

# **University of Hawai'i**

## **Distance and Distributed Learning Action Plan**

*May 8, 2003*

### **I. CONTEXT**

The University of Hawai'i has been a pioneer in many ways in the use of technology to bridge the distances among the Hawaiian Islands in order to extend access to higher education for our citizenry. With the emergence of the Internet and personal computing as radical transformational tools in teaching and learning, most of the University's distance learning support has now blended with the broader use of technology to improve educational environment for campus-based and distant learners alike.

The technology approaches used to reach distant learners are now routinely applied by our faculty in their campus-based courses. Today's campus-based students frequently register in completely online courses when available, and they both expect and use flexibly delivered student services that were originally initiated to support distant learners. The result of this "blending," which is occurring across the nation, is that for most educational services there is no longer a compelling distinction in how we serve our distant and campus-based learners.

Serving the needs of the people of Hawai'i (and beyond) through distance learning remains a critical imperative for the University of Hawai'i. At the same time, the actions needed to advance distance learning are part of a broader educational agenda to advance student-centered teaching, learning and service within the entire University and State of Hawai'i. We therefore use the widely accepted term, "distributed learning," to encompass the use of technology to extend access to education through distance learning as well as the use of information and telecommunication technologies to improve and transform the educational experience for our students anywhere and at any time.

But the greatest challenges before us in distance and distributed learning are not about technology; they are about academic planning – particularly across a system of higher education. All units throughout the University must understand their responsibility to potentially serve learners on all islands. In addition, all units must collaborate to maximize opportunities for students by leveraging the offerings available through other parts of the System. While our campuses and units each have individual missions, all units must be learner-centered as they work together to serve the entire State of Hawaii.

A strong commitment to distributed learning pervades the new University of Hawai'i Strategic Plan, as elaborated below. From an implementation perspective, the Strategic Plan directs that our system "mainstream" its approach to distributed learning opportunities by incorporating them into the responsibilities of our entire faculty, staff and administration. This commitment supports the realization that it is no longer acceptable to consider distance or distributed learning apart from the rest of the academic enterprise.

While the mainstream approach to support of distance and distributed learning offers many compelling advantages, it is not without its challenges. For UH campuses and their many support services to completely embrace and execute an extended mission that fully supports all

UH learners, not just those who come to campus during the day, will require a shared vision, strong leadership, unflagging commitment and open communication among all parties.

Among the specific recommendations in the Strategic Plan, ten that are most relevant to distributed learning are repeated here, as context for the Action Plan that follows.

- Ensure that students experience a transforming education by: ... Using technology to support learning.
- Enhance the student experience by implementing: ...A state-of-the-art student information system that supports a positive relationship with students from recruitment to alumni status.
- Provide access for students, faculty, and staff to a first-class information technology infrastructure, support, and services that sustain and enhance University instruction, research, and administrative services within the University, throughout Hawai'i, and beyond.
- Mainstream institutional response to distance learning and ensure that all professional development and support for technology-enhanced teaching, learning, and student services are integrated to benefit campus-based instruction as well as distance learning.
- Coordinate and facilitate high quality distance learning through a system-wide distance learning council made up of representatives and leaders from the constituencies that provide instruction and support; use grass-roots task forces to leverage the expertise and experience within the system.
- Engage, develop, and support the University's entire faculty and staff to create a pervasive, technology rich instructional environment that serves on-campus and off-campus learners through intercampus sharing of experiences, application showcases, and collaborative development activities that demonstrate how technology can improve student-learning outcomes across the curriculum.
- Identify and capitalize on strategic international markets for profit-generating programs (short-term training, distance learning, and technical assistance) based on existing partnerships and UH program strengths and capacity.
- Resolve issues that create barriers to faculty participation in distance and technology-enhanced learning, including intellectual property, workload, financial incentives for participation in entrepreneurial programs, and recognition in tenure and promotion processes.
- Fund a first-rate information technology infrastructure.
- Develop a coherent pricing and funding model for distance learning and allocate funds based on the shared priorities of the system.

Following is an Action Plan to implement the ambitious agenda now before the University. In each case there is a specific action and general locus of responsibility for the activity in a mainstreamed environment.

While availability of resources continues to hamper progress, significant progress and improvement can be made without the explicit allocation of new resources. This Plan is intended to guide the University of Hawai'i to a future in which our students -- on and off our

campuses -- are better served regardless of our financial environment. As new resources become available this Plan will guide their allocation for maximum effectiveness.

