
The Planning Process

3.1 Overview

The strategic planning process is the means by which the LIS Program charts its future and measures its progress toward each of its goals. Faculty members, staff, students and other constituents each have a voice in creating this road map, which helps the Program allocate and leverage its resources to move the Program forward.

The LIS Program has actively responded to the feedback from the previous accreditation by implementing and formalizing this strategic planning process. At annual one-day retreats, the faculty assesses each of the Program's goals, activities in support of those goals, and measurable outcomes. These are tracked, regularly updated, and discussed during monthly faculty meetings. Though strategic planning guides and focuses the Program's efforts, it is by no means a straitjacket. It is a dynamic process that is flexible enough to allow the LIS Program to adjust to new realities and opportunities.

3.2 University of Hawai'i Planning Process

The University currently participates in a system-wide collaborative planning process and has engaged in two major planning efforts over the past decade. The University's 1999 Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) self-study provides details of the history of the planning process, noting that there were few data or planning documents that account for resource allocation decisions before 1995 (www.hawaii.edu/svpevc/wasc/). The first University strategic plan, *A Strategy for Academic Quality 1985-95*, was developed in 1984 and identified five areas of focus: serving the needs of the State, achieving program quality, establishing an Asia-Pacific focus, adapting to scientific and technological change, and "enhancing the essence" of the University. This document was followed in 1991 by *A Statewide System and Beyond: A Master Plan for the University of Hawai'i* that emphasized attention to: system behavior, undergraduate education, diversity, access, research, Asia-Pacific focus, and public perception of the University, among other goals.

The University published its first formal strategic plan in 1996, *Focus on Quality: The University of Hawai'i Strategic Plan 1997-2007* (www2.hawaii.edu/ovppp/stratplan.pdf). The administration directed academic units in the system to take into consideration the UH System and Manoa Campus Mission statements and the UH Strategic Plan in their own planning process. The intent is to establish a body of evidence about the institution's effectiveness in meeting its mission, goals, and objectives and to use this data to improve programs and services. The LIS Program integrated UH goals into its planning process in 1996 (see table, page 16). However, most units have not completed this task. For example, the Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CAS), of which ICS is a member within the College of Natural Sciences (CNS), created the first CAS mission statement in May 1999 (available on site).

The goals that have been retained from prior UH strategic plans include quality in undergraduate education, responsiveness to State needs by educating a skilled labor force, K-12 reform, and research quality. Its five broad goals cover access to quality education, commitment to diversity, strengthening Hawaiian, Pacific, and Asian offerings and research, and accountability (see, on-site document, or www2.hawaii.edu/ovppp/stratplan.pdf):

The UH plan articulates differentiated objectives for each campus in consonance with their missions, and reports that since 1991 there is evidence that the University is performing better as a system. Since Act 161, passed in 1995, requires the use of benchmarks and performance indicators, the administration has produced the *Benchmarks/Performance Indicators Report 1997-1998*, reporting on progress made on the stated goals of the strategic plan. The benchmarks report focuses primarily on progress in the undergraduate education area, with little attention so far to graduate education (see on-site document or www2.hawaii.edu/ovppp/assessment/access.html).

Because of the State's distance from the U.S. mainland, historically, the institution has attempted to serve an ever-widening set of educational needs. As a result of new fiscal realities and the need to reduce redundancy, the emphasis in planning has shifted from serving a wide range of needs to a focus on ways to build the institution's strengths, particularly:

- 1) supporting selective excellence in targeted areas, especially graduate and professional degree programs that focus upon Manoa's areas of strength,
- 2) improving research productivity and support, and
- 3) enhancing the overall effectiveness of and satisfaction with the educational experience.

