

Three R's to Creating a Global University



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President Wheelright, Vice-President Checketts, university administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community guests: Aloha.

I am humbled to be given the opportunity to speak at the time honored tradition of Convocation. In accepting this invitation, I thank Jeff Boroughs and others for expressing confidence in me today.

In March 2007, I had the opportunity, along with my colleague Dr. Barry Mitchell, to travel to the New Territories of Hong Kong to observe two of our student teaching interns. During our visit to Pak Kau College secondary school, we were asked to address the 7th form students who had finished their schooling and were ready to break for intense personal study in preparation for the national examinations.

Dr. Mitchell is a New Zealand native and is a product of the British system. He experienced firsthand the national exams, and later spent over 20 years as a teacher preparing students for these exams. He gave the students clear advice specifically addressing the tests, based on his years of experience.

As I listened to him address the students while awaiting my turn, I wondered what I might share with them that they would find useful and relevant. In fact, I wondered what circumstances had taken me from a college graduate struggling to find a teaching job to a traveling university professor viewed as an honored guest with something important and relevant to say.

I shared with these students the story of my grandfather, who had emigrated from Canada and spent his life in hard, difficult work. He was honest and honorable in his work. Yet, he wanted my father to have greater opportunities than he had. When my father was 16 years old, my grandfather took him to the oil refinery and set him to work scrubbing the inside of oil tanks. My father took only 15 minutes to realize that he wanted a different job in life. At that point, he decided that he wanted to attend university and receive a higher degree. As my father related this story to me as I prepared for university, the message for my life was simple: hard work is honorable, but that if I wanted a choice in the type of career I would later have, education would provide that opportunity. As I received more education and the more I learned to use that education wisely, the better chance I would have to make decisions about my future, whether to work with my hands, my mind, or both.

I never imagined as a young teacher in Utah that one day I would be speaking to students in Hong Kong about

the possibilities that awaited them in their futures. Many professors and university personnel here could share similar stories, and I believe it illustrates the changing world of education. Technology has made the world smaller, as on-line and distance courses bring students from around the world into one university course. As international travel and study grows, students from around the globe are coming together into learning environments that are rich with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. One reason I sought the opportunity to teach at BYU-Hawaii was the chance to work for a global university with a diverse student body in an intimate environment. A global university presents a number of challenges as the university moves to outreach to more students in meeting the prophetic mandate of training and preparing future leaders in communities, industry, and in the kingdom. However, it would be presumptuous on our part to claim that we are the first ones to face challenges, such as growth, language, relevance, or cost.

Currently, a number of countries face shortages in funding universities. In addition to funding, these universities face questions of curriculum and career focus. Economic characteristics exist in which students graduate in specific fields, only to find they cannot be employed in their area. Other examples indicate conflicts between traditional teaching systems and an increased international and technological world. Many universities continue to maintain well-established traditions of learning and as world conditions change little by little, new problems arise.

In ancient Greece, individual philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle gathered students to centers of learning, or academies, in which inquiry, dialogue, and reason were paramount. A search for knowledge using these skills was a key component of learning and continues as a significant model in Western thought. Although limited during the Middle Ages, the European Renaissance returned to these themes and they continue to influence educational theory today.

By contrast, Eastern traditions focused on memorization and rote learning. In the Confucian model, students sought an educated, wise, and virtuous teacher who modeled exemplary behavior. The Great Academy, for example, was established to prepare students for national civil service exams. There, they read classic literature and focused on memorizing significant texts. This learning model stayed consistent in Eastern learning centers for centuries.

