January 4, 2007

Denise Eby Konan  
Interim Chancellor  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
2500 Campus Road  
Honolulu, HI 96822

Dear Chancellor Konan:

At its December 11, 2006 meeting, a panel of the Proposal Review Committee considered the University of Hawaii at Manoa Institutional Proposal submitted in preparation for its next reaffirmation of accreditation review. The members of the review panel would like to thank you and your colleagues for their contributions to the phone conversation. The panel found the discussion very helpful in illuminating the proposal and the context for the University. As reflected in my email to you that same day, the panel acted to accept the proposal with commendation.

The panel found the proposal to be exemplary in many respects. It is based on a process that had widespread participation and consultation, and it set forth a set of issues that are clearly important to the University and well related to the WASC Standards. There is a very clear set of objectives for each area, and a clear timeline of actions to be taken. Those responsible for engagement in each of the areas have been identified. From the conference call with University representatives, it appears that there is a strong commitment from campus leadership and key stakeholders within the campus to these areas of focus, and to making sure that significant attention will be given to see that each issue is successfully addressed.

Indeed, it is apparent that there is a strong feeling that these issues are central to the future development of the University, and in some respects, are long overdue. It was evident from both the proposal and the conference call that this proposal is not just for WASC but reflects a clear set of needs for the University and that the WASC process can be a stimulus for getting these important issues addressed. At the same time, the proposal clearly links the areas of focus and outcomes to WASC Standards and to issues of longstanding concern to WASC, so there is effective alignment between the University and WASC.

In acting to accept the proposal, the panel also made several recommendations for the University to consider as it moves to implement the workplan:

985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100  
Alameda, CA 94501  
PHONE: 510.748.9001  
FAX: 510.748.9797  
E-MAIL: wascsenior@wascsenior.org  
INTERNET: www.wascweb.org
1. The proposal sets forth both an ambitious set of issues to be addressed but also an ambitious timeline for addressing them. Success in each of these areas will require considerable discipline, focus, commitment, widespread engagement, and management. The University has admirably set a timeline that extends well beyond the conclusion of the WASC reaccreditation process, in acknowledgement that not all can or will be done by the time of each WASC site visit. At the same time, the panel expressed caution that not all objectives may be reached within the specified timetable.

2. The panel urged continued focus on student learning outcomes through each of the two visits and that further development be undertaken in promoting these outcomes more prominently on the University’s and each program’s website. In search the University’s website, members of the panel did not find learning outcomes easily accessible or prominently displayed. Further attention should be given as well to making further progress in embedding learning assessment throughout the University.

3. The University is urged to maintain its focus on filling out the development of general education learning outcomes so that progress can be demonstrated at the time of each site review.

4. Of vital importance to the fulfillment of the proposal will be a strong data collection and analysis function within the University. This function will need to be developed further to support the widespread data analysis needed in each of the areas in the proposal.

5. It is evident that there is strong support for the proposal from the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors, as well as the faculty senate. It will be important to ensure that the new chancellor, when one is selected, be fully briefed and engaged in the implementation of the proposal. The panel urged that the proposal be shared and discussed with the Board of Regents, and that they formally commit to support it as the Board of the Manoa campus, and be involved and engaged in the implementation process.

The timeline for review will remain with the Capacity and Preparatory Review conducted in spring 2009 and the Educational Effectiveness Review in fall 2010 (specific dates are yet to be determined). The proposal now becomes the framework for the accreditation review process and represents a plan of action and commitment by the institution. The proposal will be shared with the visiting teams for both the Capacity and Preparatory Review and the Educational Effectiveness Review, and with the Commission following each Review. It is understood that adjustments in the activities undertaken under the proposal will be made as implementation occurs. Major changes to the proposal, such as in the direction or focus of institutional activities for the accreditation review process, are to be approved in advance by Commission staff.
Congratulations on completing this first step in the reaccreditation process. Thank you for agreeing to make your proposal a model that others can review. Let me know if I can be of assistance as you implement your proposal and prepare for your Capacity and Preparatory Review.

Sincerely,

Ralph A. Wolff
President and Executive Director

Cc: Neal Smatresk, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Proposal Review Committee