

Response to the WSCUC Team Report

John Gotanda, President

April 27, 2022

On behalf of the entire Hawai'i Pacific University, I want to thank the WSCUC Commission and the WSCUC Review Team for their assistance during the most recent Reaffirmation of Accreditation review. Throughout this process, we have welcomed the opportunity to celebrate our past progress, examine our present operations, and illuminate a path forward that will lead to even greater success. This review process has also given us greater insight into ways in which we can continuously improve for the betterment of our students, staff, faculty, and community.

We also thank the WSCUC Review Team for its helpful discussions with members of the HPU community during the site visit. Though the pandemic meant that not all members could participate in person, we appreciate the team's willingness to adjust to a hybrid/hyflex visit in order to keep the visit on schedule. Furthermore, we appreciate the commendations and recommendations offered by the team, as it provides insights into how to strengthen the University.

We are pleased that the team found sufficient evidence to determine compliance with WSCUC Standards and federal requirements. To further assist the Commission, we appreciate the opportunity to offer corrections and clarifications of some of the items referenced in the report. In addition, we welcome the opportunity to share updates on our finances and enrollments and to highlight some of the items in progress that pertain to the team's recommendations.

Corrections of Fact

On page 18 of the team report, the launch date of our Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (PsyD) program is incorrectly stated as summer 2022. As noted in a correction email to the team chair on March 21, 2022, the new PsyD program launched in fall 2020 and is expected to bring in \$0.8M in new revenue in FY22 and \$1.3M in FY23. Our Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program is set to launch in summer 2022 with an initial cohort of at least 100 students. As of April 21, 2022, the DPT program has received 95 deposits for the July 2022 start.

Clarifications and Additional Context

1. Strengthening Financial Sustainability Through Increased Net Tuition

HPU has worked hard to transform its finances. We are pleased to provide an update on our current fiscal year financial results. Through February 2022, we have achieved an operating surplus of \$1.5 million, which is a 50 percent positive variance to our budgeted year-to-date surplus of \$975 thousand. We expect this positive variance to reach nearly \$2 million for the entire fiscal year as our enrollment and net tuition are better than expected for the spring 2022 term. We are therefore confident that we will comfortably meet all debt covenants for FY22, as well as achieve another year of positive operating income.

We would like to take this opportunity to clarify the review team's comment (p. 15) of the University's "near lack of compliance with debt covenants" in at least one previous year. We are at a loss as to why the team reached this conclusion, as we have never been close to missing any of our debt covenants. The debt covenant calculations shared with the team show excess in all years: For the liquidity covenant, these excesses were \$7.6 million, \$6.8 million, and \$17.2 million in fiscal years 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively. For the debt service coverage covenant, the excesses were \$5.8 million and \$2.9 million in fiscal years 2020 and 2021, respectively. The debt service coverage covenant was not in effect for fiscal year 2019 as provided for in the bond refinancing documents to account for the moving of most of our facilities to downtown Honolulu that year.

With regard to the review team's concern about HPU's discount rate for first-year students (p.17), we wish to point out that our current (FY22) freshman discount rate of 55 percent, which is projected to remain flat for FY23, is consistent with other non-profit, private universities across the nation. According to the [2020 Tuition Discounting Study from NACUBO](#) (National Association of College and University Business Officers), the median discount rate for first-time undergraduates at Master's Institutions in Fall 2020 was 56 percent. Also, according to NACUBO, the median discount rate for all undergraduate students at Master's Institutions in Fall 2020 was 48 percent; HPU has maintained an overall undergraduate discount rate of 47 percent. Furthermore, HPU had the same discount rate in Fall 2021 as it had in 2018, whereas the average institutional discount rate at non-profit, private institutions has increased by more than 3 percent during this same period. In the end, HPU recognizes the need to increase total net tuition and understands that keeping discount rates stable is one way of accomplishing that goal.

We would additionally like to address the review team's questioning the ability of HPU to accurately predict enrollments (p. 20), particularly this past year. Over the past few years, HPU has developed complex enrollment models that have given the University the opportunity to track performance in real-time and to make adjustments as needed. We wish to also point out that the size of the fall 2021 first-year class was well above what was originally targeted.

