PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

(A DRAFT CONCEPT PAPER)

KAPI'OLANI COMMUNITY COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I

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Submitted to the PPAC, Kapi'olani Community College
by
Salvatore Lanzilotti (ssl@hawaii.edu)
for
Interim Chancellor Leon Richards

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Pathways to Success

Many students enter Kapi‘olani Community College (the College) with degree and transfer aspirations but leave before meeting the requirements for either. The responsibility to attain these goals ultimately lies with the student. However, there are institutional factors that can either aid or hinder goal attainment. While an institution may offer a wide variety of resources and programs, to the uninformed and unprepared student these resources can be a source of confusion instead of help. For example, Figure 1., KCC Requirements & Support Programs, & Transfer Requirements to UHM/BBA, includes, in no particular order, the College’s requirements for the Associate of Arts (AA) Degree, the pre-business program requirements that allow for transfer to the University of Hawai‘i Manoa (UHM) College of Business, for entry into the Bachelor Degree in Business Administration (BBA) program, and many of the support services and programs available through the College.

Sorting out which information to attend to and which to ignore, in essence trying to create order out of what may be perceived as chaos, can be overwhelming to a student who feels out of place on a college campus and who may have life issues needing attention and resolution. In Figure 2., KCC Pre-Business AA to UHM/BBA Pathway and Support Programs, information is organized so that there is a clearly defined academic pathway for student transfer to the UHM College of Business Administration (see above the Student line). In addition, Figure 2., shows services (below the Student line) available to support student persistence and improve retention rate so as to increase the probability that AA/AS Degree and transfer goals will be attained.

Finally, above and beyond providing the pathway and environment in which students can master the requirements of a specific subject area, while removing obstacles to education in their personal lives, the College has the mission and responsibility to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. As individuals enter into new careers at multiple points throughout their lives and as individuals over age 55 represent progressively larger proportions of the workforce, the knowledge and skills needed for sustained employability are less fixed and static and more flexible and dynamic. The College has identified General Education Academic Skill Standards, i.e., written communication, critical thinking, information retrieval and technology, quantitative reasoning, oral communication, and understanding self and community as the minimum learning outcomes expected of “21st century students” who have completed their general education experiences. The expectation is that each course will address not only the content-based outcomes of the course and the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudinal outcomes relating to a specific field of study, but also at least one of the skill standards outcomes.

To assure that faculty and staff integrate the general education academic skill standards into the teaching of their content area, the College has developed:

1) curricular infrastructure that allows for providing various potentially transformative experiences through cross-curricular programs, such as writing across the curriculum and thinking and reasoning emphasis, information technology emphasis, mathematics across the curriculum emphasis, international education, Malama Hawai‘i, and service-learning;

2) teaching/learning tools and activities, such as internships, research projects, capstone courses, context/real world focus, projects, collaborative teaching and assignments, and assessment techniques which may include the use of eportfolios, rubrics, and other forms of student evaluation, especially those that allow students to develop the ability to self-evaluate; and

3) an institutionalized focus for faculty/staff development, the Center for Excellence in Learning, Teaching, and Technology (CELT), which functions as an one-stop support for improving learning, especially through the development and use of the aforementioned emphases, programs, and activities.

Accordingly, College has begun to remove the mystery out of the education process for the student by improving and developing pathways to degrees through the organization and integration of curricular
infrastructure and curriculum design, pedagogical innovation, summative and formative assessment, and focused support services into a system that leads to a degree and seamless transfer. Figure 3., KCC/Pre-Business AA to UHM/BBA Purposeful Pathway, illustrates the relationship between Student Support Services, an academic pathway to the UHM College of Business and the College’s curricular infrastructure. Figure 3. suggests a goal, i.e., at the interface between the student and the College, the student should experience an orchestrated resonance of intentional and integrated learning through established pathways, rather than the fractured dissonance of programs, activities, expectations, and requirements.

This paper addresses the College’s need to develop purposeful pathways that allow students to prepare for their future, i.e., for their ever evolving and revolving roles as students, workers, parents, and citizens of the 21st century, with the least amount of resistance.

Academic and Career Pathways: Coherent and Articulated

According to Warford, a pathway is a coherent, articulated sequence of rigorous academic and career courses, commencing in the ninth grade and leading to an associate degree, and/or an industry-recognized certificate or licensure, and/or a baccalaureate degree and beyond.1 Although community colleges can implement pathway approaches in several transition points across the education continuum this document will focus on establishing pathways linking academic work in two-year and four-year degrees.

