April 8, 2015

Aloha President Lassner and the University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents,

The undersigned campus councils of the Pūko’a Council, the Native Hawaiian advisory council of the University of Hawai‘i, hereby declare an official position against the proposed Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on Mauna Kea.

The Pūko’a council, composed of representatives from all ten University of Hawai‘i (UH) system campuses, met with President Lassner at Kap‘iolani Community College on April 6, 2015. At that time, the President was advised that the Pūko’a Council stands firmly against the TMT project and was urged to halt construction.

We, the undersigned members of Pūko’a Council, in our advisory capacity within the University of Hawai‘i system, hereby appeals to the President and the Board of Regents (BOR) to heed our advice and stop the TMT construction indefinitely. This stance is in alignment with UH system’s commitment to be a Hawaiian place of learning and the BOR policy on Sustainability. In order to fulfill that commitment, it is necessary for the University to make decisions that respect and perpetuate Native Hawaiian cultural values. The University of Hawai‘i is the steward of Mauna Kea and the construction of the TMT represents extreme disrespect and devaluation of Hawaiians; this is unacceptable.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with President, the BOR, or their representatives. The students, staff, and faculty that we represent await your response.

Me ka‘oia‘i‘o,

Members of the Pūko’a Council of the University of Hawai‘i
Ho‘oulau Council, Hawai‘i Community College
Kalāualani Council, Kap‘iolani Community College
Ke Kumu Pali Council, Windward Community College
Kualii Council, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
Kupu Ka Wai Council, Honolulu Community College
Lau‘ulu Council, University of Hawai‘i Maui College
Makaloa Council, Kaua‘i Community College
Nālimakui Council, University of Hawai‘i - West O‘ahu
It is the BOR Policy on Sustainability. Executive Policy, EP 4.202 System Sustainability

http://www.hawaii.edu/policy/?action=viewPolicy&policySection=ep&policyChapter=4&policyNumber=202

One part of the policy states:

III. Executive Policy, Section E Cultural Connections

Recognizing the unique and respected Hawaiian host culture, the geographic remoteness of the islands and the rich diversity of cultures in Hawai‘i, the University will create a sustainable living and learning environment that honors its cultural foundation and addresses the challenges and opportunities of its location. The University will proactively form working relationships with external partners to understand community, workforce and business needs to bring higher education, research and service outreach value to the community, and to help shape economic structures, employment opportunities and integrated, 21st century sustainable solutions for Hawai‘i, the region and beyond. These cultural connections shall:

1. Embrace the culture, wisdom and fundamental values of the indigenous people of Hawai‘i to advance sustainability.

2. Cultivate an inclusive University community with varied characteristics, ideas, cultures and world-views through which our students, faculty and staff celebrate difference and respect tradition and wisdom.