## **II. ACTION PLAN**

### **Abbreviations and Definitions**

CCAO – Council of Chief Academic Officers

The new council made up of the Chief Academic Officers of all ten UH campuses, which is facilitated by the Office of the VP for Academic Affairs.

COC – Council of Chancellors

The new council made up of the Chancellors of all ten UH campuses.

Distance Learning

The delivery of instruction when the student and faculty member are not in the same physical location. Distance learning today is generally mediated or assisted by some form(s) of technology – interactive video, email, the web, course management systems (e.g., WebCT), CDROM, DVD, Cable Television and/or streaming media. Because distance learning is generally focused on extending access to educational opportunities, the University of Hawaii also includes and defines its face-to-face off-campus programs as part of its distance learning program.

Distributed Learning

Includes distance learning and also encompasses the broader campus-based use of technologies that enhance teaching and learning and the provision of complete online courses and services to campus-based students.

DLAC – Distributed Learning Advisory Council

A new system-wide council appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs with responsibility to oversee and lead the mainstreamed implementation of this Action Plan.

ITS – Information Technology Services, including its Distributed Learning and User Services (DLUS) group.

OVPAA – Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs

UH – the University of Hawai'i System

### **Academic Issues**

Many of the most important issues in distance and distributed learning at the University of Hawai'i are fundamental issues of academic planning and policy that are particularly exercised or exacerbated by the opportunities before us. For example, providing distant learners in relatively remote areas where there is no campus with access to a coherent range of credential programs in a cost-effective manner requires more collaborative planning than has been customary across the UH system. Similarly, increased cross-taking of online courses between campuses, even by campus-based students, has increased the need for transparent articulation

and transfer among all UH campuses. These issues must be addressed within the context of overall academic policy, not as problems unique to distance and distributed learning.

### **A1 - Statewide Educational Planning**

WHAT: The UH System must meet the greatest priority statewide needs for higher education. There must be ongoing statewide needs assessment informed by an understanding of community needs, the workforce and monitoring of economic development directions. Collaboration is essential to maximize opportunities for students in under-served areas, including through activities such as 2+2+2 and the offering of “gap courses” that bridge program requirements. This must strongly influence overall academic planning and coordination for the University, including for distance learning.

WHO: CCAO working with University Centers and others

### **A2 - Program Planning**

WHAT: subject to accreditation and other external compliance requirements, program planning for distance learning should be managed through the same processes that apply to other academic programs rather than through special groups or independent processes. Similarly, all academic program planning should include consideration of statewide needs. Input from faculty and other appropriate parties should be included.

WHO: CCAO

### **A3 - Entrepreneurial Programs**

WHAT: UH should identify strategic national and international markets for distance and distributed learning programs based on existing partnerships (primarily in the Pacific Rim), UH niches and areas of academic excellence. These programs, which would not normally be funded with State resources, are by their nature “entrepreneurial.” Such programs cannot become the primary focus of UH as a public institution. But they can be an important means to enhance our capacity to serve the State. System level communication and coordination is essential and there may be specific markets in which a system-wide approach is most appropriate, e.g., in serving the military community. But generally, entrepreneurialism is best fostered on a decentralized basis. Units should be given the flexibility and incentives to develop entrepreneurial programs with resources they can identify, acquire and allocate, subject only to the usual considerations of mission and program appropriateness.

WHO: Colleges, CCAO, COC, OVPAA

### **A4 - Assessment**

WHAT: Distance and distributed learning should be assessed with the same rigor and methodology as applied to campus-based classroom instruction.

WHO: CCAO, Faculty

### **A5 - Articulation**

WHAT: The University of Hawai'i, as a system, must leverage the strengths and capabilities of all its units to serve learners throughout the State. Recognizing the mobility of students among our campuses, we must implement and communicate rational student-centered articulation and transfer policies.

WHO: CCAO, OVPAA, Faculty

### **A6 – P20 Opportunities**

WHAT: Distributed learning courses offer a unique opportunity for advanced high school students to participate in higher education. P20 program planning should include the opportunities and processes through which Hawai'i high school students, including those in virtual programs, can enroll in UH distance and distributed learning courses.

WHO: OVPAA

### **A7 - Update UH Distant Learning Plans, Policies and Procedures**

WHAT: Update E5.204 for current situation. This update should address issues including but not limited to the priorities of units, “entrepreneurial” programs, roles & responsibilities of various units and offices and make any other changes appropriate to ensure consistency with new UH Strategic Plans and this Action Plan.