Coherence denotes the systematic or logical connection within a course and between a series of courses so that the student taking those courses can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to meet rigorous baccalaureate and career standards. Coherence allows a program to define expected outcomes based on the level of knowledge or skill in an area from novice to expert and measure these outcomes through direct evidence of learning. Issues of coherency may dictate curriculum reform, for example, when existing curriculum or learning outcomes are not consistent with advances in a field and/or essential learning outcomes needed at a particular level of expertise in an area of study. Coherency connotes communication and collaboration between faculty in order to establish and implement a developmentally sound curriculum design. Obviously, coherence between courses in each discipline is an essential component for transfer from a two year to four year institution.

Rifkin’s list of key elements for the smooth and efficient transfer of students and their academic credits to and from two- and four-year colleges and universities includes:

1) collaboration
2) articulation agreements,
3) curriculum reform,
4) student support services,
5) technical support and
6) institutional research.2

Articulation addresses the issue of agreement between institutions concerning the established coherence, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed in individual courses, or series of courses in one institution are at least equal to those obtained in the courses or series of courses deemed to be the same in the other institution. It is the responsibility of these institutions to negotiate fair and reasonable articulation agreements between themselves for the sake of their students and the efficient use of resources. Both coherence and articulation rely fundamentally on collaboration between faculty and staff within and between institutions, mandating partnerships that drive planning and implementation. Thus, pathways are the systemic frameworks that connect educational programs within and between educational institutions at the same and different levels.
Tinto states that students are more likely to persist and graduate in settings that provide clear and consistent information about institutional requirements and effective advising about the choices students have regarding their programs of study and future career goals. The Illinois Articulation Initiative is a statewide program in which two-and four-year faculty collaborated, as equal partners, on the content of the statewide core general education curriculum. Students who take this package of coursework are assured their credits will satisfy the general education requirements at the institution to which they transfer. The Illinois Articulation Initiative also addressed the problem of credits accepted at the institution versus credits applied to a major. If students follow a prescribed major’s curriculum and complete the general education core curriculum, their credits in the major will transfer.

On May 10, 2007, Kapiʻolani Community College and the University of Hawaiʻi at Manoa (UHM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Degree Pathway Partnership Agreement, called Kaʻieʻie. Kaʻieʻie is a dual-enrollment, dual-admission program for students pursuing their first four-year undergraduate degree who are accepted at UHM but choose to begin their degree at KCC. Eligibility for Kaʻieʻie is determined by two sets of criteria: 1. Students who are eligible for acceptance at UHM upon admission (i.e., these students may choose to be accepted at UHM, pay the application fees, but declare KCC their home institution and take their courses at KCC); and 2. Students eligible for acceptance at UHM upon transfer (i.e., students who are accepted to UHM via the transfer process, but once accepted, may choose to continue taking classes at KCC and indication KCC as their home institution. Once admitted through the Kaʻieʻie Program, students need not go through any subsequent application or approval process, on the condition that they maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA, and are in good academic standing in both institutions). The management of the Kaʻieʻie Program and resulting articulation agreements between the two institutions will be coordinated through the Chief Academic Officers or the designees at each institution and a representative committee made up of faculty, academic advisors/counselors, admissions officers, student affairs and any others deemed appropriate. Students admitted under the Kaʻieʻie Program will be offered advising by the faculty member identified as responsible for coordinating the program on the KCC campus so that they can design a course of study to complete the agreed upon prerequisite course prior to transfer to UHM.

In addition to the Kaʻieʻie Program with UHM, the College is also developing articulation agreements with the University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo (UHH), and the University of Hawaii, West Oahu (UHWO). The goals of these partnerships are to:

1) enable students to be jointly admitted to the four-year institutions while completing program requirements at the College;
2) improve student access, success, and four-year degree completion;
3) expand student options for college-level services and curriculum;
4) improve academic program articulation; and
5) utilize resources at each institution more efficiently and effectively.

Plans for a BAS in Culinary Arts are being developed with the UHWO. There are established pathways for transfer to UHM through shared core requirements in the AA and/or AS degrees, as well as established tracks for pre-Business, pre-Elementary Education, pre-ICS, pre-Sociology, pre-Social Work, pre-Biology, pre-Engineering, pre-Art, pre-Psychology, and pre-Nursing. Recently, the Board of Regents recently approved an AS Degree in Natural Sciences with a concentration in Life Science or Physical Science for the College so as to facilitate articulation and transfer agreements with UHM and UH Hilo in these areas.

