TO: UHH Faculty Congress
FROM: Seri Luangphinith
Chair, Assessment Support Committee
CC: Don Straney, Chancellor
Kenith Simmons, Interim VCAA
April Komenaka, Accreditation Liaison Officer
RE: Report of the Assessment Support Committee
DATE: October 21, 2011

On behalf of the members of the Assessment Support Committee, I hereby submit the following report on the following activities that were done over Summer of 2010. This report documents the commendable work undertaken by faculty outside of their 9-month contracts and the level of assessment that is ideally advocated per accreditation standards.

E-Portfolio

Due to a cited lack of funds, the Chair of the Assessment Support Committee utilized mileage gained during her WASC training in California to meet with representatives from Kapi'olani Community College, who are developing a nationally cited e-portfolio. Keola Donaghy from Ka Haka ‘Ula was also present for the June 13 meeting with Mary Hattori, Joy Shirokane and Karl Naito—the team leaders developing the software with Ikayzo. While we were initially excited about the concept given our initial reviews of their platform back in October of 2010, the newest release seemed more geared towards trade and industry skills-based assessment that promoted a strict linear progression (scaffolding) of assignments and skills that may not be applicable for a four-year liberal arts environment (i.e. writing can sometimes falter in upper division courses when new concepts or harder readings are pursued). We gave feedback citing our concerns and we have since decided to evaluate other existing software (such as Turnitin.com) to see if an eportfolio function can be developed. Keola Donaghy is currently pursuing a viability study.

Mathematics

Dr. Mitchell Anderson took the lead to test-pilot the new GE Rubric for Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning. He worked with two of the Math Department’s key instructors—Zorana Lazarevic and Diana Webb—who teach Math 104. In Math 104F, they assessed three problems that were imbedded on the last page of all of the final exams—problem 1 targeted calculation (column 2 of the GE rubric), problem 2 targeted analysis and visual representations of information (columns 1 & 3), and problem 3 targeted a slightly higher level of calculations (column 2). In Math 104G, two shared problems were likewise
used—problem 1 targeted calculations and visual representations of data (columns 1 & 3) and problem 2 targeted all three areas of competencies.

The team decided to modify the rubric to a 5-point scale to give them more reliable data, which led one instructor to note “students could use a little more instruction on the second Math 104G problem.” Dr. Anderson’s report shows that assessment in this context is the most meaningful to teachers—it provides them with the opportunity to see where improvement is needed. More importantly, the interactive work these three faculty members undertook facilitated a collaborative teaching environment that is idealized by assessment experts like Driscoll and Wood (2007) who cite the enormous pedagogical benefits of “moving assessment from a private to a collaborative focus” (p. 38).

Apart from validating the efficacy of the rubric, the math assessment project also validated the success of the department in teaching the competencies identified by the rubric. For example, a review of the scoring of the Math 104F exams reveals that 78% of 70 students met or exceeded basic competency in their calculations for problem 1; 73% met competency of calculations for question 3.

Dr. Anderson gives the following breakdown of mean scores:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Math 104</th>
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<th>Math 104G</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70 exams</td>
<td>51 Exams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>Calculations &amp; Visual</td>
<td>Calculations &amp; Visual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
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<td>All competencies</td>
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<td>Calculations</td>
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<td>Analysis &amp; Visual</td>
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<td>All competencies</td>
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Dr. Anderson’s report, the questions used on these exams, the scoring sheet, and all exams collected will be converted to a pdf and uploaded to the Assessment Support Committee website shortly.

Writing

The final report AY 2010-2011 of the Assessment Support Committee dated May 6, 2011 cited Fall 2010 data from freshman surveys in ENG 100 that revealed a large disparity in the perception of writing instruction on the part of these two student bodies. While the surveys indicate that many UHH students have had some exposure to writing, HAWCC students either are “turned off” to writing or have had little writing at all during their high school years. 39% of HAWCC ENG 100 students reported that their high school work was meaningless and/or had little to no benefit whereas another 23% expressed the learning of grammar. This was by far their most numerically significant responses to the survey question: What was your experience in terms of writing in High School? UHH’s ENG 100 students reported having done a substantial volume of writing (32%) and having had exposure to different forms/genres of writing (27%). This divergence translates to two completely different pools of students—HAWCC student who transfer in may have had little to no exposure to research and higher forms of writing prior to the 16 weeks they undertake ENG 100 and may also exhibit disengagement with writing in general.

Similar figures appear in the most recent aggregation of Spring 2011 survey data. 39% of HAWCC students reported writing as meaningless work or simply work for a grade. What was surprising were
the results from the UHH data set: 29% reported learning different forms and genres of writing; however, the second most frequent response was that writing instruction appeared to have little or no benefit (meaningless work) at 19% of respondents. What was also surprising was the reduced pool of students of only 62, which reflected a drop in the enrollment of students in the course; many sections reported being under-enrolled. More worrisome is the fact that of the 62, 21 (or 34%) were upperclassmen. We should stress that it is unclear if this data reflects freshman population attrition or a delaying of the taking of the course. EMIT mechanism are in place for this academic year and will hopefully address this problem.

