University of Hawaii at Manoa
Distance Learning Strategic Plan

Review Draft
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Manoa Distance Learning Committee
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A Shared Vision for Manoa

Distance learning courses and programs should be used to maximize Manoa’s educational mission. As such, technologically mediated instruction should affirm and enhance residential learning and not replace it. Distance learning technologies should be used to strengthen and augment good teaching and life-long learning. Distance learning creates new opportunities to investigate learning styles and pedagogy. It can help to create more flexible and accessible opportunities for student learning. It creates new opportunities for collaboration within and across academic disciplines and between researchers, teachers, instructional support specialists, and learners. As such it can broaden the educational experience for Manoa students, while maintaining a high standard of quality. Distance learning provides an opportunity to elevate the role of the university within society by increasing access to on-campus and virtual resources. It also provides opportunities for reinventing and transforming the university. Recognizing the potential for change – the opportunities, threats, and uncertainties, it is necessary to gather and share information and develop overall principles and guidelines for managing change. The purpose of this document is to identify, to the extent possible, the shared vision for Manoa for distance learning courses and programs.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Manoa Distance Learning Committee is to promote quality and access to students choosing the venue of distance learning for part or all of their academic pursuits.

The committee will work collaboratively to develop general guidelines, plans, and policies to enhance the development, delivery, management, and evaluation of distance learning courses and programs offered by the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The mission of the committee is to provide both overall, long range policy development and guidance to the University as well as to interpret policies and provide academic and administrative review of matters related to technologically mediated instruction offered at a distance. The role of the committee is to work with existing administrative and academic units and committees to address issues and concerns related to all aspects of distance learning. The committee will work with the University community to develop a planning process and a strategic plan. The purpose of the plan is to foster greater
communication, cooperation, commitment of resources, and consensus related to distance learning courses and programs.

**Executive Summary**

The Manoa Distance Learning Committee offers this strategic plan to provide overall direction for the University of Hawaii at Manoa for the development, delivery, management and evaluation of distance learning courses, programs and degrees. For purposes of this document, distance learning is defined as *technologically mediated instruction* offered at a distance.

The vision for Manoa is to use distance learning as a way to maximize our educational mission. Thus, technologically mediated instruction should affirm and enhance residential learning, not replace it. However, it should be used to strengthen and augment good teaching and life-long learning. Distance learning creates learning environments that are flexible and accessible, offers room for collaboration with and across academic disciplines, and broadens the educational experiences for Manoa students, all the while maintaining high standards of excellence.

The strategic plan includes five main goals: 1) the creation of strategic alliances and partnerships; 2) faculty involvement and responsibility; 3) mainstreaming of administrative policies and procedures regarding distance learning; 4) increase the support infrastructure and resource base; and 5) conduct evaluation and review of courses.

Each goal is followed by a number of objectives that clarify the goal. Additionally, the strategic plan has determined six strategic actions and priorities in order to meet the goals and objectives. These are: 1) increased commitment from administration to support distance learning; 2) stronger university-wide leadership; 3) increased role for Outreach College; 4) enhanced support for faculty, departmental, college, and academic unit distance learning initiatives; 5) better marketing and promotion of distance learning; and 6) determine role of the distance learning committee.

The plan identifies a series of benchmarks that would ensure progress towards the goals and objectives in the plan. Finally, the plan outlines eight evaluation criteria to be considered. These include the following: 1) review and assessment of the plan; 2) evaluate level of awareness among faculty and students regarding the plan; 3) public awareness of distance learning initiatives at Manoa; 4) increase in distance learning courses and program offerings; 5) increase in the number of students matriculating in distance learning courses and programs; 6) increase in the number of partnerships and
alliances between faculty and others; 7) increase in funded research; and 8) increased academic quality at Manoa.

Manoa Distance Learning Program Goals

Goal 1  **Strategic Alliances and Partnerships**
Create strategic alliances and partnerships within and across the University of Hawaii system and with other learning institutions, government agencies and the military, private sector partners, and non-profit organizations to expand distance learning courses and programs to under-served and new populations, including international venues.

Goal 2  **Faculty Involvement and Responsibility**
Empower faculty and departments/colleges to initiate, develop, deliver, manage and evaluate distance learning courses and programs by providing incentives in an environment in which they may experiment and explore.

