Focus Group on Accreditation – 5/14/03

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General Comments
- budgets will be tied to the areas of emphasis
- we need to identify 3-4 major areas of importance
- this is our opportunity to let the administration know what the faculty feel is important rather than having them decide for us
- key performance indicators – how are these determined?
- a possible way to group the themes is:
  #1, 3, 5, 8, 11 all focus on teaching & learning including EIL & retention
  #2, 6 focus on cultural diversity & intercultural competence
  #7, 12 focus on collection, dissemination, & use of data
  #8, 9, 10 focus on leadership and placement
- don’t make the themes too broad or they will be meaningless and difficult to accomplish; faculty need to be aware of the themes so that they inform what we do

Areas of Importance

Retention
- information from the Factbook indicates that retention is a serious problem, but it is seldom mentioned
- it was pointed out that mentoring might be part of increasing retention, but “mentored learning” as it is currently defined does not include that idea; it focuses more on research associateships and the capstone experience
- retention may be a way to measure our success in particular programs (i.e. first-year initiatives such as the learning community being implemented in fall)
- although first-year programs are mentioned under #5, they may need more emphasis particularly if retention is viewed as something we want to address

Data Collection
- it was agreed that collecting data and using it to inform decisions is critical; however, some felt data collection needs to be specified as a theme because of our weakness in this area while others felt it should be incorporated as a means to track our success
- data we currently have available such as the Factbook is not circulated and not being used to inform decisions

Student Learning
- this theme also implies teaching effectiveness and is related to course load
- mentored learning should be broadened to include first-year initiatives and learning communities; this term has a definite meaning in education and we may want to change the term or at least agree on a definition for ourselves
Diversity
• need to get students engaged in intercultural learning; this should be part of course objectives
• do we teach differently because our students are diverse?
• are we as faculty trained to teach diverse students? it seems that such training should be offered on campus

Placement or Return of International Students
• report of the returnability committee should be reviewed
• the term returnability is problematic; we don’t want to be forceful
• having students return to their home countries or placing them in careers outside the U.S. is related to the needs of particular countries and our ability to offer majors to address these needs; we should also consider partnering with Provo to expand our ability to offer these majors
• focus should be on educating leaders rather than on forcing students to return
• work opportunities must be created to enable students to return

Community Partnership & Collaboration
• should this be a theme? should it be part of the language we use?
• Polynesian students get very homesick – they need to connect with members of the community who share their cultural backgrounds
• this is also related to service learning