

**University of Hawaii at Hilo**  
**College of Business and Economics**  
**Maintenance of Accreditation**  
**Executive Summary**

*Background.* The University of Hawaii at Hilo's College of Business and Economics (CoBE) gained collegiate status in 2004 and earned initial accreditation in 2005, offering a single general business major in the BBA program. A second major in accounting was added in 2008. As of the 2008-2009 Academic Year, the BBA general business major remained the largest of the declared majors at UH Hilo (351 general business, 50 accounting, 6 double majors). In that year the combined business and accounting major enrollment share of UH Hilo's total rose to 10.3 percent, reversing a decline from Fall 2003 (10.4 percent) to Fall 2007 (8.5 percent). CoBE's program remains only the second business program in the state of Hawaii to be accredited by the AACSB.

*Educational Improvement.* The AACSB letter of January 7, 2005, informing us of our initial accreditation, noted the importance of the following items. We have made substantial progress and improvement, reported below.

1. Hiring a permanent Dean,
2. Improving the breadth of research across the faculty,
3. Improving the existing facility and making progress toward obtaining a new facility for the College,
4. Expanding opportunities for student growth outside of the classroom,
5. Enhancing student awareness of career placement services on campus, and
6. Making efforts to negotiate a percentage of salary, instead of a flat rate, for summer teaching.

A permanent Dean was placed in 2005. Growth in the average number of our highest valued intellectual contributions – peer reviewed journal articles, peer-reviewed book chapters, and scholarly books – has continued, rising from 5.1 in Fall 2004 to 6.3 in Fall 2008. Classroom furniture and technology were upgraded. More importantly, we have secured the assignment of the current Student Services Building for the College, once the new student services building is completed and the former space has been renovated. We will seek funding for planning and renovation.

We have expanded student opportunities for outside-the-classroom engagement through class projects, now available across a wider range of classes, through a speaker series that brings business and community leaders onto campus, through funded opportunities for student travel, and through the traditional internship program. We

have enhanced student awareness of the UH Hilo Career Center through the CoBE College Fair. Student satisfaction with our efforts to prepare them for job search improved, as measured by EBI benchmarking survey results.

The College has sought advice on how College faculty might receive a percentage of salary compensation for summer teaching. Progress has been stalled, primarily because summer compensation is subject to contract negotiation by the University of Hawaii Professional Assembly union, which represents faculty at all campuses within the University of Hawaii system.

The CoBE's Assurance of Learning processes have undergone considerable formalization over the last five years. What was previously done on an ad-hoc basis is now becoming systematized, embedded and regular. One of the major benefits of the effort to do these things has been scrutiny the existing processes have undergone, and the understanding of how they all fit into the CoBE's continuous improvement efforts.

The College has iteratively revised the business program learning goals from the original list of seventeen to the current set of five broad learning goals with an eye to measurability. Rubrics for each goal have been developed and are being used for program evaluation, or are in beta testing, as part of the assessment plan. We use the Student Tracking and Evaluation Portfolio System (STEPS) service to facilitate our data collection. We continued our long-standing practice of using the Educational Testing Service, major field exam in business, to measure student comprehension of the fundamental principles of essential business functions. We established a computer competency examination as a demonstration of ability in the use of technology. We revised the lower division quantitative requirement to more accurately reflect content expectations for students entering upper division courses. We modified the Business Law syllabus, when it appeared that student performance on the major field test in this area was not consistent with performance in the other areas.

We have also expended considerable time to determine how we can improve student performance on writing skills. To this end, we are engaged in a pilot project to operate the upper-division course, Management, Organizations, and Human Behavior, as a University Writing Intensive course. Evaluation data on improvement in student writing from this pilot will guide curriculum modification decisions and the use of faculty resources to improve this skill.

Our relatively young Assurance of Learning processes are now integrated with the College's established process for curriculum modification, allowing for continuous review of the curriculum's success in student achievement of the program learning

goals. Members of the faculty comprehend the collective process of review, evaluation, and modification, and have participated through data collection and application of assessment tools. Inclusion of larger numbers of faculty in the assessment process, as evaluators and developers, is an area of future improvement.

*Strategic Management.* Our mission and strategic plan help us to focus scarce resources, through the financial management plan and the annual strategic management plan that links our planned action items back to the mission and strategic plan. There is strong support by the department chairs and faculty, based on understanding of the linkages between our action items, our mission and our strategic plan. While the strategic management processes are somewhat young, the mission statement has been a remarkably good compass in evaluating proposals presented to the College.

The College has the backing of the Chancellor of the University of Hawaii at Hilo, with strong support from the Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs, Administrative Affairs and Student Affairs. We have received four new faculty lines since the last review, and one-time funding was provided to upgrade our classrooms. The College has been allocated a spacious building, the current Student Service building, for our occupation once the new student services building and renovation of the current building is completed. On a campus with significant space constraints, this is a significant marker of the regard for the College's activities.

*Fulfillment of Mission.* Our Mission Statement reads:

The Mission of the College of Business and Economics at the University of Hawaii at Hilo is to assist individuals in acquiring the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to be productive and responsible citizens in the global economy. The College serves students and communities primarily from the island and State of Hawaii, as well as students from the US mainland and the Asia/Pacific region.

We believe that the College has been successful in achieving a number of its Mission goals, through the identification of focused, annual action items. We provide a personalized, high-quality baccalaureate business and economics education, having achieved this through the educational improvement action items and outcomes noted above.

The College has been successful in supporting faculty excellence in teaching, research and service, with primary emphasis on teaching, through the establishment of effective faculty development support practices. The College has been responsive to the educational needs of our community and state,

through new academic programs, such as the accounting major, and through the delivery of training to enhance leadership skills for area business leaders.