In the Pacific, learning focused not on higher educational institutes, but on passing on important cultural knowledge and skills based upon community needs, where all adults in society added to the education of the young. 1

Throughout a number of societies, universities and school systems were exclusive or elitist, allowing only those of noble birth or of advanced social standing to be included. Arthur Young, the English writer, observed about pre-revolutionary France:

To the *Ecole Militaire*, established by Louis XV, for the education of 140 youths, the sons of the nobility; such establishments are equally ridiculous and unjust. ...You educate the children of men, who are well able to give the education themselves, you tax the people who cannot afford to educate their children, in order to ease those who can well afford the burthen; and in such institutions, this is sure to be the case. 2

Tax supported institutions that provided an education only to the wealthy while ignoring the needs of non-noble families, did little to advance society. A broader, more open and formal education system was needed in these societies to bring about economic opportunities, social change, political growth, and scientific innovation. The influence of education became powerful as societies implemented mandatory education laws that gave access to education. Today, education continues to reach throughout the world. As students from a broad spectrum of cultural, economic, and social backgrounds gather together in the university setting, the greater the need to create a learning environment that addresses the varied learning approaches the students bring with them.

The BYU-Hawaii website boasts:

Brigham Young University Hawaii is an accredited four-year undergraduate institution with 2,400 students from more than 70 countries. BYU-Hawaii is a unique multi-cultural campus where spiritual as well as academic learning is encouraged among the most "international" student body in the U.S. 3

We rightfully and proudly define ourselves as a global university, which leads to the question: How can the university meet the learning needs of such a diverse population? Although we can, and should, celebrate that students come from over 70 countries to study at BYU-Hawaii, the corresponding challenge is that students arrive at BYU-Hawaii as the products of over 70 different school systems. Some systems are national in scope; others are more regional or local in their control. Mandates, curriculum, funding, and assessment, including high-stakes testing or national exams, may come from local goals or from national ministries or departments of education. In some cases, nations purchase the curriculum and tests from successful international neighbors. Some schools also mix the local indigenous culture and learning philosophies with those of an outside schooling system.

One common theme among these school systems is the belief that each student can learn. Throughout my years in education, I have found that most vision and mission statements tend to be similar. In this vein, students arrive at BYU-Hawaii with a pre-university education served by an entity that has invested in that student. Notice the common themes in these school vision statements:

- **Round Rock (Texas) Independent School District:** Every child will learn, whatever it takes.
- **Fiji LDS School:** "Building Zion schools, where every student succeeds every day."
- **Pak Kau College Secondary School:** All are Educable.

Yet, within these commonalities differences exist that reveal cultural and philosophical underpinnings.

Recently, I taught a course on campus in which the 25 students enrolled represented 17 countries. In a discussion on the impact of political, economic, and cultural influences on educational systems, students participated in an activity that demonstrated the patterns of schooling that were present in their collective experience. Students shared one unique fact about their secondary schooling years. They quickly realized that despite certain shared experiences, their respective systems were quite different, even within the British and American systems. Cram week and high stress for national placement exams were prevalent among Asian students. Many Polynesian students had experienced corporal punishment and second language instruction. American students had competitive sports teams built into the schooling curriculum. While some had worn school uniforms, others had not. Many had completed secondary schooling entirely in a second language; others

spoke only their native language. Student learned, often with incredulity, how different the pre-BYU-Hawaii experience was for their fellow classmates.

How then do we approach instruction that effectively reaches student populations with diverse educational backgrounds? Specifically, what examples can we look to when approaching these broad and varied needs? Reforms, models, or movements that are successful at one university may not necessarily be successful at another. Certain trends in education have emerged which address these challenges that exist in schools both at the secondary and higher education levels. I will share with you today, several of these movements that open the possibility of future dialogue as we discuss ways to analyze and improve teaching and learning at BYU-Hawaii.

