



UNIVERSITY
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HILO

UH HILO 2018 STRATEGIC PLANNING LISTENING TOUR

Meeting with Pharmaceutical Sciences Ph.D. Students

March 21, 2019

This note represents a summary of the meeting held with Pharmaceutical Sciences Ph.D. Students as part of a 2018-2019 Listening Tour. The intention of the tour is to help inform the next UH Hilo Strategic Plan. The summary reflects the collection of comments made by individuals participating in the session. The order of the note may not necessarily reflect the order of the discussion.

Question 1: *When you first joined UH Hilo or were introduced to campus, what attracted you? What was exciting and made a positive impression?*

- The diversity of the faculty. The professors are well qualified, from all over the world, and open and welcoming to people of all types, creating a friendly environment.
- Research opportunities that are broad, involving both the chemical and biological aspects of science.
- Research opportunities at UHH not available in home country.
- Natural products research at UHH is unique. The Ph.D. in Pharmaceutical Sciences Program is becoming a niche program nationally.
- The geographic location on the island of Hawai'i provides access to native plants where they grow. These plants are not found in other environments.
- The research centering on natural medicines and products is very attractive, expanding on the work done in undergraduate and master's programs.
- People are nice, accepting, and supportive, and they meet people halfway.
- Ease of interaction with community members and high school students, and their welcoming attitude towards international students.
- The opportunity to learn from herbalists and native healers of Hawai'i about their practices and traditions.
- Hawai'i's climate is similar to the climate at home, so it feels a bit more like home.
- Hawai'i's natural beauty and healthy lifestyle.

Question 2: *Why is what you are doing today at UH Hilo important?*

- **Research is our most important undertaking.**

- **Our research supports the economy of Hawai'i.**
 - The success of our research helps the scientific field to advance and encourages local industries to partner with us in academia. This results in job opportunities for residents of the Big Island, and also invigorates our laboratories.
 - Our research is helpful to the community and the people of Hawai'i who have been using natural products historically for healing. The research provides scientific evidence and relevance supporting the use of Hawaiian medicinal plants, in addition to opportunities for wellness.
 - Research is an important source of information about Hawaiian herbal medicines and leads to expansion in the use of herbal medicines. It has economic importance, e.g., mamaki and noni.
 - Our research elevates the status of the medicinal plants of Hawai'i.
 - We bring data-driven research to the community (local healers, noni growers, etc.) and invite them to serve as citizen scientists through their feedback.
- **Our research supports the medical system of Hawai'i.**
 - We are investigating the effect of FDA-approved worm medications on rat lungworm in the lab.
 - The rat lungworm research station provides support and educational resources. (Example: a community member accidentally eats part of a slug. The other half of the slug may be tested for \$25 to determine if it harbors rat lungworm.)
- **Our research benefits the students of DKICP and UH Hilo, and the community of the Big Island**
 - We are part of the Pharmacy Health Fair and the DKICP Research Day where we disseminate information about the medicinal properties of natural products, rat lungworm disease and other areas of research that our Faculty are involved in (e.g., cancer research).
 - Behind-the-scenes work on research allows pharmacy practice students to see how drugs are developed.
 - We provide training and support for undergraduate students and even high school students through various campus teaching/research programs.
- Research training will allow us to take the knowledge and expertise back home to benefit our home country and community.
- Our graduates will become national and international ambassadors for the DKICP and UH Hilo.

Question 3: *During your time on campus, there have likely been peaks and valleys. Reflect on a high point when you felt most alive, most engaged, most proud. Tell us the story.*

- Choosing a research path - continuing education and doing hands-on research with state-of-the-art instruments and technology is a dream come true.
- Being on the ground floor of cutting-edge research that has the potential to help the community.

- Testing and designing our own research and ideas, rather than reading about it or running tests as instructed for a project that is not our own. This allows independent work and creativity.
- Moving from pharmacy industry research to academic research provides freedom and is empowering.
- Direct hands-on access to all types of high-end scientific instrumentation.
- Moving to a place that is great for raising a family.

