Chapter 11. Enter Evan Dobelle: "Defining Our Destiny"



"The world stands aside to let anyone pass who knows where he is going"

David Starr Jordan
(1851-1931)

11.1. Dobelle Makes a "Big Splash"



On 2 July 2001, Evan S. Dobelle became the 12th president of the University of Hawaii system. Dobelle, who holds a PhD degree in education and public policy from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, had previously served as president of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut for six years and, before that, was chancellor and president of the 85,000 student, 9-campus City College of San Francisco. Earlier in his distinguished career, Dobelle served two terms as mayor of Pittsfield, Massachusetts and was chief of protocol for the White House with rank of ambassador under US President Jimmy Carter. The 55-year old Dobelle was paid $442,000 per year to lead the UH system.

President Dobelle's first order of business at UH was to re-establish the chancellor's office. On his first day at work, he named UH political science professor Deane Neubauer as interim Manoa chancellor and SOEST Dean Barry Raleigh as head of a presidential task force on research infrastructure (Figure 11.1). Less than one month into his term, on 20 July 2001, Dobelle announced a major restructuring of the UH administration. Among other changes, three new vice chancellors were created for the Manoa campus; several senior administrators were also fired. When the smoke cleared, oceanography professor Ed Laws was the new interim vice chancellor for research and graduate education. With these and other administration changes, Dobelle launched a new era at UH, one with renewed optimism and enhanced faculty morale. Now was the time to redefine the UH at Manoa mission and prepare an explicit strategic plan for the future.



Figure 11.1: On President Dobelle's first day on the job – 2 July 2001 – he made several key appointments, including the naming of SOEST dean Barry Raleigh (second from left) to head a commission on UH research infrastructure. (from *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, photo by George F. Lee; http://starbulletin.com/2001/07/03/news/index.html)

The mission of UH at Manoa, as articulated circa 1991, is "to serve society by increasing, refining, disseminating and sorting human knowledge, and contributing to the enhancement of wisdom and values. The University carries out this mission through teaching, research and service in an atmosphere of academic freedom, and as a member of an international community of universities." This mission statement has served as the basis for a more detailed and tangible academic program planning process which over the past four decades has produced several formal academic development plans.

In 1964, a committee of UH faculty and administrators chaired by Robert Hiatt, then vice president for academic affairs, prepared the first-ever Academic Development Plan (ADP-I) to help guide future growth of the University over the next decade. Among other recommendations, the plan called for an expansion and improvement of the graduate programs in oceanography. This began a tradition at UH for planning and tracking the development of new high priority academic units.

ADP-I was followed a few years later by ADP-II in 1969, then ADP-III in 1978 and finally, in 1991, the UH-BOR published the ADP-IV, also known as *A Statewide System and Beyond: A Master Plan for the University of Hawaii*. In that document, as in all previous planning efforts, the BOR emphasized the key role of research and their

commitment to support "ocean-related sciences." In particular the 1991 plan emphasized, SOEST will be supported, but it also mentioned that the school "should consider locating more of its research facilities off campus, preferably to sites on the neighbor islands." To date this has not happened, although there were discussions and even some advanced planning to homeport the new research vessel, R/V *Kilo Moana* (see section 13.11), on the Big Island.

According to UH-BOR's *University of Hawaii's Strategic Plan* published in November 1996, UH at Manoa will "maintain research as a primary function; recognize and ensure that all UH at Manoa colleges/schools and organized research units contribute to Manoa's standing among its peer research universities; give priority in resource allocation to those areas where Hawaii has a natural advantage and areas where research results address issues of importance to the state including ocean and earth science, marine biology, astronomy, cancer and biomedical research, conservation biology, tropical agriculture, and Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific areas." – a reaffirmation of the key role of marine sciences.

