS 102 (Microcomputer Applications for Sciences) to eliminate the need for expensive upgrades to a commercial software product.
• CS 110 (Visual Basic Programming) was completely revised to use a totally object-oriented approach based on VisualBasic.NET and an entire new sets of course notes was written.
• A set of online homework assignments for CS 110 was created to complement each lab project.
• With the new lab facility, the CS 150 class (Introduction to Computer Science) has been able to schedule 8 closed lab sessions per semester, and lab activities have been written for these sessions.
• As a result of the NSF grant, student tutors have been available for CS 150 and CS 151 students.
• XSL transforms have been incorporated in CS 200 (Web Technology I) to give students immediate feedback in learning to write HTML.
• The third CS course in the E-Commerce Technology and Business Certificate will be offered for the first time in Spring, 2004.
• Extensive course content updates have taken place in CS 200, CS 201, CS 420 (File Management), and CS 430 (Operating Systems).
• A new version of a CD-based course delivery system featuring both content and assessment tools has been developed and is in use in CS 420.
• The CS 460-461 Software Engineering team project combined both on-campus and distance ed students, and resulted in a software package for evaluation in a distance learning environment for technical courses, including both an authoring/grading tool and a student-side test-taking tool.
• The new C# programming language was incorporated into CS 460-461 and CS 450 (Programming Languages).
• A new CS 494 topics course in Computer Security, a very timely topic, was offered in Fall, 2003.
• The student Computer Science Club was revitalized and now is meeting regularly
• Students in the Computer Science Club, under the supervision of several faculty, have assembled, configured, and carried out preliminary testing on a parallel computing cluster
• CS faculty participated in GEAR-UP, the summer advising program with high school students and their families
• The Department participated in the UHH Majors Day Fair
• The Department will participate in the Onizuka Science Day activities
Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikolani College of Hawaiian Language

- The college has hired a part-time assistant to advise students academically, direct students to tutoring and counseling programs, to reach out to and counsel students at risk or on probation or academic dismissal, and to ease the transition into the college for new students
- Two student tutors for Hawaiian language students have been hired by Kīpuka (a Title III-funded program to benefit native Hawaiian students)
- In Fall 2003, three guest speakers met with Hawaiian studies students on Sailing on the Hōkūle‘a to the northwest Hawaiian islands, the Kamehameha Schools’ Admission Policy, and ‘Awa.
- In Fall 2003 the college sponsored 3 talk-story sessions for students about current issues within the Native Hawaiian community with our Hawaiian studies professors These topics included: Native Hawaiian entitlements, the last will and testament of Bernice Pauahi Bishop, and the Mauna Kea Astronomy Educational Center.
- The college assists students in finding a career in a Hawaiian studies field, in meeting with Hawaiian language places of employment such as ‘Aha Pūnana Leo and Hale Kuamo‘o as well with the State of Hawaii Department of Health and Lyman Museum
- The college sponsors a Visiting Mānaleo Program; in Spring 2004, Title III funding will assist Ka Haka ‘Ula’s ability to enable students to engage in conversation with native speakers once a week.
- The college website is being revamped to include a student information component: requirements for majors, minors, and certificates and checklists to track individual progress, financial aid and scholarships, admission information for post-baccalaureate study, announcements, internships and volunteer opportunities; as well as a directory of staff and faculty, discussion boards and online Hawaiian language resources
- In 2003-2004, the college plans to coordinate “acquaintance” opportunities such as picnics, field trips, camping, and projects in which students can use the Hawaiian language in authentic life situations

Mookini Library

The practice of identifying program goals and focusing on mission has encouraged library staff and administration have promoted student learning and co-curricular life in a number of different ways:

- The library lanai has become the university’s first true gathering place for students throughout the day and into the evening. The library has worked with HawCC carpentry students and the student governments of UH Hilo and HawCC to provide five more picnic tables on the lanai, and with the university’s Sodexho food service to continue coffee service on the lanai during the week.
- Created "celebrity" study rooms using ALA Read posters
- Students can now borrow wireless-access laptops free of charge while in the library.
• Students now have wireless access to the internet while in the library or on the library lanai.
• Equipment in multimedia stations has been updated.
• Furniture in the library lobby has been rearranged so that seating is more comfortable and the entry is more welcoming.
• A new DVD display makes borrowing easier.
• Library displays are renewed on a monthly basis to interest students in various parts of the collection.
• New white boards at ADA height levels have been installed in two of the group study rooms
• The number of "wired" student carrels has been increased to allow students to research using their lap tops.
• The current-journal display area has been rearranged to create more casual seating.
• A student representative has been added to the new Congress Library Advisory Committee.

Office of Student Affairs

Attracting excellent students
• Beginning in Fall 2002 and with the cooperation of the CAS, establishment of a Chancellor’s Scholarship, four-year scholarships aimed at attracting highly academically qualified students from the state of Hawaii

Streamlining procedures, guidelines, and forms
• The new “MyUH” portal to the UH Banner system enables students to check their UH email, registration, account, etc., at a “one-stop” website
• Ease of registering for classes within the UH system through new Banner student information system
• Revised financial aid application procedures that simplify the process for most students
• Revised Satisfactory Academic Progress guidelines for financial aid eligibility that are more supportive of student success
• New method of disbursing financial aid payments so that students do not have to stand in long lines; financial aid gets disbursed directly to a student’s account; examining possibility of electronic disbursement of “refund” amounts directly into a student’s bank account
• The University is beginning work on developing a new graduation audit system in Banner
• The University is considering adopting a tuition payment plan option
• Revised certain policies related to registration and payment that are more student-friendly

Increasing personal contact between staff and students
• The University is considering an early registration option for all newly admitted students (not just those who can physically attend an “Early Bird” session in the state)
• Enhanced orientation with increased numbers of students attending
• The position of coordinator of the Women’s Center will become full-time when the position is filled.

Improving housing on- and off-campus
• High speed internet access from the residence hall rooms
• Additional housing availability off-campus, and more on-campus housing planned in the future at the US-China Center
• The University is considering revising priority guidelines for residence hall space such that freshmen would have highest priority
• Increased programming in the residence halls
• Temporary off-campus housing coordinator hired during late summer/early fall to help meet the needs of students seeking housing

Serving transfer students more efficiently
• With the implementation of the Banner student information system, the transfer credit evaluation process has been revised such that transfer students will receive evaluations in a more timely manner (ultimately, at the time of admission)

Adding co-curricular activities and services
• Purchase of new, modern ID card system and consideration of adopting new ID card software, which has the potential to serve various functions (e.g., identification, meal plan, debit card, Library card, etc.)
• Increased opportunities for service learning and volunteerism
• Plans to remodel both campus cafeterias
• Increase in student fees, which will primarily enable the University to provide more co-curricular activities
• Greater availability of health care on campus, via a physician on-campus approximately twice a week
• Enhanced Career Center activities and services, including the Center website, which now allows users to search for on-campus jobs as well as post-graduation jobs
• administrative and fiscal support specialist in the Campus Center

Supporting students with special needs
• Continuation of a Federal Title III grant (Kipuka Native Hawaiian Support Program), aimed at retaining more Native Hawaiian students
• Establishment of a “Summer Start” program, aimed at orienting and assisting adults returning to education
• Discussion of revised ways to outreach to students on academic probation

Getting out the word about UH Hilo
• Initiation of a new newsletter aimed at the parents and families of students
• Greater number of sections of University 101 offered in the fall semester
• Production of “Islands and Beaches” videotape, aimed at increasing understanding of cultural norms and values between local students and students from the mainland
• Assigned a staff member in Admissions to coordinate the “Running Start” program, which enables high school students to take courses for college credit at UH Hilo
• UH Hilo hosted hundreds of low-income, middle school students from throughout the state as a co-sponsor of the Gear Up Program’s “A Taste of College”