Goal 3  **Administrative Policies and Procedures**
Review, revise and mainstream administrative policies and procedures such as recruitment, admissions and enrollment criteria, registration, financial aid, tuition and tuition distribution, credit and performance equivalencies, and student and academic support services to meet the needs of all learners.

Goal 4  **Technology Infrastructure and Resource Base**
Maintain and increase the human and technical resources and the network infrastructure necessary to reliably support and expand distance learning opportunities. Ensure a continuous and stable fiscal and organizational resource base for the ongoing development, delivery, and maintenance of distance learning courses and programs.

Goal 5  **Course Evaluation and Program Review**
Conduct evaluation of distance learning courses and programs consistent with the University’s policies and procedures.
Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide overall direction for the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) in terms of the development, delivery, management, and evaluation of distance learning courses and programs. The document represents a consensus statement developed by faculty, administrators, staff, students, and others interested in expanding and improving UHM’s capacity to deliver high quality distance learning courses and programs to learners across campus, through the state of Hawaii and the world. This document serves to articulate a vision with goals and objectives as well as strategic actions and priorities to achieve these ends. As with any planning document, this strategic plan represents a collection of values, aspirations, ideas, and recommendations for change. In order for this vision to become reality, there must be a commitment of resources and support from the highest levels of the University administration. More importantly, for this plan to succeed there must also be a widely shared commitment and mutual understanding among faculty, students and staff to support distance learning. The purpose of this plan, therefore, is not just to allocate resources and define institutional responsibilities, but also to build new partnerships and alliances related to distance learning that support the overall mission and goals of the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Distance learning is defined as technologically mediated instruction offered at a distance. Different from traditional classroom based activities, distance learning courses and programs involve either or both the physical and temporal separation of instructors and learners. Distance learning can occur through asynchronous (anytime, anywhere) modes (i.e., Internet, email, web-based, fax, or mail delivery), or through synchronous modes (i.e., telephone, interactive television, scheduled cable TV, radio, and other modes which require same time interaction between learners and instructors).

There have been significant developments related to distance learning. These present both tremendous opportunities and significant challenges to the University of Hawaii. Many institutions around the world have initiated models of higher education to accommodate the changing needs of students. Most of these models are articulated through some kind of distance learning, attending to the fact that students are interested in flexibility, ownership, and a variety of opportunities to learn.
The developments range from one extreme to another. On the one hand, most colleges and universities are offering at least a small collection of courses through distance learning. And yet, many agree with Clifford Stoll when he suggests, “It’s (the online world) a great medium for trivia and hobbies, but not the places for reasoned, reflective judgment.” On the other, there are those who claim that the brick and mortar of a traditional institution of higher learning is no longer necessary. “In the networked world and cyber education, higher education institutions not only will lose geographic monopoly, but also will have to deal with vigorous local, national, and global competition,” claims Bizhan Nasseh of Ball State University. Thus, you have completely online establishments, such as the University of Phoenix, offering courses, programs, and degrees to students from around the world. In his book *Being Digital*, Nicholas Negroponte notes, “Computing is not about computers anymore. It is about living.” Today students are invited to join a global community of learners by using the new communication technologies.

There are claims that half of our physical institutions will disappear in a very short time. Don Tapscot, author of *Growing Up Digital, The Digital Economy*, and president of New Paradigm Learning says,

“Private education is growing 20,000 percent faster than public education. You can get a degree from Motorola U. What are the implications for the engineering school when you can get a degree on a network anyplace, anytime for one one-hundredth the cost, delivered by a private company, that has equal or even greater cachet in the marketplace? Every university's got to fundamentally change their model.”

People are interested in learning within a context, at their own pace and leisure, in a flexible environment to accommodate their lives, and with the possibility of having some hand in how the learning occurs. Corporations are meeting those needs by developing their own universities clearly meeting the needs of thousands of their employees to move ahead in their careers. Online universities are cropping up daily to offer students flexibility and opportunities and simplified methods of gaining a degree, more credits, or certification. The possibilities are endless, but what is most important to note is that the traditional model of higher education is not the model of choice for a great number of people. Thus, distance learning needs
to be viewed as a catalyst toward helping us redesign our institutions to be in line with the needs of our customers, the students.