In September 2001, shortly after President Dobelle had taken over as chief executive officer of UH but not because of it, the *US News and World Report* national ranking of colleges placed UH near "rock bottom." Five years prior to that time, UH at Manoa was ranked among the top 25 national public universities, but now UH was in the third tier. Despite this grim news, Dobelle remained optimistic; there is nowhere to go but up! In a 7 September 2001 Treena Shapiro *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* article titled, "Dobelle eyes revival in research," he characterized UH at Manoa as a powerful research institution – and the facts supported this. He went on to say that he has conscripted Barry Raleigh and Harold Matsumoto to guide the university's research future. Raleigh had recently been appointed to head a task force for Dobelle on research infrastructure, and Matsumoto – at that time – was the executive director of RCUH.

In a news conference on 2 July 2001 on this important matter Dobelle said, "We need a top-to-bottom review of the research enterprise – what works, what doesn't and what needs to be done for the system to work as well as it can." He went on to state that the current research system at UH at Manoa has been described by some faculty as "swimming through molasses." Dobelle proclaimed, "This simply isn't acceptable for a Carnegie Research / Doctoral Extensive University that aspires to be one of the best." The team will be tasked with identifying solutions, not problems. Dobelle said "The diagnosis – broken – has been made already; it's time to find a cure."

Despite very good intentions and a competent task leader, progress on the problem solving has been slow, in part due to a major reorganization of the research enterprise, including the appointment of a new system-wide vice president for research and the re-establishment of the chancellor's office, including a vice chancellor for research. The Raleigh Task Force issued its report, "Restructuring the Administration and Infrastructure of Research," in November 2001. In connection with this plan, Raleigh also prepared a research business plan, as discussed previously (see section 10.5).

The *University of Hawaii System Strategic Plan: Entering the University's Second Century 2002-2010* was formally adopted by the UH-BOR in June 2002, printed and distributed to interested parties. In it, UH President Dobelle stated, "This plan will change and evolve in response to changes in our environment, whether resulting from our own collective actions or compelling events in our surrounding world. However, this plan is the template that will guide us." Once again, as in all plans that preceded it, a key action strategy was to "assume leadership in knowledge creation by building on existing research strengths…and capitalizing on Hawaii's natural advantages" – including oceanography.

According to the *University of Hawaii Institutional Effectiveness Report: 2002 Update*, UH ranked 61st among the top 100 research universities in the nation in 2000. Based on information contained in a 21 June 2002 *The Honolulu Advertiser* article written by Bev Creamer, support for UH research had reached a record $252 M according to Ed Laws, then UH interim vice chancellor for research and graduate studies. Laws went on to say that while UH President Dobelle had created an atmosphere that encourages excellence, the specific grants were written by individual faculty – and they deserve most of the credit. That same year SOEST ranked 5th nationally in NSF funding for research in ocean sciences. Bean-counting aside, the oceanography program rating reflects the world-class program that has emerged at UH over the past four decades as well as the vision and leadership of key faculty and administrators over those years.

Later, in 2002, the UH at Manoa office of the chancellor released a draft strategic plan, *Defining Our Destiny*, which covers the period 2002-2010. (note: Shortly after Albert Simone became UH president in 1984, the UH at Manoa chancellor's office was dissolved until it was reinstated by UH President Evan Dobelle in 2001. On 1 August 2002, Peter Englert – a nuclear chemist trained at the University of Cologne, Germany – became the first chancellor in nearly 15 years on the UH at Manoa campus; see *Box 11.1*. This report was prepared by interim chancellor Deane Neubauer prior to Englert's arrival at UH.) By 2002, the mission statement was boiled down to three key items: Leadership, Excellence, and Innovation, with core commitments to Research, Exemplary undergraduate education, Social justice, Place, Economic development, Culture, society and the arts, and Technology – RESPECT. The Technical Advisory Committee's mantra was "Planning is all about hope," and with President Dobelle in charge, there was renewed hope for the future.

One of Chancellor Englert's first actions was to replace oceanographer Ed Laws, who was then serving as interim vice chancellor for research and graduate education, with astronomer Rolf-Peter Kudritzki, who was then director of the UH's Institute for Astronomy. Laws moved back into SOEST and on 1 July 2003 he began an unprecedented third term as chair of the Department of Oceanography and the oceanography field of study.

