To: Doug Dykstra  
From: David Mongold  
Subject: Consultant’s Report on the GSIEC Evaluation  
Date: January 10, 2012

Doug:

Please find the consultant’s report attached.

I mentioned to Jan that I would be more than willing to meet with members of the GSIEC subcommittee or other interested parties to discuss any issues pertaining to this project or to answer any questions.

I would also like to meet with you at some point to provide some additional comments and suggestions.

I thank you for the opportunity to be of service and hope you find the results valuable to your on-going efforts to improve governance at the College.

With fond Aloha
THE GSIEC EVALUATION PROCESS AT
WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
REPORT OF THE CONSULTANT

JANUARY 2012
THE GSIEC EVALUATION PROCESS AT WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Windward Community College currently conducts an evaluation of senior administrators and faculty using a self-assessment process that goes by the acronym GSIEC. The process is managed by a subcommittee of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. The process was developed in response to a recommendation made by the ACCJC, the body that accredits the college. The process has been in place for several years. A consultant was hired to evaluate the process and make recommendations for improvement. This document provides the results of that evaluation.

Over a period of six weeks, a series of one-on-one interviews were conducted with faculty and administrators to gather perceptions about the evaluation process. In addition, material posted on the campus websites was reviewed along with external material pertaining to community college governance. This information was used to inform the analysis.

The overall evaluation process consists of three stages. The first is the collection of perceptions about unit performance from faculty and staff. This step makes use of surveys, consisting of questions with likert scale structured responses. Surveys are distributed to both members of the units being evaluated as well as non-members. The results of the surveys are compiled by the staff of the institutional research unit and distributed to the personnel conducting the self-assessments. Stage two is the completion of the self-assessment. This process is supported by the results of the perception surveys. The intent of this stage is to identify strengths and weaknesses in unit performance and to identify goals for improvement. These goals are to be supported by measurable outcomes. The third stage is the distribution of the results of the self-assessment to the campus community, along with on-going monitoring of unit performance. The long range goal of this overall evaluation process is to “institutionalize and promote effective governance of the College and to contribute to the culture of evidence regarding the improvement of governance of the College.”

In general, faculty felt that there was value in the GSIEC process. There was also general sentiment that the process could be improved. The primary areas needing improvement identified from the interviews were three: the perception surveys, which many people felt were vague and difficult to interpret; non-compliance with the self-assessment process by certain members of the senior administration; lack of adequate follow-through on the dissemination of process results.

The conclusion of the consultant is that the process as outlined in the GSIEC policies and procedures documents is a good one. Improvement of the perception surveys should be on-going. Commitment to the process by senior administration is crucial to its success. Better communication of process results with greater attention to stated goals will help to achieve the overall process objective.
I. REPORT CONTEXT

A. Characteristics of the Campus

Windward Community College has an attractive campus in a beautiful setting. The visitor is greeted by a very pleasing environment, with soft clouds caressing the slopes of the Ko'olau Pali, diffuse light, misted rain, a verdant lawn and lovely Spanish Colonial style architecture. Unlike other UH Community College campuses, there is a very distinct sense of open space. Parking is abundant and free of cost. Most recently, the campus has undertaken the construction of a new library, as well as repair work to roads and pathways. These activities contribute to the sense of a campus on the rise.

Windward became a part of the University of Hawai‘i system in 1972. For most of the years since the campus was founded, enrollment has remained between 1,400 to 1,800 students. Enrollment in recent years has been growing rapidly. Since fall 2005, enrollment has increased 8% annually, and 58% overall. Enrollment as of Fall 2011 measured approximately 2,700 students, a record high for the campus. The current strategic plan calls for enrollment to increase to 2,000 by the year 2015, but the campus has already exceeded that goal by a considerable margin. Over this same period, faculty and staff have increased by only about 16%, and instructional faculty positions have not increased at all.

B. Recent History

In July 2000, the long-time Provost of the campus stepped down. His replacement served for nine years before resigning in the aftermath of a vote of no-confidence from the faculty. The current Chancellor has been in office for a little over two years. There is a sense that this Chancellor is doing well so far, and the mood among the faculty is one of guarded optimism. However, there are certain issues with respect to faculty attitudes toward members of the administrative team that resemble the issues that led to the previous vote of no-confidence. Many faculty have been at the campus for 30 years or longer, going back to the very earliest days of the campus. Faculty have a strong sense of stewardship for the campus. The working relationship between the faculty and the administration is a key to moving forward to constructively address the changing environment and the associated challenges that confront the campus. The building of trust and confidence between faculty and the administration is a work in progress.

