Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education
Notification to the University of Hawai'i Professional Assembly (UHPA)
and the Hawai'i Government Employees Association (HGEA)
Dear Dr. Musto,

The following information on the Pacific Biosciences Research Center (PBRC) Reorganization has been posted on the Organizational Charts website: http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/ovcafo/neworg_charts/index.html

- Comments received on the PBRC reorg
- OVC RGE response to the comments
- Amended PBRC proposal

UHPA will have 45 days to review and respond. You may send your response to the following address:

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education  
2500 Campus Road, Hawaii Hall 211  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

Thank You,
Michelle

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Michelle Isa  
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
2500 Campus Road, Hawaii Hall 103  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
Phone: (808) 956-4066  
Fax: (808) 956-2751

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Dear Mr. Perreira,

The following information on the Pacific Biosciences Research Center (PBRC) Reorganization has been posted on the Organizational Charts website: http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/ovcafo/neworg_charts/index.html

- Comments received on the PBRC reorg
- OVCRGE response to the comments
- Amended PBRC proposal

HGEA will have 45 days to review and respond. You may send your response to the following address:

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education  
2500 Campus Road, Hawaii Hall 211  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

Thank You,
Michelle

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Michelle Isa  
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education  
University of Hawaii at Manoa 2500 Campus Road,  
Hawaii Hall 103 Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
Phone: (808) 956-4066  
Fax: (808) 956-2751  
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Hawai‘i Government Employees Association (HGEA)
Response to Proposal
July 12, 2010

Ms. Virginia Hinshaw, Chancellor  
Chancellor’s Office  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
2500 Campus Road  
Hawaii Hall 202  
Honolulu, HI 96822

Dear Chancellor Hinshaw:

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO wishes to express our preliminary concern regarding a proposal to abolish the Pacific Biosciences Research Center (PBRC), University of Hawaii at Manoa. PBRC is an Organized Research Unit which fulfills the Board of Regent mandate of providing the university with a catalyst for interdisciplinary research and training, not readily found in conventional academic departments. ORUs provide an efficient, visible, and effective means of pooling appropriate expertise, equipment and management resources.

Under normal circumstances, the Director of PBRC would advocate on behalf of the center but the center has been without a permanent director for approximately ten years. While the VCRGE was appointed Interim Director of PBRC for the last six years, he continues to advocate for the abolishment of the center rather than its continued existence.

In 2004, Gary Ostrander was appointed Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education as well as the Interim Director of PBRC, and during 2006-2008 he was also named Interim Dean of JABSOM. At best, it could be argued that the VCRGE has a conflict of interest while also serving in the director and dean positions. A number of important decisions were allegedly made during this period including not permanently filling the PBRC Director position as well as faculty positions. Additionally, we’ve been told that the VCRGE also negotiated a shortened lease for PBRC’s Kewalo Marine Lab during this period. These strategic decisions serve to further diminish the important work of the center.

The university claims to have used a consultation process to discuss this proposal with the affected employees. If that is true, when and where were meetings held with administrative and support employees? We have discussed this proposal with affected employees in our bargaining units and the employees did not participate in any consultative meetings with the employer.
According to the proposal the abolishment of PBRC makes both academic and fiscal sense. We disagree. The PBRC is fiscally sound and annually attracts $5-6 million in extramural funds with a current state-funded operating budget of $3 million. It reports always operating in the “black.” The proposal further states that the administrative staff will all report to new units. This statement is not accurate. There are a number of encumbered temporary positions and the incumbents are uncertain about their status. They have not been advised about their options or the potential consequences this proposal may have on their employment status.

Although we understand that the university considers the closing of the facility to be unrelated to the abolishment of PBRC, we are requesting clarification. The proposal does not address the current status of the Kewalo Marine Laboratory. What is the current status of the lease agreement? Did the university renegotiate the lease? Is the facility still projected to close in 2013?

Finally, we are interested in knowing exactly what other alternatives or options were considered by the university before the VCRGE decided to advocate abolishing PBRC. Did affected employees make any recommendations?