Chancellor Englert hired a consultant, Robert Forrester, to visit the UH at Manoa campus in November and December 2002 to meet with selected principal investigators, research administrators and others for the purpose of advising him on various options

regarding future investments in the research enterprise. A copy of the Forrester Report is available at http://kela.soest.hawaii.edu/UHARI/Forrester_report.pdf (also see *Box 10.2*).

***Box 11.1*: Chancellor Peter Englert**



(from: Honolulu Star-Bulletin*; http://starbulletin.com/ 2002/05/17/news/story1.html)*

On 17 May 2002 it was announced that the UH-BOR had confirmed Peter Englert – then the 52-year-old pro vice chancellor and dean of science, architecture and design at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand – as the first permanent chancellor at UH at Manoa in nearly two decades. (note: In 1984, the position of UH at Manoa chancellor was incorporated into the president's office during the Simone administration.) The appointment would be effective 1 August 2002; Englert will earn a reported $254 K per annum to oversee the largest campus in the growing UH system. In addition to his high-level administrative responsibilities, Englert planned to continue his ongoing research as a member of the 2001 Mars Odyssey Gamma-Neutron Spectrometer Flight Investigation Team. Englert earned a PhD degree in nuclear chemistry from the University of Cologne in Germany, and would hold a tenured faculty position in SOEST.

According to a *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* article by Mary Vorsino, "Three hours of chanting, hula, and warm embraces greeted Englert on his first day on the job," 1 August 2002. There was high expectation that Chancellor Englert – who had increased Maori enrollment at Victoria University during his seven-year tenure there – would help to build a bridge between UH and the native Hawaiian community. Following the emotional ceremony, Englert moved into Gateway House dormitory to gain a better appreciation for student issues and student life. "I wanted to demonstrate my commitment to supporting our students and to helping maintain an environment that is conducive to their academic goals," he said.



Makaahoa Duarte and Chancellor Englert exchange breath in a ceremonial gesture during a welcoming ceremony on 1 August 2002 (from Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, photo by Cindy Ellen Russell; http://starbulletin.com/ 2002/08/02/news/story6.html)*

By the end of September, Chancellor Englert had already written a major position paper on "Improving Campus Decision Processes through Consultation." Consultation, he said, is essential to implement the strategic plan, ordinary management, and solutions to day-to-day issues of university management. In this regard, he hoped to continue the new tradition begun by President Dobelle and interim Chancellor Deane Neubauer who had both established trust and support by the broad consultation they had developed during the strategic plan. In this position paper he outlined the consultation framework and process that he would follow in his shared governance policies. According to his official web page (http:www.hawaii.edu/admin/ englert.html), Englert characterizes himself as a consensus-builder and his leadership style as collaborative and consultative.

continued

***Box 11.1*: Chancellor Peter Englert (continued)**

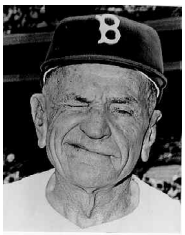
Approximately one year into his initial three-year contract, Alice Keesing published a feature article in *MidWeek* entitled, "Shaking 'Em Up in Manoa." By this time, Chancellor Englert and his team had moved into the newly renovated Hawaii Hall. (note: Hawaii Hall was built in 1912 as "Main Hall." In April 2003 it was rededicated following a 2-year $15 M renovation. Englert felt it was important to move into this historic building near the center of the UH campus "to be closer to students and closer to where our teaching takes place.")

According to Keesing, "Englert ruffled some feathers in his first year, especially those opposed to change. They (the "fiefdoms and warlords," according to the article) ain't seen nothing yet." According to the article, Englert has President Dobelle's "absolute support," while he describes Chancellor Englert as a "work in progress" whose real worth should be measured further into his three-year contract.

In February 2003, the UH-BOR approved the appointment of David McClain as interim vice president for research for the UH system. His starting annual salary was $237,000. This position was created under the reorganization plan approved by the BOR in December 2002. According to a 21 February 2003 press release, the system vice president for research will be expected to oversee the development and implementation of long-range research planning, and to promote effective administrative and operational relationships between UH and RCUH. McClain received his PhD in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1974, and served as Dean of the UH College of Business Administration for three years before his promotion to vice president.

