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: January 13, 2012

On behalf of the members of the Assessment Support Committee, I hereby submit the following report.

Program Review

Per the recommendation of the Congress, a sub-group has been formed and will undertake a comprehensive revision of Program Review Guidelines. The following was submitted to WASC for the upcoming Program Review Workshop in February.

Program Review Revision
(2012 Project for the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo)

The University of Hawai‘i at Hilo is sending a cohort of eight senior faculty and program leaders to undertake a comprehensive revision of current Program Review Guidelines.

The current state of the document and a breakdown of communication have led four out of five programs slated for review this academic year in the College of Arts and Sciences to petition for postponement; all program review has been put on hold at the request of the Faculty Congress per recommendations from the Chairs of the Assessment Support Committee and the General Education Committee so that faculty may use this academic year to receive the training they need in assessment in order to move forwards.

In November of 2011, the Chair of the Assessment Support Committee reported to the Faculty Congress concerns raised by “Chairs over the incoherence of expectations worded within it [the current guidelines].” Furthermore, it was reported that one colleague in particular expressed reservations about the use of assessment vis-à-vis program review: “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, our team of eight will first participate in the Assessment 101 workshop, which will segue into our needed work on developing a much more simplified and much more “user-friendly” document.

Much work needs to be done in synthesizing various components that should feed into effective program review. Our new strategic plan and our new GE program (including assessment tools) need to be integrated with existing system-level expectations in a meaningful way into the new guidelines. Furthermore, the revision of WASC accreditation standards presents us with the challenge to also consider how

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. (Situating WASC Accreditation in the 21st Century: Redesign for 2012 and Beyond, p. 18)

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." Of note is the new focus on demonstrated competence at graduation, which has tremendous implications for program review.

Furthermore, the possibility of WASC adopting the Lumina DQP presents us with an opportunity to see if the paradigm can be adopted. Seeing if the DQP can meaningfully guide “degree outcomes” within Program Review is an exercise that can provide the kind of feedback WASC itself is seeking—it should be noted that the UH system has volunteered to pilot certain initiatives and this project is serving as one of UH Hilo’s “experiments.”

All eight members will have reviewed and will be bringing with them the following:

- WASC Standards for Accreditation
- University of Hawai’i System Report to the 2011 Legislature (includes Performance-Based funding mandates)
- University of Hawai’i Executive Policy E5.201: Approval of New Academic Programs and Review of Provisional Academic Programs (1989) (includes required Quantitative Indicators for Program Review)
- UHH Strategic Plan 2011-2015
- Current GE Learning Outcomes and Rubrics
- Marilee Bresciani’s “Typical Components of An Assessment Plan and Report”
- Marilee Bresciani’s “Data-Driven Planning Using Outcomes Cased Assessment Program Review in Strategic Planning”
- Mary Allen’s “Evaluating a Program Assessment Plan” (handout from the ALA)
- Current Guidelines for Academic Program Review

Attached with this project proposal are the current guidelines.
This project represents a prime opportunity for UHH to explore and generate an innovative and, more importantly, functional approaches to engaging in methods aimed at improving student learning and, ultimately, the success of academic program.

Project members are:

Seri Luangphinith (Chair)—English (CAS)
Karla Hayashi—Kilohana
Todd Belt—Political Science (CAS)
Mark Panek—English (CAS)
Michael Bitter—History (CAS)
Mitchell Anderson—Math (CAS)
Terry Jalbert—CoBE
Keola Donaghy—CHL

The members of this committee represent a wide constituency of individuals who direct programs and who have institutional memory to help drive Program Review “reform.” Some of these individuals have also undertaken assessment leadership roles in their programs; others have undergone the process and can help drive improvement.

Assessment 101

Per the recommendations of the Chairs of General Education and the Assessment Support Committees, ten individuals who currently teach key General Education certified courses were identified and asked to attend the upcoming one-day WASC February workshop in Honolulu. (One individual representing non-teaching co-curricular faculty was also asked to attend to help build alignment between both branches of this institution):

Norman Arancon—CAFNRM
Drew Martin—CoBE
Yumiko Ohara—CHL
Errol Yudko—Psychology (CAS)
Reni Ivanova—Math (CAS)
Shawon Rahman—Computer Science (CAS)
Jonathan Awaya—Biology (CAS)
Sarah Marusek—Political Science (CAS)
Fiona McCormack—Anthropology (CAS)
Jonathan Price—Geography (CAS)
Kathleen Stacey—Library

In an email dated January 7th from GE Chair Todd Belt, the following guidelines for participation were spelled out:

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf on the Faculty Congress and the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, we are inviting you to participate in the upcoming WASC Assessment 101 workshop in Honolulu, slated for February 1, 2012.
Your airfare and registration fee are being covered by the VCAA’s office. As food is provided at the venue, no per diem is being issued. Expenses such as (shared) taxi and airport parking will be covered.

Your participation is essential for UHH to move towards becoming a learning-centered institution. The Assessment 101 workshop will introduce you to best practices in how to achieve this through assessment. More importantly, as you are all actively teaching GE-certified courses, you are essentially becoming the leaders in both your department as well as among GE-teaching faculty to help us generate the data and the data-informed improvement mandated by our accrediting body, WASC. And as the first large UHH cohort, you can also all rely on each other to help facilitate alignment and other pedagogical discussions that underpin successful assessment at an institutional level. Lastly, your involvement in this process is crucial to helping your program develop assessment techniques that are appropriate to our students, your program, and the university as a whole, rather than relying on external standardized tests that may not be appropriate for your program.

We are doing all this to make the life of our faculty easier – so that you can develop for your program a simple mechanism that simultaneously generates data for GE Assessment, Program Review, WASC Assessment, and Strategic Plan Assessment. Better yet, you will be able to generate the kind of data you need both to strengthen your program and to highlight your areas of success. It is important that our faculty are empowered to take charge of this task so that it doesn’t end up as a mandate from above and in a form that is meaningless to you, your program, and your students.

Upon your return, both the GE and the Assessment Support Committees will be relying on you to help us generate the data we need for WASC’s upcoming fall 2013 visit. Todd will be working with the GE Committee to start getting the ball rolling on larger-scale assessment in GE certified courses; Seri will be working with the Assessment Support Committee to help departments turn that data into a meaningful backbone for effective program review.

We ask that you keep track of your efforts upon your return and share with us (in a form of a report) on how well your efforts are going; preferably, we need all of you to start utilizing and documenting data per the attached GE Assessment Rubrics. We also need feedback in terms of what the data helps you to understand and/or accomplish on a personal and departmental level. We hope to be in receipt of your reports (along with data tables) by the end of the next academic year (Spring of 2013).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of us. We look forward to working with all of you.

Sincerely,
Todd Belt, Chair of the General Education Committee
Seri Luangphinit, Chair of Assessment Support Committee

CC: Kenith Simmons, VCAA
Jim Beets, Chair of Faculty Congress