We are concerned that the proposal to abolish PBRC will negatively impact the affected employees. We ask that you reconsider this proposal and immediately enter into consultation with the affected employees of the center. Finally, in addition to a written response, we are requesting a meeting to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

Leiomalama E. Desha
Executive Assistant to the Executive Director
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Response to Hawai‘i Government Employees Association (HGEA)
August 26, 2010

Ms. Leiomalama E. Desha  
Executive Assistant to the Executive Director  
Hawai‘i Government Employees Association  
388 Miliiani Street, Suite 601  
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

Dear Ms. Desha:

Thank you for meeting with Vice Chancellor Gary Ostrander and I on Friday, August 13, in my office with regards to your letter dated July 12, 2010 and to engage in formal consultation. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss with you our reasons for the reorganization and our responses to your questions and concerns pursuant to your letter dated July 12, 2010. As we discussed, the decision to proceed with the proposed reorganization to abolish the Pacific Biosciences Research Center (PBRC) was not taken lightly and has been considered and reviewed for several years. The organization itself has evolved since its inception and has reached an opportune point where programs may be integrated with current complementary research programs in academic units. This opportunity is certainly as a result of the work and accomplishments of PBRC over the years, and we expect that this reorganization will further strengthen and advance UH-Manoa’s education mission – both academic and research – with those contributions by current PBRC faculty, staff and programs.

Vice Chancellor Ostrander met with Administrative/Professional/Technical (APT) and civil service employees on July 29, 2010 at the Agricultural Science Building and shared the reasons for the proposal and the needs of the University at this time. He reaffirmed that he has moved the proposal forward and continues to keep in mind doing what is best for our faculty and staff at UH Manoa. We are committed to find appropriate work locations for all employees. He also reassured those in attendance at the meeting that we would find appropriate units for faculty and staff – no one would face termination or non-renewal due to this specific reorganization and in the proposal, we have accounted for such positions. The temporary employees are funded by various funds – so as long as the grants continue, the employees’ funding should as well.

As for the issue of his service as Interim PBRC Director, I appreciate Vice Chancellor Ostrander’s dedication to the University in serving in a multitude of positions for the benefit of the University. In 2004, prior to his arrival at UH-Manoa, Vice Chancellor Ostrander was asked to serve as Interim Director for what a prior Chancellor
had anticipated would be only a few months. For a variety of reasons, his tenure has been much longer and we appreciate his review and assessment of PBRC programs and operations over such years to help us determine the best direction.

In your letter, you also mention that PBRC is financially sound. With our assessment and given our current efforts at maximizing efficiencies, we conducted an analysis and determined that it would be more beneficial for faculty and their respective programs to be integrated with other faculty in similar disciplines. It is not uncommon for centers to start off initially as a separate temporary entity, and later be incorporated with existing units for purposes of maximizing campus resources including knowledge and collaborative initiatives as the synergy further develops. PBRC faculty have and continue to work collaboratively with faculty in many units over the years; many faculty have joint-appointments. This reorganization provides further opportunities for the faculty and staff, and there would be no adverse impact to the grants if faculty were relocated organizationally. The grants and related work would continue seamlessly.

As we discussed, the closing of the Kewalo Marine Laboratory is a facilities/safety issue and is not related to the abolishment of PBRC.

As I mentioned earlier, there was much analysis and consideration for PBRC programs and accomplishments before determining that the abolishment of the center was best. We have determined that this is the opportune moment to move forward and bring some closure to a proposal that has been considered and reviewed for over a year. Options considered included moving as whole or building with existing academic areas – and at this point and as we discussed, we must proceed with the reorganization to abolish PBRC and plan to submit for action by the Board of Regents.

We have seriously considered the comments and concerns of the HGEA and believe we have responded accordingly. We appreciate the discussion and given the consultation with HGEA, and our meeting to address the employees' and HGEA's concerns, formal consultation has concluded.

With warm regards,

Virginia S. Hinshaw
Chancellor

cc: Vice Chancellor Ostrander