C. Report of the ACCJC

In January 2008, subsequent to a November 2007 site visit, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) placed Windward Community College on warning over governance issues. Deficiencies were noted in a letter, dated January 31, 2008, which outlined a series of recommendations. Recommendation 5 dealt with the refinement of governance structure policies and the implementation of an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of leaders and decision makers, with the goal of effecting institutional improvement. The latter part of this recommendation was the immediate impetus for the formation of the GSIEC subcommittee and the associated evaluation process.
D. Campus Response to the ACCJC Recommendation

The response of the campus to the WASC recommendation has been to form a subcommittee to manage the evaluation process. This Governance Subcommittee of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (GSIEC) is comprised of five senior faculty members and the Director of Institutional Research. The subcommittee has conducted two self-assessment cycles to date and is in the midst of the third and final planned assessment cycle for the current members of the subcommittee. At this time, the decision was made to evaluate the process and a consultant was brought in to conduct that evaluation. This report summarizes the results of that study.

II. GOVERNANCE MODEL

A. Types of Governance Models

Since both the GSIEC evaluation and the ACCJC recommendation concern the issue of campus governance, some general research on community college governance was warranted. Following Birnbaum (1988), there are four principal governance models to consider: Bureaucratic; Collegial; Political; Anarchical. Although the governance practices at any given campus are a blend of different types, one style will tend to predominate. Also, although the actual practices at a campus will defy a simple typology, the consultant found it useful for framing the analysis.

B. Governance Model at Windward

An evaluation of the governance processes at Windward Community College leads to the firm conclusion that Collegial or Shared Governance is the dominant style for the campus. Features that help to define the campus as such include:

- Faculty that have been employed for many years exercising a strong sense of stewardship
- A small total number of faculty existing within a close, rather tight-knit community
- Informal channels of communication via which information flows freely and quickly
- The existence of many committees which oversee a variety of activities
- Broad faculty participation in committee work
- A flat organizational structure
- Relative lack of codified governance rules

Within a shared governance structure, most activities should not require strict oversight by campus administration. Peer pressure should serve to regulate faculty behavior around shared institutional norms. Committee work will be free flowing, and information moving via informal channels of communication will be at least as important, if not more important, than information flow along formal channels. Decision making should be conducted in an open and transparent fashion, and should follow the development of broad consensus among administration and faculty. Administrative leadership
should center around setting and articulating goals and priorities, and in leading and participating in activities that reinforce shared institutional values. Ideally, administrators should act as the facilitators of faculty performance and excellence.

Clearly, the development or inculcation of governance processes that rely on rules and regulations (Bureaucratic governance) or the competition for resources among coalitions (Political governance) would be inappropriate governance practices at Windward Community College. Similarly, administrative behavior that relies on rules or that depends too heavily on hierarchical or status-based command and control authority likely would not be effective. The Collegial governance model is appropriate for the campus and no change in the basic governance structure is recommended.

C. Issues Surrounding Effective Governance

To gather information on faculty perceptions on governance, the GSIEC evaluation process and related issues, a total of twenty-six one-on-one interviews were conducted. Interviewees included members of the faculty senate, members of the GSIEC subcommittee, the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, Deans, Department Chairpersons and Committee Chairpersons. All persons interviewed were cordial, cooperative, and provided valuable information in an open and candid fashion.

The primary issue surrounding governance from the faculty perspective is the need to be heard. Problems in governance tend to occur when the faculty perceive that they are not being listened to by administration, when decisions are made by senior administration without adequate consultation, or when decisions are made that are contrary to faculty recommendation. These causes were repeatedly singled out as the primary reason why the no-confidence action was taken against the previous chancellor.

From the administrator’s perspective, there was less direct statement as to causes for problems in governance, but the sense that emerged was that there is a certain level of frustration among administrators with the degree to which communication with faculty is needed. Also, administrators singled out the very negative and in some cases hurtful comments that were made on various assessment documents, including both the 360 and the GSIEC perception surveys, as a problem.

Clearly, the creation of a climate of civility and trust between the administration and faculty is a work in progress, and a necessary pre-condition for effective communication and governance. Without such a climate, the repetition of the circumstances that led to the previous no-confidence action are likely to recur. There is a danger that a pattern could become established, where administrators wall themselves off from faculty in response to criticism or other perceived threats, leading to increased dissatisfaction from faculty accompanied by increasing criticism, which in turn leads to barriers in communication being raised higher, and so forth. Once such a vicious cycle becomes established, a crisis in confidence may become inevitable. If nothing else, the GSIEC evaluation process should be designed and conducted in such as way as to break such a vicious cycle or prevent its occurrence.
III. NOTABLE QUOTES

A. Some of the comments made by those interviewed are quoted here for reference / emphasis.

- What do we really want to know?
- It shouldn’t be a mystery what good governance looks like
- How honest can we be if they can figure out who we are?
- Windward goes by (the beat of) its own drum
- Evaluation is all the rage (in higher education)
- We’re assessing the heck out of this place right now
- (GSIEC is a) process run amok
- (The GSIEC process) holds management’s feet to the fire
- People want and need a voice
- Administrators do listen to input when it’s there