This plan acknowledges an already active UH Manoa distance learning program that addresses University of Hawaii Strategic Plan (1996) Goal 1, Item C: Access, Distance Education, and Technologies and University of Hawaii at Manoa Strategic Plan (1998) Strategic Objective 5.a. Expanding Opportunities Through Distance Education and Information Technologies. In Fall 2000, UHM offered ninety classes that were part of fifteen distance-delivered certificates, bachelors, and masters’ degrees. This plan addresses and follows the planning and policy guidelines in the revised Executive Policy Procedures (1998), including collaborative planning at the campus and system-wide levels, acknowledging lead responsibilities, adhering to program quality assurance and WASC accreditation, determining program priorities, developing annual plans and funding, addressing workload and intellectual property issues, establishing guidelines for external partnerships, and providing assistance to students and enrollment reporting (E5.204, 6-23). This plan also sets forth goals and benchmarks that are based on the fundamental provisions of UH distance learning, policy, including commitment, purpose, and responsibility; collaboration; quality and assessment; entrepreneurial distance learning; and accreditation (E5.204, 2-5).

We are situated in the midst of the Pacific, with a system scattered among many islands, and Manoa is viewed as a flagship campus for many in the Pacific Basin. If we are to maintain our position as a relevant, dynamic, forward-thinking institution, the possibilities afforded by technologically mediated instruction must be taken seriously.

**Strategic Planning Process**

A broad-based committee that met during the Fall 2000 and Spring 2001 semesters prepared this plan. List of members can be found at the end of the strategic plan.

The first draft of the plan was developed through a series of structured conversations and facilitated meetings. A general approach and timetable for the planning process was developed and the committee then focused on information exchange and a review of distance learning initiatives on campus, as well as throughout the University of Hawaii system, and at other
institutions and locations throughout the world. A representative of the University of Hawaii Professional Assembly also provided an overview of issues related to intellectual property rights and the status of negotiations between the faculty union, the administration, and the state. Members of the committee also developed and shared scenarios for describing possible, probable, and preferred futures with respect to distance learning courses and programs. The scenarios served to identify trends and driving forces affecting higher education and technologically mediated instruction offered at a distance. These scenarios also served to expose both aspirations and fears associated with distance learning. Minutes of each meeting were circulated both among the members of committee as well as to groups such as the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii (ASUH) and the Graduate Student Organization (GSO).

Following acceptance of the draft strategic plan by the committee, the draft document will be circulated widely for comment and review. Members of the committee will also make presentations on the draft plan to various groups on campus during the Spring of 2001. Comments will be received and incorporated into a final version of the plan which will be submitted for acceptance by the administration and the faculty senate during the Spring of 2001.

All committee meetings are open to students, faculty, and administrators.

Organization of Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan contains both goals and objectives. The goals encompass the principles and the underlying values and a shared vision for Manoa. Accordingly, the plan is organized around these goals. Objectives are more specific statements related to each goal. Actions and priorities associated with each objective have also been described in a later section. The plan concludes with some benchmarks and some suggested criteria for evaluation of this proposed plan.

Objectives

Goal 1 Strategic Alliances and Partnerships - Create strategic alliances and partnerships within and across the University of Hawaii system and with other learning institutions,
government agencies and the military, private sector partners, and non-profit organizations to expand distance learning courses and programs to under-served and new populations, including international venues.

**Objective 1.1**
Encourage faculty to collaborate with each other and with others across the UH System and outside the University of Hawaii to create and deliver key service programs statewide.

**Objective 1.2**
Identify local and global “niche market” areas for distance learning courses and programs.

**Objective 1.3**
Identify and establish partnerships with local businesses, the military, and companies interested in distance learning courses and programs.

**Objective 1.4**
Encourage administration and academic units to form partnerships and consortia with other national and international institutions, agencies, and companies to develop and deliver distance learning courses and programs.

**Goal 2**
**Faculty Involvement and Responsibility --Empower faculty and departments/colleges to initiate, develop, deliver, and manage, and evaluate distance learning courses and programs by providing incentives in an environment in which they may experiment and explore.**

**Objective 2.1.**
Increase opportunities for on-demand faculty development that focuses on successful instructional strategies. (Dan’s suggestion)

**Objective 2.2.**
Recognize distance learning activities as part of scholarly, instructional, and service endeavors in hiring, promotion and tenure decisions.
Objective 2.3.
Ensure that faculty retains appropriate intellectual property rights in distance learning courses, programs, and activities.