We have been moderately successful in expanding and enhancing opportunities for experiential learning, and we seek ways to institutionalize and integrate these more broadly into the student experience. The College also seeks ways to provide students with meaningful leadership development experiences, as well as opportunities for the exercise of ethical judgment.

*Program Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement.* The BBA program at UH Hilo has several notable strengths. The first among these is the faculty. As a group, they are more than well-qualified in their respective disciplines, and stay at UH Hilo because of their love of teaching. The second major strength in the program is the close interaction that is available in our small classes and through the faculty's involvement in student advising and student activities outside of the classroom. Our students benefit from the faculty's high level of qualification and interest, and from the quality of their interaction with the faculty.

Despite this, the attraction of students who are Hawaii residents and students of Native Hawaiian background could be improved. Student retention and student satisfaction with career planning and placement data suggest that those functions could also be improved. The College engages in specific interventions to support student retention and placement, with positive effect. More services related to career planning and job search preparation are now used. The impact of College efforts to recruit the targeted populations is less measurable. The College seeks to gain more direct management over student recruitment, retention and placement, but will continue to work with the respective University offices charged with these responsibilities.

The College seeks the advice of the team. Faculty, Business Board and student participants in the 2008-2009 mission and strategy review process opted to remove the focus on smaller organizations from our mission goals. Participants believed that the focus is unattractive to students or unnecessary in our approach to management education. At the same time, stakeholders chose to increase the emphasis on personal attention and left open the possibility for program development in entrepreneurship, tourism, and sustainability. We have a program of high quality, doing a few things very well. We have a culturally diverse student population. We would like advice on how to build our program and enrollments, over the period from 2010-2015, whether in entrepreneurship,

tourism, or sustainability, by leveraging our cultural diversity, and provide for the need of global transnational enterprises.

*Best Practices.* We believe the following practices demonstrate leadership and continuous improvement in management education:

**Student Advising and Tracking System.** The College's advising and tracking system remains a key factor in student success, especially at the upper-division level. It provides for consistent advising information and student preparation in the business courses. Regular GPA warning letters are sent to aspiring upper division students when needed. Each student has an assigned faculty advisor, and advising appointments are facilitated by office staff prior to each semester's early registration. Our student information system bars student registration in courses for which pre-requisites have not been met. We centrally manage student requests for exceptions, typically during the pre-registration period when prerequisite courses are in progress. Decisions on courses presented by incoming transfer student are similarly managed.

**Faculty Development Support.** Faculty development within the College begins with an orientation to the activities that are important to the promotion and tenure process, followed by regular faculty evaluation. Faculty members are encouraged to use self reflection and multiple perspectives in self evaluation of their teaching activities. Through its faculty, the College has sharpened research expectations through an explicit designation of outlet priorities, research type emphasis in support of our mission, and minimum research standards. Faculty members are supported by individually allocated development funds; junior faculty members are assigned lighter service loads. These practices have been effective in attracting and maintaining a moderately diverse, stable and well-qualified faculty who have chosen to locate with the College of Business and Economics at the University of Hawaii at Hilo.

**Faculty Governance.** Our small size contributes to a high level of participation by faculty in decision making at the College. The CoBE Faculty Senate is a senate of the whole, where all faculty members can contribute to recommendations on curriculum or other process items directed for Senate discussion. Each faculty member participates on a College Committee, a listing of which includes the personnel, student awards, student relations, and instructional resources committees. Faculty members in the academic departments directly participate in the development of biennium budget requests that have the opportunity to become part of the campus budget request. A recently completed campus shared governance policy on curriculum and policy development provide for expanded opportunities for faculty participation at broader levels.

Faculty Deployment and Course Scheduling. The College uses an internally developed, faculty planning spreadsheet tool to support forward planning in staffing courses. An annually updated two year schedule of courses provides students with a helpful advising tool to plan for timely program completion. Actual course scheduling is performed manually into three classrooms currently allocated to the College. While manual scheduling is time consuming, it minimizes conflicts among required courses and allows for a unique rotation of the preferred twice-a-week class meeting schedule among all tenure-track faculty members, regardless of rank. This promotes an egalitarian faculty structure that reflects our value set. It also ensures an efficient use of classroom capacity that has few peers campus-wide.

Assurance of Learning. The College curriculum process has effectively made the transition to a mission-driven, outcomes-based review process. Evidence in three of the five learning goals, evaluated to date under the program assessment plan, suggests collective effectiveness in achieving program learning goals. A unique practice is the periodic pre- and post- administrations of the ETS major field test in business that have demonstrated statistically significant gains in student comprehension of the fundamental principles of essential business functions.

Business Leaders Advisory Board Support. The Business Leaders Advisory Board is an active group that meets monthly to work on projects in support of the College. To support the College's goal of enhancing out-of-classroom learning experiences, the Board was instrumental in founding a speaker series drawing on business people of note. Board members are willing participants in interactive student events, such as the CoBE College Fair, and in planning sessions for the College. A current Board project is promotion of the College through local high schools. In 2009 the Board adopted a mission statement that reads: *The College of Business and Economics Business Leaders Advisory Board advises, advocates and offers resources in support of the University of Hawaii at Hilo College of Business and Economics.*

Strategic Planning Process. The College's strategic planning process, noted as a strength by the 2005 AACSB report, annually involves the participation of its major stakeholders – students, faculty, and business leaders. The 2004 iteration focused on the achievement of mission goals, a focus that continued through 2007. In 2008, we embarked on a major re-visit of the College's mission and vision, making only incremental modifications in 2009. We seek to hone our program focus, to strengthen our image and message to students, to faculty, and to our business community partners.