3.2.1 New Fiscal Realities

Fundamental goals remain the major focus of the current strategic plan, but economic conditions over the past six years have had a dramatic impact on the University planning process, particularly the prolonged downturn in the State's economy and the UH autonomy legislation passed in 1998. To implement the provisions of the autonomy Act 115, the administration formed several task forces comprised of representatives from the various constituents of the university. Task forces were formed in the following areas: optional retirement system, procurement, capitalization of equipment, special and revolving funds assessment, and facilities use. These task forces formulated policy and procedural change recommendations in their respective areas. Board or Presidential actions have been taken on some, but most of the work is in progress. Several new bills to increase UH autonomy were debated in the 1999 legislative session. They proposed to remove the University from the executive branch and create a fourth branch of government, exempt all UH employees from civil service, and broaden the powers of the Board of Regents (see on site document UHPA legislative summary). The Board would become the Employer for the purposes of collective bargaining and set up a 12-member advisory committee including two faculty members, to assist the governor in selecting regents. Other legislation related to higher education was intended to facilitate economic development by UH professors. These bills proposed to exempt from taxable income proceeds from intellectual property created in Hawai'i. This legislation will be introduced again and debated in the 2000 session.

As with other states, Hawai'i has begun to reduce its direct financial support for higher education, favoring instead an entrepreneurial model for the University system. Autonomy legislation mandated that tuition be returned to the University and that general funds from the legislature be reduced accordingly. In addition, as tuition rates increased over four years, tuition increases have been offset by reductions in the state general funds. Academic units are now encouraged to develop income streams to support growth in programs and services and to help diversify the economy of the State. The three-year financial plan advanced by the administration in 1998 is based largely on historical distribution of funds, the ability of units to raise their own revenues, and their centrality to the priorities set forth in the UH

Strategic Plan. In addition, a three-year Reallocation Plan (1999-2002) provides for enhancement funding to academic units that support the priorities of the strategic plan, e.g., achieving interdisciplinary cooperation in the curriculum through participation in learning communities, joint Master's degrees, and other strategic initiatives. According to the WASC Self Study, the University anticipates that a few programs will likely disappear, some others reduced or combined, most maintained, and a few enhanced (WASC Report, p. 113, www.hawaii.edu/svpevc/wasc/) (See WASC site visit report at www.hawaii.edu/svpevc/).

Restructuring has been a common national response to shrinking University budgets. The campus has embarked on a series of reorganizations in order to reduce redundancy and provide units with the advantages of larger scales of staff and resources. The UH restructuring initiatives began in 1994 when the Hawai'i legislature called for vertical program cuts, consolidation of programs, and a streamlined University with clear priorities that it could afford to fund (see Chapter 1, LIS-ICS merger). After requesting a system-wide review of programs, UH President, Kenneth Mortimer focused initial restructuring efforts on small programs and professional schools. Well in advance of the President's restructuring initiative, the LIS Program created an interdisciplinary vision for the future of LIS education in the State. The University continues to combine and restructure administrative units in order "to find the optimum number of administrative units which limit redundancy and yet are responsive to program needs" (WASC Report, p. 89), e.g., in 1998, Summer Session and Continuing Education merged to become the Outreach College, currently the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources is undergoing restructuring, among others.

An overall decline in system-wide enrollment has been influenced by higher in-state tuition and is seen by the administration as temporary. Enrollment is higher than 1989 levels and projected to increase 10% by 2003 (p.27, UH Strategic Plan, 1996), in fact, LIS applications for Fall 1999 rose 36%. The UH Strategic Plan acknowledges that information technology will expand its role in business and education, necessitating a greater emphasis on its uses in higher education curricula, especially its potential for expanding distance learning opportunities to wider groups of students. New technologies make physical presence on campus less important than technological access. Just as libraries today are identified with both physical buildings and information networks, LIS education in Hawai'i is increasingly identified with both physical and distance learning formats. This is an area of particular strength for the LIS Program, a State pioneer in using live, interactive video for distance education, with plans to expand into Web-based formats and offer nearly the entire degree at a distance.