B. Notable passages from the research conducted for this study are presented here (see also Fryer and Lovas ³):

- A climate of civility and trust is essential to successful change
- The only difference between building blocks and stumbling blocks is how we use them
- Management is about doing things right; leadership is about doing the right things
- Leadership in governance means the creation of climates under which organizational participants want to contribute more than the bare minimum required of them in service to the institution’s purpose
- Shared governance can be defined as a mutual recognition of the interdependence among stakeholders for institutional decision making relating to mission, budget, teaching and research
- Effective governance requires a renewed sense of community based upon intensive, communication-rich interaction
- A key to a successful faculty-administration relationship is a sense of partnership capable of supporting a culture of shared enthusiasm

IV. SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS

A. GSIEC Subcommittee

In response to the ACCJC Recommendation 5, regarding the implementation of an annual evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of leaders and decision making leading to institutional improvement, the college formed a subcommittee of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. The title of the subcommittee was “Governance Subcommittee of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee” (GSIEC). This subcommittee was staffed by senior faculty, which was meant to ensure that the committee would be respected by faculty and staff. Creating the committee as a subcommittee of the standing
committee on institutional effectiveness (IEC) seemed logical. In turn, the IEC reports directly to the Chancellor.

According to the GSIEC Policies and Procedures document, the charge of the GSIEC subcommittee is to: 1) plan, oversee and ensure systematic, comprehensive and continual evaluation of leadership, decision-making and governance structures; 2) further the development of a culture of evidence; 3) maintain and communicate all materials and reports related to evaluating leadership, decision-making and governance structures. Concerns were expressed about the power of the GSIEC subcommittee to enforce compliance with the evaluation process and about potential problems associated with having the line of reporting authority ending ultimately with the Chancellor. Although ideally the GSIEC subcommittee should be located organizationally in such a way as to insulate it from potential political pressure, in the opinion of this writer there does not appear to have been any adverse consequence from positioning it within the IEC. Furthermore, as a general principle, any organizational development effort (such as the GSIEC evaluation) cannot succeed without the enthusiastic support of the Chief Executive Officer. If true, then there should be no adverse consequence of having the line of authority lead to the Chancellor, other than the more general problem of a moral hazard stemming from lack of support or deliberate manipulation (in which case the entire project would likely fail anyway). Ultimately, the final recourse of faculty would be to the vote of no confidence, which the evaluation process is designed to avoid. Consequently, once implemented, full and complete compliance with the GSIEC evaluation process is in the best interests of all concerned.

B. Self-Assessment Process

The self-assessment process consists of three steps. Step one involves the collection of perceptions from faculty and staff regarding the performance of administrators, faculty chairs, departments and other units subject to the evaluation. A survey instrument was developed, under the leadership of the social science faculty, to assist in this data gathering effort. Step two consists of the self-assessment activity performed by the administrators, faculty, committee chairs or others subject to it. A form was developed by the institutional research staff to facilitate this process. Step three involves communication of the results of the assessment to the college community, together with action plans oriented toward unit and institutional improvement.

Each step in this process presents difficulties. The survey gathering effort suffered from a number of problems, including low response rates and confusion over the interpretation of the survey questions, which some people found to be ambiguous. There were two sets of surveys for each unit being assessed, one for those who were members of the unit and one for those who were not members of the unit. Many people complained that this distinction was confusing and that, in the case of the non-member surveys, that they didn’t have any useful opinion to offer, due to lack of interaction.

For the self-assessment activity itself, there seemed to be a general lack of engagement on the part of the senior administration. This was apparent both from the comments of members of the GSIEC subcommittee and observations from faculty, as well as comments from senior administrators.
themselves. There seemed to be a general lack of engagement for committees being assessed, as well. Several people commented that the assessments were presented once at a committee staff meeting and then never seen again. In the case of department chairs, there was the observed problem that, due to the frequent turnover in the position (faculty rotate out after two years), the assessment often would not address the current chair, but rather the person recently departed. Chairpersons found writing the assessment about the previous chairperson to be both difficult and inappropriate.

Finally, there seemed to be little in the way of follow-up activity to the evaluations once completed. Ideally, the evaluation should involve frank and candid assessment of achievements and failures, strengths and weaknesses, with a detailed action plan describing how the person / unit will address any issues or problems in the ensuing year. This plan should be communicated rigorously along multiple channels of communication. There didn’t appear to be much evidence that anything in the way of such communication was taking place. Note that the mere posting of results to a website, although perhaps adhering to the letter of compliance, is insufficient to achieve the stated process objectives.

C. Perception Surveys

There were several faculty members who demonstrated keen interest in the surveys and in taking steps to address problems associated with them. In response to this interest, a meeting was held to discuss the surveys and brainstorm new ideas. The discussion was lively and fruitful, although no consensus on how to proceed was reached. Among the ideas developed were: reducing the number of questions; eliminating the member / non-member distinction; using open-ended questions allowing for written responses rather than employing a likert scale for responses; framing the questions so that they measure desired leadership qualities more directly; supplementing the survey with additional evidence gathering techniques, such as focus groups or interviews. There was broad agreement that a survey of some type should remain the backbone of the perception gathering step.

