Response to College Recommendation 2

As was recommended by the 2006 evaluation team, “In order to meet the standards, focus on ensuring student success and the quality of programs and services, the team recommends the college...develop and refine its program review process and to identify student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels. The college should also systematically assess these student learning outcomes and use the results of these assessments for the improvement of institutional effectiveness.” In addition, the college should ensure that assessment of program quality occurs for all student support, academic and administrative programs. (2006 Recommendation 2, Eligibility Requirement 10, Standards I.B.1, I.B.4, I.B.7, II.A, II.A.1.b, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.g, II.A.2.h, II.A.2.i, II.A.3, II.A.6, II.A.6.a, II.B.1, II.B.4, II.C.1.a, II.C.2, III.A, III.A.6, IV.A.1, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.5, IV.B.1.b)

The Commission’s cover letter accompanying the visiting team’s report also noted that:

With regard to Recommendation 2 above, the Commission notes the College has taken significant steps to address the recommendations from the 2006 evaluation team. There remain, however, some portions of the 2006 recommendations that need to be addressed in order to fully meet the Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards.

As noted in the college’s response to Recommendation 1, members from the divisions of Administrative Services, Academic Support, and Student Services participated alongside instructional faculty in a three-day Outcomes and Assessment Training in April 2013 [link, workshop agenda]. The training days included specific work sessions for both Administrative Services and Student Services. These specific work sessions allowed for more in-depth training on how to create robust and assessable student learning and/or service area outcomes. The foundation of the training was rooted in the work of Dr. Ruth Stiehl and Dr. Les Lewchuk. The basic philosophical approach of Stiehl and Lewchuk’s work is to start with the development of robust outcomes. Stakeholders within and outside the program or department help to create the outcomes through an affinity process of brainstorming concepts and issues, clustering of themes, and eventual development of written outcomes. The outcomes are then honed and edited in order to make sure they are robust enough to speak to the overall mission or goals of a program or department, but specific enough so that they are measurable. Only after the development of the outcomes are assessment tools designed. The assessments include the traditional quantitative and qualitative tools (surveys, open-ended questions, and numerical data) as well as new tools that may not traditionally be used in areas like Student Services or Administrative Services (rubrics, checklists, and process checklists.)

Prior to this training, the Administrative Services Division, under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services, had been working on creating Service Unit Outcomes (another term used could be Service Area Outcomes.) In several staff meetings over the course of the Spring 2013 Semester, lead personnel within the division spent
time at each staff meeting to learn about outcomes and assessment, and to develop unit mission statements, goals, and outcomes. Prior to this, the units within this division had not been asked to create outcomes. It became necessary to make sure staff were trained in assessment before outcomes could be developed. [link, Admin service staff meetings] Using a common framework, each area worked on developing and refining their mission, goals, and outcomes. [link, unit assessment manual, admin svcs 3-13-13] The three-day training session helped by offering more training and opportunities for refinement of outcomes.

By the end of the semester, each unit (including Human Resources, Business Office, and Operations and Maintenance) had not only created outcomes, but also had in place specific unit goals that tied into the unit’s ultimate mission. For each unit’s goals, relevant activities were identified. Many of these activities were then linked to some kind of assessment or measurement tool. In many cases, these assessments relied on looking at data reports or conducting a survey. As each unit identified outcomes, particular activities or assessments were noted that would help measure the intended outcome. All this information was pulled into one Planning Document, which will be used for tracking. [link, admin svc final 3-25-13.] The Planning Document also serves as a way for each unit to report on assessment results, and to document any changes made to processes or procedures due to the results. The units within the division plan on using this as a yearly cycle of assessment and improvement.

As for particular unit outcomes, the units will spend the Fall 2013 semester developing assessment tools. Data points for each outcome or goal will also be pulled. The units that comprise Administrative Services will then implement their assessment process at the end of the Fall semester. The Planning Document, and related activities linked to assessment of outcomes and goals, will both be used to help complete the division’s Program Review.