There are many areas of opportunity for improvement of pathways in the UH system. Each department is responsible for reviewing its curriculum structure (coherence) and determining where it is possible to remove obstacles to attaining AA/AS and BA/BS degrees. The next step is coherence between two- and four-year programs and articulation between these institutions. The issues needing attention are abundant, e.g., assuring that credit given for a course transferred between community colleges is also accepted by four-year institutions; or allowing upper division courses taught at the College to be transferred to UHM as meeting upper division requirements, and accepting UHM upper
division courses as meeting the elective requirements at the College for the AA/AS degree. Additional agreements between the College and its sister CCs and between all institutions in the UH system should include a common course numbering system, easily identifiable course equivalencies, and dual admissions programs.

The core requirements and recommended support courses for a variety of majors are available at the College. Students using 18 credits of electives in the AA degree can fulfill UHM general education core requirements as well as lower division program-specific requirements at the College. Critical to the success of established pathways is the student’s decision making process, based on awareness of paths and options, and guided through the College’s academic advising system, the skills of its program specialist counselors and faculty advisors, and the level of collaboration of these groups with support specialist counselors. The academic advising system needs to continue to develop a framework for an integrated model for advising as the College transforms itself through the use of purposeful pathways.

Coherent Student Services for Persistence/Retention

In addition to removing institutional barriers, the College has the responsibility to assist students in removing the barriers they bring with them to the institution. Studies consistently show that students most often drop out because of conflicts posed by family or job obligations. Support systems for students to resolve role conflicts, (e.g., change in family status, conflicts at home and personal problems, conflicts with job or the military, financial problems, academic setbacks) and social issues (e.g., personal or family problems) must be developed and implemented to improve students’ ability to realize educational goals.

Just as in academic pathways, where courses are not stand alone entities, student services programs need to have an underlying “coherence” of their own, i.e., a developmentally structured student support services system. We expect an academic field to have formulated the difference between the novice and the expert, delineated a pathway to facilitate student acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes from one stage to the other, and have established both quantitative and qualitative expectations for each, as well as the means to assess essential learning outcomes. The same standard of expectations is applied to student support services. According to the College’s Student Services Unit, counseling is a transformative, developmental learning process that utilizes a holistic and wellness approach to assist students in clarifying their career and educational goals. It is a trusting, multi-faceted, and collaborative relationship between students and counselors from entry to exit. Student Support Services’ goals include students’ becoming self-aware, attaining their educational, career and life goals, and being capable of self-development. To accomplish these goals, counselors at the College are developing a common model of developmental steps/stages/phases that students navigate to reach these goals, a common means to assess progress, and common process to utilize assessment to inform personal and academic advising to determine intervention where needed. The counseling process is the College’s infrastructure support system for reducing personal and institutional barriers to student use of established pathways. It will take the deliberate collaboration and coordination between all student services personnel, faculty advisors, and faculty to develop coherence in the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes promoted in and between all programs and activities offered by the College, both academic and student services, to improve student persistence, and subsequently, student retention.

Certainly, support for student persistence does exist at the College. For example, as conflict and contradiction are a part of life, many students need assistance in developing mechanisms that will help them constructively cope with the issues that inevitably will arise from being a college student. One innovative response to such needs is an Access to College Excellence (ACE) cluster entitled Single Parents, which is designed to help single parents adjust to college life and balance their academic and family responsibilities. Providing this type of assistance to students illustrates how every member of the College can develop creative ways to assist students in developing personal skills while working toward educational goals. Support specialist counselors at the College assist students based on other unique...
characteristics, such as Native Hawaiian, single parent, disability, and developmental and remediation academic needs.

Having one "official" place where articulation information resides and that is easily accessible through world wide web-based technology would enable students to plan for and meet their transfer goals and thus enhance progress toward their baccalaureate degree. The College’s First Year Experience Program provides students with a Master Academic Plan they can develop and use as they move through their postsecondary experience. Also, the College provides a degree audit program, i.e., STAR, to help students in second and subsequent semesters’ selection of courses. The degree audit focuses on courses to complete graduation requirements. Also, the Trio-Student Support Services program includes academic advisement and academic progress monitoring, but only for students who qualify as low income, and/or are first generation student in college, and/or have a documented disability. Other programs at the College, such as the Single Parents and Homemaking program, the Native Hawaiian Career and Technical Education Center, the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students program, and the Honda International Center provide specific groups of students with academic advising and career counseling.