Objective 2.4.
Provide appropriate workload and course releases, funding for student assistants, and instructional design team support for the development, enhancement, and delivery of distance learning courses and programs.

Goal 3
Administrative Policies and Procedures - Revise and mainstream administrative policies and procedures such as recruitment, admissions and enrollment criteria, registration, financial aid, tuition and tuition distribution, credit and performance equivalencies, and student and academic support services to meet the needs of all learners.

Objective 3.1.
Review and revise administrative policies and procedures that include issues identified in the Report from the Outreach College Advisory Council, June 1999, e.g. admission criteria, registration procedures, flexible course scheduling, performance equivalencies such as seat time and outcomes-based assessment, credit transfer, financial aid, tuition to accommodate learners.

Objective 3.2
Expand on-line information resources and increase student support personnel to assist learners from a distance.

Goal 4
Technology Infrastructure and Resource Base - Maintain and increase the human and technical resources and the network infrastructure necessary to reliably support and expand distance learning opportunities. Ensure a continuous and stable fiscal and organizational resource base for the ongoing development, delivery, and maintenance of distance learning courses and programs.
Objective 4.1
Expand and maintain HITS, Internet, Internet2, and other infrastructure for the delivery of both synchronous and asynchronous modes of distance learning.

Objective 4.2
Acquire an integrated and networked student information system.

Objective 4.3
Integrate distance learning into the overall planning and funding of information technology at the University of Hawaii.

Objective 4.4.
Identify and secure new resources to be used for development, marketing, delivery, and maintenance of distance learning at UHM.

Objective 4.5
Develop new avenues of resources for distance learning initiatives.

Goal 5
Course evaluation and program review - Conduct evaluation of distance learning courses and programs consistent with the University’s policies and procedures.

Objective 5.1.
Encourage colleges to develop standards and procedures of evaluation that are consistent with the University’s policies and procedures.

Objective 5.2
Evaluate distance learning courses and programs as part of personnel actions, program reviews, and routine monitoring of educational quality on the UHM campus.

Objective 5.3
Improve access to distance learning course enrollment and student information.
Strategic Actions and Priorities

In examining the goals and objectives, it is apparent that there is need for the following strategic actions and priorities:

- Increased Commitment from Administration to Support Distance Learning
- Stronger University-wide Leadership
- Re-envisioned Role for Outreach College
- More Support for Bottom-Up Initiatives
- Better Marketing and Promotion of Distance Learning
- Continue Activities of Distance Learning Committee

Increased Commitment from Administration

The commitment needs to go beyond appointment of a committee of faculty and administrators. The administration should commit monetary resources and staff. The administration should appoint a designated individual with authority to work with units and programs involved with distance learning and to broker alliances and partnerships between units on and off-campus. This individual should have senior administrative status, be responsible to the Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and be charged with overall management and implementation of distance learning at Manoa. Without a strong, visible commitment from the administration, distance learning courses and programs are not likely to be supported nor integrated within educational units at Manoa. It is particularly important at this point in time for the administration to reaffirm the commitment to quality, access, faculty involvement and congruency of distance learning as part of the overall mission of UHM.

Stronger University-wide Leadership

Given both the opportunities and challenges created by distance learning, there is a need for stronger university-wide leadership. There is a need to share more information on distance learning programs throughout the institution. There is a need to address various academic, administrative, personnel, funding, and management concerns created by distance learning courses and programs. There is need to develop new administrative policies and procedures for distance learners. Concerns regarding virtually every aspect of higher education faced by traditional students also affect distance
learners including: recruitment, admissions, transfer credits, course scheduling, registration, limited enrollment management criteria, tuition, tuition distribution, financial aid and scholarships, grading, performance equivalencies, advising, majors and concentrations, core requirements, grievances, career counseling, course evaluations, library and computer support, etc.

**Re-envisioned Role for Outreach College**

Outreach College has extensive experience marketing non-credit courses, special programs, and innovative opportunities for education beyond our campus. They have done this through Continuing Education and Summer School. The College also has experience handling many of the administrative and student support issues and concerns regarding non-traditional learners. Because of this experience, Outreach College could be viewed as the portal for entrepreneurial projects using the new communication technologies.