Fall 2021

Student Type	Goal	Census Enrolled (FTE)	% of Goal Achieved
First-Year	545	783	144%
Transfer	210	189	90%
Graduate	225	222	99%
Visiting	40	261	653%
Military	195	124	64%

As shared with the team at the time of the site visit, HPU's only "enrollment miss" in fall 2021 was in the enrollment of military numbers, but this was noted in the institutional report and also during the site visit as likely being a confluence of three factors: a) a misinterpretation of HPU's accreditation status because the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs interpreted the 2020 WSCUC Notice of Concern as a loss of accreditation on the "[GI Bill Comparison Tool](#)" website. Although eventually corrected, it took almost a full year (August 2020 - July 2021) to get the website permanently corrected, which suppressed recruitment and enrollment efforts for fall 2021; b) a continuation of federal emergency conditions due to the Delta variant surge, which precluded some students from being permitted to enroll in fall 2021 by their commanding officers; and c) continued COVID restrictions at the military sites, which prevented staff from holding recruitment events on base. It was largely the low military enrollments that led to any missed fall 2021 enrollment projections. It is also important to note that while the FY22 budget was adjusted in June 2021 to account for the extra large freshmen class, earlier versions of the budget assumed only 545 first-year freshmen. Our final tally of 783 FTE greatly outperformed original projections.

More significantly, the prediction in enrollment was further complicated for the current fiscal year given that the decline in COVID-19 cases in early May, which coincided with the widespread availability of vaccines, seemed to indicate an end to the pandemic. As we know now with hindsight, the surge in COVID cases in late summer from the Delta variant significantly altered many institutions' and students' plans for the fall 2021 term. All of this caused greater than normal variance in our fall 2021 enrollment estimates. We believe it is unfair to criticize the University for having a variance in light of circumstances, particularly because the volatility and unpredictability of the pandemic undoubtedly played a role in the creation of this variance.

In the report (p. 20), the WSCUC Team noted that HPU would have a net tuition "shortfall" in the current year, meaning that the forecasted net tuition for the full fiscal year is likely to trail the budget by \$3.4 million or 6 percent,¹ and expressed concern over what it called the "magnitude

¹ Note that the most recent forecast of net tuition as of April 2022 shrinks this variance to budget to \$2.1 million or 4 percent due to higher Spring enrollment.

of the estimation variance” and its effect on the current and future years of net tuition revenue. We respectfully disagree with this characterization, particularly in light of the circumstances explained above. We also fully expect to meet our budget goal, which is to have a positive cashflow at the end of the fiscal year. This is because our budget processes and procedures are designed to ensure that we meet our financial targets, even when unanticipated events like the Delta and Omicron variants affect enrollments and the functioning of the University.

As discussed with the team during the site visit, our budgets are finalized internally in May and then approved by the Board of Trustees in June. Because the traditional academic year enrollment cycle does not neatly align with the fiscal year cycle, it is difficult to precisely predict August enrollments and tuition revenue when the budget is developed and approved months in advance. Like most institutions, we estimate fall numbers based on May 1 deposit numbers, with some expectation that enrollments will continue to fluctuate between May and August. Not surprisingly, fall numbers have fluctuated more these last few years when compared with the past because of the evolving nature of the pandemic and because of the removal of enrollment norms stemming from the 2019 U.S. Department of Justice antitrust settlement with the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). Even with our complex enrollment models, there will always be variances in our model given the multiple assumptions utilized; therefore, we now consider a +/- 6 percent variance to be within acceptable range. More importantly, however, we must note that *our budget process is designed to accommodate these variances*. All budget managers understand that HPU is a net tuition dependent institution and that reductions to budgeted expenses must be made if forecasted net tuition is less than originally budgeted. We have become very good at tracking expense levels monthly and adjusting throughout the fiscal year as necessary. One need only look at our current fiscal year results through February 2022 to see evidence of this. While we were experiencing lower net tuition than budgeted through February, we also had lower than budgeted personnel expenses of 7 percent and lower other expenses of 10 percent. This was due to our deliberate steps to adjust hiring and spending to accommodate the lower forecasted levels of net tuition. As a result, we believe that we are proficient at monitoring our monthly financial results and making the necessary adjustments to ensure that we meet our financial targets for the entire fiscal year. The fact that we have never missed meeting our bond covenants and will be on track to be in the black at the end of the fiscal year demonstrates our ability to effectively manage our budget.

