ACCJC

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

Outcomes | Innovation | Improvement

CORE INQUIRIES

Hawai'i Community College

1175 Manono Street
Hilo, HI 96720

The Core Inquiries are based upon the findings of the peer review team that conducted Team ISER Review on Thursday, March 20, 2025.

Dr. Seher Awan
Team Chair

Table of Contents

Hawai'i Community College

Peer Review Team Roster

Team ISER Review
Thursday, March 20, 2025

CHAIR	VICE CHAIR
Dr. Seher Awan Mission College President	Meridith Randall Golden West College President
TEAM MEMBERS	
Dr. Ghada Al-Masri Fresno City College Vice President, Educational Services & Institutional Effectiveness	Mr. Patrick Bettencourt Modesto Junior College Vice President, Instruction
Mr. David Beymer Hartnell College Instructor - Athletic Trainer	Dr. Treisa Cassens Cypress College Dean, Library, Learning Resources Center and Distance Education
Mr. Kyle Crider West Hills Community College District Director of Accreditation, Research, Institutional Effectiveness, Planning	Dr. Nicole Grose Feather River College Professor, English
Mr. Rick Hicks Golden West College Vice President, Administrative Services	
ACCJC STAFF LIAISON	
Dr. Kevin Bontenbal, Vice President	

Summary of Team ISER Review

INSTITUTION: Hawai'i Community College

DATE OF TEAM ISER REVIEW: Thursday, March 20, 2025

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Seher Awan

An accreditation peer review team conducted Team ISER Review of Hawai'i Community College on Thursday, March 20, 2025. The Team ISER Review is a one-day, off-site analysis of an institution's self-evaluation report and supporting evidence. The peer review team received the college's Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and related evidence several weeks prior to the Team ISER Review. Team members found the report to be a comprehensive document detailing the college's alignment to the 2024 Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Commission policies. The College provided a thoughtful report, reflecting on the institution's transformational processes, equitable student outcomes, and planning for continuing institutional improvement.

In preparation for the Team ISER Review, the team chair attended a team chair workshop on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, and held a pre-review meeting with the college CEO on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. The entire peer review team participated in a team workshop provided by staff from ACCJC on Wednesday, January 29, 2025. Prior to the Team ISER Review, team members completed their assessment of the college's alignment to the Accreditation Standards and policies, identified areas for further clarification, and provided a list of requests for additional evidence to be considered during Team ISER Review.

During the Team ISER Review, team members spent the morning discussing their initial observations and their preliminary review of the written materials and evidence provided by the College for the purpose of determining whether the College meets Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Commission policies. In the afternoon, the team further synthesized their findings to validate the excellent work of the college and developed Core Inquiries to be pursued during the Focused Site Visit, which will occur during the week of September 22, 2025.

Core Inquiries are a means for communicating potential areas of institutional noncompliance, improvement, or exemplary practice that arise during the Team ISER Review. They describe the areas of emphasis for the Focused Site Visit. During the Focused Site Visit, the team will tour the facilities, conduct scheduled meetings and an open forum, gather additional information to further their analysis to determine whether all standards are met, and accordingly finalize their Peer Review Team Report, which will identify commendations or recommendations. The college should use the Core Inquiries and time leading up to the Focused Site Visit as an opportunity to gather more evidence, collate information, and to strengthen or develop processes in the continuous improvement cycle. During the course of the Focused Site Visit, the ACCJC staff liaison will review new or emerging issues that might arise out of the discussions on Core Inquiries.

Core Inquiries

Based on the team's analysis during the Team ISER Review, the team identified the following Core Inquiries that relate to potential areas of clarification, improvement, or commendation.

Core Inquiry 1: The team seeks to understand how the college disaggregates and analyzes learning outcomes data for subpopulations of students.
Standards or Policies: I.B.6
Description: The team reviewed the evidence provided in the ISER and the additional evidence provided by the institution. It is clear that the college is conducting disaggregation and analysis of student achievement (success rates, degrees awarded, etc.) at multiple levels, including Program and Unit Review and Institution-Set Standards. Additionally, the processes are in place through Program and Unit Review to allocate resources to address observed equity gaps. However, no evidence has been provided showing the disaggregation of learning outcomes data by student subpopulations.
Topics of discussion during interviews: • In what ways is the college disaggregating learning outcomes data for student subpopulations? • In what ways is the college analyzing disaggregated learning outcomes data for student subpopulations?
Request for Additional Information/Evidence: • Learning outcomes assessment reports showing data disaggregation by student subpopulations • Minutes showing discussion of learning outcomes assessment results for student subpopulations • Examples of Program and Unit Reviews where disaggregated learning outcomes data is discussed
Request for Observations/Interviews: • Assessment Coordinator • Assessment Committee • CERC Committee • Faculty and Department Chairs

