

Oral Testimony from Mānoa Staff Senate Chair, Jaret KC Leong

Distinguished Regents,

Aloha....my name is Jaret Leong and I'm the Mānoa Staff Senate Chair.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify.

On behalf of the Mānoa Staff Senate, which is the voice for staff members at Mānoa, we strongly oppose the BOR resolution and letter to Governor Ige.

We are concerned that this proposed action is being taken without consultation from the various campus governance organizations. There are established mechanisms for shared governance that can be utilized, yet these mechanisms are overlooked and left out of the process described in the resolution.

Moreover, we would like the opportunity to understand the overall proposed plan of the Administration moving forward. And thus, we respectfully request the Administration to share budgetary information and future actions (especially the short-term plans) with all stakeholders at the university in a timely fashion through open campus-wide meetings in consultation with campus governance organizations.

Now speaking specifically for our staff members. [take a pause]

Staff employees across all campuses are critical to the success of the university and provide valuable services and support for students and the campus community.

Staff have demonstrated time and time again that they are willing to make the sacrifices in order to keep this university running. They are hard-working and constantly doing more with less. Showing tremendous loyalty and dedication. They are your front line essential workers who have been here day in and day out. They have also proven extremely valuable in providing meaningful input and perspectives that contribute to the success of this university. Believe me when I say: UH staff are much more than you will ever know.

With that being said, we are committed and ready to work with other campus governance organizations and the UH Administration to get through these challenges and ensure the future of this great university.

In fact, we have already demonstrated the ability to work together effectively to come up with creative solutions to help this university. I would like to cite the recent Manoa Reorganization Phase 2 Functional Teams, Manoa Campus Climate Committee, and Manoa COVID-19 Working Teams. These groups are composed of faculty, staff, students, and UH administrators. We all worked collaboratively together and guess what...GREAT things have come from it.

I hope the board has seen the outpour of support in OPPOSITION to these agenda items. I have read every single written testimony (I hope you have all done the same) - There was not a SINGLE testimony in favor of what you are proposing.

We hope you will do the right thing. We hope you will listen to the university's most valuable assets - its faculty, staff, and students. Decisions should not be made without input from its members. We should all be included in the process. I mean...aren't we all in this together?

I realize that we are under extremely challenging times. But, I feel the best course of action is for all of us to come together to work together as one Ohana under this great university. I truly believe there will be better days ahead.

I would again like to thank the distinguished regents for the opportunity to voice our concerns.

Thank you and Aloha.

Jaret KC Leong, Chair of the Mānoa Staff Senate