Attendees
Kanani Baker (STU SRVC), Robert Barclay (LANG), Pam DaGrossa (Recording Chair), Paul Field (CCAAC), Toshi Ikagawa (SOC SCI), Ellen Ishida-Babineau (Presiding Chair), Ross Langston (NAT SCI), Malia Lau-Kong (HUM), Leslie Lyum (ETC), Ellen Nagaue (ETC), April Sandobal (ETC), Tara Severns (Academic Support), Johnny Singh (MAT BUS), Libby Young (Off-Campus Chair)

Guests
Jan Lubin, Director of Planning and Program Evaluation

1. Call to order 12:38pm
2. Approval of October 6, 2009 meeting minutes
   MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES OF OCTOBER 6, 2009, AS CORRECTED WITH MINOR CHANGES [UNANIMOUS]
3. Reports
   A. Senate Chairs meeting with Chancellor (Ellen I-B.)
      Ellen I-B. reported that the three chairs met with Chancellor following the Faculty Senate meeting on 10/6/09. The chairs asked for the Chancellor’s cooperation in updating and posting all current policies. Ellen also explained the New Initiatives proposed structure and function.
      Regarding administrators sitting in on selection committee interviews, the chairs recommended to the Chancellor that it be made clear, up front and in writing, that the committee can decide whether this will be allowed or not. The committee should not feel pressured to acquiesce. It was noted that there may be people other than administrators who request to observe committee processes. Paul Field confirmed that this has happened in the past, even with community members.
      Jan said the Chancellor has requested a policy and procedure on creating, revising, and reviewing policies. Faculty Senate should receive it in the next two weeks.
   B. CCAAC (Paul F.)
      There was no CCAAC meeting last week. By the next Faculty Senate meeting, there will be a number of new course proposals, so be prepared to receive and read them. No courses being approved now will be taught before Fall 2010. The online catalog and when its content becomes effective will be discussed within CCAAC. The timeline for Fall 2010 course proposals is the first meeting of spring semester (1 week after the first Faculty Senate meeting).
   C. Task Force: Constitution Revisions
      Leslie L. reported that things are moving slowly in ETC, but she thinks a proposal may be ready by December.
      Libby said that at the system level there was an amendment proposed to authorize the Off-Campus Chair to speak for the campus Senate to the Vice Chancellor when it is not possible to get a response from the Senate.
      Tara said the task force will likely be presenting revisions for discussion in parts. It hopes to have a revised constitution in place by next year.
   D. Planning, Budget, and Accreditation – no report
E. **New Initiatives** (Robert B.)

Robert B. reported that the website is up and the subcommittee is awaiting information from Vice Chancellor Fulton and Dave Krupp.

F. **Procedures and Policies** (Toshi I.)

i. Brian Richardson wanted the Chancellor to approve the policy on policies template before posting it. The Chairs will talk with the Chancellor about this at today’s meeting with administrators.

ii. Policy and Procedures for the GSIEC (distributed last meeting) was created by the GSIEC, forwarded to Faculty Senate, and now needs approval (attached).

**MOTION TO RECOMMEND THAT THE PROCEDURES AND POLICIES OF GSIEC BE MADE OFFICIAL [1ST TARA S.; 2ND JOHNNY S.; UNANIMOUS].**

iii. Policy on Academic Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal (distributed last meeting; attached)

**MOTION TO RECOMMEND THE POLICY ON ACADEMIC PROBATION, SUSPENSION, AND DISMISSAL [1ST ROSS L.; 2ND MALIA L-K.; UNANIMOUS].**

iv. Toshi reported that today the committee is sending its recommendation on the Excellence in Teaching Award. This was previously sent to Chancellor Angela Meixell, but was not acted upon. The committee has since revised it, so **Senators take it back to your departments for comment and discussion.**

v. **Senators also take the recommendations on the Planning and Budget Council to your departments for comment and discussion** (attached).

vi. **Sabbatical Review Committee & Process for Handling Reassigned Time**

Jan sent Toshi all the system-wide policies, which the subcommittee will review. Jan noted that the Chancellor found a directive on reassigned time. **This will be sent to all Senators to forward to departments for comment and discussion.**

vii. **Class Scheduling and Cancellation of Classes**

Vice Chancellor Fulton prefers the procedure for cancellation of classes and changes to class schedule remain guides. The subcommittee would like it to be a policy, so the committee will enter into discussion with the Chancellor on this.

