University of Hawai‘i Distance Learning

Distance Learning Planning and Policy Base
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A. Early Commitment

The University of Hawai‘i has a long-standing commitment to serving statewide needs for high demand programs. Before the advent of distance learning technologies, outreach instruction needs of students in under-served parts of the state, including the neighbor islands, were addressed by faculty who traveled to teach compressed or “weekend college” courses. More recently, technologies such as the SkyBridge interactive television system on Maui, the statewide Hawai‘i Interactive Television System (HITS), and cable television educational access channels have greatly expanded the University’s ability to provide access to on-campus offerings. In addition, satellite education centers, such as the Leeward Wai‘anae Center, were established to serve particular, geographically isolated regions.

The University of Hawai‘i also has a long history of providing learning opportunities in the Pacific region including, for example, the American Samoa Territorial Teacher Training Assistance Program (TTTAP) which began in 1980.

While such on-site efforts continue, the rapid growth in the capabilities of distance learning technology to deliver and improve the quality of instruction prompts a reexamination of distance learning policy. In the past and for the future, the primary goal is to improve access by all the people of the state to public post-secondary education by serving more students cost-effectively.

B. UH Strategic Plan Context for Distance Learning

The recently adopted University Strategic Plan 1997-2007 acknowledges the escalating demand for meaningful access to post-secondary education in traditionally under-served regions of the state and the University’s mission beyond state boundaries.

1. While all five goals of the UH Strategic Plan provide a foundation for distance learning, the first four are particularly relevant. They are:

   a. Providing Access to Quality Educational Experiences and Service to the State.

   b. Implementing Differentiated Campus Missions and Functioning as a System.

   c. Continuing to Champion Diversity and Respect for Differences.

   d. Strengthening the University as the Premier Resource in Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Affairs, and Advancing Its International
2. Strategic Plan Planning Principles make clear the University’s commitment to distance learning.
   
a. Responsiveness to State Needs. In keeping with its land-grant mission, the University of Hawai‘i system will continue to be responsive to state needs within available resources.
   
b. Access, Distance Education, and Technologies. The point of access to the University system will be based on prior student preparation. Distance education will be used to reach more students throughout the state and region. Emerging technologies, information access, and networks will assist student learning and research and improve service delivery and administrative operations.
   
3. Strategic Plan Action Strategies set forth implementation actions that deliver on the University’s commitment to distance learning.
   
a. Manage intercampus cooperation and deliver demand-driven educational options to under-served populations on the neighbor islands and in West O‘ahu, using campus-based and/or distance education delivery means, and provide the needed administrative, student, and faculty support services.
   
b. Re-engineer institutional and student support services, including a common student database for operational transactions. Use information technologies to improve access to the full range of institutional databases for management and planning purposes.
   
c. Provide and support UH system-wide and campus-specific library and electronic information services to preserve and develop collections and enhance the academic programs of all UH students, regardless of their place of attendance.
   
d. Develop an on-line catalog of electronically delivered courses available from the campuses of the University system.
   
e. Explore the possibility of establishing an “open university” or “virtual university” component of the University of Hawai‘i system, and determine the placement of this unit within the system. Within accreditation standards, consider the use of alternatives such as: mentoring and individualized degree study; advanced standing that grants college credit for prior learning; learning contracts; telecommunicated learning
resources; and the delivery of courses/programs on a cost-reimbursable basis.

f. Develop a time line and financial strategy for updating and implementing strategic plans for information technology and distance education.

g. Provide relevant education and training to those who will assume positions of responsibility and leadership in the region and world.

h. Develop affiliation, exchange, and/or collaborative arrangements that promise to advance instructional and research priorities and benefit students; continue cooperative arrangements with the East-West Center.

4. The assumptions of the Strategic Plan acknowledge the effect of the continuing demand for distance learning on the overall mission of the University of Hawai‘i system. They set the context for more specific policies and procedures.

a. The demands on the University to expand access sites and respond to the geographic areas of the state lacking ready access to post-secondary education will not abate.

b. Telecommunications, computing technology, and integrated library and information services will continue to advance at a rapid pace, offering opportunities for profound change in how the University carries out its instruction and research missions, manages the total enterprise, and responds to distance education and information needs.

c. Collaboration and working cooperatively as a system will accomplish more than autonomous campus efforts. An effective system assumes dual responsibilities by all to nurture system synergies and enhance campus strengths. The University of Hawai‘i will continue to be a multi-campus state university system composed of Units with distinct, yet coordinated, missions governed by a single Board of Regents.

5. Other relevant distance learning planning and policy references include the Interim Operational Roles and Responsibilities for University Centers and Originating Campuses (May 13, 1997 agreement signed by senor executives) provided separately as Attachment 3 and the following documents.

b. BOR Outreach policy (BOPR Section 5-2d).
c. Board Teaching Assignments for Instructional Faculty policy
(BORP Section 9-16).

d. Administrative Teaching Assignment policy.
e. Board policy on Program Approval (BORP Section 5-1.a(2)).
f. Executive Policy E5.201 on Program Approval.
g. Board policy on University Centers (BORP Section 5-2g).