2. Improving Financial Stability Through Increased Fundraising

With respect to fundraising activities, it is important to provide some context as to how far the University has come in this area since the last full site visit in 2016. At that time, HPU raised a total of \$1.6 million through its development operations. By contrast, from 2018-2020, we raised an average of \$3.1 million per year, and, in 2021, the University raised a record \$6.4 million. This year, we are on track to raise over \$4 million. Additionally, the University’s fundraising production compares favorably to peer institutions. A 2021 benchmarking report prepared by Executive Advisory Board (EAB) for HPU found that median dollars raised at similarly situated institutions (during the period 2018-2020) was \$3.1 million (the 25th percentile was \$2.4 million and the 75th percentile was \$3.5 million). Moreover, the EAB study determined that the University’s cost to

raise a dollar was \$0.25, and it compared favorably to the peer median of \$0.46 (the 25th percentile was \$0.39 and the 75th percentile was \$0.59). This indicates that we have a high fundraising production per FTE compared to our cohort. The EAB Report was not originally included in the Institutional Report, nor was it in the category of requested documents given to HPU after the off-site review. However, because the team raised the issue of fundraising production for the first time in its final report, we believe it important to make this information available to the Commission to provide an accurate picture of our fundraising efforts. We would be pleased to submit the EAB Report upon request.

3. Developing Accurate Revenue, Enrollment and Timeline Projections of New Degree Programs Based on Evidence-Based Assumptions and Data

HPU understands the need to scrutinize third-party partnerships carefully, as it now has become commonplace for some institutions to rely too heavily on these partner-supported programs for the financing of day-to-day operations. The team report discusses our plans to significantly expand net tuition revenue via partnerships with *Evidence-in-Motion (EIM)* and *Pearson* and rightly notes that this is an important part of our future growth. However, the report implies that these programs must achieve aggressive targets in order for the University to be “sustainable.” We disagree with this characterization. We believe that HPU is sustainable now, as evidenced by our positive operating income in FY21 and our expected positive operating income in FY22. These programs are important to expand the scope of our mission, not to correct any deficient financial decisions in other areas of the University. We monitor all programming at HPU and do not accept underperforming programs as loss leaders. Indeed, the first partnership programs to launch in FY22, MSN and DNP through *Pearson* and DPT through *EIM* have both outperformed enrollment expectations in the first enrollment cycles. For example, the original Board-approved proforma for DPT predicted an inaugural cohort size of 80; however, enrollment demand has been stronger than predicted, and HPU now expects to secure an inaugural cohort of between 100-110, which is the maximum permitted by the professional accrediting body, CAPTE.

Importantly, none of the new *EIM* and *Pearson* programs requires any significant upfront investment other than pre-launch faculty costs as dictated by accreditation standards. These start-up costs amount to approximately \$2.5 million for each program, a very low figure given that each program will bring in approximately \$10 million in net tuition annually. Even with the revenue share, we will be able to pay back the up-front investment costs in less than three years.

While we are very confident of the market demand and projected enrollments, we also designed contractual off-ramps with our third-party partners should enrollment not meet our expectations. During the site review, the team noted that HPU's contracts with *EIM* and *Pearson* were, in-fact, well-constructed. Accordingly, we believe these new programs will create the opportunity for significant mission and financial expansion without excessive financial risk. Nevertheless, the performances of these programs are monitored weekly by senior officials, including the provost, the CFO's financial analyst, the graduate admissions director, academic deans, program administrators, and financial aid staff. As shared with the review team during the site visit, these weekly meetings ensure that HPU and the OPM partners are able to work together quickly and collaboratively to adjust strategies and tactics in order to secure the desired outcomes.