In the 1990s, the United States Department of Education began a program called Smaller Learning Communities. The purpose of this reform was to bring students in large high schools together into smaller learning groups based on common interest and career goals. Studies found that in large schools, students might spend an entire school day without one person calling them by name, without ever having a teacher call on them in class, or having the opportunity to explore how their studies connected to their interests and future goals. As a result, the smaller learning community movement sought to organize schools differently by creating smaller schools within schools. Students were grouped together in career houses or academies which enabled them to receive instruction based on career goals, to make friends among students with common interests, and to have adult mentors who could help them navigate the intricacies of schooling. This structural change requires a completely different way of looking at a comprehensive school. As one government report stated:

The creation of schools as educational communities that consciously intend to provide all students with the kind of rigorous, intellectually challenging education that used to be restricted to an elite is no mere downsizing of big bad institutions. It is a radical notion and an even more radical endeavor. 4

The learning community concept no longer is limited to high schools. Examples of learning communities are now found at a number of U.S. universities. One campus offers housing options to students based on common interests and academic pursuits. There is a purpose to such new, innovation structuring:

Participation in a learning community supports you in developing skills and attitudes that enhance academic achievement, helps you make friends quickly and easily, and gives you the tools to balance your academic and social lives. 5

This school's website, under the guideline, *Why Join?* states:

- enhanced academic and social opportunities,
- improved GPA,
- improved connection to faculty,
- greater involvement in learning,
- increased satisfaction with your [university] experience, and
- increased persistence to graduation 6

Another university proudly advertises that over one half of incoming freshmen join a learning community, and similar types of initiatives can be found across the United States. 7 This movement is not unique to U.S. universities as this concept becomes more well-known. Learning communities in science have been tried at the

University of Auckland. 8 This restructuring is designed to increase student learning and academic success. Here at BYU-Hawaii, we have taken a foundational step in this direction by linking three general education courses for new freshman.

Although BYU-Hawaii stands as a smaller school in comparison to many larger state or national universities, the student needs on this campus are just as great and perhaps even greater due to our demographics. Yet BYU-Hawaii may not need the structural changes larger universities may need. The second part of smaller learning community reforms is changing the curriculum and instruction to address the student learning needs. It is this emphasis on curriculum reform that is perhaps more significant for schools that seek to address increased student learning. This area of reform focuses on the three new "R"s of education: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. These three terms are increasing prevalent in reform dialogue, including such groups as the Gates Foundation and others. 9 As Melinda Gates stated:

We must reinvent our ...schools so that they give all students a new version of the three R's: rigor, relationships, and relevance. 10

Each of these three areas focuses on a theoretical framework and provides opportunities to focus on student learning.

First, rigor implies focusing on clear standards of academic learning and holding students to these standards. Rigor is not simply assigning difficult tasks for the sake of having difficult tasks, or adding more tasks to overburden students. Rather, a standards-based system has a minimum set of expectations that students must achieve to be successful, based on the standards of the field or the discipline. For years, industry has years had standards of quality. For example, in construction or home building, having proper plumbing and wiring is not only ideal, but necessary. When having surgery our life depends on the doctor having met a high standard of skill to complete the procedure. I don't believe any of us would feel comfortable with a doctor who had an I, T, or X grade in suturing. One might also look at the Honor Code, which outlines expectations of a spiritual standard. Students either meet the dress code or they don't, but they know what the standard is and how to meet it. So, we might approach learning in the classroom as well. Students are given academic challenges based on standards and are taught the strategies and skills to meet those standards.

Throughout the Pacific, New Zealand has been a leader in the standards-based approach. In this educational model, skills and knowledge are connected to specific outcomes and student work becomes evidence of meeting the standard. The instructor has the responsibility to determine clear, measurable outcomes for a course, and to provide relevant examples and opportunities for students to meet these standards. They have eliminated all busy work and have created authentic assessments that measure whether students have met the outcomes of the course. The student takes responsibility to learn and produce evidence through the completion of assignments, tasks, projects, performances, and assessments to show his/her mastery of the standard. Students cannot miss any assignment, as all assignments are evidence, and we cannot show mastery of a course with missing evidence. All assignments submitted must meet a minimum expectation of the standard. Student work that fails to meet the standard must be resubmitted until it does meet the standard.