English 100 teachers at UHH are in the process of gathering samples of high school writing from all students in the current sections of the course. We will then assess the batch of samples for alignment with DOE standards and with our own GE learning outcomes. The Chair of Assessment has been asked to present these findings to the DOE for their November 29 statewide meeting of school representatives. That report will also be presented to Congress at the December 16 meeting.

Tables of Survey Results will be posted upon completion of Spring 2012—the tables will encompass AY 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, which will provide us a better picture of student attitudes and writing skills at the freshman level. This can then be used as a “benchmark” for future assessment.

In fact, the efforts of both the Math and English Departments have herein provided a sound basis for future assessment by which General Education can work towards scaffolding increasing skills from the 100- through the 400-levels.

Accreditation Planning

The Chair of Congress (Bruce Matthews), the Chair of General Education (Todd Belt), and the Chair of the Assessment Support Committee (Seri Luangphinith) met with other members of the Accreditation Steering Committee on October 13, 2011. At that time, the Accreditation Liaison (April Komenaka) released information concerning the revision of WASC accreditation standards. Of particular note were the following:

- An institution may identify institutionally-specific graduation outcomes to assess and all institutions will be required to assess five proficiencies in CFR 2.2 at graduation and externally benchmark at least two of them. [The proficiencies are the core competencies that have been listed in WASC Standard 2.2 since 2001: they are "college-level written and oral communication, college-level quantitative skills, information literacy, and the habit of critical analysis of data and argument." New: the focus on demonstrated competence at graduation.]
- The Commission sees value in exploring the Degree Qualifications Profile [DPQ] as a potential tool to define degree outcomes and seeks to engage a broad array of institutions in exploring its usefulness through a series of piloting activities. [UH Hilo has been invited to participate in a pilot, possibly in a learning community with other universities in the state of Hawaii.]

According to the working draft of Situating WASC Accreditation in the 21st Century: Redesign for 2012 and Beyond," a set of California institutions and the University of Hawai‘i system have agreed to work with the DPG” (p. 18).
Per yesterday’s WASC forum that the Chair of Congress, the Chair of GE and the Chair of Assessment attended, those institutions are: University of California at Santa Cruz, University of La Verne, Ashford University, Hawai’i Pacific University, National University, the University of San Diego and Brandman University.

From an assessment standpoint, the fact that the core skills are already found within our new GE program validates the hard work of the faculty in past years to “get us out in front of the pack.” However, the more daunting challenge is: (1) to start doing actual assessment across the board in all GE certified classes, and (2) to pilot an alignment of our current assessment tools with the Lumina Degree Profile that was released by the AAC&U back in February of this year. The key skills of the Lumina are: **Specialized Knowledge** that are acquired in a specialized field of study; **Broad, Integrative Knowledge** that are acquired in general education fields; **Intellectual Skills**; **Applied Learning**; and **Civic Learning**. Of particular note is the cross-disciplinarity that is worded in a few of these categories. (The Chair of the Assessment Support Committee will give a more formal presentation of the Lumina as well as any pressing developments from the International Association of Educational Assessment Conference)

Given these developments and the new Strategic Plan, the Chair of the Assessment Support Committee recommends a revisiting of the Program Review guidelines. A revision of the document is also important given the many concerns expressed by Chairs over the incoherence of expectations worded within it.

However, such a revision should be undertaken by faculty who have the proper training to understand its function and how assessment serves as its core. This then begs the additional need for faculty to understand assessment and how it serves accreditation. According to one colleague: “I’ve been chatting with chairs and others in my building regarding many things, including assessment when it comes up, and it seems that many of our colleagues still don’t really understand what it is, and, even worse, have a very negative view of it, perhaps with some reason, since I know it has been used in some parts of the country in ways for which it was never intended.”

To facilitate the necessary expertise, to overcome faculty anxiety, and to help demystify the process of accreditation, the Chair of Assessment Support and the Chair of General Education recommend sending key members of both committees to the upcoming WASC retreat on assessment and program review. While the Chair of the Assessment Support Committee will be one of the presenters at the first workshop, it is important that members of our faculty body have access to more than one pipeline of information. The Assessment 101 workshop on February 1 will primarily feature two noted specialists—Amy Driscoll and Mary Allen.

The Program Review Workshop takes place on February 2-3. We recommend that key senior members of committees and select department chairs to use the 2 days to develop a simplified and much more “user-friendly” document.

To ensure that participation guarantees actual implementation results, participants will be asked that they develop a tangible activity in their respective programs, units of divisions that they then report back to Congress. It therefore makes sense in the immediate- and long-term to send Chairs whose programs are slated for program review and whose help will be needed in facilitating collaborative assessment among their constituents in their departments to meaningfully engage a process that gauges student skills and documents areas needing improvement per the five (5) competencies identified by WASC.