While the College has established the above mentioned individual programs to help students plan and monitor their academic progress, a centralized system such as the ASSIST program used in California provides integrated information that meets the needs of all students, while also being available for use by counselors and teachers. Integrating the data captured through various counseling and academic advising and monitoring programs into a cohesive on-line planning system would enhance the ability of College personnel to collaborate and coordinate efforts on behalf of individual students while providing a model to students for problem solving and decision making in which they would be active partners.

Other institutions have developed early warning systems to improve student persistence by identifying and supporting students at academic risk. In these systems, faculty and staff work closely together as “degree-pathway-specialists” to monitor and analyze students’ performance for the purpose of providing the appropriate resources to promote student progress. Early warning systems currently utilized by other community colleges and four-year institutions include:

1) sending mid-term progress reports to faculty so that they can contact students having difficulties;
2) placing results of student performance indicators and faculty evaluations on-line in order to assist students in choosing classes;
3) initiating an alert (by faculty) to student mentors/advisors if a student is in difficulty; and
4) monitoring the academic progress of all first- and second-year students by reviewing daily class attendance, academic performance after the fourth week of classes, midterm exam grades, and final exam grades and sending a “progress report” for each student to faculty teaching in the core curriculum.

Whatever the mechanism for identification of students in need, faculty and staff development of an early warning system could improve student outcomes, and create an opportunity to enlist the students in problem solving and decision making in a way that promotes ownership of the process of exercising persistence in learning.

The aforementioned support services are only a few of the programs currently available to different categories of students in need of assistance at the College or that can be initiated by the College to improve student persistence. However, the underlying need is for a coherent framework that guides the application of the elements of these programs toward student development, both personal and academic.
Coherent Transformative Curricular Infrastructure for the 21st Century

With a view of the 21st century student/worker/citizen in mind, the College seeks to provide students with potentially transformative experiences that stimulate development. The goal of the College is to provide purposeful pathways for students to use as a catalyst for development that is characterized by new frames of reference, points of view, or habits of mind. The end result, if successful, is emergence of a student with a clear vision and a new identity in relation to the self and the community that functions for the benefit of both. Transformation of self does not come from memorization and correct filling of round circles with a No. 2 pencil, but from investment and engagement of self through praxis in a field of study and in our ever-widening world.

As stated in the beginning of this document, the College has identified general education academic skills standards: written communication, critical thinking, information retrieval and technology, quantitative reasoning, oral communication, and understanding self and community. Again, the theme of coherence as the underlying principle for all of the efforts mentioned above is critical to the College meeting its goals and responsibilities in relation to these standards. Each comes with its own set of levels of development, novice to expert, and each is to be integrated with the other, and the developmental levels of academic fields of study, as well as with student support services. This is the challenge of purposeful pathways, a complex matrix of the intersections of interactions, meagerly represented in Figure 3.

To help faculty meet the challenge, Leskes and Miller (2006) recommend eight practices to strengthen student’s achieving of key learning outcomes and educational goals in purposeful pathways:

1) Learning communities
2) First year experiences
3) Senior capstones and culminating experiences
4) Service-learning
5) Experiential learning
6) Authentic tasks (collaborative projects, undergraduate research, creative projects)
7) Problem-based learning
8) Interdisciplinary instruction.

The College is in the process of developing and improving these practices and continues to make them more accessible to faculty and staff through CELTT. CELTT ensures the quality of teaching and learning at the College by providing centralized, localized professional development support focused on student-centered, learning-college pedagogy in classroom and clinical settings. This resource ensures the quality of teaching and learning by promoting the scholarship of teaching through technology support, increased learning-centered behavior, enhanced technological infrastructure across the campus, and efficient provision of campus services through the use of technology. Also, the College is improving its use of institutional research, through analysis of student outcomes, so as to inform planning (i.e., strategic and tactical) and decision-making by faculty and departments concerning the level of student learning. Outcomes need to be compared to the expectations of business and industry, standards for academic areas of study, and/or results from other institutions of higher learning. Institutional research of student short-term and long-range learning outcomes informs faculty and staff when there is need for curriculum and instructional reform and when there is cause for celebration, and informs the establishing, reviewing, and reforming of purposeful pathways on a regular basis.

