WASC Capacity Review

Major Recommendations

Keith Roberts, Vice President for Academics

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The team recommends that the institution continue to pursue solutions to the housing issue in order to support the recruitment and retention of quality faculty and staff.

Brigham Young University Hawaii is delighted to report that the Board of Trustees has appropriated a loan of $8,000,000 for the startup and implementation of a housing initiative that will demolish 26 homes built in the early 1960’s on lots that were zoned for two homes. These homes will be replaced by 52 new homes that will be for sale at approximately 50% of the market rates in Hawaii. The conditions of home ownership will be restricted so that the home owner will be required to sell the unit back to the university. This is to assure a continued affordable marked for faculty home ownership. This proposal was the result of a Housing Task Force initiative that led to a proposal from the UniDev Group. This proposal is being implemented by the university administration with the guidance and input of a faculty housing committee. The committee and the university have cooperated so that the university’s existing housing will also be made available for sale under the same conditions as the new units. The sale of existing homes is being included in the plan to offset the high cost of construction of the new units, so that they can be affordable without continued university subsidy.

The timing is right for this project because there is beginning to be a slow down in the housing market and the corresponding slow down in new construction on other parts of the island. This benefits us because in the past builders and subcontractors were reluctant to bid on construction in Laie because of the distance from Honolulu. The important predictors of quality construction are the track record of the building contractor and the quality of the subcontractors. We believe that we will be able to get a quality “high volume” contractor, who, in turn, will demand dependable subcontractors of high quality.

We know that there will be many “bumps in the road” as we move ahead, but we are currently closer to high volume home ownership than we have been at any time in the past fifteen years.

The team recommends that the institution formally restructure teaching loads to bring itself into alignment with institutions that require scholarly activity of its faculty. More normative for research-active faculty at universities that have a primary commitment to teaching would be a nine-hour load with a three-hour release for research.

Although the university respects the recommendation of the committee regarding the teaching load, its funding scheme does not allow for the substantial additional costs that a 9-9-6 load would require. Upon reviewing the recommendations, the Vice President for Academics committed to a goal of making 3hrs available for scholarly activity each year to faculty who had a documented, results oriented scholarly projects. The Academic Planning Council is in the process of setting parameters for scholarly activity that is appropriate for a university, such as ours, that has a primary commitment to teaching. The replacement of part time faculty with non CFS visiting faculty is also intended to build a stronger teaching core that would enable the CFS faculty who are scholarly active to have the 3 hr per year release time.

Since the Capacity Review visit the university has had a change in leadership. It will be important to include the ideas of the new president in these deliberations.

The team recommends that the institution cultivate leadership skills and aspirations among their women faculty, and find more productive means of recruiting and retaining qualified women and persons from underrepresented groups for full time faculty position.
The university sees these as three interrelated challenges, recruitment, retention, and promotion. The recruitment and retention challenges are clearly the most interconnected. Since 2000, the university has proactively acted to be sure that the recruitment pools were diverse by gender and ethnicity. The preference for qualified candidates who are members of the sponsoring church has become less of an inhibitor as educated people from throughout the world are represented among the church members. Since the Capacity Visit we have been able to add female faculty from the US, Italy, Finland, and China, and male faculty from Fiji and China. Our dilemma with retention of female faculty has been the lack of job opportunities for spouses of married faculty and the lack of social life for single faculty. This is further complicated by the high value the church places on family and the number of female faculty who choose to leave full time employment to fulfill family responsibilities. In the past three years, two of our most productive female faculty cashed out the equity in their homes in Hawaii and moved to the mainland so that they could own a home and would not have to work full time and therefore spend more time raising their families. Neither of these faculty were originally from the mainland. In addition, experience teaching in a multicultural environment such as BYU Hawaii’s is considered positively on faculty resumes and therefore our female and minority faculty are in high demand at other campuses.

Our strategy is to continue to actively recruit a diverse faculty and to create ways to support academic couples. In that regard, we have developed the position of Adjunct Associate Professor. This is a part time position that can become a permanent part time assignment upon review similar to CFS review. We have currently identified four faculty spouses who have been teaching successfully since their wives or husbands have been hired and who have the appropriate degrees and experience to have been full time faculty. These four will be initial candidates for Adjunct Associate Professor positions. Strategic use of this opportunity can aide in both recruitment and retention of academic couples.

In response to the suggestions of the Capacity visiting team, a group of female faculty and administrative staff and formed an “Academic Women’s Network” that meets informally and makes recommendations to the Vice President for Academics. As the result of these activities, two female faculty have been sent to the American Association of University Women Conference in Phoenix in June of 2007 and one female faculty member has been nominated for and accepted to attend the HERS Summer Institute at Bryn Mawr College in 2007. Additionally, an effort was made to assure continued female participation at the annual WASC Conference and on WASC committees.

The team recommends that the institution make periodic reports to the campus community on the objectives of the strategic plan to affirm the progress being made. Given the plan is due to expire in 2007, it would be timely to begin discussion of the next five-year plan for 2007-2012.

Since the Capacity Review visit, the university has had a change in leadership. President Eric Shumway has been replaced by President Steven Wheelwright. President Wheelwright is in the process of examining the organization, planning processes and implementation strategies and habits of the university and will include this recommendation is his deliberations.