D. The 360

A form of evaluation already in place at the University is the 360. This annual evaluation of executives is a requirement of University Board of Regents policy. At Windward Community College, those subject to the 360 include: the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellors for Academic Affairs, Administrative Affairs and Student Affairs, Deans I and II and the Director of the Occupational Training Center. One obvious issue with the GSIEC self-assessment process is that, at least to some degree, it may duplicate the 360. Several of the senior administrators commented that the 360 rendered the GSIEC evaluation redundant.

From the faculty perspective, the difficulties with the 360 are three: first, that the respondents can be hand-picked by the person subject to the assessment, which undermines the validity of the responses; second, that the results are private and not made available widely, which promotes the perception that the process is secretive; and third, that any disciplinary action would be the province of the Chancellor alone, which promotes the perception that the Chancellor may act to shield senior staff. Furthermore,
the general consensus is that the results of the 360 cannot be made public and therefore the 360 is, by itself, insufficient to address the concerns of the ACCJC recommendation.

E. Closing the Loop

Clearly, a critical part of any evaluation is the communication of the results. Despite problems with the surveys and self-assessment activities, this last step would appear to be the weakest link in the overall process at present. The question should be asked as to whether the GSIEC evaluation is intended merely to satisfy the recommendation of the ACCJC, or whether there is an earnest interest on the part of administration, faculty and staff to institutionalize the process. As mentioned previously, the GSIEC evaluation is currently in the third and final year of the planned cycle. Much useful information has come from the process, especially regarding the conduct of the self-assessment activity as well as what has been revealed about the strengths and weaknesses in the governance processes of the college. This work creates a foundation of knowledge and experience upon which to build a more effective process.

V. MOVING FORWARD

A. Should the GSIEC Continue?

As mentioned previously, two important questions that should be addressed at this point are one, whether or not the GSIEC evaluation has fulfilled the purpose for which it was created and two, whether or not it should be continued. Certainly the process represents prima facie evidence of an earnest effort on the part of campus faculty and administration to address the ACCJC Recommendation 5. However, whether or not the ACCJC team would be satisfied with the progress made thus far is an open question. If the goal is to effect institutional improvement then the process probably has not yielded much fruit to this point, though the potential to do so is apparent. If the goal is to institutionalize the process, then that has yet to be firmly established. Given that there is another WASC accreditation team visit forthcoming in 2012, disbanding the process at this time would appear unwise. Therefore the recommendation of this writer is that the process be continued for another planning cycle.

B. Organization of the GSIEC

Assuming the self-assessment process will continue, the next question to ask is how to organize it – whether to re-staff the GSIEC subcommittee and, if so, where to locate it. If enough senior faculty can be recruited to serve on the subcommittee, then reforming the subcommittee under the IEC standing committee would appear to be reasonable. A key issue for the GSIEC subcommittee is to what extent it will be empowered with the ability to overcome resistance to participation, and to what extent it will be willing to exercise that authority. Without full and complete compliance, the self-assessment process will lack effectiveness. As noted previously, there is the perception among the faculty that senior administrators have failed to comply with the self-assessment. There also appears to be other units that have gone through the motions merely. For faculty, judicious application of peer pressure would seem to be the best means to marshal compliance. For senior administrators, encouragement from the
Chancellor would appear to be the best solution. Recourse to outside agency for oversight or enforcement, even if possible, is not recommended and should be avoided.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. The Evaluation Process

The general consensus on the GSIEC evaluation process among the faculty is that the intent is good. Among the senior administrators there appears to be less enthusiasm, which is probably due to apparent redundancy with the 360. Of course, with a process such as the GSIEC evaluation, performing the activity with less than complete commitment is probably worse than not doing it at all, since conducting the activity raises expectations. Furthermore, non-compliance, especially from the senior administration, will damage morale and may provide added impetus for more severe action by faculty. Finally, if problems are exposed by the evaluations but no steps taken to address them, or if those steps are inadequate or perceived to be inadequate, that development would likely contribute to increasing friction between faculty and the administration.

The recommendation of this writer is that the GSIEC evaluation process continue, but that the issues and deficiencies needing to be addressed be given serious thought by all concerned and steps taken to address them. These issues include: redesign of the survey instrument; provision of adequate resources for institutional research support; increased commitment by senior administrators; better communication of process results and associated action plans.

B. Evidence Gathering - Surveys

As noted previously, there are faculty members with strong feelings and opinions about the perception surveys currently in use. To redesign the survey instrument after several years of use seems to be a reasonable expectation, both to address perceived flaws and to keep it fresh. Whether or not the faculty and staff have the expertise to re-develop the survey is an open question. Also, having the survey redone “in-house” may serve to exacerbate tensions. The recommendation of this writer is that the survey be revised, preferably with guidance from an external consultant who is an expert on survey design.