Core Inquiry 2: The team is unclear if there are department-wide examinations (internal or external) used to assess student learning, and if so, how the institution validates the effectiveness of these examinations, reduces test bias, and enhances reliability.
Standards or Policies: II.A.8
Description: The College's ISER indicates that it has "only a limited number of programs and departments that use department-wide examinations" and that "the agreed upon exams are a tool for assessment across multiple sections", which implies that there are course-wide examinations used for assessment of student learning in individual courses. The College's response for additional evidence states that "The College doesn't have any internally created department-wide exams beyond the type of exams referenced in the narrative," which implies that there are no course-wide examinations used for assessment of student learning in individual courses. Evidence I.B.I-25, English 100 and 22 Assessment Reports, includes information on a department-wide course assessment for English 22 and 100. This evidence includes a student essay assessment that is given to all students enrolled in these courses. This evidence seems to imply that there are course-wide examinations used for the assessment of student learning in individual courses. The team seeks clarification on: • Whether the College uses department-wide examinations, such as the English 100 and 22 examinations. • If English and/or other departments use similar department-wide examinations, how these are assessed and evaluated for their effectiveness; and • How the College ensures that processes are in place to reduce test bias and enhance reliability.
Topics of discussion during interviews: • Are there specific departments or disciplines that use department-wide assessments/examinations to assess student learning across multiple sections? • What do the department-wide examinations or assessment processes entail? • How are these department-wide examinations or assessments validated by the College for their effectiveness? • Are there processes in place to reduce test bias in these department-wide examinations or assessments? • Are there processes in place to enhance reliability of these department-wide examinations or assessments?
Request for Additional Information/Evidence: • Evidence to show how the institution validates the effectiveness of any department-wide course examinations • Evidence to show how the institution ensures that processes are in place to reduce test bias for department-wide course examinations • Evidence to show how the institution ensures that processes are in place to enhance reliability of department-wide course examinations
Request for Observations/Interviews: • Faculty members and/or department chairs who use department-wide examinations

Core Inquiry 3:   The team seeks to understand how the college evaluates its placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness and minimize bias.
Standards or Policies: II.C.7
Description: The college ensures that all student math, reading, writing, and/or ESL placements are conducted either by an approved instrument or by multiple measures self-placement, which demonstrates cooperation with system standards and best practices. However, the team is unclear as to how these instruments are validated for their effectiveness and to minimize bias.
Topics of discussion during interviews: How are placement instruments evaluated to ensure their effectiveness and to minimize bias?
Request for Additional Information/Evidence: • Evidence that placement instruments and practices have been validated for effectiveness   • Evidence that placement instruments and practices have been evaluated to minimize bias   • If bias is discovered, what steps are taken to address the bias
Request for Observations/Interviews: • Office of College Research and Planning, or equivalent   • Individuals responsible for the selection and maintenance of assessment instruments   • Curriculum Committee members

Core Inquiry 4: The team seeks to better understand the College's process to ensure that evaluations of personnel are occurring systematically and at stated intervals, and that actions taken after evaluations are formal, timely and documented.
Standards or Policies: III.A.5
Description: The team reviewed the evaluation processes and policies reported by the College. The team further reviewed additional evidence provided by the College of a chart showing the percentages of employees in each group that were evaluated annually over the last few years. The chart showed that most civil service employees (70-80% per year) had not been evaluated annually over the past six years. Additionally, the team did not receive any evidence of documented actions taken after evaluations.
Request for Additional Information/Evidence: • Evidence of a plan or process to complete civil service employee evaluations • Evidence of timely and documented follow-up for employees in all classifications
Request for Observations/Interviews: • Human Resources personnel • College Leadership

Core Inquiry 5:
The team seeks to determine if the college has sufficient staffing to ensure the effectiveness of its operations.
Standards or Policies:
III.A.9
Description:
The College noted in its ISER that it did not meet this standard. The team recognizes that the College is making progress toward this standard in its QFE. The team is interested in learning about the College's progress with this QFE project.
Topics of discussion during interviews:
• What progress and implementation has the College made with its QFE project?
Request for Additional Information/Evidence:
• Update on QFE project
Request for Observations/Interviews:
• Management team • Individuals responsible for QFE project

Core Inquiry 6:
The team seeks to understand how the institution regularly assesses its efforts to employ equitable and diversified personnel consistent with its mission.

Standards or Policies:
III.A.12

Description:
The team observed evidence of policies for diverse personnel; however, the team was unable to locate evidence that the College assesses its efforts with employing equitable and diversified personnel consistent with its mission.

Topics of discussion during interviews:
• How is the College assessing its employment to ensure equity and diversity?   • How is the College monitoring its goals as documented in the policies?   • Is the College making progress towards equity and diversity in employment?

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:
• Assessment of practices that support hiring diverse personnel   • Plans for recruitment of diverse personnel tied to the mission

Request for Observations/Interviews:
• Individuals responsible for diversity and equity goals related to employment   • Chancellor   • Vice President of Administrative Services

Core Inquiry 7:
The team is impressed by and interested in learning more about the extensive range and diversity of programs available to employees for leadership development and personal and professional growth.

Standards or Policies:
III.A.14

Description:
The team reviewed evidence showing that the College offers a range of professional development opportunities, including workshops, training, conferences, and leadership programs. Additionally, collaboration with other campuses and system-wide instructional designers has expanded access to these resources. The team would like to learn more about how these opportunities are accessed and their impact on employee growth and institutional effectiveness.

Topics of discussion during interviews:
• How does professional development directly influence teaching practices or institutional improvements?   • What innovative professional development initiatives have been particularly successful, and what lessons have been learned from them?   • How are professional development opportunities being assessed to design, refine, and enhance professional development offerings?

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:
• Any additional evidence highlighting the College's professional development programs/resources available to employees for leadership development and personal and professional growth.

Request for Observations/Interviews:
• Faculty, staff, and administrators who have participated in these opportunities   • Faculty and staff who have taken advantage of tuition waivers or sabbaticals   • Professional Development Coordinator