This group also works collaboratively to develop enrollment and financial models and to achieve specialized accreditations. Although the team noted specialized accreditation as an item to address in **Recommendation #3** (p. 41), HPU shared in advance of the visit (as part of the Line of Inquiry documentation due in December 2021), confirmation that specialized accreditation (through CCNE) had already been attained fully for the *Pearson*-supported Nursing programs, and that provisional accreditation (through CAPTE) had been secured for the *EIM*-supported DPT program. We also shared correspondence that the PA program is on-track with its professional accreditation body (ARC-PA) and shared evidence that the accreditation process had begun for the OTD program (ACOTE). PsyD, which is not supported by an OPM, is also on-track for APA accreditation.

4. Completing Windward Island Relocation

With respect to the team's **Recommendation #4** (p. 41) that the University complete the windward island relocation, we are pleased to report that earlier this month construction began on the building of a new 24,000 square foot facility that will house natural science labs. This facility, which is being financed and built by a third-party developer, is expected to be completed by fall 2023. At that time, HPU will close the Hawaii Loa Campus on the windward side of the island as all academic operations at that campus will be relocated to our downtown campus.

5. Promoting Faculty Development

We would like to take this opportunity to update the Commission on the University's efforts to promote faculty development to ensure academic quality of its degree programs and effectively manage the workload of faculty to support the integrity of all of its degrees as noted in **Recommendation #5** (p. 41-42).

Full-time faculty assigned to support traditional (non-accelerated) academic programs typically follow a 24-credit (4-4) teaching load, in which the average class size at the undergraduate level is 25 students per section or less. Faculty who teach large sections, defined as sections in which enrollment exceeds 50 students, typically receive double the instructional workload credit. Faculty assigned to support accelerated programs that run continuously over the calendar year typically teach between 30- and 36-credits per year. During the WSCUC Team Visit, some faculty reported teaching numerous overloads, which constrained their ability to complete their other responsibilities in the area of scholarship and service. Like many other institutions during the pandemic, we experienced a few last-minute vacancies. Indeed, we had one faculty resign right before the start of the fall 2021 semester to take care of an ill family member on the U.S. mainland, and another faculty member resigned abruptly in the middle of the fall semester to return to family in Mexico. We very much appreciate that our faculty members immediately volunteered to fill these spots to ensure that our students were able to take and complete their courses and receive high-quality instruction.

In general, while overload teaching is permitted for additional compensation, it is always performed on a voluntary basis and is restricted to a maximum of 12 credits per year. Continued

voluntary overloads are only approved upon verification from the dean that the faculty member continues to perform well in teaching, scholarship, and service. With respect to the staffing of first year classes, because HPU officials knew before May 1, 2021 that the incoming first-year class was likely to be extra large, several lecturer positions were approved for hire to supplement instruction in typical first-year subjects, including Biology, Chemistry, Math, and Writing. This absorbed most of the extra sections created to support these students; career-track faculty were not compelled to teach extra to accommodate this large first-year class.

Prior to the pandemic, professional development funds had been largely used to support a narrow range of research and scholarship activities, including travel to professional conferences to present research findings and teaching release time to complete scholarship activities. While these development activities represent an important component of faculty professional development, it is not inclusive of the range of professional development activities required by a diverse body of faculty. Consistent with the team's **Recommendation #5** (p. 41-42), the emphasis on professional development now includes support for online teaching pedagogy through the [creation of a short course](#) designed to improve teaching and learning in online instruction. Additionally, faculty responsible for overseeing General Education assessment attended a virtual conference in 2021 sponsored by AAC&U. Professional development funds will also be diversified in their use to include support for faculty who need to stay current on developments in the field for teaching and continued professional licensure. Funds have been and continue to be available for faculty who need to attend conferences in order to prepare for upcoming external accreditation reviews, such as the ABET review for engineering in 2023. Starting next fiscal year, funds will also be available for faculty who wish to improve their effectiveness in the area of teaching and mentoring.