**Enhanced Support for Faculty, Departmental, College, and Academic Unit Distance Learning Initiatives**

The University needs to greatly increase support for distance learning courses and initiatives. The University should make more grants available to faculty to acquire hardware and software to enhance teaching through technologically mediated instructional modes. Faculty should be given release time to develop distance learning courses. More training and technical support should also be available for faculty interested in transforming the content of existing courses into distance learning classes. Academic units should also be encouraged to consider distance learning goals and objectives for new hires. University guidelines for promotion and tenure should be re-written to recognize research, teaching, and service activities related to distance learning. Units should be encouraged to recognize and reward quality and innovation with regard to distance learning courses and programs. The University should also support the development, implementation and maintenance of certificate and degree programs.

**Better Marketing and Promotion of Distance Learning**

The University should develop a marketing strategy to promote distance learning. It should identify both high demand areas as well as areas
in which UHM has a special, comparative advantage. There should be separate strategies for developing in-state and global distance learning constituencies. An annual budget allocation should be available for marketing costs.

**Role of Manoa Distance Learning Committee**

There is need for continued dialogue, identification of problems and uncertainties, and strategic planning related to distance learning. The Manoa Distance Learning Committee should continue to meet and increase its visibility on campus. It should be considered a venue for bringing together all of the distance learning activities at Manoa. In particular, this committee should be designated as an Advisory Board to a new Manoa Office for Distance Learning.

**BENCHMARKS**

In order to ensure progress towards the goals and objectives identified in this strategic plan, a number of benchmarks have been identified.

- Presentations on Draft Plan to Campus Groups. During Spring 2001, members of the Distance Education Committee will present the draft plan to the Administration, Board of Regents, Faculty Senate, GSO, ASUH, and other groups on campus.

- Faculty Senate Review. A copy of the draft plan will be submitted to the Faculty Senate for review. Resolution supporting plans to be adopted by May 2001.

- Review and suggest revisions to administrative policies and procedures as they affect distance learners (refer to Jun 6, 1999 Report from the Outreach College Advisory Council). (Spring 2001)

- Guidelines for the evaluation of Distance Learning courses to be drafted by Distance Learning Committee (Spring 2001).

- Suggested revisions to Tenure and Promotion Guidelines drafted by Distance Learning Committee (Spring 2001).
• 10 $5,000 grants to be awarded to faculty to develop new distance learning courses (Spring 2001).

• Conference on Distance Learning at UH involving participating from faculty, students, administrators, others interested in distance learning (Fall 2001).

• Public relations and media campaign on efforts related to distance learning at UHM (Spring 2001).

EVALUATION

In addition to gauging success or failure of this strategic plan in the near term by accomplishing the specific actions listed as benchmarks, there are a number of other, broader evaluation criteria that can be considered. These include the following:

• Review and assessment of the strategic plan and the committee’s activities by the Distance Learning Committee members;

• Level of awareness among faculty and students about the distance learning committee and the distance learning strategic plan;

• Public awareness of distance learning initiatives on the UHM campus;

• Increase in distance learning courses and program offerings;

• Increase in the number of students matriculating in distance learning courses and programs;

• Increase in the number of partnerships and alliances between faculty and others related to the development and delivery of distance learning classes and programs;

• Increase in funded research related to distance learning;

• Increased academic quality at UHM.
No doubt that the evaluation of the strategic plan’s effectiveness will need to conducted over time and involve the various stakeholders – faculty, students, administrators, and others who are part of the university community.

CONCLUSIONS

This strategic plan represents but a beginning. It is clear that distance learning will have a profound impact on higher education in Hawaii – whether we like it or not, whether we prepare for it or merely watch from the sidelines. In this plan, we have attempted to articulate core values – such as an emphasis on quality and the centrality of faculty involvement in the educational experience. We can see the advantages of increased flexibility in not just scheduling but also in terms of learning styles and improved pedagogy. At the same time, we need to recognize the inherent limitations of technology and the risks and uncertainties to higher education that distance learning poses. Distance learning is a tool for delivering sound, progressive education. The University of Hawaii must make a conscious effort to support distance learning with the resources to experiment and expand, and to participate with the faculty in a shared vision of creating new and exciting educational opportunities for reinventing and transforming the university.

Members of the Committee

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Scott Campbell
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