MEMORANDUM

March 12, 2012

TO: Erika Lacro, UH Vice President for Community Colleges (VPCC)

FROM: Leeward Health Information Technology (HIT) Program Faculty*  
        Kay Ono, Leeward CC Interim VCAA, Facilitator

C: Tammi Chun, UHCC Interim Associate VP for Academic Affairs  
    Della Teraoka, UHCC Interim Director of Academic Programs

SUBJECT: HIT Program, UHCC Single Program Discussion, Phase III Report

Faculty Participation*

The two full-time Leeward CC (LeeCC) Health Information Technology (HIT) Faculty participated in the  

- Kathleen Cashman HIT Instructor & Program Coordinator  cashmank@hawaii.edu
- Roselyn Bumanglag HIT Instructor  roselyn@hawaii.edu

HIT Program Overview

*The Leeward CC Health Information Technology (HIT) Program is the only program in the UH System.* The UH Board of Regents approved the Leeward CC Associate in Science in Health Information Technology (HIT) Program as an established program effective Fall 2018. The 61-credit stackable degree includes a Certificate of Competence (16 credits) and a Certificate of Achievement (31 credits). The HIT Program provides classroom instruction that integrates both lectures and practical applications, professional practice experience (practicum), and study preparation for the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT).

National Accreditation and Certification. The HIT Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM); and follows the CAHIIM Standards for the associate degree. Since LeeCC is accredited, its HIT associate-degree graduates are eligible to take the RHIT national certification. This certification adds to the value of the HIT associate degree as graduates seek employment at higher salaries. *The LeeCC HIT Program is the only CAHIIM accredited program in Hawai‘i.*

Meeting Workforce Needs

The HIT Program is meeting its current workforce needs for the state and county according to the 2019-2020 ARPD; however, the demand for coders will continue to rise due to the aging population. There is a shift toward more complex coding, and single pathway coding is emerging (combining physical and patient coding). Although there is coding software, it does not replace coders because they are needed to review and edit.
There are many HIT positions available in Hawai‘i on a regular basis as advertised in various online websites such as Indeed, ZipRecruiter, or Glassdoor, as well as hospital/clinic websites. The best paying entry-level coding positions require a RHIT, which requires graduating with from a CAHIIM accredited associate-degree program like LeeCC.

According to the 2019 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, the job prospects continue to be excellent.

- Median pay: $42,630 per year ($20.50 per hour).
- Jobs nationwide: 341,600.
- Job outlook for 2019-2029: 8% growth, which is much faster than average.
- Largest group of employers: 37% of job market: hospitals (state, local, and private).
- Second large group of employers: 15% of job market: physician offices.
- Health Information Technician positions will continue to be needed due to the aging population.
- Cancer Registrars are expected to continue to be in high demand; also noted by the LeeCC HIT Industry Advisory Board.
- Job prospects will be best with certifications such as the RHIT, which is the certification HIT associate-degree graduates are eligible to take.

(Reference: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CNJLhr9GVtlnzWKT1XtsZ_e9E4BG9XDfF2Xffyglr8/edit?ts=60413a25#heading=h.awl772y8em4g)


Data from the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), 2019 U.S. Salary report for HIM Professionals, supports that HIT is a profession that pays well in Hawai‘i.

- Average salary by region (Hawai‘i, California, Alaska, Oregon, Washington), $87,680.
- Salary with a RHIT, $70,300.
- Confirms professionals earn more because of certification.
- Average salary: $44,530 (0-1 years), $47,290 (1-2 years), $51,110 (3-4 years).

**HIT Industry Advisory Board.** As one method to keep current in the Health Information areas, the LeeCC HIT Program meets annually with its Industry Advisory Board. On March 11, 2021, the Board met and included three Health Information industry experts that represented both private and public organizations. In addition, UHWO was represented with a Faculty member from its Health Information Management (HIM) Program.

- Emerging Area—Cancer Registry. This was 1 of 2 specific areas mentioned at the Board meeting. Since there is no official Cancer Registry program, employers are creating internal training and offering online training to its employees.

- Emerging Area—Data Analytics. These positions are usually filled by business or information technology (IT) majors; but there is a growing need for data analytics to be integrated into the Health Information areas. Like the Cancer Registry, the employers are creating its own training programs as noted by the Board. To address this workforce need, the HIT Program offers two courses: HIT 120, *Introduction to Healthcare Data Management & Analytics*, and HIT 220, *Healthcare Data Management & Analytics*. Critical thinking is an important skill needed in data analytics.

- Emerging Area—Informatics and Cybersecurity. These IT areas are growing and would be an opportunity for Leeward’s ICS Program. Leeward has a certificate in Cybersecurity.
Opportunities

Increase Program Faculty. The HIT Program has two full-time Faculty and hire lecturers to teach additional sections. Due to the growing number of HIT majors, there is an immediate need to hire at least one additional Faculty member, which will allow the program to grow. It is recommended that another full-time member be hired. If the Faculty member has a bachelor’s or master’s degree, the person could be a back-up to the program director because CAHIIM requires the director to have at least a bachelor’s degree.

Distance Education. The HIT Program has been growing in the number of Distance Education classes. A goal of the HIT Program is to offer its entire associate degree program online.

- Expand the HIT Program to other UHCC Campuses. DE courses could provide an opportunity for these campuses to offer at least the CO in HIT; and provide a pathway for their students to Leeward’s HIT associate degree.

- Recruit Globally. There will be opportunities to recruit active military, veterans, military spouses and dependents. While stationed abroad, the HIT Program would be an excellent program to market, since there are many HIT-related positions on military bases and military hospitals/clinics. Once a federal position is obtained, the individual can continue their career upward despite reassignments.

Student Opportunities. Current student opportunities for careers in the Health Information Technology and Health Information Management areas.

- Non-credit to Credit Articulation. The LeeCC Office of Continuing Education and Workforce Development (OCEWD) and the LeeCC Business Division established a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) effective July 1, 2018. The MOA provides an opportunity for a smooth transition for students that successfully complete identified OCEWD Healthcare Technology (HLTH) courses. Seven (7) OCEWD HLTH courses articulate to the Business Division HIT Program when students earn at least a grade of “C” or higher. The OCEDW HLTH Program is accredited by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA).

- Pathway toward a Bachelor in Applied Science (BAS) in Health Information Management (HIM). LeeCC and UHWO have an existing Articulation Agreement for students graduating with the AS in HIT to continue their higher education at UHWO seeking a Bachelor in Applied Science (BAS) in Health Information Management. At this time, the UHWO HIM Program is seeking accreditation from CAHIIM; when accreditation is earned, HIM bachelor-degree graduates will be eligible for the Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA) national certification.

- Pathway toward Management Opportunities. HIT graduates with the RHIT certification and experience should consider a bachelor’s degree in management, which could open up opportunities for future management positions. Managers in coding areas must possess a RHIT or RHIA national certification.

- Externships. The HIT Program provides externships for its students, which enhances their educational experience. These externships are a method to engage the Health Information industry in Leeward’s program and provides networking opportunities for Faculty and students.

- Multiple Exits with Job Opportunities. Whether the student earns a certificate or an associate degree, there are many job opportunities for the students such as: Patient Access Clerk, Registration Clerk, Ward Clerk, Insurance Coordinator, Billing Clerk, Coding Specialists, HIM Technologists, or Electronic Health Records (EHR) Trainer. In addition, there are many opportunities for national certifications in these areas.