McClain's term was short-lived; he was soon thereafter promoted. At the June 2003 BOR meeting, McClain was confirmed as UH system-wide vice president of academic affairs, effective 1 July 2003; his salary was reported as $260 K per annum. This left the recently established vice president for research position vacant. Later, Jim Gaines – then assistant vice chancellor for research – was approved by the UH-BOR to the important post of interim vice president for research.

11.2. Hawaii Politics: Open Mouth, Insert Foot…



"The key to being a good manager is keeping the people who hate me away from those who are still undecided."
Casey Stengel
(1890-1975)

In 1998, the UH Professional Assembly (UHPA), the faculty union, endorsed Linda Lingle – a republican – for governor. Many UH faculty thought this was a terrible idea. It infuriated most democrats, especially then Governor Cayetano, as well as Hawaii's congressional delegation – all democrats. Cayetano won the election and vowed to "get back at the UH faculty."

Four years later, with Cayetano out of the political picture (he had already served his maximum two terms as governor) the UHPA again endorsed Lingle who, at that time, was a much stronger candidate. Endorsements by labor unions were nothing new so no

one thought more, or less, about the UH faculty for voicing their opinion. However, a virtual firestorm broke out in early November 2002, just days before the election, when UH President Dobelle appeared in a television commercial – as a private citizen – to endorse democrat Mazie Hirono, Lingle's opponent.

In a *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* op-ed piece on 10 November 2002, Rob Perez asked rhetorically, "What in the world was Dobelle thinking?" After all, the governor appoints the BOR who collectively run the university and hire/fire its president. The governor also approves the university's budget. Perhaps, that was exactly what he was thinking. After all, if a commercial backing of "his" candidate in the 11th hour of the election was enough to sway public opinion and elect Hirono – then he would be set for the next four, perhaps eight, years.

Dobelle is no novice when it comes to politics; he previously served as treasurer of the Democratic National Committee and as finance chairman for President Jimmy Carter's re-election campaign. The fact that Dobelle's endorsement contradicted that of UHPA alarmed many of the faculty. However, as Larry Meacham – spokesperson for the government watchdog group Common Cause – said, the endorsement by the UH president and the endorsement by the UH faculty are essentially no different. "Even if neither endorsement seems prudent, it is their right to do so."

In the end, Hirono lost the election. The only question that remained: Was Dobelle's mistake fatal to his presidency? – especially as newly elected Governor Lingle begins to replace the retiring UH-BOR members (Figure 11.2).



Figure 11.2: Former Governor Ben Cayetano (left), UH President Evan Dobelle and Governor Linda Lingle at ground-breaking ceremony for the new UH medical school complex in Kakaako (from: *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 4 June 2003, photo by Craig T. Kojima; http://starbulletin.com/ 2003/06/04/news/story4.html)

11.3. UH Budget Woes Continue into the Lingle-Dobelle Era

At their 22 November 2002 meeting, the UH-BOR called for a 21.5% hike in the UH budget, thereby challenging the new republican governor and her administration to help turn the UH system into a world-class organization. At that same meeting, Paul Costello – Dobelle's external affairs officer – made a "sales pitch" for creating a new marketable UH complete with a new logo (see section 11.4).

Unfortunately, after all the dust had settled at Washington Place and at the state legislature, UH came away with yet another budget cut, not hike, which is likely to further stress, if not fracture, the increasingly feeble institution. In the case of SOEST, there will be an even greater reliance than usual on federal support for our research programs. On 18 March 2002, the US and UK militaries invaded Iraq in an attempt to rid the country of an evil dictator and to eliminated purported "weapons of mass destruction." The impact of the war on domestic and international travel to Hawaii further exacerbated an already weak economy. The UH general fund budget woes continue.

11.4. The "Branding" of UH

In February 2002, UH system administrators announced plans to begin an aggressive marketing, advertising, and graphic identity campaign. A contract was let to the brand strategy group, Robert Rytter & Associates graphic design and Starr Seigle Advertising to assist the UH administration with their new institutional identity.