G. **ACCFSC/CCCFSC** (Libby Y.)

i. **Draft of the Memorandum of Agreement on the Transfer of Gen Ed Core**

Senators reported that Social Sciences and Natural Sciences agree it is a good idea. Malia and Tara spoke with a few people in their departments, who viewed it favorably. Some people had questions about the consultation process in the second part, on program and degree requirement changes. Libby will report that for now reaction is positive.

ii. **President Greenwood’s letter**

Libby conveyed that at the last Board of Regents meeting, Pres. Greenwood did acknowledge that her language was “inelegant.” The LeeCC Faculty Senate Chair drafted a response (attached). Libby thinks that LeeCC, MauiCC, and HawCC may sign on to that letter. Libby thought the initial draft of the letter was inappropriate in
tone and drafted her own (attached). At this point, the Faculty Senate can decide to (1) sign on the LeeCC letter, (2) send the letter drafted by Libby, (3) write a new letter, or (4) do nothing.

Malia supports sending Libby’s letter. Ross just sent the letters to his department and so is awaiting feedback. Tara questioned the purpose of responding and suggested selecting an action based on our purpose. Toshi reported that Social Sciences feels a Faculty Senate response is appropriate, as are individual letters. Robert B. noted that Pres. Greenwood sent her letter to everyone, including students. Do we want to do that or direct it just to Pres. Greenwood? Johnny asked what the purpose of sending all these letters is serving if Pres. Greenwood realizes what she did was wrong? Libby suggested that going on record may be important. Kanani said a response indicates concern.

If we don’t plan to sign on with the LeeCC letter, we should probably make a decision within a week. Ellen I-B. noted that we can do an online poll to make a decision. Robert was concerned that bringing to departments for feedback will draw out the process. Senators should get department feedback ASAP and forward to Libby.

**MOTION TO TAKE LIBBY’S LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENTS FOR APPROVAL** [1ST ROBERT B.; 2ND KANANI B.; UNANIMOUS].

4. **Unfinished Business**
   - CIL – Tara S. reported that Bryan Shon has been hired to grade the tests and make the tutorials.

5. **New Business**
   - A. Chancellor Dykstra has asked Faculty Senate to take the lead on creating a committee to review the Mission/Vision/Core Values. Ellen I-B. will send the request to Senators to share with departments.
   - B. Leslie suggested changing of the name of the Subcommittee on Policies and Procedures to the Subcommittee for Policies and Procedures Review.
   - **MOTION TO CHANGE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES’ NAME TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE FOR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REVIEW** [1ST TARA S.; 2ND ROSS L.; UNANIMOUS].

6. **Adjourned 1:29pm**
   - The next meeting will be November 3, 2009, 12:40pm, Palanakila 117.

Respectfully submitted by Pamela DaGrossa, Recording Chair
October 20, 2009
Approved November 3, 2009
WCC Policies and Procedures

Title:


Reference:

1. WCC Strategic Plan Action Outcomes and the University of Hawaii System Strategic Outcome #5 (November 2008). Specifically, WCC action outcome 5.7 which states “Refine, document, and annually assess College governance structures, policies, and procedures to ensure appropriate participation, input, and effectiveness.”

2. Recommendation 5 from the ACCJC stating that:

“The team recommends, to ensure appropriate participation and input, that the college refine its current governance structure policies by including written definition of the roles and responsibilities for all constituent groups and formalize processes and structures for clear, effective communication and reporting relationships. In addition, the college should implement an annual evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of leaders and decision-making which leads to institutional improvements.”

