Dr. Paul Thayer’s presentation, from 1:00-2:45, set the scene for lively group discussions from 3:00-4:00. Students as well as student affairs staff and faculty addressed key questions and came up with many positive steps that UH Hilo, departments, and individual faculty and staff can take to make the university a better place for students to learn and succeed.

In the closing session, following the group reports, Dr. Thayer summed up what he found to be the four themes he found recurring in the discussions and reports that he felt were most likely to produce positive changes at UH Hilo—and that were relatively low-cost or no-cost:

- Campus leaders, faculty as well as administration and Student Affairs staff, must recommit to the university’s mission of quality undergraduate education. Excellent teachers must be hired, recognized, and retained.
- Faculty can connect with students in many small, routine ways: eating in the cafeteria, where spontaneous conversations with students can occur; having occasional office hours in the cafeteria and other student-accessible places; making sure that students do come in for office conferences.
- Excellent teaching must be rewarded in the promotion and tenure process.
- Individuals must commit to supporting students through excellent teaching, advising and guiding students, helping them through the bureaucratic tangles. Faculty and staff can work to develop informal support networks for students.

Here are notes on the group reports on practical, doable, useful strategies for making the university work better for students. These will be shared with Dr. Vincent Tinto, who will be on campus March 10, 2003, and will build on these and related suggestions.

**Group 1**
**What Departments Can Do to Retain Students?**

**What Are We Doing That is Working Well?**

1. UH Hilo has a lot of friendly, encouraging, welcoming, & passionate teachers.
2. Student involvement programs like MAAP.
3. Orientation activities help (trips, etc.)
4. Opportunities for students to express their views (will be listened to by faculty and other students).
5. Have students meet outside class (fieldwork).
6. Students are getting engaged in research.

**What Are Some Things We Could Do Better?**

1. Build learning communities
2. In classroom settings, have students solve problems while teachers act as facilitators.
3. Smaller classes on introductory courses to make more meaningful
4. Improve intra/inter departmental communication
5. Open departmental meetings.
6. Academic advising be mandatory
7. Increase class seats
8. When hiring new faculty, make emphasis on faculty who are student “engaged”. This component should be part of criteria in hiring practice.
9. Faculty should communicate campus opportunities such as events, employment, etc.
10. Departmental Orientation – offering individual department orientation sessions.

**What Are Some New Approaches?**

1. Reward faculty who do engage with students
2. More faculty including hands-on learning
3. At the end of the semester, have each department meet with students to describe class offering (group orientation)
4. Class description on website – when registering, students would like to be able to automatically link to class description course.
5. More departmental flexibility regarding advising such as designation of specific faculty advisors.
6. Better promote programs, opportunities, etc.
7. Put best teachers in lower level classes to help in retention of students. Having a good teacher in the lower classes usually makes or breaks a student.

**How Will We Know We Have Succeeded?**

1. Check the statistics
2. Personal involvement of faculty with students through graduation.
3. If students are connected through campus involvement.

**Group II**
How Individual Faculty and Staff Can Engage Students Inside and Outside the Classroom?

1. Possible apprehension
2. Individual assessment

Question 1 – Possible Apprehension
   Re: Individual Engagement vs. Dept/Group

Signals:
1. Validation
2. Multiple mediums – work on issues in class, some might be more comfortable in class or others more comfortable out of class
3. Email

Structure:

Promotion/tenure stresses
a. research/publication
   research is an important teaching tool. Keep track of their academics.
b. teaching
c. community services lower priority
does not receive as much recognition
Rewards for independent mentorship lacking
Institutional recognition
Faculty have more than 40 hour workload.
   Should identify and reward faculty for independent strengths.

Why would you take the time to assist a student outside of the classroom, because when you say outside the classroom, that’s family time. Your reward for spending time with students will be “Outside the Classroom” has a whole level of added time. Only thing to give up is family time.

Question 2 – Individual Assessment

Research important teaching tool
a. Faculty research
b. Student resident projects

Provide faculty with more information on student support programs, career services, and counseling.
Housing Programs – Take a teacher to dinner. Only three have taken advantage of this in the English department. How can we make it more popular?

Service learning embeds participation with course.

Possibly structure orientation to increase participation.

**What Doesn’t Take Extra Time?**

How can we encourage faculty and staff to sit with students at the cafeteria?

1st day of class delivery.
   a. Introduction of each other in classes.
   b. Interact more
   c. Social dynamics

Integrate social dynamics in curriculum.
Campus wide marketing to change perceptions for both faculty and students.

**Group III**
How Do We Structure Support into the Students’ Environment?

**What Works**

Office hours with faculty. Some students are having a hard time to fit their hours with the faculty hours.

Counseling is helpful

Consistent grade check is helpful especially for the athletes. The students know that you care about how they are doing.

Online registration

Orientation week is great for the students to attend. More students should attend orientation.

Learning Center is helpful.

**What Can We Do Better?**

Sometimes students are not prepared for the class that they are taking.

Some courses are required for students that have to take classes at HCC but they have a hard time to register for that class. They also have to pay extra money. Concurrent
courses are hard to do because of bureaucracy and all the paper work. If we offered these classes it would help. (ex: math courses) Should be user friendly.

Adding and dropping a class on-line would be helpful with no extra charge.

Paperwork is very difficult especially for students that come from Am. Samoa as far as stipends to get paid. They sometimes have to wait months to get their stipend money.

More labs for different classes. (ex. Hawaiian language lab, Math lab) Sometimes Math Lab tutors are not very friendly.

Required advising would be very helpful. Those who advise, should be consistent and of good quality.

Faculty office hours are not compatible for students. Expand office hours.

More job opportunities for student.

More dorm spaces. Culture shock especially students that come by themselves from away.

Each department should offer University 101 every year.

Help to prepare for graduation.

Lack of areas for people to sit and congregate. There isn’t a central place for activities to be advertised and posted.

**Group IV**

How Do We Build a Community of Learners?

What are we doing already.

We have small classes especially for the majors.
We have access to faculty.
Nursing department – cohort & model nursing ohana.

Resident’s hall. – support of community. When someone needs help they can normally go to someone in the dorms who is able to help the student with their problem.

Email access to the professors helpful.

What Can We Do Better?
Access to Unv. Housing – students would like more dorm rooms

General education classes. – students didn’t know anybody, class too big. Unengaged. No help

Complaints about library – need to extend hours

Communication – need more communication. Doesn’t help with any student newspaper. Suggestion is that we have a student newspaper on line if possible.

Advising – hard time because of different philosophies of advisor.

Possible Actions

Residential – Priority to Freshmen in Residence Halls
  a. study rooms with tutors (also open to non-residents)
  b. culture of study environment
  c. early information on student programs to Resident Managers

Creating a Department of General Studies offering course clusters under General Ed requirements.
The cluster enrollment to residence hall assignment

Extend library hours
  a. to service learners
  b. residence hall reciprocation

Peer mentors – to retain students

PALS – model their type of program to other programs so that they can help students with peer mentors, tutors, counseling.

If parents are involved with clusters, then they know what their kids are doing and how to help their child.

Mandatory advising by advisor of the student’s choice would be great. This will help to get a strong link which can make a difference with a student going on in school or dropping out.

Dr. Thayer’s summarization:

Wonderful ideas. Students brought great ideas to their groups

Importance of leadership at every level. If retention is the true mission of the school, then everything else follows.
1. There are all these levels of thoughts. Useful to think of what we can change that’s possible.
2. Doing things in a way that your signals are sent correctly to the student
3. Personal commitment. If people can build together as a community then it helps
4. Multi-level approach is very important.