The transformative infrastructure is the meta-process students experience throughout the College, regardless of the program they come to study. The means through which the infrastructure and the program of study are experienced by students are the teaching/learning processes and activities, such as listed by Leskes and Miller above, developed to both enhance students’ opportunities to attain their goals and faculty’s efforts to provide a quality learning environment.

Conclusion and Next Steps
The College has the potential to offer the highest quality education and training in the state of Hawai‘i, and export the same both nationally and internationally. It can become the institution in Hawai‘i for completing the first two years of the baccalaureate requirements in Art, Business, Education, Engineering, Psychology, and Science, and other areas of study. Also, the College can develop, within the existing AA degree, concentrations in Hawaiian, Asian, and International Studies.

However, first there must be coherence of curriculum and articulation between institutions to facilitate the successful transfer of students. In addition, while it is students’ responsibility to put forth effort toward their educational goals, coherent processes that involve faculty and staff in creating a culture of competence, completion, and self-development need to be designed and implemented so that students will be able to take advantage of articulation and transfer agreements. Therefore:

1) It is proposed that each department review its curriculum for coherence, i.e., for a systematic or logical connection within individual courses and between a series of courses. In addition, in terms of articulation, collaboration between faculty and organizations must result in clear pathways to transfer from the AA/AS to the BA/BS.

2) Furthermore, there needs to be a developmentally coherent structure of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that guides the support services unit and its faculty and staff in their interactions with students, whether it be when advising for courses, assisting with financial aide, or counseling a single parent. Student Services should review its programs and best practices to determine how to enhance, coordinate, and integrate current programs, as well as identify new programs that are needed to support student persistence. Faculty and staff collaboration needs to be at the heart of these efforts.

3) The Curricular Infrastructure of the College, i.e., the transformative cross-curricular emphases, programs and activities, needs to be implemented with a sense of coherence for each area of the College. Developmentally-based learning outcomes for each of the general education academic skill standards, through courses, programs, and student services, need to be assessed and used to improve the educational experience of students. Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between Student Support Services, an Academic Pathway, and the College’s Curricular Infrastructure. The figure shows how these three areas of the College, although separate, can interact to form an orchestrated educational experience for students.

References


4. Rifkin, T., ibid, p. 3.


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Figure 2. KCC/AA to UHM/BBA Pathway, Support Programs

Kapalani CC AA Degree Requirements:
1. 60 credit hours in courses numbered 100 or higher;
2. Minimum cumulative grade point ratio of 2.0 or higher for all courses applicable toward the degree.
3. Course selection as described under the Liberal Arts program.

KapCC courses to meet lower division requirements for transfer to the CBA at UHM with Curricular Intentionality, i.e.:
- Foundation
  - Mathematics
  - Hawaiian/Second Language
  - Electives

UHM Admission Requirements for Transfer into CBA
Use AA Degree 18 elective credits to meet requirements.

Successful Transfer
Transfer to UHM CBA as Upper Classman and obtain Baccalaureate Degree

BBA from UHM College of Business Administration

STUDENT
[Values, attitudes, interests, goals, incentives (intrinsic/extrinsic), knowledge, abilities]

Credit-Based Transition Programs for H.S. Students:
- Running Start for H.S. Juniors & Seniors
- Early Admission for H.S. Seniors
- College Credit Equivalency Program

First Year Experience:
- Master Academic Plan
- Access to College Excellence – 734-9245

Honda International Center 734-9312

Learning Support resources, e.g., Library, Computing Center, Learning Assistance Centers, i.e.:
- Holomua Center
- No iako Computer Lab
- Health & Natural Sciences Learning Center

Student Support Services:
- SSSO – 734-9052
- Counseling – 734-9554
- Child Care – 734-9393
- TRIO – Student Support Services 734-9552
- Testing Center – 734-9340

- Services for Deaf & Hard of Hearing 734-9210, or TDD, relay service at 711.
- Maha Kamer Center for Career & Transfer Services
- Single Parents and Homemakers Program – 734-9500
- Native Hawaiian Career & Technical Education Program
- Kekaulike Information & Service Center - 734-9555, registration for classes.

Legend:
ACADEMIC PATHWAY: KCC TRANSFER TO UHM, CBA
KCC SERVICES AND PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT STUDENT PERSISTENCE

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