What form the survey takes is not, in the opinion of this writer, a question of supreme importance. Whether the revised survey makes use of a likert scale, open-ended responses or some other scheme is not a crucial issue. Any instrument that is developed will, no doubt, contain imperfections. Those responsible for implementing the survey should be willing to consider suggestions for improvement on a routine basis. Perhaps the committee for survey design (or whatever group is charged with revising the instrument) can conduct an annual review to make needed changes. In general, the survey should be short, concise, focused on the key issues and easy to interpret (unambiguous).
Some provision for open-ended responses on the survey, either to address specific questions or as a summary to the entire survey, seems reasonable. However, in the interest of civility, surveys with responses that are deemed, in the opinion of the GSIEC subcommittee, to be mean-spirited, personal or vicious in nature should be considered as outliers and discarded. The intent of the GSIEC subcommittee to take this action should be communicated to all survey respondents with emphasis. As a consequence, those with axes to grind may decide to abstain from the process entirely, but the message should be clear that such behavior is unconstructive and will not be tolerated. In such cases, the responsibility for policing the process rests with the GSIEC subcommittee.

This writer favors the elimination of the member / non-member distinction in the surveys. Instead, the surveys might make use of a pool of respondents, similar to the manner in which the 360 is conducted. The pool of respondents would be assigned by the GSIEC subcommittee, with sufficient breadth to provide adequate representation of the College community. The use of pools would enable the committee to conduct follow-up with respondents, which would hopefully increase response rates. Also, the use of pools would allow the respondent lists to be managed in such a way as to avoid overburdening any given individual and to ensure that the surveys are directed toward people who can provide meaningful input. Of course, the GSIEC subcommittee would exercise confidentiality to protect the identity of the respondents.

C. Scope of Assessment Activity

How broadly the evaluation activity should be conducted is another matter to be decided. Clearly there is a desire to simplify and streamline the activity, both to make the results more focused and to ease the processing and reporting burden on staff. One way to help determine the scope of the activity is to decide for which units the evaluation is most relevant. The relevance question can then be used to develop a hierarchy of need. In the opinion of this writer, the greatest relevance of the activity is for the senior administration. Level I would include the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors. Level II would be the Deans of Division I and II. Level III would be the Faculty Senate, and Level IV would be Standing Committees. Any other units of interest (including Department Chairs) would be Level V. Assessment activity should begin at the top and move down the levels as resources permit. If certain units are not assessed in a given year, or if assessing all the units every year is deemed to be impractical, units can be placed on a rotating schedule. In any case, all units should be covered at least once every three years.

Clearly the most important use of the evaluation, besides satisfying the ACCJC recommendation, is to ease tension between the faculty and the senior administration. The evaluation presents an opportunity for the senior administration to engage and address concerns of the faculty, and to exercise leadership. In order to make this activity successful, senior administrators must be committed. A lack of commitment may very well doom the entire process to failure. Note that University policy regarding the 360 (UHCCP #9.202 Executive Employees Performance Evaluation) allows the executive employees the option of substituting another evaluation, such as the GSIEC evaluation process, for the 360. Furthermore, although privacy concerns may limit the disclosure of the specific contents of the 360 confidential assessments, the policy does not appear to prohibit publication of the statements of
professional and administrative objectives required of executives at the beginning of the year nor the end of the year evaluations, as outlined under section IV. Evaluation Procedure (see Appendix A for a copy of the policy). The crucial element is that issues and problems be faced and that plans going forward outline how these issues will be addressed.

Another suggestion that should be considered is the use of rubrics to delineate performance standards for the units. Such rubrics would serve as guides for defining superior performance, for completing the perception surveys and conducting the self-assessments. Responsibility for developing the rubrics would rest with the units being assessed, subject to the review of the GSIEC subcommittee. The rubrics should be developed at the beginning of the year, concomitant with the promulgation of unit goal statements and action plans. Development of such rubrics would be a useful exercise for all units subject to the self-assessment.

D. Ensuring Compliance

In order for the evaluation to be useful, each step in the process must be completed thoroughly. Using a pool of respondents for the perception surveys / evidence gathering should help boost the response rates by enabling the GSIEC subcommittee to conduct follow-up. Similarly, there should be sufficient follow-up to the self-assessments to assure quality and completion. This matter is more delicate, because of the political position of the committee members within the organization (even if senior level tenured faculty), and because of the potential difficulties when dealing with non-compliance or poor quality from faculty or administrators. Training, the use of tutorials and the provision of high quality examples is recommended. The GSIEC subcommittee also should be willing to send self-assessments back for further work when required, and to provide guidance as needed. However, although the subcommittee can and should work with faculty and administrators to ensure compliance and quality, the power of the subcommittee is limited, especially vis-à-vis senior level administrators. Responsibility for ensuring compliance or for managing the potential repercussions of non-compliance would have to be handled at a higher level within the organization, ultimately by the Chancellor’s office.