One author summed it up this way:

The traditional college-prep, lecture-style curriculum is not connected to the world from which many students come; nor does it align with the worlds for which students must be prepared. 11

This standards-based approach allows students multiple opportunities to show mastery of expectations and outcomes, or in other words, competency in their subject. Additionally, in this approach, if a student fails to meet any of the standards of a course and must repeat, they would only need to demonstrate competency in

those standards previously deemed insufficient. To clarify the measure of evaluation and to eliminate ambiguity about the grading, instructors use well-designed rubrics that show students what they must do to provide evidence of meeting the standard. For struggling students, this method allows for great growth, as they can see up front what the expectations are. Instructors can target instruction and tutoring to the weaknesses students might have. Feedback and revisions help students learn not only what they must do to meet the standard, but how they can complete the process itself. Over time, they become better students, by initiating self-regulation in their learning. This system also brings uniformity to all sections of a course, thus eliminating discrepancies of rigor among instructors while maintaining the individual instructional skills of these instructors.

The standards-based movement began as a reform to help struggling students and has been successful in pushing students from all demographic groups to higher achievement. A number of BYU-Hawaii students completed their secondary schooling under this type of system. The state of Hawaii is moving to the standards-based approach in its public schools and the change can be seen in the elementary school report card. Graduates from the BYU-Hawaii School of Education can find employment locally and internationally because they are trained in the standards-based and can teach effectively in this system.

The second area of curriculum and school reform is the concept of Relevance. The term relevance indicates a connection to student interest and prior knowledge. The move to include relevance in the curriculum takes many names: problem-solving, problem-based learning, real world experiences, authentic learning, and engaging classrooms, among others. Relevance, at its fundamental core, speaks to the instructor and the student's ability to connect to course outcomes to future goals and past learning. The objective is to shape education in ways that require new information students acquire to blend with background experience and prior learning at the institutional and individual level. Fiji, for example, faces conflicts between the English system used in upper grades and the traditions and learning styles used in local communities and villages. Many Fijian students are struggling in the upper grades and drop-out rates are high. As part of the Standard Monitoring Reform, the Ministry of Education is seeking to bring more traditional learning skills to classroom, including using culturally relevant examples from village life and vernacular to augment English instruction. ¹² This example illustrates the need to understand diverse learning styles of the students and how utilizing past experiences and knowledge can be synthesized with new knowledge.

Engaging classrooms, often associated with relevance, is a term that can be interpreted in many ways. First, the topics and tasks might be interesting to students in ways that engage their interest and keep them on task towards learning the standard. Second, engaging classrooms might focus on the teacher and the personality, in that the presentation style is engaging. In creating a relevant classroom, one school reformer stated:

It is an unfortunate fact that educators too often fail to differentiate between teachers who are engaging as a person or as a performer and teachers who are skilled at providing work and activities for students that the students find to be engaging. Failure to make this distinction too often leads to the conclusion that the only way to improve education is to work on the performance of the teacher. . .What is in virtually unlimited supply, once teachers figure out how to do it, are tasks, assignments, and activities that students find engaging from which the students learn those things that teachers and the larger society believe the students should learn. ¹³

Building skills and knowledge students will need for lifelong use is the key in creating engaging, relevant classrooms. We live in a dynamic world where market forces will drive changes in career offerings. But what will not change is the need for students to synthesize past knowledge and experiences with material, ideas, and technology they will encounter in the future. Instructors continue to have the responsibility to provide current, relevant material in the classroom while students maintain the responsibility to seek learning. An anecdotal story of Socrates illustrates this concept:

One day a young man came to Socrates seeking knowledge. He flippantly asked Socrates, "Will you teach me today all that you know?" Socrates took the young man to the river, and wading in, pushed the young man under the water. The young man fought to rise, only to have Socrates push him further down. The young man

resisted and eventually broke free. After several episodes, the young man cried, "why did you do that?" The reply came, "When you want knowledge as much as you wanted air, then come return and I will teach you."

Clearly, instructors who study current trends and skills keep current in their professions in order to teach students what must be learned at this particular time. Students must also take the effort to read the books, complete assignments, ask thoughtful questions, and seek help when they struggle, in order to develop their own learning and synthesizing skills. In a university course, especially in general education or inter-disciplinary field, a professor may teach a topic that focuses on areas in which most class members will not be employed in the future. Yet, one approach is to teach multiple applications of the content, giving students an opportunity to reflect upon their own background and to apply this content and skills their future goals. Thus, the course material takes on a relevance and application to their future that was not visible prior to enrolling in the course.