6. Details and Plans Concerning Graduate Programs and Support for Graduate Students

The review team noted that, with respect to new graduate programs coming on board, the University did not provide sufficient details and plans concerning those programs and the extent of support for graduate student learning and engagement. We did submit this information for each new graduate program in connection with the WSCUC Substantive Change process. Because all of the WSCUC Substantive Change reviews were positive, resulting in approval for the offering of new degrees and/or new programs, and because the Commission already had the relevant documents, we did not embed these documents again in the institutional report. However, we did make the review team aware of these documents during the site visit, but were unable to share them after the visit because they were not specifically requested.

As the University expands enrollments into new graduate programs, HPU is committed and prepared to ensure graduate student success. Indeed, as part of the comprehensive WSCUC Substantive Change review of the new Doctor of Clinical Psychology (PsyD), Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT), and Master in Medical Science Physician Assistant program, HPU provided more than two dozen documents that addressed how the University planned to support graduate student learning and success at the program level, where students have the most affinity and where students expect the most support.

In addition, the documents included in the WSCUC Substantive Change process also provide evidence addressing the team's **Recommendations #7 and #8** (p. 42). As shared in meetings with the review team at the time of the site visit and as noted by the team on p. 24 of the report, HPU policy requires faculty to create the curriculum. Faculty are also responsible for assessing the learning outcomes in each course and for assessing learning outcomes for the program in conjunction with HPU, WSCUC, and specialized accreditation standards. Furthermore, HPU's curriculum review is comprehensive, involving faculty review at the College curriculum committee, the University-wide curriculum committee (Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or Graduate Curriculum Committee), and approval by the Faculty Senate Chair, before new programs or revisions are sent to the WSCUC ALO for review (and completion of screening forms, if needed), and to the provost for final review and approval. Following the approval process, the Registrar's office is responsible for archiving the approval forms. Approval forms for all new programs and program changes, including new courses and course revisions, are archived and can be produced upon request.

Finally, each of the new graduate programs launched in the past four years was created with specialized accreditation requirements in mind. HPU would welcome the opportunity to resend the WSCUC Substantive Change documents for each of the new graduate programs if they would be helpful to the Commission.

With respect to ensuring support for graduate student learning and engagement, HPU has already expanded digital library resources to support the new PsyD, DNP, and DPT programs, and has plans to add library resources for the PA and OTD programs in FY23 and FY24. These additional resources were included in the program budgets provided to the WSCUC Substantive Change Review committee as part of the review process. In addition, HPU has begun construction on a new clinical laboratory space that will be used by DPT and OTD students for their on-campus interaction with faculty. Finally, HPU has secured an agreement with Academic Live Care for virtual behavioral health services for online/hybrid graduate students to supplement in-person services available to all HPU students on O'ahu. This service expansion was in progress at the time of the review team site visit and was finalized a short time later.

7. Student Life Activities

The review team recommended that the University design, deliver and assess the effectiveness of co-curricular programs and use the results for improvement. (See **Recommendation #8**, p. 42). The assessment of co-curricular programs was identified as a strategic plan priority by the Dean of Students in 2019, and this has already resulted in the completion of several assessment instruments, including the EAB Title IX survey in 2019; the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey in Spring 2022 (with results to be delivered in late summer/early fall 2022); the HEDS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey in Spring 2022 (which results to be delivered in early fall 2022); a survey of undergraduate students about academic advising by staff and faculty advisors in fall 2021; the addition of a Fall Residential Experience Survey in fall 2021, which will repeated each fall hereafter; the continuation of the Residential Experience Survey each spring; and the assessment of student participation and satisfaction of various student life activities and events. We will use these survey

results to adjust our annual objectives to ensure that we continue to make progress toward our strategic plan key performance indicators.