Background and purpose

The ACCJC has charged the College to complete a progress report by March 15, 2009, detailing its progress in responding to the recommendations of the commission from the accreditation visit of 2006.

In conducting this evaluation the College is also guided by the WCC Strategic Plan Action Outcomes (November 2008). Specifically, WCC action outcome 5.7 which states, “Refine, document, and annually assess College governance structures, policies, and procedures to ensure appropriate participation, input, and effectiveness.”

Authority:

The GSIEC is comprised of faculty and staff and is independent in its operation. Organizationally, the GSIEC reports directly to the IEC, and the IEC reports to the Chancellor.

Definitions/categories:

There are no specific terms or categories used.

Procedures:

The charge to the GSIEC is to 1) plan, oversee, and ensure systematic, comprehensive, and continual evaluation of leadership and decision-making and governance structures; 2) to further the development of a culture of evidence related to leadership, decision-making and governance structures, and; 3) to maintain and communicate all materials and reports related to evaluating leadership, decision-making and governance structures. The membership and leadership of the GSIEC is as follows: 1) the Director of Institutional Research (caretaker of the data) serves as the ex-officio convener of the GSIEC, and; 2) the GSIEC is comprised of five senior, tenured faculty and permanent staff selected by the IEC. As a
subcommittee of the IEC, the members are notified of their appointment by the Chair of the IEC and serve up to three years. The selection or replacement of members is done on an annual basis by the IEC.

The operation of the GSIEC and the evaluative processes it conducts are as follows: The GSIEC will conduct perception surveys, closely aligned with the four themes of Standard IV. A., to objectively measure faculty and staff perceptions of the institution’s leadership, decision-making, and governance structures. The sequence of survey administration of the identified leaders and governance structures is shown in Table 1. Table of Leaders and Governance Structures. The surveys will measure performance outcomes that can be tabulated, analyzed and followed in succeeding years. The GSIEC will first transmit the results of the survey to the leader or governance structure. The leader or governance structure will conduct a self-assessment based upon the surveys and formulate improvement outcome statements to serve as goals to be achieved in the following assessment period. The GSIEC will review the data and outcome statements for congruence and substance, and if necessary, interact with the leader or governance structure to arrive at the outcome statements and to provide measurable outcome statements. The data and self-assessment information will be forwarded to the Chair of the IEC and the Director of Planning and Program Evaluation for inclusion in annual assessments and program review and for posting on a private webpage and a paper copy will be available in the Library. The GSIEC evaluation process will be assessed and changes made as indicated by the evaluation at the end of the first year of operation and thereafter annually. The sequence of the evaluation process is shown in Figure 1. Assessment Flow Chart for Leaders and Governance Structures.

The long-range goal of the process is to institutionalize and promote effective governance of the College and to contribute to the culture of evidence regarding the improvement of governance at the College.

Timeline:

The GSIEC conducts assessment of leaders and governance structures on an annual basis.

Exclusion:

There are no exclusions from this policy/procedure.

Responsibilities:

The GSIEC and IEC are responsible for updating this policy or procedure.

Effective date:

Fall 2008.

Revised date:

No revision has occurred to date.
WCC Policies and Procedures

Title: POLICY ON ACADEMIC PROBATION, SUSPENSION, AND DISMISSAL

Reference: BOR Policies and Bylaws 9-40.4 (November 15, 2007); APM III A9.880 page 4, letter c; E1.201 Faculty Involvement in Academic Policy; E2.218, page 2 (Section II. B) Use of institution email for notification of action; WCC Faculty Senate Minutes, November 20, 2006.