According to the administration, UH's "brand" is fractured due to an excess of 150 logos in use system-wide. The implication was that all of these proud images of specific UH programs would be short-lived as a result of the UH administration's desire to force a common logo/brand down everyone's throat! They went on to state that once we "roll out" the new UH graphic, all existing logos and identity marks will become "obsolete." The branding police also suggested that the UH seal – with us since the formation of the University in 1921 – would be "updated graphically to make it more legible and contemporary."

In fall 2002, a newsletter "Building the University Brand" was published – one team, one voice, one university was the new mantra. The response from the faculty was predictable. For example, on 18 December 2002, SOEST Dean Raleigh wrote to Phil Kinnicutt – then director of marketing and brand management – with his views on this matter. Raleigh's memo read, "Ford makes Tauruses and they make Jaguars. You should offer to sell them your idea of 'one brand for all' so the Ford owner won't feel upset by seeing the elitist Jaguar owner snooting him by displaying an individualist brand signifying quality and excellence." He went on to remind the UH administration that "we (in his case, SOEST) have altogether too much pride in exceptional accomplishment around here. Take away our symbols and maybe we will succumb to the righteousness of uniformity and mediocrity."

In another email dated 18 December 2002, John Learned, professor of physics and astronomy, was a bit less polite and characterized this whole matter as "whimsical logo foolishness" that is "reflective of our new management of UH; fluff over substance." He went on to comment about the lone exception to this logo retrenchment mandate – the UH at Manoa and UH at Hilo athletic departments, "I note the only UH groups officially keeping their logos are the sports teams … forget SOEST, forget IfA, forget the Cancer Center. We all love our gloomy green H brought to us by homophobes in the athletics department."

What Learned was obviously referring to was the decision, two years earlier, to get rid of the university's 77-year old rainbow logo because the rainbow had elsewhere become perceived as a symbol of gay pride and acceptance. According to a 28 July 2000 *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* article on this matter, Hugh Yoshida, then director of UH athletics, said at the time that the rainbow logo "put a stigma on our program." Ken Miller, co-chairman of the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in Honolulu characterized the university's concern about the old logo as "bigoted and ignorant." Learned concluded his emotional diatribe by stating, "I, for one, shall do my bit to sabotage these silly efforts by ignoring them, and I hope others will as well." Polite and civil as always, Learned ended with a personal message to Kinnicutt, "And apologies, Phil, I am sure this was not your idea … though folks will heap abuse upon you anyway."

In March 2003 a letter to the editor appeared in the *Honolulu Weekly* (vol. 13, No. 12, 19-25 March 2003). According to Frank Beaver II, UH professor of art, UH had made a major blunder with their new, high profile brand/logo. Based on the "yin and yang" image published in that issue as a "sneak preview" of one of the two final brands. It was also revealed that Robert Rytter and Associates were paid $82 K to design the new logos – so people soon began to pay attention.

Beaver argued that the proposed logo "demeans the specialness and the esteem that we all feel for our university." Beaver went on to state that this is "just another thing being jammed down our throats…" The next issue of the *Honolulu Weekly* (vol. 13, No. 13, 26 March – 1 April 2003) included a response by Gloria Garvey and Brook Gramann of The Brand Strategy Group. They claimed that Beaver was "dead wrong" about the process. Garvey and Gramann went on to say that "UH Vice President for External Affairs and University Relations Paul Costello and his team have acted in extremely good faith throughout this process, and they have been remarkably cheerful and patient with some of the rudest people we have come across in our 30-year careers in this business." Presumably they included Beaver in that group. A key point in their response was that the logo published in the 19-25 March issue of the *Honolulu Weekly* was not one of the final logos under consideration – as Beaver had claimed.

Then in the 8 April 2003 issue of *Ka Leo O Hawaii*, Editor-in-Chief Mary Vorsino reported that the unveiling of the new system-wide logo has stalled because one of the latest designs "may infringe on the copyrights of other companies' marks…" According to the article, the logos will be revised and brought to the 29-member logo committee for

a final decision. The UH-BOR will then pass final judgment – probably at the May 2003 meeting.