3.3 History of the LIS Planning Process

The Program has engaged in planning processes since its inception in 1965. Recent experience with reorganization has demonstrated how strategic planning has enabled the Program to adapt to change quickly and effectively. The Program utilizes several approaches to systematic planning, including:

- annual faculty retreats
- monthly faculty planning meetings
- ongoing and systematic student input
- regular student, alumni, and employer surveys
- five-year program reviews for the UH administration
- semi-annual input from the LIS Advisory Committee on educational issues of concern to employers

3.3.1 The Internal Planning Process

The LIS faculty have held retreats since 1984 to assess the Program's mission, goals, and objectives. From the mid-1980's to the mid-1990's retreats were held every five years. While the pace of change in the field has accelerated, the local and global economies that impact Hawai'i have decelerated. The LIS faculty has held annual retreats since 1995 in order to respond to the many changes in the local, national, and international environment. Since then, student representatives have been present and have provided valuable input. The ICS Chair, Stephen Itoga, participated fully in 1996 (pre-merger), 1997, 1998 and 1999 retreats. The faculty find that the retreats are an effective method for long-range planning. LIS retreats are held away from the Program facility, and are a time for standing back and taking a long view of the past, present, and possible future of the Program. Retreat activities contribute to developing a collective sense of purpose, e.g., re-viewing goals and objectives from the previous retreat, measuring and discussing achievements and future needs, examining the factors contributing to unfulfilled plans, and making revisions according to new realities.

As early as the 1984 retreat, LIS faculty articulated a goal of cooperating with the ICS faculty to develop an interdisciplinary doctorate. This goal was attained in 1989 when the Communication and Information Sciences interdisciplinary doctoral program began, joining LIS, ICS, Communications, and Decision Sciences. As evidence of a gradual convergence of LIS/ICS, each retreat since 1984 included a goal that enhanced information science offerings. By 1995 three new automation courses were added, a dual degree with ICS was established, and objectives were added concerning the integration of the knowledge, competencies, and attitudes related to information technology into all existing courses. Since 1996, special topics courses in automation, digital libraries, and Web-based multimedia resources have been offered regularly.

The 1996 pre-merger retreat was the first to address the newly published UH Strategic Plan, and the first with ICS participation. At this retreat, the faculty worked on a five-year strategic plan that integrated UH and LIS goals and objectives, using the COA standards as an organizing framework. The new goals set at the 1996 retreat were ambitious because the merger with ICS was in the works and we attempted to address its implications for the Program, in addition to carrying forward the existing plan. ICS Chair Stephen Itoga made substantial contributions to the planning process at this and subsequent annual retreats. Plans to achieve all of the new objectives within times specified proved unworkable and some objectives were deferred (see on-site LIS strategic planning documents for details of specific outcomes).

At the 1997 retreat, the year of the merger, the faculty and ICS Chair reviewed progress to date on the goals set the prior year. The major focus was on analysis of local and national job types, benchmark comparison to similar LIS programs, and a review of Program goals and objectives. The faculty renewed their primary commitment to educating for careers in libraries and information centers. Some progress was made on goals set in 1996 and some deadlines were moved ahead, e.g., development of an undergraduate service course in digital information literacy was delayed while constituent groups were consulted.

At the 1998 retreat, one year after the official merger, the faculty and student representatives, along with the ICS Chair, reviewed the ambitious set of goals set forth in 1996 and distilled their essence into a focused set of four strategic goals (see section 3.4 below and Chapter 9).

As a function of the LIS influence, in April 1999 the department participated in the first annual ICS strategic planning meeting. This departmental retreat inaugurated the strategic planning process in ICS and will serve to facilitate the further integration of LIS and CS programs. LIS faculty and student representatives participated in defining the mission and goals for the department as a whole (See Chapter 1). The intent of the LIS annual retreat held in May 1999, was to review and update the strategic plan, review the LIS Program mission, goals, and objectives, and to address the newly formulated department goals.

Monthly faculty meetings include a planning segment where faculty and students present updates to the goals and objectives in the strategic plan. These frequent updates keep the plan fresh and organic, permitting it to evolve with the changing nature of the field, the community, and the economy. (Minutes available on site.)

3.3.2 Mechanisms for Systematic Input

Student Input

The LIS faculty consider student input to be essential to the planning process. Student concerns and views are invaluable information, necessary to determine how well the Program is meeting its goals. Students participate in faculty meetings, retreats, standing committee meetings, special projects, and curriculum focus groups. In addition, faculty conduct regular student course evaluations, and students hold focus groups to evaluate the entire Program and forward their concerns to the faculty. Results from the 1998 focus group report are presented in the standards chapters (available on site).