Background and purpose: This policy outlines procedures for timely intervention when students do not maintain the minimum cumulative GPA for satisfactory academic progress. Intervention is intended to encourage and enable return to satisfactory academic progress, and to prevent further damage to the academic record through unsatisfactory grades. Procedures for applying academic actions to student records, and for the readmission of students on academic suspension and dismissal, are established. The policy also provides guidelines for student appeals.

Authority: Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs

Definitions/categories:

a. Satisfactory academic standing is maintained with a cumulative GPA at or above 2.0. Satisfactory academic standing is a requirement for graduation and transfer.

b. Unsatisfactory academic standing occurs when the cumulative GPA is below 2.0.

c. Cumulative GPA is calculated by dividing earned grade points by total attempted credits. Grade points are calculated by multiplying grade values (A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1, F-0) by the number of credits assigned to the grade. For example, an A in a 3 credit course results in 12 grade points earned.

d. Warning occurs when a student moves from satisfactory to unsatisfactory academic standing.

e. Probation occurs when a student remains on unsatisfactory academic standing in the semester following a warning.

f. Suspension, a stop out of one semester, occurs when a student on probation is unable to earn a semester GPA of at least 2.0. The forced time out from academics encourages students to resolve outside challenges and to return when school can be made a priority.

g. Dismissal, a forced stop out of two consecutive semesters, occurs when a previously suspended students is readmitted on Probation after Suspension but is unable to earn a semester GPA at least 2.0.

h. Removed from Probation occurs when a student returns to satisfactory academic progress by raising their cumulative GPA to 2.0 or higher.

Policy and Procedures:

a. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs (VCSA) will assume primary responsibility for interpretation of guidelines and for implementation of the policy.

b. A student is classified as making unsatisfactory academic progress when the cumulative GPA is below 2.0.
c. Academic actions are taken at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. Upon the complete posting of final grades, records of all students on unsatisfactory academic progress are reviewed and assessed for academic actions by counselors. Actions are confirmed based on grades posted at the time of review, and actions are taken regardless of the number of credits attempted. Summer grades do not relieve spring actions.

d. Once actions are confirmed:

1. Students will be notified of unsatisfactory academic progress and corresponding actions by letter and/or institution email from the office of the VCSA. Letters are mailed to the primary address on file for the student; email is sent to hawaii.edu addresses only. Notices are sent as quickly as reasonably possible; usually no later than 10 working days after the complete posting of final grades.

2. All students notified of unsatisfactory academic progress are required to meet with a counselor prior to registration.

3. The registrar will purge subsequent semester registration of suspended and dismissed students, and correct any discrepancies in academic standing discovered in the counselor review.

4. The registrar will enter a notation of actions on the students’ permanent records. Actions to be noted on the academic record are: Probation, Probation Continued, Probation after Suspension, Probation after Dismissal, Removed from Probation, Suspension and Dismissal. Warning will not be noted on the academic record.

e. Grades posted by the instructors at the end of the semester are final. Assignment of academic actions, based on review of end of semester grades, is considered final upon completion of the counselor review.

f. Once actions are noted on the permanent record, student appeal of actions or the suspension and dismissal wait periods will be considered only in the event of grading, clerical, technical or other errors, or extreme and extenuating circumstances.

A student may appeal via a formal letter of petition addressed to the VCSA. Students intending to appeal should first meet with a counselor to discuss their situation and to determine the best course of action. Petitions must be submitted as soon as notification is received and prior to the first day of instruction of the following semester.

Petitions should address the following, if applicable:

- Timeliness (why withdrawal by the published deadline was not possible)
- Specificity (if grades for only certain courses are being contested)
- Any extenuating circumstances involved

Petitions claiming extenuating circumstances must be accompanied by documentation. The decision of the VCSA is final.

g. Academic Actions:

1. WARNING. A student will be placed on warning status each time they move from satisfactory to unsatisfactory academic standing. This action is not noted on the permanent academic record. The student is required to meet with a counselor prior to registration for the following semester. It
is possible to be placed on and removed on warning multiple times. If a student on warning is unable to raise their cumulative GPA to 2.0 or higher, the student will be placed on probation.

