MEMORANDUM

TO: Maria Gallo  
Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources

FROM: Reed Dasenbrook  
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Your Response to the 2015 Program Review

Thank you for your memo of October 22nd which was your response to the 2015 CTAHR Program Review. I appreciate the work necessary to turn the initial response to all 47 recommendations into a more integrated document, and I am happy to accept this document as revised. What I want to do in this memo is to highlight the most important issues as I see them.

It seems from all quarters that a focused review of the extension mission of CTAHR should be conducted. The review raises questions about a number of aspects of the extension mission, including the qualifications required for hiring and promotion, their placement into academic departments at the Mānoa campus, their connection to the County Administrators on each island, as well as concerned about whether the extension mission is adequately funded. We look forward to working with you on the design of this review as well as learning from its results.

The Program Review echoes concerns in the prior review about programs in the college that are small, and this is a concern shared by the UH Board of Regents and the Legislature, so is a concern that needs to be taken seriously. In particular, a majority of graduate programs in the college are on the small program list disseminated by the UH system. We are encouraging the steps already taken by the college, and agree that the 3 & 2 initiative should help with recruitment of students into your masters program. All small masters programs in the college should be considering a 3 & 2 partnership, and both the OVCAA and OGE can assist with these efforts. This is necessary but clearly not sufficient, so we encourage a deeper reflection in the college about what needs to be done to attract more students into the small programs in the college. Faculty in those programs need to understand that the alternative to investing time and effort into growing these programs will be an inevitable shift of resources towards the programs that have a demonstrated student interest in them.
The issue of bottlenecks to graduation was raised by the Program Review, and concern was expressed in particular about how the Writing Intensive requirement might be a cause of bottlenecks. The college's response here simply stated that these requirements "are outside the direct control of the college," which while true is somewhat beside the point. The bottlenecks the report refers to are, I believe, caused by having too few WI courses in the college so that students need to take courses outside their required courses to meet this requirement. Where this is the case, departments need to consider which courses already required for their majors should become WI courses—obviously, this will always require deliberation on the part of the faculty and can be a resource issue if the courses they are considering making WI are now enrolling more than the 20 students allowed in WI courses. The proposal is not to change the entire General Education (GE) system, it is to work with that system in such a way that students can fulfill their GE requirements within a realistic four-year plan.

We have two more concerns focused less on the substance of the Program Review than how we will move forward. Many of the responses call upon the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs to take lead on the issues identified. Very few responses call on anyone else in the CTAHR administration to take lead on anything. We suspect that this isn't workable, that simply too many initiatives are being loaded onto one person—who already has a full plate of responsibilities—to make progress on them all. We think that much of this will fall back to the dean, which is probably as it should be, but this should be acknowledged from the start.

A final point is that many of the same responses state somewhat formulaically that CTAHR agrees with the recommendation and will move to implement it. This, while good to see, falls somewhat short of an action plan. So we look forward to an action plan that describes how the college will move ahead on the many worthwhile initiatives described here.

We will certainly expect this, as well as a good deal of progress already made on such an action plan, by the time of the one-year progress report, which will be due at the end of the fall semester in 2016.

c: Krystyna Aune, Dean, Graduate Education
    Hokulani Aikau, Director, General Education
    Xiaoxin Mu, 3+2 Program Coordinator
    Program Officer Goodwin