HPU would also like to provide the context for the use of University Relations staff during the pandemic to oversee the planning and implementation of student activities, a practice which the review team criticized. It is unfortunate that the site visit meeting with the University Relations staff was canceled because the staff in that department could have helped to provide greater understanding for the "pandemic pivot" that resulted in the shift of some of the student activities over to the University Relations team for the present academic year. In fall 2021, the City & County of Honolulu and the State of Hawaii implemented tightened COVID regulations due to a surge of cases resulting from the Delta coronavirus variant just days after students completed fall 2021 orientation activities. Gathering sizes were reduced from a prior maximum of 500 down to just 25, and the slate of large-scale events and activities designed to promote social connections, including a concert for students at Aloha Tower, had to be canceled at the last minute. The restrictions on events meant that the Events staff within University Relations had the capacity to refocus their efforts on curating dozens of small-scale events designed to promote social bonding and connections. At the same time, the Dean of Students and residential life staff were once more focused on ensuring that the University's COVID surveillance testing program, contact tracing, and quarantine/isolation procedures were rigorously followed in order to ensure that COVID infections remained low on campus. This strategy to reallocate staff capacity worked well: last fall, over 2000 students were able to participate in approximately 280 small-group activities, which was essential for their social and mental well-being, while the COVID testing and tracing teams were able to quickly identify and isolate community members who tested positive.

HPU agrees with the review team that the purpose of having student activities goes beyond mere recreation. However, unlike institutions on the U.S. mainland, or even other institutions in Hawai'i, the complexity of HPU's diversity means that approximately 70 percent of students come from outside the state. From a student's perspective, this means that their closest family and friends are 2,000-5,000 miles (or more) and several time zones away. Students who are not able to make friends, or unable to quickly reconstitute a support network in their new, adopted community, present a high risk for dropout. Indeed, research has regularly shown that promoting social connections creates a sense of belonging that improves academic persistence, retention, and performance, especially among students from under-represented and under-resourced backgrounds (see, for example, Davis, et. al., "Students' Sense of Belonging: The Development of a Predictive Retention Model," *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 19, No. 1, February 2019, pp. 117-127).

To be sure, HPU also recognizes that student success also depends on co-curricular events and experiences. In fall 2021, new student orientation featured a customized session on the risks of alcohol and substance abuse for college students with Dr. Jason Kilmer, Associate Professor in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Washington, who is a well-regarded, sought-after expert on this topic. Throughout the current year, the Residential Life staff offered numerous events focused on health and wellness issues, and the Student Affairs staff, led by the Dean of Students, promoted sessions each month featuring academic guest speakers related to identity months and other "national topics," such as Pride Month in October, Black History Month in February, Women's History Month in March, Sexual Assault Awareness month in April, and

Asian/Pacific Heritage History Month in May. Co-curricular events are planned jointly by staff housed within University Relations and the Dean of Students, with active participation by academic deans, faculty, and staff. In addition, academic programs and colleges regularly schedule authors, industry experts, and other professionals to present to students.

To confirm what was shared with team during the site visit, and consistent with the team's **Recommendation #11** (p. 42), each of the events - all 300+ so far - are being assessed in real time. Staff in Student Activities and Student Affairs will compile the data this summer to make recommendations for the following year. The newly hired Director of Student Activities, who will begin no later than May 1, 2022, will have a shared reporting line to the Office of the Provost and will work cooperatively with staff in events, residential life, student affairs, and academic affairs, to ensure that co-curricular events for undergraduate and graduate students are identified, implemented, and assessed in the coming year. The director will also ensure that programming is adjusted as a result of the student, staff, and faculty feedback.

8. Faculty Qualifications for Graduate Programs

With respect to the review team's uncertainty noted in the report (p. 11) as to whether appropriate faculty qualifications have been adopted for the expanded graduate programs, HPU would like to assure the Commission that this is the case for current and future graduate programs.

HPU offers programs for a diverse population of student learners, ranging from dual-credit high-schoolers through doctoral students in a range of fields. At minimum, all faculty, even those instructing dual-credit students within high schools, are expected to have an earned master's degree from an accredited institution; exceptions, which are rare, may be made for professional practitioners teaching specialized skills, such as might be found in theater, music, or the visual arts, and, even then, only upon petition by the dean and approval from the provost.