2. PROBATION. A student on unsatisfactory academic progress for two consecutive semesters or more will be placed on probation. This action is noted on permanent record. The student must meet with a counselor prior to registration and earn a semester GPA of 2.0 in each subsequent semester to remain eligible for enrollment.

The student will continue on probation until their cumulative GPA is raised to 2.0 or higher. The student will be removed from probation upon raising the cumulative GPA to 2.0 or higher. It is possible to be placed on and removed from probation multiple times. While on probation, if the student is unable to earn a minimum semester GPA of 2.0, the student will be placed on suspension.

3. SUSPENSION. A student unable to meet the terms of probation (above), will be suspended. This action is noted on the permanent record. A suspended student may not enroll in classes at WCC for the following fall or spring semester. Existing registration for the following term will be purged by the registrar.

The student must apply for readmission if they desire to return to WCC following the semester of suspension. The student will be admitted on Probation after Suspension. It is possible to be suspended only once; failing to meet the terms of probation after returning from suspension will result in dismissal.

4. DISMISSAL. A student readmitted on Probation after Suspension will be dismissed for failing to meet the terms of probation. This action is noted on the permanent record. A dismissed student is not allowed to enroll in classes at WCC for a minimum of two consecutive semesters.

Students intending to apply for readmission after the two semester wait period should first meet with a counselor to discuss their situation and to determine the best course of action. Readmission after dismissal is rare, and will be allowed only upon recommendation of the VCSA. Upon recommendation of the VSCA, the student will be admitted on Probation after Dismissal. A second dismissal is considered permanent.

5. PROBATION after SUSPENSION, PROBATION after DISMISSAL. These categories are assigned by the registrar to students readmitted after suspension or dismissal. It appears on the permanent record. Students must meet the terms of probation (above) or be subject to further academic action applicable to their previous standing. Students readmitted on probation after suspension or dismissal must meet with a counselor prior to registration.

Timeline: Cumulative and semester grade point averages are reviewed at the end of each fall and spring term. Notices of academic actions are sent to student within 10 working days of the complete posting of final grades.

Exclusion: Student who audit (L) or enroll in courses for credit-no credit (CR/NC) exclusively are not subject to academic action.

Responsibilities: Student Services: Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Counselors, Registrar

Effective date: End of Fall 2006 term.

Revised date: November 20, 2006
DECISION NATURE and DECISION-MAKING PROTOCOL:
The goals of the Planning and Budget Council (PBC) are to ensure that the College is best positioned to:

1. Utilize and/or leverage the College’s strengths;
2. Fortify the College’s areas of weakness;
3. Take advantage of new opportunities; and,
4. Monitor and respond to external complexities.

The primary mission of the PBC is to:

1. Review, evaluate, and update the College Strategic Plan, at least once a year;
2. Prioritize strategic actions based on program reviews, annual reports, and summary reports from the deans and directors; and,
3. Review, evaluate, prioritize, and make recommendations to the Chancellor regarding the use of resources in the College budget, and regarding resource requests for future funding.

CHARGE:
The PBC will provide advice and counsel to the Chancellor regarding economic, political, industry, and programmatic forces that are currently or will have impact on the College’s plan of action that is designed to accomplish specific goals. Initiatives to achieve these goals should be justified by assessment, analysis, and evidence of community needs. A major outcome of the PBC’s work will be regular review and updating of the Strategic Plan and the prioritization of the College Budget.

LINE OF AUTHORITY
The PBC will formulate recommendations and submit them to the Chancellor for approval and implementation. All recommendations stemming from the PBC will be treated as advisory. The Chancellor reserves the right to accept, in whole or in part, or refuse the Council’s recommendations.

- If the Chancellor does not implement or accept the Council’s recommendation, the Chancellor will provide a written explanation to the Council.