In the Student Services Division, several of the offices and programs had some outcomes already developed but had not fully addressed them for assessment. [link, prior student svc. Annual reports and program reviews.] Prior to the Outcomes and Assessment Training workshop, the Dean of Student Services (DOSS) held a division meeting specifically centered on outcomes. The intent of this meeting was to pre-train the members of division in the philosophy and terminology of outcomes development in order to have a shared understanding of the work ahead. [link, Guide..., assessment 101.] Lead personnel in each of the Student Services areas were asked to attend the three-day training. After attending the April 2013 training, each office or program worked with the DOSS to either revise their Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) or develop new outcomes. In areas where appropriate, Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) were developed. This work was done over a period of several months using the techniques and practices learned in the training. After the outcomes were set, attention turned toward choosing which two or three outcomes each program or department will measure during the upcoming academic year (AY 2013-2014) [link, student svc summary of workshop, student svc SLOs.] Selection of particular outcomes dictated what kind of assessment tools would need to be used or developed. In several cases, the assessment tools did not
exist and work began over the last half of summer 2013 to create these tools. Many of the new assessment tools being created (rubrics and checklists) will also end up being part of a program or department’s every-day work. Certain parts of the checklists will be used for assessment. These types of embedded assessments can help reinforce concepts or issues related to the outcomes. Due to the timing of the training, and the amount of time it took to revise or create outcomes, additional data are currently being gathered, and the assessment based on those data will take place in the current (2013-2014) academic year. Each program or department has an established Assessment Plan that includes which outcomes are up for assessment in 2013-2014 and how they will be assessed. At the end of Spring 2014, the results of the assessment will be completed and each area will use a common template for reporting results. This information will be used for the following: (a) program department improvement, (b) division prioritization for funding and advocacy, and (c) program review data and documentation. [link, student svc assessment plan 13-14; annual reporting template – Katy Ho to create.]

The work being done around outcomes and assessment, including assessment results and findings, will be used in the Student Services Annual Report of Program Data (ARPD), or program review. As with instruction, the Student Services Division is required to submit the ARPD each fall semester. [link, student svc ARPD.] Traditionally the data metrics used to respond to the ARPD sections are generated through the University of Hawai‘i’s Office of the Vice-President for Community Colleges. These metrics are pre-defined and use a combination of data set by Achieving the Dream and the University of Hawai‘i System. The sections of the ARPD report mirror those of instruction. Each college may also request additional items from their offices of Institutional Research (IR). [link, IR data request.] Currently, the default ARPD measures and data are not specific or related enough to the areas or mission of student services, and as a result it is often hard to describe fully what areas within student services do, the impact on students, and how areas can improve. The additional request for data from IR is helpful, and the results of individual program/department assessment of SLOs will also aid in helping to show areas of accomplishment and areas of needed improvements. However, the ARPD measures and metrics should be reviewed at system level with input from student services administrators, as our key mission and goals are often different from those of our instructional counterparts. By reporting on measures and asking for data more meaningful to the mission and goals of student services, the ARPD will then become a more meaningful report for planning and improvement.

In addition to the work done specifically around outcomes and assessment, the Student Services Division also engaged in two related activities in the Spring 2013 semester. First, an Accreditation Action Plan for the overall division was created, as well as one for each program or department within the division, was created. In conjunction with the members of the division, the DOSS worked to pull out specific items in Standard IIB: Student Support Services that needed to be addressed. The creation of the action plan was shared at a division meeting. [link, student svc accreditation presentation and accred. Action plan.] In addition to outcomes and assessment work, the action plan also includes changes and improvements that need to be made in order to serve the college’s Distance Education students, as well as other issues identified by the visiting team.
The second assessment-related activity in Student Services was the creation and implementation of a Student Satisfaction Survey. [link, student satisfaction survey 2013.] The purpose of the survey was to take a baseline reading of how programs and departments within Student Services and related areas were doing in terms of serving the student population. The survey was deployed over the span of several weeks prior to summer registration, and was offered in both online and paper formats. Over 300 students filled out the survey. Results were analyzed by individual program/departments and as a whole. Results of the survey were used to loop back to the Accreditation Action Plan for each area, as well as used to make changes in order to improve access to services and customer service. [link, division summary.] Overall, the results showed that students are satisfied with the level of service that they are receiving from programs and departments. Students also feel that the types of services and programs offered are valuable to their success. However, when students had trouble accessing services or felt unwelcomed, they were very unsatisfied with their experiences. The results helped the group consider how to address this issue. At this time, the college plans on deploying the survey again in Fall 2013. Small changes will be made to the survey to improve completion rates, and it will once again be accessible both online and in-person. Results from the survey may also be used in specific programs or departments to help measure specific SLOs.