E. Effective Communication

Once the self-assessments have been completed and approved by the GSIEC subcommittee, they should be widely disseminated. The content that is most important would pertain to issues and / or problems that occurred in the previous period and the unit plans for addressing them. Also, although posting of the results to a website (such as the GSIEC website) is a good idea, doing so probably is not sufficient to provide adequate coverage. Plans and goals should be discussed at unit meetings, posted to unit websites, distributed in print and made available by electronic media, such as e-mail. Results should also be discussed or presented at general college-wide meetings or colloquia. In general, any and all available channels of communication should be exploited. Although doing so may be contrary to the habits of unit leaders, and does entail some risk, the stakes for not doing so are also quite high.
This last step in the evaluation process is really the most important single element, and constitutes a litmus test for the college. Can the college develop and implement an effective communication process between administrators, faculty and staff? Can faculty and staff engage with administrators (and with one another) in civil public discourse that leads to the creation of an effective working relationship? Although an evaluation process, such as the GSIEC, is not necessary nor sufficient for such conduct to occur, it does present an opportunity to make progress toward the important goal of creating a genuine partnership.

F. Training and Staffing

Opportunities for training appear at each step in the evaluation process. As mentioned previously, the use of outside expertise in survey design is recommended. In addition, individuals have expressed difficulty in interpreting survey questions or in knowing how to properly answer questions for units with which they have little or no involvement. Others have indicated frustration in interpreting the survey results or in performing the self-assessments. These points in the process require the delivery of instruction and guidance, in the form of tutorials, examples, or hands-on training. The entire process would be improved if such services were made available in a more comprehensive way. The availability of one-on-one guidance in conducting the self-assessments and in working through the results to action plans and communication is especially recommended. The provision of adequate resources to these processes would serve as an indication of a strong commitment by the administration to the process.

Being an administrator, manager or leader requires a different or at least supplemental set of skills from those of an effective teacher or researcher. Unfortunately, whether or not an individual possesses the requisite skills often does not become apparent until after the person is on the job. Also, the predilection in higher education toward hiring faculty for senior positions, as opposed to professional managers, sometimes works against the organization. However, there is nothing to prevent individuals from acquiring management training, even after securing a senior staff position. The use of training courses, workshops, suggested reading lists or other training regimen to help prepare leaders for their roles is highly recommended. Finally, any person assuming a senior level position for the first time should be mentored by someone with experience, preferable someone familiar with the organization, its history and culture. The value of such a mentoring relationship in avoiding miss-steps and hastening the journey down the learning curve should prove considerable.

G. Other Considerations

A college such as Windward Community College has a relatively small faculty and staff, where meeting and getting to know everyone in the organization is still possible. In such a situation, the cultural norms should be well understood and should be largely self-reinforcing. There is always going to be a certain tension between those who want to keep things the way they are, adhering to well-established behavioral or cultural norms, and those who advocate change. This condition is especially true when environmental factors, such as changing needs from the surrounding community, undergo a transition or begin to transform more rapidly, as may be happening at the present time.
With a relatively flat organizational structure, the importance of senior administration being a “good fit” to the organizational culture cannot be overstressed. Certainly this does not mean that individuals with new ideas or different ways of communicating or making decisions cannot be successful. When times are changing the need for proactive leadership and the skills associated with it becomes more acute. However, that said, the college should pay special attention to ensuring that those selected for key positions have a good understanding and acceptance of the organizational culture and represent a “good fit” for the college. Faculty demands of senior staff are considerable, and to be successful in a senior level position requires superior “people” skills, especially patience, active listening, emotional maturity, the ability to communicate effectively, and a willingness to face and accept criticism, whether or not it is deserved. Also, senior administrators should consider carefully before acting against the recommendation on hiring presented by a faculty led search committee.

VII. SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A. Evaluation / Assessment of Decision Making Processes

This study has been concerned primarily with the GSI EC evaluation process, with some foray into the subject of college governance. One area that is central to the conduct of governance is decision making: how decisions are made; who makes which decisions; how decisions are implemented. Given the importance of decision making in governance, this area is deserving of further detailed examination. The conduct of such a study was beyond the scope of this present effort and is recommended as a follow-up activity. To do so would require comprehensive data collection and analysis, and would include activities such as interviews with faculty and staff, observation of meetings at which issues are discussed and decisions made, examination of the history of past decisions and their consequences, and so forth. From such a study the pattern of decision making could be explicated, with the goal of determining potential points of conflict and how to remove them. Improved or clarified decision making processes may help to reduce conflict and to improve overall college governance.

B. Access and Communication

With a flat organizational structure, access to faculty and senior administrators should be freely available at Windward Community College. Indeed, such did appear to be the case to this writer. However, access may be as much a matter of perception as of fact. Also, merely being present and available for consultation is not the same as genuine access, especially if the result of interaction is a failure to communicate. The recommendation of this writer is that senior level administrators be more proactive in the communication process. They should make the effort to reach out to faculty and staff. Some ideas include regular weekly gatherings, such as a coffee hour, or the setting aside of regular office hours to meet with faculty and staff. The campus could make use of an annual or semi-annual town hall style meeting, led by the Chancellor, where organizational plans could be reviewed, progress reports presented and open-ended discussions conducted. For their part, faculty should ensure that the such meetings be conducted with civility and respect. As stated previously, the responsibility for policing their own rests with the faculty and the judicious use of peer pressure.
Increased communication obviously involves some risk and the results can go either toward increased partnership or increased estrangement. Some may feel that restraining from any communication at least preserves the peace. But the situation at Windward Community College has progressed to the point where a mutual silence is no longer an acceptable solution.