- If the vote on a Council decision or recommendation is close (difference of 4 votes or less), the Council will present a majority and minority written report to accompany the formal recommendation.
LEADERSHIP:

The Chancellor will convene the SPC and the recorder will be the Chancellor's secretary. When voting is required the majority vote will prevail. Quorum for the Council is half of the membership + 1.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS:

• Coordinates periodic review of the College Mission, Vision, and Goals/Core Values statements

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN AND BUDGETING PROCESS:

• Coordinates annual review and update of the College Strategic Plan, including ensuring the integration of results of Annual Assessments and Program Reviews into the College Strategic Plan and decision-making processes;

• Recommends proposed planning initiatives, including specific budget requests and resource allocations, in accordance with System guidelines and in line with the College strategic planning needs and institutional assessment processes;

• Develops, communicates and utilizes criteria to prioritize strategic planning and budget initiatives;

• Addresses operational issues and setting operating guidelines/deadlines;

• Makes recommendations to the Chancellor regarding priorities and allocations for the operating budget, equipment budget, lectureship budget, and student assistants’ budget.

COMMUNICATION

• Coordinates communication with and between governance bodies;

• Monitors College processes and outcomes related to institutional research and institutional effectiveness;

• Maintains an open dialogue with the member’s respective constituency;

• Communicates general College issues to the member’s constituency, and shares a perspective on issues that are or will impact the PBC’s and College goals.

1. Provides a forum for discussions related to academic and student needs, security and safety, and other matters; and,
• Disseminates information related to operational issues and matters.

MEMBERSHIP

The Faculty Senate member; Operational, Institutional, Academic Support, and Student Services members, WCCASUH member, Ke Kumu Pali member, and the Employment Training Center member will be elected by their units to two-year terms. All other participants are members due to their positions.

1. Coordinator of Computing Services
2. Coordinator, OCET
3. Accreditation Liaison Officer
4. Faculty Senate Member
5. Department Chair – Language Arts
6. Department Chair – Social Sciences
7. Department Chair – Business and Math
8. Department Chair – Humanities
9. Department Chair – Natural Sciences
10. Operational Support Member
11. Institutional Support Member
12. Academic Support Member
13. Student Services Member
14. WCCASUH Member
15. Ke Kumu Pali Member
16. Employment Training Center Member
17. Director of Planning and Program Evaluation
18. Director of Institutional Research
19. Chancellor (ex officio, non-voting)
20. Vice Chancellor of Instruction
21. Vice Chancellor of Administrative Affairs
22. Vice Chancellor of Student Services
23. Director of Vocational and Community Education
24. Chancellor’s Secretary (non-voting, recorder)

DOCUMENTATION:

The council discussions, recommendations, and decisions will be documented by the Chancellor's secretary via minutes and via PBC memos to the Chancellor and will be posted on the WCC website.
Dear President Greenwood,

In the past few weeks, you have been visiting our campuses, no doubt being warmly welcomed in local fashion. We may have all voiced the idea that assuming responsibilities of chief executive was difficult in the current context. And we did have certain expectations as we sat across from you at our various tables.

*We expected that you would live up to one of several qualifications you were described as having in the *April 30, 2009* press release, “...a deep appreciation of shared governance with the faculty.”*

As Senate Chairs, we have been hopeful that this is the case. However, the letter you issued last week is evidence that you do not have “a deep appreciation of shared governance with the faculty.”

*We expected that you would give the negotiating context a fair hearing.*

What we have found this week is that you are replicating the dissembling presented in earlier administrative summaries of a contract offer that pales by comparison with the current one.

*We expected that you would check your own facts.*

In effect you have promulgated the half-truths about the offer of tuition waivers as if they would be available to all eligible faculty dependents, a pay lag as bookkeeping alchemy without acknowledging the loss of a full paycheck in 2010 until separation from the University, the likelihood of losing the 5-4 workload in community colleges as a result of dropping the References section, and the loss of 60% employer premiums in the face of unprecedented increases in medical coverage. You accepted the substitution of 13 days of “paid leave” for days already in the duty period as a bonus. Your offer for minimum salary levels was $5000 below what the union has determined as fair market value at each rank.