During the Spring 2013 Semester the hiring process was underway for a permanent Dean of Academic Support Services, a process that has now been completed. This division is new in the college’s organizational chart, and includes a combination of instructional and support services. At the time of the three-day training around outcomes and assessment, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs oversaw the areas within this division. Members of these departments or program participated in the workshop with the intent of creating or refining SLOs or SAOs pertinent to their areas.

Outcome creation and refinement took place over the last part of spring semester and over the summer. Members of each department or program met with the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs during this time to make sure outcomes were measureable and robust. By the middle of summer, a permanent Dean of Academic Support Services was hired. Programs and departments under this division continued to work on refinement of outcomes. Consultants who led the three-day training were asked to provide input on several of the outcomes. A few programs and departments were also able to move forward with identifying what types of assessments could take place to measure specific outcomes.

Each program or department under the Academic Support Services now has finalized SLOs or SAOs. The plan heading into the Fall 2013 Semester is to work with each program or department to either finish identifying assessment tools, or to begin to create the assessment tools. Outcomes will then be measured, and results from the assessments will help to inform the Program Review and be used for program and department improvements and planning. [links, SLOs/SAOs for Design Center, Ed Tech Center, Library, PPIR, Student Access, Testing and Tutoring, Academic Success.]
In addition to the areas identified above, the Office of Communication and External Affairs also participated in the outcome and assessment training workshop. As a result of this, outcomes were developed specifically for the work of that office. Due to the extensive collaboration between this office and that of the Design Center (housed under the Academic Support Division) outcomes were compared and aligned where necessary. In determining how to measure the established outcomes, the Office of Communication and External Affairs will draw upon the University of Hawaii Community College System’s data derived from in-depth media preference surveys that are completed every two years. [link? System data?] Additionally, more campus specific surveys will be developed and deployed through the college’s social media channels over the upcoming academic year. Results from the assessments will be used in the annual report that is coordinated by this office. [links, Communications and External Affairs SAOs, college annual reports.]

Program review in the instructional context, the most fully developed domain of the college’s engagement in assessment of student learning outcomes, has continued to evolve, with a multi-faceted focus on curriculum review, course development and program modification. All courses offered at the College have clearly identified Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs); all programs also have clearly identified SLOs. All Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs have mapped course to program SLOs; the Liberal Arts program began the process of this course to program mapping in Spring 2013, and will complete that work in Fall 2013, with the understanding that the fact that students may take multiple pathways toward the completion of the Associate in Arts (A.A.) makes charting the degree structure more complex. [links, AA alignment chart.]

As participants in the assessment training workshop of April 2013, instructional faculty also engaged in program-level discussions. All faculty members were provided with an SLO Assessment Inventory template [link, template] and asked to complete the form for each active course offering, which asks, among other things, how each course-level SLO aligns with one or more program SLOs. While faculty have become proficient at utilizing various forms of assessment, these inventories serve to engage in assessment in a more focused and mindful way, and to consider other or additional forms of assessment of student learning. Academic Deans have continued to work with program faculty to complete these course inventories, and peer mentoring has also been made available. [link, summary of SLO inventories.] Focused assessment efforts in the areas of distance education and general education are addressed in the College’s responses to Recommendations 3 and 4.

The College also developed institutional-level outcomes in academic year 2011-2012 [link, Planning Council minutes]. An initial discussion of assessment measures took place in academic year 2012-2013 [link, assessment summary]; the Planning Council will develop a more robust plan of ILO assessment in the current academic year.

The College has also provided support for the participation of the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) in the 2013-2014 WASC Assessment Leadership Academy. This has
brought additional resources to the College in support of a more broad-based approach to assessment in multiple contexts at multiple levels.

[NOTE: Should we include “mini-reorg charts” for the various non-instructional units to further clarify which units/functions are included in each?]