C. Alignment of Processes with Organizational Values

What are the enduring values at Windward Community College? Some are obvious, such as commitment to the educational mission and service to the surrounding community. Others might include such values as openness, honesty, patience, a commitment to community, and respect in interpersonal communication. In the opinion of this writer, the most fundamental aspect of the college is the grounding in the local landscape. Windward CC is located in a beautiful place, with gentle winds, verdant green colors and soft light. As noted previously, it is a good place for a college in that it encourages the inward turn toward reflection and increased self-awareness. The institutional values should reflect these qualities that come from the landscape, and that in many ways are uniquely Hawaiian. This thought can be expressed by the Hawaiian language phrase Ola i ka Honua (life from the land; spiritual well-being from the place).

Explicit identification of the organizational values of the college is recommended. (Note that the core values listed in the strategic plan are not quite the same thing as intended here. For example, although “diversity” is a goal of the strategic plan, a value along these same lines might be “tolerance and understanding of cultural differences.” Values in this sense should have the objective of informing behavior and guiding decision making.) This activity should be campus-wide but could be led by the IEC. Once these values have been identified they should be widely publicized. The idea is to align behavior with these values, so that when issues are debated, decisions made, or resources allocated, these steps are taken in harmony with those values upon which the college community has agreed. Unlike a mission statement, or the core values in the strategic plan, which are more general statements, these organizational values should be made quite specific and with the goal of providing a moral compass.

As the college moves to increase the presence on campus of and service to the Hawaiian community, there will be potential points of conflict. Not the least of these could be over the architecture, which as noted is of the Spanish colonial flavor. Integrating the need for an increased Hawaiian sense of place with the existing architectural elements will be an interesting test for the college. Constructing a center for Hawaiian studies apart from the other buildings, in order to preserve the integrity of each style, is one potential solution, but hopefully an alternate solution can be found which better represents the goal of genuine integration. Each cultural tradition has something unique and valuable to offer. The best solutions will be ones that make of our diversity a cultural and institutional strength.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Windward Community College is a wonderful place to pursue higher education, and a great place to work. The location is beautiful, the atmosphere serene and the sense of community strong. Faculty are deeply committed to the educational mission and have a keen sense of stewardship of the organization. Certain frictions between faculty and administration have led to conflicts in the past, but steps have been taken toward easing tensions and creating more meaningful dialog. One of these has been the development of the GSIEC evaluation process. However, with an impending site visit by the WASC accreditation team, there is a certain nervousness about whether or not these steps will be adequate to avoid intervention by the ACCJC. This study has been undertaken with the goal of assessing the current state of the GSIEC evaluation process in the context of college governance with the goal of providing useful recommendations toward further improvement.

The GSIEC evaluation process is currently in the final year of the planned cycle. Certain deficiencies have become apparent, but there is a general perception that the process has merit and should be continued. As part of the preparation for the next cycle, a number of steps will be required, including the reformation of the GSIEC subcommittee and the redesign of the perception surveys that form the backbone of the evidence gathering step. Other decisions include: whether or not to continue to locate the GSIEC as a subcommittee of the IEC; whether or not to continue to assign the workload associated with processing the surveys and assessments to the Institutional Research Office, and if so, whether additional resources can be made available; delineation of the scope of the assessment activity, including possible rotational scheduling; development of rubrics to delineate performance standards; provision of training resources to assist the self-assessment activity; organization of a more comprehensive post-assessment communication process. Each of the recommendations made should help to improve the process but may require additional resources and collectively represent a greater level of institutional commitment.

Commitment is really the key to the success of this project. Although the general sense of this writer was that faculty are committed to the evaluation process and are genuine in their interest to seek accommodation to the senior administration, there was a noticeable measure of resistance to the process by some members of the senior administration. Why this resistance might exist is not entirely clear. For some the GSIEC evaluation may appear to be redundant, since the senior administrators are already subject to the 360. Fatigue from what may appear to be endless assessment activity may also be an issue. Frustration on the part of senior administrators with faculty involvement at every level of decision making also could be an issue. As mentioned previously, a study to evaluate the decision making processes at the college might serve to better delineate which decisions are the province of the senior administration and which require participation from faculty. Explicit delineation of agreed upon parameters for decision making could be an important step toward reducing potential points of conflict. In any case, without genuine and complete commitment on the part of the senior administration to the evaluation processes, whether it be the GSIEC, the 360 or some combination of the two, the process cannot succeed. Indeed, conducting such an evaluation process raises the stakes considerably, so that
any decision to go forward with such a process necessitates adequate follow through. Not to do so invites conflict.

