



MĀNOA
STAFF SENATE

January 3, 2024

TO: Alapaki Nahale-a, Chair
University of Hawai'i Board of Regents

FROM: Christie Ann Nitta, Chair
Mānoa Staff Senate
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Nōweo Kai, Vice-Chair
Mānoa Staff Senate
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SUBJECT: Mānoa Staff Senate Written Testimony:
UH Presidential Search Process, Permitted Interaction Group

Dear Board of Regents,

As we all come together again on this same topic, we are given the honor, once again of testifying on this topic of the selection process of our next President. I would like to reiterate what we stated in our last testimony, that as we move forward with the Presidential Search Process, the Mānoa Staff Senate would like to ensure we have a voice from inception to completion. While we know that the Board of Regents have already been composed of members, something that should also be brought to the table in the future is involving shared governance in the selection of Board of Regents Appointees. From listening and reading all other testimonies, it is very clear that moving forward as projected has major flaws and needs to really be analyzed by shared governance, and not just Board of Regents Appointees.

Mānoa Staff Senate voices:

- *“UH Mānoa Staff is a diverse organization of dedicated people with a wide range of skills that we use to improve the UH Mānoa Campus Educational experience. Without UHM Staff involvement, multiple important programs would languish, and Staff input to decide who the next President of the University of Hawai'i is critical.”*
- **Senator Andrew Sensano, Information Technology Specialist**
- *“Staff are the foundation of the university. The faculties may be the building, and the students may be the occupants, but without the foundation, no structure/university can exist. Staff should have all the rights and privileges that the others have. Therefore, we should be included in the Presidential search process.”*
- **Senator Richard Okubo, Fiscal Specialist**
- *“Facilities serve as a critical organ in a complex body - staff open doors, wipe floors, collect and dispose of waste throughout campus - indoors and outdoors; maintain running water, hand soap, toilet paper, and hand towels in lavatories; plant, water, and groom lawns and botanical beds; maintain firm foundations beneath physical buildings*

and sound rooftops; maintain a unique collection of over 4,000 trees across 320 acres featuring trees that have stood tall for over a century.”

- Senator Nōweo Kai, Curator

- *“President David Lassner approved the Mānoa Staff Senate on July 26, 2019, and has advocated for the staff during his tenure as President of the University of Hawai‘i. The Mānoa Staff Senate represents 1,315 APTs and 579 Civil Service employees, and through our diverse roles on the Mānoa campus, we function as the backbone of the university. From an administrative perspective, without staff, students cannot be enrolled in courses or programs, grades cannot be entered, classrooms cannot be reserved or prepared, and grant funds cannot be administered. To continue President Lassner’s legacy of recognizing the importance of staff, we ask that UH staff be represented in the search process for the next University of Hawai‘i President. The MSS speaks on behalf of all constituents and requires a president who is not afraid to communicate directly with those they lead.”*

– Senator Carol Oshiro, Administrative and Recruitment Specialist

- *“Staff are just important as faculty to our university as we all contribute to creating innovations that help our university continue to grow and prosper. A Staff Representative is important to have on the search committee as staff jobs and support for us can be greatly influenced by the President.”*

- Senator Reynold Kajiwara, Student Advisor

- *“As the search and selection process for the next UH Mānoa President begins, I believe that is crucial to include the voice of the hardworking and dedicated UH Mānoa Staff. The involvement of staff in the selection process recognizes our contributions to the university’s success, but it is also valuable given the diverse representation of the staff. Allowing staff representation in the process will help to foster a greater sense of community and ownership. It will create a shared vision for the success of the University going forward. It will send a powerful message that our voices matter and that the University is committed to creating a more inclusive culture. I urge that our testimony be considered as a way to harness the collective experience and diverse perspectives within the UH Mānoa community.”*

- Senator Raedelle Van Fossen, Educational Specialist

- *“A primary mission of the Mānoa Staff Senate (MSS) is to participate in the Shared Governance of the University of Hawaii at Mānoa, i.e. to have a seat at the table. President Lassner was a key supporter of the formation of the MSS and the newly created system-wide University of Hawai‘i Staff Council (UHSC), because he recognized the importance of staff to the University as a whole. The MSS and staff now serve on various campus wide committees and Search Advisory hiring Committees (SAC’s). It is vital staff be able to participate in the search for the new UH President. Those candidates need to hear from and about the perspective of staff as they go through the hiring process. Any new UH President would be underserved if they are not afforded the opportunity to learn about Staff and their valuable contributions to the University of Hawai‘i.”*

- Senator Carl Dionne, Information Technology Specialist

Listed below are the MSS Senators that represent a wide spectrum of the roles that staff provide for our campus.

Alapaki Nahale-a

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Christie Nitta - Human Resources Manager, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
Nōweo Kai - Curator, Campus Arboretum
Carol Oshiro - Fiscal and Recruitment Specialist, College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources
Jennel Sesoko - Director of Branding & Marketing, Provost's Office
Raedelle Van Fossen - Education Manager, Lyon Arboretum
Carl Dionne - Information Technology Specialist, College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources
Bernadette Baraquio - Creative Director, College of Social Sciences
Aeza Hafalia - Program Coordinator, Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene
Reynold Kajiwara - Academic Advisor, College of Natural Sciences, Student Academic Success Center
Andrew Sensano - IT Specialist, Outreach College
Michele Inouchi - Senior Fiscal Specialist, DSS – Administrative Services
Jacob Choe - Professional Standards Manager, UH Mānoa Department of Public Safety
Richard Kubo - Fiscal Administrator, Student Diversity and Inclusion
Devon Gordon - Micropropagation Laboratory Manager, Lyon Arboretum
Elmer Ka'ai - Director, Government Relations and Community Affairs, Provost's Office
Jaret KC Leong - Director of Mānoa Academy and Academic Pathways, College of Social Sciences
Nathaniel Kinglsey - Seed Conservation Lab Manager of the Hawaiian Rare Plant Program, Lyon Arboretum
Sarah Simmons - Operations Coordinator, Outreach College

If you would like to learn more about the MSS, please feel free to take a look at our website at <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/staffsenate/>. The MSS would always welcome any comments or questions that any of the regents have regarding any issue.

Thank you for your time, consideration and dedication to our University.

Mahalo Nui,

Christie Ann Nitta

Chair

Nōweo Kai

Vice, Co-Chair