On Monday, 23 April 2003, the two final designs for the new UH-system logo were released by the administration. The two new logos were termed the "wave" and the "spectrum" (see Figure 11.3). Despite the time, effort, and promotion – not to mention the financial investment – the logos were an immediate flop! As Beverly Creamer reported in her 24 April *The Honolulu Advertiser* article on this subject, "Consensus builders they are not." Paul Costello, UH vice president for external affairs and the person responsible for the new logo search, said "It's not meant to hang in the Louvre." In his periodic column (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 25 April 2003), Dave Donnelly was brutally honest when he suggested that one of the final designs should be named Costello, and the other Abbott! To many Hawaii residents including UH students, faculty, and staff – this was a joke. Once again there appeared to have been a major miscalculation by the new Dobelle administration.



Figure 11.3: These two logo designs emerged in April 2003 – the result of a $82 K contract to a mainland design firm. According to a 24 April 2003 *Ka Leo O Hawaii* staff article, the "wave" (left) – named for the crossbar of the symbolic "H" – is fashioned by two waves joined in the center. This was meant to indicate the university's unique island location and its tradition of excellence in marine research. The center overlap and connection signifies the university's unique east-west connections. The "H" stands alone – rather than UH – to emphasize the university's profound importance to the state as a whole. The "spectrum" (right) is a contemporary logo that fuses a classic serif H with an abstract circular design meant to evoke east meets west. It replicates the scoop of a voyaging sail – reference to Hawaii's Polynesian heritage. The sweeping curves resemble waves, once again emphasizing the university's link to the sea.

On 1 May 2002 – May day – after a week of non-stop public criticism and ridicule, UH President Evan Dobelle rejected both proposed logos. According to Beverly Creamer's *The Honolulu Advertiser* article on this matter, Dobelle said he was underwhelmed by both of the designs and said "they simply didn't work;" they do not meet the common sense rule. In the same article, Costello said he was encouraged by the developments "because you find out that people really care about the University of Hawaii." Now that's spin.

On Friday, 11 July 2002, the UH-BOR terminated its $82 K contract with Robert Rytter's Baltimore design firm. It was reported in Jennifer Hiller's *The Honolulu Advertiser* article that he had been paid $74 K of the $82 K contract; it will not get any

more. According to new BOR chairperson Patricia Lee, a new open process to select the logo will begin immediately. In a 12 July 2003 *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* article by Michelle Mueller, local design firms will be part of logo design "phase II." A BOR logo subcommittee will meet to review design firm portfolios, and three finalists will receive a $5,000 stipend to "flesh out a new logo design." The winner will get another $5,000 to finalize the design. Regent Kitty Lagareta – a member of the logo subcommittee – emphasized that all monies will come from the sale of logo merchandise, not from the state taxpayers.

11.5. A Broken Trust?

On 6 July 2003 – two days after the celebration on the 4th – the fireworks really started. A special editorial "Dangerous Equations" appeared in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*. The subtitle of the opinion piece by Amy Agbayani, Donna Mercado Kim, Ralph Moberly, and Mark Takai was "President Evan Dobelle has run UH's finances into the red with huge pay raises and empty promises" – another broken trust as it were (Figure 11.4). The topics discussed ranged from executive salaries, to retirement bonuses, to "logo-gate," to Dobelle's failures at fundraising, to his defiance of the BOR. Their conclusion was that "our beloved university is in turmoil;" they stopped just short of a call for Dobelle's resignation.



Figure 11.4: Graphics (left) from the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* 6 July 2003 "Dangerous equations" article and (right) from the 13 July 2003 "Embracing hope" reply. (photo credits: David Swann, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*)

On 13 July 2003, Dobelle responded in kind with his own essay, "Embracing Hope." In this piece Dobelle pointed to several of his many accomplishments to date including, but not limited to, raising expectations about the future of UH as a "necessary pre-condition" for success (Figure 11.4). He disputed several of the specific allegations in the "Dangerous Equations" article as a way to begin to defy the doubters. While the jury is still out on his overall performance and success as president, it is evident that much of this "chatter" is rooted in politics rather than academics. Hopefully, this will have only minimal impact on UH programs in marine sciences.