WHO: OVPAA

### **A8 - Interactive Video and Cable TV Scheduling**

WHAT: Interactive Video and Cable TV timeslots are still limited resources and their scheduling for classes should reflect statewide educational priorities. The mechanics of scheduling are largely an operational task, but as a matter of process, the CCAO should approve the Interactive Video & Cable TV course schedules and advise on any specific matters of statewide prioritization that arise that can not be resolved as an operational matter.

WHO: ITS with CCAO as necessary

## **Faculty Engagement & Support**

Our faculty have already learned a great deal and made dramatic improvements in their service to students, on- and off-campus, through their use of distributed learning. But many of our individual successes have not been shared widely with the rest of the System. UH needs a much stronger community of faculty and staff engaged in distributed learning. This engagement will help us all learn from the experience of others, nurture our successes, and reduce burnout of some of the lonely pioneers who have led the way. In addition, UH needs to ensure that our faculty are deeply engaged in relevant planning and policy development. Distributed learning is fundamentally about teaching and learning; it cannot be driven solely by administrators.

### **FAC1 - Faculty Involvement**

WHAT: Faculty must be actively engaged in distributed learning planning and policy, particularly driving matters of teaching & learning. There should be faculty membership on all relevant distributed learning planning, policy and oversight groups.

WHO: Faculty, COC, CCAO, OVPAA, ITS

### **FAC2 - Faculty & Staff Development and Support**

WHAT: Faculty and staff must have access to training to help them get started using technology, and ongoing support to ensure continuing development and success. Support strategies must go beyond workshops to include coaching, mentoring and more individualized and just-in-time approaches.

WHO: COC, CCAO, ITS, Faculty, Staff

### **FAC3 - Distributed Learning Colloquia**

WHAT: Establish (at least) an annual system-wide distributed learning colloquium/conference as well as regular events throughout the year that bring together the UH distance and

distributed learning community. Topics should include pedagogy, costs, program planning, learning resources, library support, student services, new technology approaches, etc. that will appeal to faculty, administrators, librarians, student services professionals, and technologists.  
WHO: Faculty & Staff with ITS facilitation

#### **FAC4 - Online Support for our Distributed Learning Community**

WHAT: Establish online communities for those involved in distributed learning with discussions, mailing lists, online resources. This should include a system-wide database of and for the distributed learning community that shares what individual faculty are doing and which staff and administrators can help. (This can build on the existing Faculty Interest Groups, the “FIGs,” developed among the community colleges.)

WHO: Faculty & Staff with ITS facilitation

#### **FAC5 – Copyright Support**

WHAT: Establish a service that helps faculty understand the legal use of copyrighted materials in a distributed learning environment and provides copyright clearance assistance when appropriate.

WHO: Library Council

### **Student Support**

Improving the university’s student support services to incorporate modern approaches to one-stop service centers and online electronic support is critical to distant and campus-based learners. With the chance to learn from best practices elsewhere in higher education and by leveraging the implementation of the University’s first system-wide student information system, UH is positioned for truly dramatic advances if we can seize the opportunity before us.

#### **S1 - First-class Student Services**

WHAT: Implement a one-stop shop approach using state-of-the-art technology for both distant and campus-based students that includes: marketing, recruitment, admissions, financial aid, registration, bookstore, cashiering, degree audits, academic advising, counseling, and statewide proctored testing.

WHO: COC, VPSA, OVPA, CFP/VPA, ITS, all student service units

#### **S2 - Library Services**

WHAT: Maximize system-wide access to online databases, print resources, media, course reserves, instructional and reference services and other appropriate learning resources.

WHO: Library Council with Faculty

#### **S3 - Student Readiness for Distributed Learning**

WHAT: Provide comprehensive orientation and development opportunities for students to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for success in distributed learning.

WHO: Faculty and Staff with ITS facilitation

#### **S4 - Distance Learning Web Site**

WHAT: A single coherent web site must provide access to information about all programs available to off-campus learners and serve as a single entry point for participation by any student who wishes to pursue a credential without coming to the campus offering that credential. This site should demonstrate how UH is addressing the high priority educational

needs of the state and what external programs are available. (Note: much of this information will also be available and of use to campus-based programs, but this is one area where the university's distance programs should be highlighted separately for marketing to potential off-campus customers.)