*We expected that you would ground yourself in this institution and its working environment before speaking on behalf of the University,*

Unfortunately, you begin your reaction to the UHPA vote of direction to the Board of Directors with: “The university is disappointed in the UHPA vote to reject our contract offer.” Better to have begun with “I am disappointed,” which would have been more personal as well as politic and correct. The faculty and students are part of the university, too. It is one thing to voice your personal opinion and another to represent the University as a whole in responding to the UHPA vote. In fact, by speaking on behalf of the University during collective bargaining, you may have damaged good faith efforts to negotiate.

*We expected you would recognize that UH students and their communities are all of our priorities.*
Your assertion that you and the Board of Regents are their only sustainers is incorrect. Students, faculty, staff and administration are ALL part of the University and collectively, our UH students and their communities are our number one priority.

*You cannot exclude UHPA from the university community.*

Your email implies that in some fashion UHPA is not part of the university community but an external force dictating the direction of the institution separate and apart from the faculty. The faculty of this university created UHPA, fund UHPA, and provide the policy leadership and decisions that guide the organization’s actions. This recent vote by the UHPA membership is a testament to the organization’s commitment to represent the values and positions of this institution. UHPA stands on equal but different ground with the Senates in the governance system of our institution. Please read Item 1. “General statement guiding UHPA-Faculty Senate relations” in the Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Roles of the University of Hawaii Professional Assembly and the UH Faculty Senate. Clearly, UHPA, as well as Faculty Senates, are part of the university community.

We sincerely hope that recouping is an option in these circumstances. In the spirit of collegiality, we trust that you will pursue avenues that will allow collaboration.

Sincerely,
Dear President Greenwood,

We have all acknowledged these are difficult times, and this letter isn’t intended to send merely another salvo your way. While we appreciate our acknowledgement at the recent Board of Regents meeting of what you described as “inelegant” remarks from your previous letter, our concerns about the advocacy for the future of the UH system remain. As evidenced by the testimony at the same October regents meeting, these are concerns shared by ALL sectors of the university.

Our concerns center on how we can meet our obligations to our students and the future of the state if the current climate degenerates into adversarial name-calling and loaded rhetoric. As the ASUH president pointed out, none of this helps the university or current negotiations. It also might leave students wondering who is really protecting THEIR interests.

Our concerns and our reaction to your earlier letter, sadly, reflect a disappointment that you chose language that was divisive. When you visited our campuses, you met with our faculty senates and said, “I’ve been a faculty member all my life.” However, at some level, even as an administrator new to the UH system, you must have known that your remarks could be interpreted as high-handed and patronizing to those of us in the classroom. Instead, it seems as though they were written to portray the administration and the regents in the best possible light while denigrating the faculty. These contract negotiations cannot be about who wins the public relations wars.

Our concern is that our counterproposals at the bargaining table haven’t been given due consideration and that whatever gains have been made in recent years to strengthen the university system, to help students move ahead in their careers and to retain good faculty will be lost as the state scrambles to close its budget deficit. In the face of record enrollments, it seems someone needs to be saying there must be a better way than to continue to cut education. We can join as a collective voice, but we’d like to think that you will lead that charge.

Our students are telling us daily of their concerns as they try to find open classes to fulfill their requirements or wonder if there will be jobs when they graduate. They see their education as a path of hope in the face of often challenging personal circumstances. They also worry that the quality of their education will be compromised as good faculty leave the UH system. The UHPA vote to reject the proposal was a message that we hear their concerns for the future of higher education. As chairs of our respective faculty senates, we need to have confidence that you, the Board of Regents and the UH administration hear that message, too.

We hope we can move forward in a way that keeps the lines of communication open.