VOICES FROM THE SHELL

HCC A.A. PROGRAM GRADUATE SURVEY

SPRING 2006

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HONOLULU COMMUNITY COLLEGE - A.A. GRADUATE SURVEY
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INTRODUCTION

As part of the University College - Associate of Arts Program annual review, HCC University College Division Chairs requested a study of students who were about to graduate from the A.A. Program.

A short survey instrument (attached to this report) was created that focused on having students evaluate learning outcomes experienced in the program and rate various aspects of the HCC institutional environment. A longer survey was deemed unnecessary as A.A. Program student sentiments had been recently tapped in Library User, Physical Resources, Satisfaction with Institutional Environment, and Student Engagement surveys conducted as part of the current WASC Self Study effort.

Researcher David Cleveland requested and received a list of A.A. students who had accumulated 45 or more transfer level credits. Using this list, David’s student research assistants were to contact these students in classrooms to administer the survey.

This plan, however, was scrapped as student assistants were busy finalizing papers and preparing for final examinations.

Instead, the survey was administered to almost all Spring 2006 A.A. graduates who were present for commencement exercises at the Waikiki Shell on Friday, May 12, 2006.

A total of 22 surveys were collected (the vast majority of A.A. graduates who “walked”).

FINDINGS

Respondent Demographics:

Gender: 64% of respondents were female; 36 were male.

Age: The median age of respondents was 27 - the youngest respondent was 19 while the oldest was 55.

GPA: Grade point averages ranged from 2.5 to 4.0 - the mean GPA was 3.25.

Colleges Attended: Two-thirds of the respondents had colleges other than HCC:

Other colleges attended:

50% - UH-Manoa 36% - Kapiolani CC 36% - Leeward CC
Others: Maui CC, Hawaii CC, HPU, Southwestern, American River CC, UNLV, Fullerton, U. Of Missouri, Tennessee Tech
Intended Transfer Campus: 62% UH-Manoa
Other planned transfers: UH-Hilo, UH-West Oahu, HPU, Chaminade, UNLV,
Central Texas, Maryland, Genesse C.C., U. of Wyoming, U. of Rhode Island

Diverse intended majors: Nursing, Psychology, Pharmacology, Education, Business
Administration, Interior Design, Communications, Political Science, Business Management, Anthropology, Business -
Finance, Speech Communication, Physics, Business,
International Business, Microbiology/Pre-Med, Human
Resource Management

HIGH MARKS FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES OF A.A. PROGRAM

Respondents were instructed to rate the quality of preparation they received in fifteen specific
A.A. degree related expected learning outcomes.

The response scale ranged from: None/Doesn’t Apply, Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent.

In twelve of the fifteen learning outcome areas, over 50% of respondents rated the outcomes as
EXCELLENT.

The overall mean for this entire group of items was an extremely high 3.54 (3.0 = Good....4.0 =
Excellent).

The top third of ranked items included several of the global learning outcomes developed across
the range of courses that students take as part of the A.A. General Education Core Curriculum:

✓ Ability to learn independently
✓ Appreciation for/tolerance of diversity
✓ Critical thinking/reasoning
✓ Logical reasoning
✓ Historical/cultural knowledge & reasoning
✓ Ability to examine ethical issues
The bar graph below includes all of the included preparation items - rank ordered by mean value:

Even the lowest ranked item - Aesthetic/artistic/musical understanding/appreciation - was ranked at a mean value of 3.0 (Good).

**Figure 2: BAR GRAPH - QUALITY OF PREPARATION - RANK ORDERED BY MEAN VALUE**

1.0 = POOR ...... 4.0 = EXCELLENT

RATING OF ASPECTS OF INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT: GREATER RANGE

The overall mean (same scale: Poor to Excellent) for the thirteen items in this section of the survey was significantly lower than for the learning outcome section: 3.12 (Institutional Environment) vs. 3.54 (Student Learning Outcomes).

The top ranked items: Overall quality of education received in the A.A. Program; Personal attention received in classes; Assistance received from faculty; Personal security on campus; and the Overall quality of the library.

The lowest ranked items: Quality of counseling for A.A. classes; Availability of courses need for transfer program; and the Quality of transfer counseling.

**Figure 3: BAR GRAPH - QUALITY OF PREPARATION - RANK ORDERED BY MEAN VALUE**

1.0 = POOR ...... 4.0 = EXCELLENT
IMPACT OF GENDER: FEMALE RESPONDENTS MORE POSITIVE THAN MALES

With only a few exceptions, females rated Learning Outcomes and Institutional Environment items higher than did male respondents. The gender differences in graduate perceptions may be somewhat related to the higher GPAs reported by female graduates.

Bar Graphs: Learning Outcomes (Quality of Preparation) Items by Respondent Gender
Bar Graphs: Institutional Environment Items by Respondent Gender

Figure 5: BAR GRAPHS - QUALITY OF INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT BY GENDER OF RESPONDENT

Your sex/gender:

Female

Quality of HCC Environment/Services

Male

Quality of HCC Environment/Services
RESPONDENT COMMENTS

Respondents were asked to provide comments about the BEST and WORST aspects of the HCC A.A. Program.

What was BEST about the Program?: (Representative comments)

Positive comments focused on the quality of the faculty, the supportive environment for learning, the intimate environment, and the personal attention they received from faculty/staff.

The faculty, they really do care and are sincere about teaching. The faculty are truly TEACHERS!!!! Thank you! ... Great faculty - Professors Smith, Pine, Cleveland, Gopal, Panisnick, Mauz, and Moore are better than any of my UH (Manoa) faculty. ... The ratio of students to teachers ... More personal and intimate: a lot of help, student aren't pushed into a large campus ... Good class availability ... The ability to take courses online and at other locations ... Schedule of classes was very easy to work with. All the teacher I had always had time when I had a question. Great Teachers: Mr. Mario (Chemistry) Ms. Judy (Logic) ... Has some great influential instructors. The was very efficient, financial aid, records, cashier. Everyone was knowledgeable and respectful. Awesome staff and faculty. ... The teachers are excellent ... Volunteering (service learning) in Rick Ziegler's class...It takes out the rough edges of a person and give a good foundation in for a higher education. ... Being exposed to various possibilities of thoughts and a "free" topic of conversation ... Very supportive; quality education; personal attention ... Faculty was very helpful; atmosphere was good ... The personal attention

WHAT WAS WORST ABOUT THE PROGRAM? (Representative Comments)

Respondents were displeased with the availability of classes (wider range) and scheduling; the information about deadlines and activities; and some aspects of the physical environment: air conditioning, chairs/desks, elevators.

More funding for other A.A. Programs like Nursing! ... Parking and cafeteria ... Better class availability and higher standards ... None ... Unorganized aspect of counseling ... Not being informed about groups (Honor Society); Not knowing about deadlines (Graduation Application); I did not go on campus very often ... Not having air conditioning in some classrooms we used. ... If possible, have more classes. It's interesting that (foreign) language is not a requirement to graduate with an A.A. ... Class availability and scheduling - I had several classes canceled repeatedly ...There should be more of a focus on business classes. There are no business courses at present. ... The facilities need much improvement - elevator in Bldg. 7. Chairs and desks are too small.

CONCLUSIONS

This small scale study of HCC A.A. graduates reveals that this year’s graduates:

- Are very pleased with the overall A.A. Program
- Rave about the quality of the faculty and the attention/assistance they received from faculty
- Feel they have achieved the expected global learning outcomes associated with an Associate of Arts Degree
- Are pleased with the quality of the Library, but somewhat less so with classroom facilities/grounds, Financial Aids, AA & Transfer Counseling, Course Availability