Engaged Learning Working Group
AY 2012-2013 Annual Report and Recommendations

Overview. The Achieving Our Destiny (AoD) Engaged Learning Working Group (ELWG) was convened on September 4, 2012 and has met each month during AY 2012-2013. ELWG membership includes members from a range of programs and disciplines identified by the Strategic Planning Committee as representing “best practices” at UHM in areas relevant to the ELWG charge, which was to:

Develop a comprehensive plan for strengthening and assessing different forms of engaged learning that can, and should, take different forms in different disciplines including undergraduate research (paid and unpaid), service learning, internships (paid and unpaid), clinical practica, capstone courses, study abroad, international exchange, etc. This plan should clearly identify and operationalize steps that need to be taken to meet the objective outlined in Initiative 1, and identify a timeline and benchmarks for meeting it prior to the expiration of AoD.

The ELWG considered multiple approaches to strengthening and increasing opportunities for engaged learning within the undergraduate student population at UHM and submitted a Preliminary Report that included the first two (2) recommendations below in April 2013. This Final Report includes two (2) additional recommendations. Explanation and justification for each recommendation follows. It should be noted that the ELWG discussed many different approaches and recognized that there is excellent work being done by various programs, departments, and individuals that, in combination, reach a broad range of students and meet a wide range of individual student needs and interests quite well. The ELWG recommendations are intended to 1) prepare all entering UHM students to succeed in whatever engaged learning experiences they elect to participate in during their undergraduate careers, 2) expand the current menu of engaged learning opportunities in areas that have potential for reaching the most students.

ELWG Recommendations. Recommendations 1 and 2 were forwarded to the Strategic Planning Committee which approved submitting them to the Chancellor in April 2013. They are incorporated here in toto as previously submitted:

1. Capstone Experience. An expanding body of national evidence supports capstone experiences as bringing reflection and focus to the whole of the college experience. Capstones can take many forms but should encourage students to integrate facets of their area of concentration with important concepts from related disciplines. Capstone experiences should focus on some feature of the student's area of concentration and require the disciplined use of skills, methodology, and knowledge taught throughout the undergraduate curriculum. Capstone experiences will normally be embodied in an academic course.

Examples of possible capstone experiences include (but are not limited to) the following:

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A senior seminar that requires a major individual or group project.

An undergraduate thesis.

A semester project that culminates in a paper, essay, presentation or similar product.

An internship relevant to a student’s discipline, and a paper that asks students to analyze and evaluate the experience.

A performance, show or recital appropriate to the discipline, together with relevant supporting assignments.

Students pursuing double majors or dual degrees should generally be required to complete a single capstone course in the program of their choice, however, individual departments and degree programs may require completion of their particular capstone course for all their majors. The ELWG recommends that all UHM departments begin adopting capstone requirements within the undergraduate major. The Manoa Faculty Senate (MFS), through its Committee on Academic Policy and Planning, is developing a capstone recommendation that will be voted on before the end of Spring 2013.

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs. Departments incorporating a capstone graduation requirement may require reallocation of faculty resources and in some instances hiring of additional faculty. In AY 2011-2012 UHM awarded bachelor’s degrees to 3026 students. To provide a capstone experience requirement across the entire undergraduate student body additional faculty resource needs may be met by 1) reallocating faculty resources to teaching and/or supervising capstone experiences, and/or 2) hiring additional faculty in those units without adequate faculty to accomplish resource reallocation.

Benchmarks and Campus Goals: The UHM offers 92 distinct bachelor’s degrees. An estimated fifty-three (53) departments currently offer one or more versions of the capstone experience, although not all require the capstone for graduation. Those units not currently offering any version of a capstone experience are encouraged to develop one or more options and all departments not currently requiring a capstone for graduation are encouraged to modify their degree requirements accordingly. The ELWG recommends the following timeline:

Fall 2013: Departments develop plans for including a capstone graduation requirement within the degree and a timeline for doing so.

Spring 2014: Departments submit requests for any additional resources needed to their dean or director; deans and directors submit budget requests to VCAA.

Fall 2015: Departments not already doing so begin offering capstone courses and modify degree requirements for incoming majors.
2. **Electronic Portfolios (E-portfolios).** E-portfolios as both process and product can promote deep learning and knowledge transfer by fostering a student’s ability to connect the learning experiences of the classroom, workplace, and community. They are becoming standard practice for academics, students, and professionals and typically include examples of skills and achievements, as well as a reflective blog element. Students can include documents, graphics, audio files, presentations and more that reflect their personal learning journey, enabling them to share their achievements, knowledge and reflections with advisors, employers or peers. E-portfolios can serve as effective and interactive resumes.