WHO: ITS facilitates

## **Research & Development**

The University of Hawai'i, like nearly all educational institutions, has only scratched the surface of how distributed learning is fundamentally altering the way we teach and learn. At the same time, new and advanced learning technologies are being developed and made available at an unprecedented pace. These changes are profound and not yet widely understood -- creating a tremendous opportunity for research and development that advances understanding of these matters within our institution and worldwide and improves our capabilities. Our faculty have diverse research interests, but the University should encourage and support whenever possible research and development that advances practice and the understanding of distributed learning effectiveness, pedagogy, organization, support, cost structures and the many advances in technology that can improve education within the University and beyond.

### **RES1 – Supporting Research and Development in Distributed Learning**

WHAT: Whenever possible, the University should encourage and support research that advances understanding of distributed learning effectiveness, pedagogy, organization, support, cost structures and the many advances in technology that can improve education within the University and beyond. This takes place through collaboration with distributed learning operations, making matching support (including in-kind) available for extramural grant applications, highlighting UH innovation and research work at the distributed learning colloquia, internally funded research opportunities and recognition of distributed learning research within the faculty reward systems.

WHO: *OVP Research, OVPAA, COC, CCAO, ACCFSC, ITS, Colleges, TPRCs*

## **Faculty-Related Policies**

UH must begin building toward its future in which the technologies have matured, our support structures have been strengthened and our entire faculty has embraced the appropriate use of technology to improve and extend learning opportunities for students. There are a number of barriers that must be removed. In implementing new policies for faculty, UH must ensure that teaching with technology be viewed simply as teaching, rather than as a special activity with unique governing rules and guidelines.

### **POL1 - Tenure & Promotion Guidelines**

WHAT: Review tenure & promotion guidelines to recognize and reward innovation and service in teaching, including through distributed learning. Expectations included in job descriptions and hiring guidelines should be used in tenure and promotion processes.

WHO: ACCFSC, TPRCs, CCAO, Colleges

### **POL2 - Hiring Guidelines**

WHAT: Update hiring guidelines relating to teaching faculty to ensure clarity that UH faculty may be expected to make appropriate use of distributed learning techniques as part of 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching.

WHO: CCAO, COC, Colleges

**POL3 - Intellectual Property Policy for Distributed Learning**

WHAT: UH should adopt an intellectual property policy that encourages faculty participation in distributed learning and institutional investment in our faculty. The policy should be geared to a future in which nearly all faculty will make some use of technology in their teaching and not on the expectation that, in the general case, either the University or individual faculty will get rich from distributed learning.

WHO: Address through Collective Bargaining Process

**POL4 - Overload Policy**

WHAT: Overload must be available to faculty for credit courses “above load” without the necessity of offering the course through the campus “continuing education” unit. This is necessary to encourage and reward faculty for participation in “entrepreneurial” or other special programs.

WHO: Manoa & Hilo with UHPA

**POL5 - General Workload**

WHAT: Campuses should be reminded to be attentive to the evolution of workload requirements associated with preparation and conduct of distributed learning and the individual skills and capabilities of faculty at different points on their individual learning and experience curves. UH should not adopt any hard-and-fast rules or one-size-fits-all regulations relating to workload for distributed learning, any more than we do for classroom-based instruction.

WHO: CCAO

**Financing**

The University of Hawai'i has embraced the principle that our campuses and education centers collaboratively serve students throughout the State without campuses paying each other for specific support services. This has been an enormous boon to statewide service. Nonetheless, there are a number of ways in which our current financing models do not encourage the behaviors UH has committed to in our Strategic Plan. Given that tuition covers only a small part of instructional costs, especially for in-state students, UH needs a clearer financial model or models that describe the situations when general operating funds are expected to subsidize delivery costs, what types of programs would be eligible for systemic startup assistance, how UH will balance its core offerings to campus-based and distant learners, when the University's existing flexibility in setting tuition for specialized programs should be exercised, and the basis for establishing entrepreneurial programs. The University must increase investment in our faculty and the development of distributed learning programs and content. Incentive and seed funding will be essential, and any such system-wide resources should be utilized in maximum alignment with system-wide priorities.

**FIN1 - Financial Models**

WHAT: Given that tuition covers only a small part of instructional costs, especially for in-state students, UH needs a clearer financial model or models that describe the situations when general operating funds are expected to subsidize delivery costs, what types of programs would be eligible for systemic startup assistance, how UH will balance its core offerings to campus-based and distant learners, when the University's existing flexibility in setting tuition for



specialized programs should be exercised, and how to establish, encourage and reward faculty participation in entrepreneurial programs.