Student, Alumni, and Employer Surveys

Every five years the Program sends detailed surveys to current students, alumni, and employers to obtain feedback on a number of curricular and faculty variables. In addition, annual placement surveys are sent to recent graduates. Survey data provide information on how well each constituency feels the Program is meeting its stated goals and objectives, as well as meeting national LIS competencies. Faculty discuss the results in their planning sessions and at retreats, determine plans to address weaknesses, and develop strategies to improve. Results of the 1998 surveys are presented in the standards chapters, in Appendix 2, and complete survey data are available on site.

Advisory Committee Input

Communication and planning with the LIS constituency is both formal and informal. The formal LIS Advisory Committee has been reconstituted since the 1997 merger with ICS. This group holds semi-annual meetings to address needs and concerns of the employers and to provide input to the LIS planning process. In spring 1999, the Advisory Committee reviewed a draft of the Program Presentation and provided insight and input that aided in completion of the report. The Advisory Committee consists of standing and appointed members from major employers and professional association officers. Minutes of meetings are available on site, summarized recommendations in Appendix 3.

University Program Reviews

University program reviews are normally conducted every five years. The last review was in 1992, but when the reorganization planning began, the program was put on a new cycle and its next external program review will be conducted in 2002.

The 1992 UHM review team was impressed with the high quality of the SLIS program (available on site).

National COA Input

Program reviews for accreditation have been favorable since the inception of the Program in 1965. The first accreditation was in 1967, and the Program was reaccredited in 1974, 1979, 1987, and 1996, just prior to the merger with ICS. Each COA review has contributed positively to the evolution and progress of the Program.

3.4 Current Strategic Plan

The plan developed in 1996 preceded the merger and was developed in collaboration with the ICS Chair, along with LIS faculty, students, alumni, and major employers. This five-year strategic plan integrated university and LIS goals and objectives, using the COA standards as an organizing framework. The new goals set at the 1996 retreat anticipated the merger with ICS as we attempted to address the impact on the Program, as well as carrying forward the existing plan. Accomplishments to date include: aligning Program goals and objectives with course objectives and University goals, examining national employment trends and reassessing curricular offerings in light of developments in the LIS field and the merger, identifying ICS and LIS cross-over courses, creating new partnerships, e.g. cooperative grant-writing with CS faculty and developing an undergraduate course in digital information literacy, among others (see on-site LIS strategic planning documents for details of specific outcomes). The undergraduate course was developed in conjunction with university librarians who teach it. This new course will promulgate information skills for undergraduates, enhance enrollment for the college and the department, and recruit students with greater diversity for the LIS Program. In addition, we have initiated a five year curriculum review process, adopted a standardized syllabus format, and created a four year course projection to aid in planning and scheduling for faculty and students. We are working on developing asynchronous courses to expand distance learning, finding additional ways to assess graduates' performance on first jobs, and recruiting students from underrepresented groups as well as students with technical skills. Recent budget enhancement allocations from the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences permit the ICS Department to hire a nineteenth faculty member and a student services specialist.

The current strategic plan is streamlined and focused on four major strategic goals with their accompanying objectives (see Chapter 9 for the complete strategic plan). The wording of these four strategic goals, determined in cooperation with representatives from the CS faculty, was adopted by the ICS department at the strategic planning meeting in 1999. CS faculty added a fifth goal of supporting the development of the software industry in Hawai'i by preparing students capable of serving and developing local industry.

The LIS 1999 retreat focused on updating and extending the objectives of the four strategic goals, revising the Program goals and objectives, examining survey data from alumni, students, and employers to develop strategies for improved assessment, and adding the department's fifth goal to the plan for future discussion. The current plan is tightly focused on critical areas for development. The complete strategic plan is presented in Chapter 9.

Through the planning process, the LIS Program directs its vision for the future with clear objectives and multifaceted activities. Faculty members, staff, students, and other constituents all help shape the vision and strategic activities to move the Program forward. The first annual department planning meeting marked a renewed

commitment to a departmental mission and our attempt to work together to integrate the activities of the LIS and CS programs.

The following table identifies the four strategic goals that have guided the progress of the LIS Program and shows the progress made on the strategic plan through June 1999. Chapter 9 presents the current strategic plan with its future projections.

Please print out the Strategic Plan charts that accompany Chapter 3.