Educational theorist John Dewey wrote:

It is not enough to insist upon the necessity of experience, nor even of activity in experience. Everything depends on the quality of the experience which is had...It sets a problem to the educator. It is his business to arrange for the kind of experiences which...engage his activities...since they promote having desirable future experiences...Hence the central problem of an education based upon experiences is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences. 14

This emphasis on creating and providing good learning activities and experiences is vital for students' success. Acquiring knowledge and applying this knowledge to new situations is not easy. Every student who has learned to play a musical instrument or attempted to conquer a new skill or hobby understands the challenges and difficulties in conquering such a task. However, practice and increased accomplishment can be empowering. This same principle applies to academic learning. For example, I would pass the football practice fields on my way to classes at the University of Texas in Austin. At the edge of the field, a large sign reads, "Practice Winning Every Day." Football coach Mack Brown explained it this way:

The first year we felt we needed to reemphasize the fact that winning didn't come easy, so we took a theme of "Practice winning every day". That premise wasn't just about practicing to win a game. It was entirely about image-the image you project to others and the image you have of yourself. Winning every day meant going to class every day, taking care of business every day, and of course, practicing better every day. 15

I realized the connection between seemingly mundane tasks and the directions I wanted to go with my learning. I learned to focus on each assignment, each reading, and each paper as a form of practice for a becoming a university professor, which was my goal. I never imagined speaking at university convocation or addressing students in Hong Kong, yet the hours of reading and studying prepared me for this opportunity. The same principles apply to our current students, and we serve their best interests when we enable and encourage relevant learning with each assignment and assessment.

While it is relevant for students to practice learning and meet the standards of their selected field, they must also be prepared to collaborate across disciplines. University graduates will enter a rapidly evolving job market in which they will need to apply and adapt their learning and skill set to new concepts and tasks.

In the ruins of Pompeii, Italy, a significant portion of the city has been recovered from the ash and prepared as an historical site. In an effort to bring the culture and society of ancient Pompeii to the modern world, the European Union has invested money into a technology project. When completed, tourists visiting Pompeii would wear a special camera, and the live video feed would link to a computer, which then would match re-enactments and recreations of ancient Pompeii. Thus visitors would see a part-virtual, part real creation of an earlier time period. 16

In order to complete this project, software and hardware designers will need to work with historians, archeologists, anthropologists, architects, linguists, fashion designers, and art historians. Each group plays a vital part in developing a successful project. If successful, such projects could spread to other parts of the globe as a way of preserving culture.

This focus on interdisciplinary work is a shared concern among a growing number of university faculties. A recent survey concerning university graduates provided interesting feedback about employment needs. In addressing the needs of university graduates, one respondent stated:

It's really important to understand the relationship of your discipline to other disciplines. So many important problems are inter-disciplinary in their nature, and you'll have to work on interdisciplinary teams. 17

Another education director stated:

Businesses want students to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, good communicators, and adept at working independently as well as collaboratively. They want them to become adults who can contribute to both the civic and economic health of their communities. 18

A university education allows for a broad introduction to numerous ideas, skills, and concepts that can give a person the knowledge to interact in an ever evolving world. Professor Douglas Tobler once stated: A good general education is the most practical thing I know. How to use the mind may be the ultimate vocational skill." 19

In engaging, relevant classrooms students recognize the usefulness of the knowledge in their lives and leave knowing how to apply it in other settings. If students fail to see the usefulness or relevance now, instructors can aim to present the material in a way that adds to the students' overall skill set that may be accessed in the future.

Were we able to see into the future, we may be able to guess at the needs of the workplace. Although many career offerings will remain necessary, most are facing rapid change within their discipline or industry. The use of technology and innovation are rapidly advancing in almost every field and interactions among cultures are expanding.