Question 4: *What were the forces and factors that made this high-point experience possible?*

- Access to state-of-the-art equipment and highly-trained faculty/staff who share that equipment
- Strong and highly accomplished faculty
- Collaborations and collegial relationships involving shared equipment and lab space within the College and among programs in UH Hilo
- PIs who trust students and work closely with students
- Being trusted to do critical work, unlike other settings
- Ability to work with autonomy and independence
- Proximity to the natural environment
- Working in an environment that is supportive, rather than the “sink or swim” environment on the mainland
- Working in a community that has vested interest in our work and the success of our research
- Hilo is a city with fewer distractions. Life here is without the challenges and pressures of city life, traffic, etc. The environment is conducive to learning

Question 5: *Now, reflect on a low point. Tell us that story. What were the forces and factors that led to this low-point experience?*

- The new Pharmacy building will not be used for research laboratory space.
- We do important research at UHH, but the System does not acknowledge our important role in research.
- Worries about what will happen to UH Hilo in the coming years given our trajectory and morale.
- The best faculty are drawn to Universities with robust research, and yet UHH does not support research.
- Due to budget issues, there is a worry that graduate assistantships might be in peril. Students may be unable to finish their program. The uncertainty of financial support also discourages prospective students as they are not sure they will be supported for the duration of their program.
- Graduate students work very hard for the support they receive and it is difficult to find enough time to conduct research.
- Every time it rains, our instruments are at risk from ceiling leaks. The state of our facilities indicates that we are a low priority.
- When the A/C is broken it is difficult to maintain air circulation for cooling the labs. It’s like working in a hot box. The conditions impact research.

- The campus community lacks vibrance, has little energy.

Question 6: *If you could experience the high points more consistently and the low points less consistently, what might you or the University accomplish in the future?*

- Our University ranking would improve because of the important research activities being conducted.
- UHH would have stronger name recognition.
- Research and innovation would be a cornerstone of the institution, and be more fully integrated into our classrooms.
- Enrollments would increase because we would integrate information about research activity into the recruitment process.
- Our campus would be more vibrant.
- We would be awarded more grant funding; more students would be financially supported and engaged in research; and more labs would remain open rather than being closed down.
- The remote location of UHH will be viewed as an asset, and as an unprecedented scientific opportunity to access the native ecosystem (microorganisms, plants, and animals).
- Prospective students will understand that we are a one-of-a-kind program and institution.
- Research Training and Revolving Funds (RTRF) will ideally be reinvested back into research to support the next round of innovation.

Question 7: *How might you move from where you and the University are right now, to where you want to be, experiencing these high points regularly? (Note: these are the big boulders that need to be moved in order to make change)*

- Significantly improve Pharmacy research facilities:
 - Sensitive research equipment in the Modulars are subject to vibrational disruptions as a result of the movement of people.
 - More efficient campus support for facilities. Air-conditioners that are broken and left unrepaired for months cause the overheating of laboratories and the destruction of heat-sensitive equipment.
 - An overly hot lab environment compromises the integrity of scientific experiments resulting in the loss of large datasets.
 - Aging facilities result in roof leaks that have the potential to destroy expensive research equipment.
- Maintain facilities better. We currently use buckets underneath roof leaks to protect scientific equipment when it rains.
- Invest in greater support for- and promotion of- graduate student research through campus-wide programs.
- Get the news out about our research through outreach programs.
- Change the mentality of the UH System so that teaching and research are given equal status, leading to integration of the two.

- Hire more Pharmaceutical Sciences faculty to teach and advise students in the Ph.D. in Pharmaceutical Sciences Program, both in the classroom and in the lab. There is a shortage at this time.
- Hire the highest quality faculty and fill available faculty and administrative positions in order to innovate.
- Build a vibrant campus and vibrant research agenda in order to recruit and retain world class faculty.

Question 8: *If there was one or more actions you could take right away to move toward more high points, where would you start? (Note: these are the small stones that you and your colleagues might help to move in order to make change)*

- Start a merit-based fund for graduate students across campus, making it possible for students to attend conferences in order to build networks of colleagues, and to advance their careers, all while representing UHH. (Note: this is especially critical because travel to conferences is difficult due to our island setting.)
- Open up more jobs on campus which may or may not involve teaching and research. This will help support more students in the Ph.D. Program. Ph.D. candidates could teach 300- and 400-level courses or become teaching assistants in chemistry and biology labs.
- Use information regarding research for recruitment purposes.
- Celebrate research on our own campus and in the community. Introduce research opportunities to UHH undergraduate students and local high school students so they know what is possible. Graduate students should have more interaction with undergraduate and pre-pharmacy students.
- Find ways to become less isolated from the rest of the Big Island Community and the nation in order to become more visible. Give people an “excuse” to visit the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy and Hawai'i.
- Host seminars and conferences that bring the community and the nation to the College. We could put Hilo on the map.
- Collaborate more with Manoa and break down any territorial feelings. It is counter-productive. We should be working together and celebrating each other's successes.
- Break down silos at UHH so that we might discover new synergies on campus. It feels like we have regressed from where we were in the past.
- Retain our great faculty to avoid brain drain.

Questions and comments may be directed to
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