Many of the activities which take place in any organization have a symbolic dimension. Indeed, in many cases the symbolic value is more important than more ostensibly tangible results. The role of a leader in an organization, especially the senior leader, is to perform these symbolic activities or rituals for the benefit of the group. In ancient times, such activities may have included overtly religious rituals, such as blood sacrifice or other ritual acts of expiation. In contemporary times, such activities might include a college fair, a charity softball tournament, a graduation ceremony or the solemn observance of a holiday tradition. The important point is that we moderns are not without our rituals, and these rituals carry important symbolic value and are important for the harmonious functioning of the organization. One task of leadership is to identify areas of institutional need and to utilize existing activities or to develop new ones to provide the necessary symbolic or ritual action, the goal of which is the demonstration and reinforcement of institutional values and the harmonizing of individual behavior around shared norms.

One way of looking at the GSIEC evaluation process is that it represents such an activity, and that the symbolic dimension that it carries is as least as important as any more measurable outcomes. Senior faculty and administrative leaders must become, in effect, the high priests of these activities. They must carry the mantle of leadership with genuine commitment, understanding that the symbolic gestures they make carry important meaning and have real repercussions for the organization. This is not to imply that the evaluation and self-assessment activities are symbolic merely, but rather to impress upon the leadership the necessity of thinking seriously about such symbolic content and participating in such activities as willing actors. Without this commitment, the members of the college may have to resign themselves to the ritual of expiation expressed in the vote of no-confidence. Such an outcome would be unfortunate, because although the no confidence vote may achieve the objective of revitalizing the leadership, it does so at the expense of considerable damage to morale and operational effectiveness. A better and more noble path is available, should those concerned decide to follow it. The sincere hope of this writer is that they will choose to do so.

1 “Policies and Procedure for the Governance Subcommittee of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (GSIEC);” February 12, 2009; p. 36.


4 “Policies and Procedure for the Governance Subcommittee of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (GSIEC);” February 12, 2009; p. 35.
I. Purpose

Board of Regents Policy requires that all Executive employees be evaluated annually for performance and accomplishments based on criteria established by the President. Within this broad requirement, supervisors of Executive employees have the option of utilizing their own evaluation tool. The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistency within the Community Colleges and to make planning and evaluation by objectives an integral part of our academic and administrative management and assessment process. This policy establishes a coordinated performance evaluation process within the Community College System that meets the requirements of the Board of Regents and Executive Policies as well as Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Accreditation Standards.

II. Related University Policies

A. Board of Regents Policy, Section 9-14, Executive Personnel Policies (http://www.hawaii.edu/offices/bor/policy/borpch9.pdf)


III. Responsibilities

Community Colleges Director of Human Resources and Chancellors are responsible for ensuring that all involved individuals comply with this policy.

IV. Evaluation Procedure

A. Each year, at the beginning of the evaluation period, the Executive employee will provide a statement of professional and administrative objectives for that year. These goals should also include long-term objectives which serve as a basis for incremental planning.

B. At the end of the evaluation period, the Executive employee will provide a self-assessment to his/her supervisor on the progress made toward goals and strategic outcomes, and accomplishments during the past year in relation to the goals and objectives agreed upon at the beginning of the year.
C. The evaluation of the Executive employee will include confidential assessments and feedback from peers, constituents, and subordinates or personnel within the responsibility of the Executive employee being evaluated.

1. The supervisor of the Executive employee will identify the evaluators for each of the three categories. The Executive employee being evaluated may then add evaluators for each category, depending on specific projects they may have worked on during the past year.

2. There shall be at least ten (10) evaluators identified for each category; however, there may be exceptions, such as when an Executive employee has less than ten subordinates or personnel under his/her responsibility. In those cases where there are insufficient number of evaluators who respond within a certain category, those results will be combined with another category in order to ensure confidentiality of the evaluator.

3. Evaluators for Chancellors and Associate Vice Presidents shall include, but are not limited to, the following:
   a. Subordinates, defined as all Executive employees on their campuses or in their units, plus all direct reports;
   b. Peers, defined as all Chancellors and Associate Vice Presidents; and
   c. Constituents, defined as individuals from governance groups such as Faculty Senate, Student Government, Community Council, Staff Council, or other campus employees or community members who they have working relationships with. In addition to the above, the Executive employee may add other evaluators to each group with the consent of their supervisor.

4. Evaluators for all other Executive employees shall include, but are not limited to, the following:
   a. Subordinates, defined as all executive employees and other staff under their direct supervision;
   b. Peers, defined as other Executive employees on their campuses or in their units; and
   c. Constituents, defined as individuals from governance groups such as Faculty Senate, Student Government, Community Council, Staff Council, or other campus employees or community members who they have working relationships with. In addition to the above, the Executive employee may add other evaluators to each group with the consent of their supervisor.

5. The confidential summaries of the assessments will be provided to the supervisor who will then discuss the results with the Executive employee being evaluated.
D. The evaluation of Chancellors shall include an assessment of their college’s progress in meeting their respective strategic outcomes. The Chancellor may extend this assessment to other staff as appropriate.

V. Recisions

None