E-portfolios support students in their lifelong learning and typically enable them to grow content, and demonstrate the increased knowledge and competence gained over an extended period of time. E-portfolios empower students by providing them increased control over their learning journey by enabling them to personalize their learning experiences, develop multimedia capabilities to support student created media, and vary the representations of their learning and development for different audiences. For teachers, e-portfolios are ideal as instructional aids and repositories of course resources. Some e-portfolio systems integrate official grades, competencies, and learning objectives that can be used to aid formal assessment component and campus reporting.

A few UHM colleges and programs have begun using e-portfolios but UHM does not offer a standard platform for this purpose. Kapiolani Community College (KCC) has developed a faculty-built e-portfolio system that can be used for multiple purposes by students, faculty and staff. The KCC *Kukui* platform provides an excellent local resource for UHM; discussions with KCC indicate interest in a partnership that could benefit both campuses by expanding student access and increasing the speed at which additional user tools can be developed. Such a partnership would facilitate articulation between campuses and enable KCC students who transfer to UHM to use a single e-portfolio platform throughout their UH career. The ELWG recommends that a comprehensive e-portfolio system be developed for UHM student, faculty and staff use and that a joint task group with KCC be developed to further explore the potential for a collaborative e-portfolio system.

**Estimated Cost and Resource Needs.** This initiative will require permanent staffing to develop and maintain the system. It is estimated that collaboration with KCC would reduce the start-up costs to develop a full menu of platform options and modifications, as well as maintenance and faculty and student user training costs. To begin implementing the e-portfolio recommendation the ELWG recommends a core staff of three (3) full-time people will be required at an estimated cost of $225,000 annually; an additional $25,000 will be required for equipment.

**Benchmarks and Campus Goals:** The ELWG recommends the following timeline:

**Fall 2013:** Convene and joint task group with UHM and KCC experts in e-portfolio development and use to explore expansion of the KCC *Kukui* platform.
Spring 2014: Hire a programmer and two additional staff who will be responsible for faculty and student interface and training.

Fall 2014: Bring UHM system online and begin training faculty and student users; begin tracking adoption patterns and targeted training with goal of expanding student and faculty use to 25% by Fall 2015.

Recommendations 3 and 4 complete the AY 2012-2013 Recommendations of the ELWG:

3. **Exploratory Student Program (ESP).** In AY 2012-2013 there were approximately 2100 UHM undergraduate students without a declared major and 41% of UHM undergraduates have not yet declared a major by the end of their second year of college. National and UHM data have shown that declaration of major correlates with higher retention rates for first year students. At UHM, the retention rate for undeclared students is 76.6% compared to an 81.8% retention rate for students who have declared a major (Manoa Institutional Research Office, 2011 Cohort). The ESP will provide peer advising, workshops, and co-curricular opportunities designed to support first-year exploratory students in their declaration of a major and encourage active student engagement within the UHM community. At Florida State University, adoption of a similar model produced a 70% rate of declaration of major by end of freshman year within 5 years of implementation.

The ELWG recommends the Exploratory Student Program be housed in the Mānoa Advising Center (MAC), which already provides academic advisement to first-year and second-year undeclared students.

**Estimated Cost and Resource Needs.** This initiative will require four (4) additional advisors, three (3) assigned to the Mānoa Advising Center and one (1) assigned to run the already-existing Mānoa Peer Advisors (MPA) Program. (The MPA Program is a campus-wide peer-advising program that is currently run part-time by four (4) supervisors. Current MPA staffing will not sustain the expanded responsibilities of the ESP.) Total annual cost estimate: $350,000 ($300,000 for 4.0 FTE junior specialist faculty + $50,000 for programming costs). The additional $50,000 per year to support ten (10) student peer advisors can be covered by Student Success Fellowship funding.

**Benchmarks and Campus Goals:** The ESP will provide support services for students during their initial two years at UH Mānoa. After the first year, students who are on track, but in majors that do not allow direct entry until junior year, will continue in workshops and advising. If students do not declare a major, they will be required to take the Mānoa Advising Centers’ Major Exploration Course, IS 197: Academic Exploration through Advising, for more intensive assistance.

Fall 2013: Begin the recruiting process for four (4) advisor positions; begin formal program planning.
Spring 2014: Hire 4.0 FTE junior specialist faculty. Continue planning.

Fall 2014: Roll out the ESP with goal of improving the major declaration rate 3-5% per year beginning 2018. (Full program assessment can begin when the second cohort completes a full cycle of programming.)