WHO: Ad-hoc working group to be appointed with CFO

### **FIN2 - Seed & Project Funding**

WHAT: Through up-front system-wide collaboration and planning, maximize the utility and effectiveness of system-wide seed funding programs to ensure allocation to the highest priorities.

WHO: CCAO

## **Technology Infrastructure**

Successful distributed learning requires a first-rate, ubiquitous, integrated information technology services and support infrastructure. While information technology supports all aspects of the University's mission – teaching, learning, research, administration and service -- the needs of distributed learning must not be overlooked or understated in overall technology infrastructure planning and implementation. It must also be reiterated that while a high-quality IT infrastructure is a necessary ingredient in successful distributed learning, the infrastructure will be of little use without a concomitant investment in our faculty for course and program development.

### **T1 - Strategic Plan for IT**

WHAT: The University's Strategic Plan for IT should be updated to reflect this Distance and Distributed Action Plan as well as the new University of Hawaii Strategic Plans.

WHO: ITS with advisory committees

### **T2 – Technical Support**

WHAT: As teachers and learners increasingly rely on technology 24 hrs a day and 7 days a week, they must have access to timely and informed technical support whenever problems arise.

WHO: ITS

## **Manoa-Specific Actions**

While this is a system-wide action plan, it is clear that full participation by and collaboration with the Manoa campus is essential. Manoa is the largest campus, the most complex campus, and it offers a rich array of unique capabilities and programs unavailable anywhere else in the UH system. Therefore, we identify a number of Manoa-specific issues that should be addressed to advance distance and distributed learning at Manoa and thereby for the entire State. They are presented here solely to recommend follow-up within the context of campus-level planning.

### **M1 - Outreach College Role**

WHAT: Outreach College provides a number of important enabling capabilities to Manoa. These include: more flexible student support services than those offered by the campus at-large; the ability to return a portion of tuition generated to the offering program to cover marginal costs; marketing support; and the ability to pay overload to faculty teaching credit courses.

However, there are also issues with offering credit instruction through Outreach College rather than through standard campus mechanisms. Manoa should determine the role of Outreach

College as it relates to credit instruction, including distance learning, in a mainstreamed environment and take definitive steps to implement its decision.

WHO: Manoa Chancellor's Office

### **M2 - Tuition Distribution Mechanism**

WHAT: It is expected that the financial model(s) for distance learning will require that some portion of the specific tuition from a distance learning program be made available to the generating unit to cover marginal costs of delivery. This is already a requirement for Manoa colleges running such programs through general campus processes rather than through Outreach College.

WHO: Manoa Chancellor's Office

### **M3 - Manoa Coordination**

WHAT: There have been a number of suggestions about how to improve Manoa campus coordination of distance learning within the campus and with other campuses of the UH system. Manoa should address this issue and move forward so that it can improve collaboration internally and beyond.

WHO: Manoa Chancellor's Office

## **III. Implementation Plan**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall appoint a standing system-wide Distributed Learning Advisory Council (DLAC). The DLAC will oversee and lead the mainstreamed implementation of this Action Plan, which must continue to evolve over time. The DLAC will be responsible to proactively identify systemic issues as they arise, and will advise and counsel administrators, policy-makers, groups such as the CoC and CCAO, faculty and others as appropriate. The DLAC is not intended as an operational body.

The DLAC must be carefully appointed to be broadly representative of the University. It must include faculty, staff, administrator and student representation. It must include members from all types of campuses and all islands. Its members must be knowledgeable about distributed learning and committed to innovation.

There are a number of committees and working groups involved in distance and distributed learning around the system that have contributed substantially to the University's successes in distance learning over the past decade. As we move forward to more "blended" approaches in a mainstreamed environment, DLAC will be informed by, assist, and perhaps include representation from some of these groups that provide mutual support to our students, faculty and each other. In keeping with the recent reorganization of the UH System there should be a transition from campus committees and community college committees and system-wide committees to campus and system-wide committees only. While work with faculty and the general agendas around teaching & learning will take place under the auspices of distributed learning, there is still an important role for coordination of specific distance learning services within the state among all our campuses and education centers to serve the people of Hawai'i. The DLAC will be responsible to recommend the nature of system-wide groups appropriate to support system-wide collaboration and services relating to distance and distributed learning.