Jobs will change and our university graduates must be prepared to adapt with these changes. A few quick examples illustrate this point. Several years ago, I invited guest speakers from a variety of careers to address the students on my high school campus. One worked for a well-known computer company as the lead project developer for high end LCD projectors. He had an Associate's degree, but had spent his life working on transistor radios, televisions, and other electronic devices. When he had entered the university, the high end projectors commonly used with today's advanced computer presentations did not exist. However, by his skills and training, he stayed current with electronic innovations and learned to adapt to a changing technology market. Recently, he finished a project for high-end projectors that not only earned him a nice bonus, but also enabled him to register 6 patents in the US patent office.

Another friend began his career as a fireman. After one particular fire, he recognized that everything had burned except for a baby diaper. As he studied the compounds made up in the diaper, he learned more about building and creating safety equipment that would protect firefighters. As he developed new equipment, he also became knowledgeable in new technologies in the areas of fire prevention and chemical and hazardous materials detection. Eventually, he became an expert in chemical detection and currently works with the US government training first responders on how to use sophisticated equipment to detect hazardous materials, including weapons detection.

Both these men work in jobs that did not exist 20 years ago. Many students here today will learn skills in fields that will change and then will become leaders in those fields. They will need to open their minds to new possibilities and use the training and skills learned here to be a lifelong learner. Whether our students stay in more traditional fields or work in rapidly advancing industries, most will find themselves working in international and interdisciplinary settings. Therefore, relevance in education is an important aspect of educational reform.

The third area of the school reform focuses on Relationships. This concept seeks to build a base of mutual respect and understanding in order to create a positive learning environment. How often, especially at the university level, has a student sat in class not understanding the material, but been afraid to ask for help, either because they feared the reactions of peers or the reaction of the professor? Building relationships is not the proverbial "touchy-feely" approach, but one in which an open learning environment is created. Students feel free to take academic risks and to be mentored in their learning. In a positive learning environment, students are more willing to participate in activities. 20 Second-language learners and those who come from educational systems in which open dialogue or questioning the teacher is not socially acceptable may find their own ways to participate more freely, in smaller group activities or within lower enrollment courses where the language or cultural barriers are minimized.

One way to describe the idea of relationships is to look at specific ways in which instructors can help students. One reformer described the concept of relationships with these six ideas:

- **Modeling values and ethics**-such as reason, empathy, dialogue in conflict, and honesty
- **Knowing and connecting interpersonally with each [student]**-asking each one about their thoughts, activities, and opinions
- **Supporting risk taking**-encouraging each [student] to try, even if they fail, and setting an environment of trust and belief in abilities
- **Building on success**-valuing quality effort and praising growth
- **Providing clear directions and expectations**
- **Allowing and planning for different patterns of learning** 21

With a focus on building relationships, faculty, administrators, and staff serve as mentors in non-academic settings. All adults on campus become a mentor in whom students can find someone who is willing to provide a listening ear, offer advice, provide support, and model to them how to be successful in other aspects of life, even beyond academics. Universities are facing increasing challenges of social, psychological, and behavioral issues among incoming students. Looking after students needs is not only an academic need, but contributes to the student developing important adaptive and coping skills. Students tend to build relationships among cohorts and learning groups. For example, the School of Education cohorts provide opportunity for students to build close relationships during their final two years of study as they prepare to enter the public schools for teaching practice. The same could be said of students in many majors across campus. Our New Freshman Learning Community attempts to build such bonds at the freshman level among incoming students.

As such relationship building continues to grow on this campus, students gain additional mentors who watch over them, adding to the support they receive from peers. In this scenario, each BYU-Hawaii student can walk across this campus and be acknowledged, recognized, and accepted. This spirit typifies the concept of "aloha"

and "Ohana" as a way of living that exemplifies the concept of family.