Faculty providing core instruction to graduate students are expected to have terminal degrees or clinical doctorates. This standard is upheld through the HPU hiring process and is reinforced by specialized accreditors working collaboratively to oversee the quality of the University's expanded graduate programs. Indeed, all faculty participating in graduate programs accredited by external specialized accrediting bodies meet the standards set by those organizations. Here is a listing of new graduate program faculty requirements by program:

- PsyD: All participating faculty must have terminal degrees.
- MSN/DNP: Per specialized accreditation rules (CCNE), all core faculty and coordinators must have terminal degrees.
- DPT: All participating faculty must have doctoral degrees, which can include clinical doctorates. Per specialized accreditation rules (CAPTE), at least 50 percent of core faculty must have a terminal degree defined as PhD, EdD, DSc, etc. The HPU DPT program exceeds CAPTE's standard for terminal degrees, and all faculty have at least a DPT (clinical doctorate).
- PA: All core faculty must have doctoral degrees. The specialized accreditation standards (through ARC-PA) specify a minimum number of faculty who must be PAs and hold

national PA certification, which requires that faculty have met the profession's standards for a terminal degree.

- OTD: Per specialized accreditation rules (ACOTE), all faculty need to have a doctorate, which can include the entry-level OTD (clinical doctorate).

9. Promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

With respect to the team's recommendation (**Recommendation #10**, p. 42) that the University promote diversity, equity and inclusion, in alignment with the University's mission and strategic plan, throughout all levels of the institution following systemic assessments and campus-wide consultation on a regular basis, we wish to report that we have begun to do so and want to clarify and highlight some of our efforts. In the team report, the reviewers noted that the promotion of cultural awareness of Hawaiian values alone is insufficient to impact equity and inclusion outcomes (CFR 1.4). We agree, but wish to point out that our infusion of Hawaiian values throughout the campus culture is more than a cultural awareness program. Our core values of *aloha* (love), *pono* (righteousness), and *kuleana* (responsibility) are akin to the implementation of spiritual values at faith-based institutions. Accordingly, HPU's commitment to *aloha*, *pono*, and *kuleana* is embedded throughout the campus culture: these values are central to HPU's educational mission. That means, for example, that faculty recognize that it is their *kuleana* to ensure that students have every opportunity and resource needed to succeed. Faculty take it upon themselves to reach out to students who are absent, struggling, or failing to engage; they also regularly fill out *Kuleana Forms* to summon additional help for students who are perceived to be struggling, whether it be with academics, finances, or mental health issues. They also recognize that it is their *kuleana* to provide extra assistance to first-generation, under-represented minority students, and those who are struggling with financial insecurities, in order to help improve outcomes.

HPU faculty and staff also practice the Hawaiian custom of *hanai*, which means to adopt people into their hearts and their families. In doing so, they go above and beyond to assist underrepresented minority, first-generation, and low-income students, as well as students who are feeling homesick and alone, often far away from friends, family, and their established support networks. Parents regularly remark on the sense of security they feel when they entrust their undergraduate students to the HPU 'ohana, and the University works hard to ensure that this sense of trust is well placed. This, too, is critical to ensuring equitable student outcomes.

The commitment of every member of the HPU 'ohana to live *pono* means that faculty and staff are committed to the principle of diversity, equity, and equality, because it is *pono* - the right thing to do. Living *pono* also means looking out for each person in the community, no matter who they are; to value her or his well-being above your own. For the last two years, the HPU campus community was able to keep COVID infections to a minimum because of the collective will to "Be *Pono*" with regard to health and safety protocols. Unlike some campuses, where mask mandates, mandatory testing, and other health and safety protocols were contested, HPU students, many of whom hail from states where such protocols were routinely refuted by officials or contested by constituents, willingly complied with the rules out of a sincere desire to be *pono* and to live righteously with regard to one another. Living *pono* also means to stand up for the rights and well-being of those who are marginalized or who have historically oppressed, whether because

of race and ethnicity, or because of sociodemographic and other identifying categories, such as gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

Finally, the core value of *aloha* is exhibited in HPU's practice of inclusion. It is also seen as members of the community extend gracious welcome at every event, in every class, and in every meeting. HPU promotes practices grounded in *aloha* toward racial and ethnic minorities, toward those who are under-resourced and those who are more affluent, toward members of the LGBTQ+ community, and towards those who hail from local, continental U.S., or international communities. Accordingly, and despite the complex diversity of the HPU community, complaints about mistreatment, bias, or discrimination are exceedingly rare. HPU challenges itself regularly to show *aloha* toward friend and stranger alike in order to ensure that the campus culture is as supportive as it can be toward each member of the community.

