April 15, 2015

University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents
University of Hawai‘i President
University of Hawai‘i Advisor on Hawaiian Affairs
244 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI  96822

Aloha University of Hawai‘i Regents Randolph G. Moore, Jan Naoe Sullivan, Eugene Bal III, Chuck Y. Gee, Coralie Chun Matayoshi, Barry T. Mizuno, Benjamin Asa Kudo, Jeffrey Portnoy, Lee Putnam, Stanford Yuen, Michelle Tagorda, Helen Nielsen, Peter Hoffmann, Dileep G. Bal, and Simeon Acoba; President Lassner; and Advisor Thompson:

As students of the University of Hawai‘i system, it is through your institution that we have learned of the significance of our mountain and its importance—not only to our ecosystem, but also to our cultural and spiritual identity. We have also been taught and expected to learn a number of skills such as communication, critical reading, critical thinking, information competency, quantitative reasoning, utilizing different areas of knowledge, reflecting on self and community as well as cultural diversity awareness and ethics—all of which are exemplified today.

According to Hawai‘i Papa O Ke Ao—the chosen name of the group given the task of indigenizing academia:

“....everything we do is, or should be, imbued with Hawaiian values and respectful of the traditions practiced here for centuries, long before the ancestors of other ethnicities landed on our shores. It is incumbent on Hawai‘i’s only public institution of higher education to both educate Hawaiian youth of our islands to prepare them for productive lives and continue to play a key role in preserving and perpetuating the culture that exists no where else on earth.”

We have chosen to take a non-violent stand to hold the University of Hawaii system accountable for its “responsibilities to the indigenous people in Hawai‘i and to Hawai‘i’s indigenous language and culture” (Strategic Planning and Assessment Mission Statement). To this end, we feel compelled to articulate what we find to be moral, and furthermore, to exemplify how we find our learning institution’s practices immoral. We believe:

1. That the TMT project construction commencement on Mauna a Wākea is in direct conflict with students’ best interests and values;
2. That this project is inconsistent with our expectations of the leaders of our institutions of higher learning in Hawai‘i.
3. That the Environmental Impact Statement that was prepared merely sums up, but does not properly identify and address the significance and scope of our sacred mountain and its paramount importance in history to the people of this island, these islands, Oceania, the world-wide indigenous community, and the global community.
4. That after citing and minimally addressing the development of a land parcel adjacent to those containing known burials of our īwi kupuna (ancestral bones and spirits), hundreds
of shrines, as well as the deposition of generations of our peoples’ *pikos* (sacred centers and umbilical cords uniting our peoples with the land), the construction can not move forward as planned.

5. The community and concerns brought forth in this letter must be addressed so that a combined agreement is reached.

We call for:

1. A moratorium of all construction activities in the TMT project on Mauna a Wakea.
2. The ethical management of a land that should be held in trust for us and our subsequent generations.
3. Our voices and concerns to be heard by decision makers.
4. More thorough cultural and spiritual inclusion from an institution that professes to be a Hawaiian place of learning.
5. Implementation of the first goal outlined in the System and Campus strategic plans’ Goal A: Educational Effectiveness and Student Success, and Goal A: Promote Learning & Teaching for Student Success and Strategic Outcome A1: *Native Hawaiian Educational Attainment—Position the University of Hawai‘i as one of the world’s foremost indigenous-serving universities by supporting the access and success of Native Hawaiians.*
6. The Board of Regents to address and effectively bridge chasms between Indigenous island cultures and the university community and address System and Campus strategic plans’ Goal A: Learning, Research, and Service Network, and Goal A: Function as a Seamless State System and Strategic Outcome B1: *Globally Competitive Workforce-Address critical workforce shortages and prepare students for effective engagement and leadership in a global environment.*
7. The Board of Regents to meet the strategic vision set forth in in the UH System Strategic plan that “...was predicated on the Native Hawaiian practice of sharing diverse, but finite, resources for the benefit of all and grounded in a unifying mission, an overarching commitment to a culture of excellence and performance, and a set of principles intended to guide the evolution and transformation of the system.”
8. We demand pono actions, justice and righteousness, from our university leaders.

Your understanding in this matter is greatly appreciated. It is our hope that the BOR, President, and Special Advisor address this letter and our concerns directly in a public written statement.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Concerned students, faculty, staff of the University of Hawai‘i-Hilo, Hawai‘i Community College, and concerned citizens of our community