

Oral Testimony from Mānoa Staff Senate Chair, Jaret KC Leong

Good morning Distinguished Regents, Chair Kudo, and President Lassner.

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

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I want to express my frustration over the lack of communication and “shared governance” with the staff at Mānoa regarding the proposed changes to this University. I appreciated the approved amendments made by Regent Acoba, which read: (quote) *“and in the consideration, planning, and formulation of any action, the Administration will consult with faculty, staff, and student organizations in a cooperative and collaborative manner and approach, taking into account the interests of the individuals, groups, and entities involved or affected.”* Unfortunately, as of today, the Mānoa Staff Senate has not been contacted by UH Administration. Nor have we received any clear process of how this will be handled and in what timeframe. I'm equally troubled that the students (ASUH and GSO), our lifeblood of this University, have also not been included in this process.

I am respectfully requesting assurances from the Board of Regents that the staff of this University, the same individuals working non-stop to keep this University running, be included in the process - and from an early stage, not after decisions have already been made. I'm merely asking the BOR to ensure Administration follows your directive in the approved Board Resolution 20-03, which states:

(quote) *“work with faculty, students, and staff to seek the broadest possible consensus for the greater good in order to maintain the integrity and continued functioning of the University.”*

Additionally, I am requesting that communications are given to the staff directly. I'm fortunate that my Dean and Department Chair are incredibly transparent and have included staff. Unfortunately, that is not the same across the campus. I want to ensure that all staff is allowed to provide meaningful feedback, especially in highly-impacted programs. I appreciate Provost Bruno, including staff in his Mānoa Budget Follow Up Approach, Bullet Point #1. However, I would like to encourage supervisors of staff (mainly chairs and deans) to please include staff in all communications.

Furthermore, the proposed process lacks the specific reference to each shared governance group and when they will be included in the process. It's my interpretation of the Board of Regent's directive that we should be included at the beginning phase, not at the point of consultation. Quite frankly, that is when decisions are already finalized.

Moreover, I would request that it made clear about the plans for staff that are serving at all levels - such as potential reassignments, new or added duties, or shifts in programmatic assignments. Staff earned the right to know and weigh-in on what changes will significantly impact them.

I do want to express my appreciation for Provost Bruno for making all the recommendations and responses publicly available and his willingness to meet to discuss. However, I would appreciate it if he would include discussions with the staff as well. Shared governance,

for me, goes beyond informing us. Shared Governance is the inclusion within the process.

Finally, I'm confident that we can work together on finding the right solution for this University. The President and Provost had the foresight to include staff in important committees, that was the proof of concept that demonstrated that students, staff, faculty, and UH administrators can work together in a timely manner to tackle complex problems. I hope that we are given that same opportunity.

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

Thank you and Aloha.

This is Jaret Leong the Chair of the Mānoa Staff Senate - the voice for all Mānoa staff members.