The commitment to these values is designed to promote equitable outcomes for students, faculty, and staff. But like all institutions of higher education, HPU desires to do more. As shared during the WSCUC visit, and consistent with the review team's **Recommendation #10** (p. 42), HPU will use HEDS diversity, equity, and inclusion survey data to inform specific and measurable diversity, equity, and inclusion goals into the strategic plan and to regularly monitor progress to ensure that the University is moving forward.

As the needs of HPU students have grown over the years, HPU has also been intentional in adding resources and additional staff support, including a third behavioral health counselor (spring 2021), a second undergraduate-focused Retention Counselor (spring 2022), two additional academic advisors (fall 2021), an expansion of tutoring services (spring 2021), and an Accessibility Coordinator to assist the Accessibility Director (spring 2022). In addition, consistent with the review team's **Recommendation #9** (p. 42), the University will continue to expand resources and infrastructure to meet the evolving needs of its diverse student body.

10. Efforts to Assess Faculty, Staff and Student Satisfaction and Campus Climate

As shared in the Lines of Inquiry documentation in December 2021, HPU has recently employed several national survey instruments to assess the risk factors facing first-year students (e.g., Ruffalo Noel Levitz College Student Inventory and Mid-year Assessments) and has also utilized HEDS instruments for campus climate (Title IX) surveys as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion surveys. We shared those instruments prior to the visit, and, consistent with **Recommendation #11** (p. 42), HPU will use the results to identify strategic goals and objectives in alignment with the University's strategic plan.

The Human Resources office also sends out engagement surveys every year to HPU employees, and these results, disaggregated by academic or staff unit, are used to evaluate problems and identify solutions in order to improve the engagement of faculty and staff within their units and within the University as a whole. These surveys, which were also shared with the review team, are planned to continue indefinitely; they are intended to assist supervisors, deans, and other senior executives as they continue to develop and execute policies that impact personnel decisions.

Summary

HPU has undergone significant transformation in all facets of the University since the last full WSCUC visit in 2016. We have brought to fruition a new triangular campus in downtown Honolulu, with Aloha Tower Marketplace serving as the center of student life, Waterfront Plaza housing our Library, Colleges of Liberal Arts and Health and Society, School of Nursing and math and engineering departments of College of Natural and Computational Sciences, and Pioneer Plaza housing of Colleges of Business and Professional Students. We are also pleased to report that earlier this month we broke ground on a new 24,000 square foot facility for our science labs, which is the last piece of the 2016 campus master plan. We have reformed our curriculum, sunsetting programs with low enrollments and commencing new ones in high demand areas, such as health care and engineering. In addition, in order to diversify our programs, we are building new graduate programs in highly sought-after fields, such as our new PsyD program, our new Doctor of Physical Therapy (first in the State of Hawai'i), and the new Physician Assistant Program. We also have rebuilt our enrollment management program, and have stopped the many years of declining enrollment. In fact, in 2020 and 2021, HPU saw enrollment increases in our first-time full-time freshmen classes, while most of the country experienced enrollment declines. While we do not expect to see numbers similar to this past year where we experienced an over 50 percent increase in our first-time full-time freshmen class, we do expect our freshmen enrollment to exceed that of 2019 and 2020, and be in line with our long-term projections. Most importantly, we have turned around our finances. In 2020, we showed a \$10.3 million improvement in operating income from 2019, and, in 2021, we had a positive cash flow. We also project a positive cash flow for FY 2022. Our financial position will be further strengthened as our new graduate programs come online.

While much has been accomplished, we recognize there is still work to be done, and we plan to use the team's insightful and valuable comments and suggestions in this endeavor. We thank you for all of the time and effort spent on our behalf, and we look forward to our discussion with the WSCUC Commission in June.