4. Civic Engagement. Civic engagement (also called community engagement) plays a prominent role in AoD; almost every page mentions some aspect of civic engagement. Rich opportunities for academically grounded civic/community engagement correlate with positive student learning outcomes including improved retention and graduation rates, grades, critical thinking, workforce development, leadership, professional ethics, and civic skills. At UHM civic engagement has recently been adopted as a core Institutional Learning Outcome.

In higher education, civic engagement can be understood to encompass collaborative partnerships, service learning, community-based research, and other service for/with our society. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) defines civic engagement as: “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference” and notes that it “encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community” (http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/civicengagement.pdf).

Students frequently find their passion through civic engagement activities, and many go on to serve their communities as leaders in politics, business, academia and a variety of social service fields. Academically anchored civic engagement such as service learning and community-based research is both supplemented and inspired by engagement in other co-curricular activities such as student organizations. However, funding barriers have limited the scope and impact of some student-led projects as well as the number of students who these activities can mobilize and engage. To encourage student initiative, creativity, and engagement and to support development of student leaders in civic engagement, the ELWG recommends: 1) creating competitive Chancellor’s Student Civic Engagement Leader Awards to support students who take on leadership roles in activities of public concern that benefit the campus or community-at-large, and 2) providing competitive funding for Student-led Civic Engagement Project Grants open to any individual student or group of students with a project that will make a difference in our communities. These measures will support academically anchored civic engagement initiatives and are intended to increase the number of civically engaged students at UHM involved in meaningful projects with real-time positive impact.

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1 Although the new advisors will have teaching and programming responsibilities in additional to advising students, hiring four (4) additional advisors to work with undeclared students will have the immediate effect of reducing the current MAC student:advisor ratio from 525:1 closer to the NACADA standard of 300:1.
Estimated Cost and Resource Needs. The impact of this initiative will depend on the level to which it is funded. The ELWG recommends an initial annual commitment of $100,000 to be used as follows: $50,000 to provide five (5) students with $10,000 annual Chancellor’s Civic Engagement Leader Award stipends, and 2) $50,000 to fund student led civic engagement projects.

Benchmarks and Campus Goals: To implement this initiative the ELWG recommends the creation of the Chancellor’s Student Civic Engagement Leader Awards Committee as a standing committee of between nine (9) and eleven (11) members representing campus governance, academic departments, student and academic affairs, and the ELWG. The Awards Committee will develop review criteria for both the Chancellor’s Civic Engagement Leader Award stipends and Student Civic Engagement Grants to ensure that the goals of this initiatives are met, i.e., student leaders receiving awards are involved in academically grounded projects that directly benefit the campus or surrounding communities and civic engagement projects are co-curricular and have, or are intended to have, positive community impact.

The ELWG recommends the following timeline:

Fall 2013: Appoint Chancellor’s Student Civic Engagement Awards Committee with the charge to develop and publish criteria for awards by February 2014; identify office in Academic or Student Affairs to administer awards.


Fall 2015: Assess impact of, and demand for, Chancellor Student Civic Engagement Leader Award and consider increasing the amount to $100,000 to support 10 students annually if warranted; assess impact of, and demand for, Student Civic Engagement Grants and consider increasing the total funding available if warranted.

Next Steps. The original charge to the ELWG focused on strengthening student learning outcomes by identifying and examining different forms of engaged learning that should be supported and enhanced to improve the undergraduate learning experience to improve retention and graduation. The ELWG addressed that charge with the recommendations summarized above, which are but a few of multiple best practices that will lead to our overall goal of strengthening and assessing engaged learning at UHM. Over the course of AY 2012-2013, ELWG and broader campus discussions have raised additional issues that significantly impact the quality of the educational experience for both undergraduate and graduate students at UHM, and address progress indicators identified in Achieving Our Destiny. The ELWG has agreed to continue working during AY 2013-2014 to address issues more directly related to students’ classroom experiences and faculty teaching, including but not limited to the progress indicator
intended to measure the increase in incentives for innovative teaching. To that end, the ELWG has developed a recommendation for its AY 2013-2014 charge as follows:

"Develop a plan for increasing the rigor of the academic experience at UHM, including but not limited to developing incentives for innovative teaching, modifications to eCafe or adoption of a new course evaluation method, and/or modifications to T&P criteria to ensure that excellent teaching is valued and rewarded. The plan should clearly identify and operationalize steps that need to be taken to meet the objective outlined in charge, and identify a timeline and benchmarks for implementation."