BACKGROUND

The majority of students who transfer from HCC to four year colleges/universities, transfer to the University of Hawaii - Manoa. As a consequence, to facilitate effective transfer/articulation, for the past three decades HCC has mirrored UH-Manoa’s General Education curriculum requirements.

In the Fall of 2001, UH-Manoa implemented a new General Education Program - which included several “Focus” requirements: Writing Intensive (previously required), Ethical Reasoning, Hawaiian/Asian/Pacific, and Oral Communications.

HCC quickly adopted the revised General Education requirements and implemented the changes in the Fall of 2002.

The Hawaiian/Asian/Pacific “H Focus” requirement was adopted to ensure that students graduating with a HCC Associate of Arts Degree would complete at least one course that placed heavy emphasis on some aspect of the culture/history/science of a Hawaiian, Asian, or Pacific society/region.

Since that time, UH Manoa has unilaterally modified the requirement to ensure that the major focus of all “H” certified courses centers on or is linked to some aspect of Hawaii or Hawaiian culture.

HCC protested the changes at a variety of levels, but was unable to reverse these changes. The modifications have reduced the ability of the college to offer the number of “H” designated courses necessary for Manoa transfers to fulfill this UHM graduation requirement.

Each “Focus” area has a Focus Board that reviews, certifies, and monitors qualified courses/faculty to ensure that expectations, hallmarks, and standards are met in Focus designated courses.

In the Fall of 2005, a pilot test of an instrument based upon the UH-Manoa “H” focus evaluation was conducted in one section of Professor Wong’s Asian Studies class. Based upon that experience, the evaluation was adopted and required of all “H” Focus faculty in subsequent semesters.

EVALUATION DESIGN

The “H” Focus student evaluation is based on an earlier UH-Manoa “H” (Hawaiian/Asian/Pacific) evaluation form (recently updated at UH-Manoa - which may cause the HCC “H” Board to update its instrument).

“H” faculty were asked to direct students to complete an online version of the evaluation.

The evaluation form was posted online and all student response data were collected from online responses.

Only five of the twelve Fall 2007 classes responded: including, two Anthropology sections, one Asian Studies section, and two Geography sections. Students enrolled in Botany, Hawaiian, and Hawaiian Studies classes did not participate. Consequently, the number of respondents dropped from 119 in the Spring of 2007 to 38 in the Fall of 2007.
FINDINGS

The current UH-Manoa Hallmarks for “H” Focus designation include the following:

**Hallmarks**

To fulfill the Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues Focus requirement, at least two-thirds of a class must satisfy the following Hallmarks:

A. The content should reflect the intersection of Asian and/or Pacific Island cultures with Native Hawaiian culture.

B. A class can use any disciplinary or multi-disciplinary approach provided that a component of the class uses assignments or practica that encourage learning that comes from the cultural perspectives, values, and world views rooted in the experience of peoples indigenous to Hawai’i, the Pacific, and Asia.

C. A class should include at least one topic that is crucial to an understanding of the histories, or cultures, or beliefs, or the arts, or the societal, or political, or economic, or technological processes of these regions; for example, the relationships of societal structures to the natural environment.

D. A class should involve an in-depth analysis or understanding of the issues being studied in the hope of fostering multi-cultural respect and understanding.

FOCUS OF “H” DESIGNATED COURSES ON HAWAIIAN/ASIAN/PACIFIC VERIFIED

When asked to estimate the percentage of the class that focused on aspects of the H/A/P cultures, 82% of respondents reported that 76% or more of the course focused on the identified culture(s).
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS FOCUSED ON HAWAIIAN/ASIAN/PACIFIC ISSUES

74% of respondents reported that more than three-quarters of their class assignments focused on the H/A/P element(s) of the course.

ALL RESPONDENTS REPORTED GAINS IN REGION/CULTURE UNDERSTANDING

65% of respondents reported that they gained a great deal more understanding/appreciation for the regions/cultures they studies in their H/A/P Focus classes. All reported gains.

ALL RESPONDENTS: GAINS IN REGION/CULTURE APPRECIATION
58% of respondents reported that they gained a great deal more appreciation for the regions/cultures they studied in their “H” Focus classes. No respondents reported that they gained almost no additional or only a little more appreciation for these regions/cultures.

CONCLUSION

As a result of UH-Manoa changing the qualifying criteria for the “H” focus requirement, HCC’s program is in a period of flux. HCC faculty subscribed to the original concept and criteria and were able to offer a sufficient range of classes to ensure that students completing an HCC A.A. degree had an array of options to fulfill the requirement. While the faculty continue to believe that A.A. recipients should develop some focused insights about Hawaiian, Asian, and/or Pacific cultures, the current narrower UHM criteria have created an array of problems.

A number of classes that once qualified for a “H” designation for transfer to UHM no longer do so.

Concerning the findings of this evaluation, the low response rate (five of twelve “H” designated classes) causes one to question the validity of the sample. Students in the responding classes do confirm that Hallmark criteria are met; however, in every area, the Fall 2007 results lag significantly behind the Spring 2007 results.

At the end of the Spring 2007 semester, another “H” focus online evaluation will be posted. To ensure a high response rate, all faculty offering “H” classes will be contacted and urged to bring their students to the nearest mobile lab to complete the evaluation.