In these positive relationships, adults set a good example for students, as in Eastern traditions. Students exhibit behavior that provides positive learning environments. Building positive relationships means understanding where students are coming from in a physical and cultural sense. Professors can reach out to their students in culturally sensitive ways, such as making allowances for a lack of eye contact or helping students understand the often informal banter that occurs between professors and instructors in an American teaching environment. Students can become more tolerant of the challenges fellow students may face and increase collaboration on group projects and presentations in classroom activities. Already there are great efforts of many among our faculty, staff, and students who do reach out to others in these ways. This spirit is exemplified in a comment made by a recent senior ITEP missionary sister speaking after the close of a course offered to CES teachers in church schools in the islands:

At first I was worried when the professor came that he would teach the class and not care about what the teachers might be experiencing. Yet, he treated the teachers with respect, listened to what they had to say, and helped them apply the course teachings to their particular schools and situations. They became excited to put into place what they were taught, because they feel empowered to improve their classrooms.

As we work towards future possibilities with our students, the need for mentoring and guidance is vital. Recently, the Secondary education department sent students back to Hong Kong to complete their student teaching to become licensed teachers in Hong Kong. As we arranged school placements, we looked at the metro map and relied too much on our perspective of time and distance according to what information we had available. The students insisted we had miscalculated travel time. When Dr. Mitchell and I went to Hong Kong and rode the metro lines ourselves, we learned the realities of the situation on site. As a result of spending time in their schools, we better matched our lesson plans and instructional examples for the students.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships provide a way of approaching learning that helps meet the challenges of a global university. BYU-Hawaii, because of its unique ability to build a multi-cultural learning environment while maintaining a common spiritual focus, is well placed to become what a global university should be. This campus is home to many success stories, of students who have entered to learn and who have gone forth to serve. A number of instructors have spent hours creating rigorous courses that focus on learning standards that produce students capable of entering their chosen professions prepared to serve and lead. I have listened to professors who have integrated instructional examples and assessment projects that are relevant to students' lives and prior experiences. These professors keep the end product in mind, knowing that students must be learning skills and knowledge they can use in the future, either in direct skills or as part of a larger, broad educational experience. And, two weeks ago, in this auditorium, a number of staff and faculty greeted incoming students and answered their questions, seeking to know them and help them from day one. They began building relationships immediately.

Yet the task for each of us is to evaluate our own efforts and progression and to seek improvement. Concerning rigor, faculty can examine courses to ensure that clear, measurable outcomes based on standards and aligned with assessments are in place. For students, this means dedicating themselves to completing all assigned tasks, and viewing these tasks as evidence of learning and mastery of standards. Concerning relevance, faculty can focus on engaging activities that connect to students' prior knowledge, experience, and goals, which incorporate the necessary skills and knowledge for future careers. Students can seek continually for ways to apply the knowledge and skills they acquire in all classes so that they can adapt to changes that may occur in job markets and career situations. Building relationships can add to the environment of this unique university. These efforts will help us reach President Gordon B. Hinckley's challenge to 'stand a little taller' as we strive to increase the

success of BYU-Hawaii.

Coming together on a consensus is often difficult, but focusing on reform efforts that target learning and student performance and preparation are important. The terms rigor, relevance, and relationships form a trio of important theoretical principles that can improve student performance and learning. These efforts take time. They cannot be done overnight. Instructors may begin by examining one course per semester. Quality improvement requires dedication and continual effort. Mentoring a student may take hours, but the time spent produces a better student. Faculty teaching loads may need to be adjusted to compensate for the time, and other campus mentors might need to step out of the office more often to mingle with students. Students, for their part, might give up one beach day or other activity if the result is improved academic success or reaching out to a fellow classmate in need.

The prophetic vision of this great university can be realized upon understanding these points. BYU-Hawaii, as it states on the website, truly is a unique university. Representing so many regions of the world, and pulling in students from such far places into one, this university has the opportunity to continue its global perspective and background. As the challenges of the global environment encroach upon this small campus, may we come together this year with increased effort to make BYU-Hawaii a more effective university in preparing students to meet these challenges.

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