Testimony on Agenda Item 7D

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Aloha e UH Board of Regents,

Please see attached testimony for your information, review, and action.

Mahalo nui,
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Testimony to UH BOR May 2015.pdf
66K
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Aloha Chair Randy Moore, President Lassner and Board of Regents,

As a member of I Mua Mānoa, I am testifying today on the agenda item 7D, Evaluation of the President of the University of Hawai‘i. I Mua Mānoa is very concerned with the leadership of the University of Hawai‘i in the following areas:

**Hawaiian Place of Learning and Model Indigenous-Serving University**

While the Board of Regents have recently adopted the UH Strategic Directions 2015-2021 expressing their support of a Hawaiian place of learning and their commitment to becoming a model indigenous-serving university, I am concerned that there are no tasks, timelines, benchmarks, and indicators to ensure that these strategic directions are implemented with the highest trust standards. Will Native Hawaiian priorities be once again neglected just like Hawai‘i Papa O Ke Ao at the UH system level and like the Native Hawaiian Advancement Task Force report at UH Mānoa? These documents have been finalized in 2012 (it’s now 2015) and I have not seen any substantive traction or implementation whatsoever! When will be able to get a progress report or status update on these initiatives?

**Management of the Senior Leadership Team**

Since Chancellor Apple was fired last year, the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa has maintained the same leadership team and in fact it is presently adding layers of associate and assistant vice chancellors at the flagship campus; however, I have noticed that the management is much worse! Stress levels amongst faculty, staff and students are at an all time high. There is absolutely **NO** accountability and a sense of justice whatsoever as there is wrongdoing in every level of management. In fact, I understand a dean of a college is requesting faculty of that college to support a vice-chancellor who has being charged with numerous allegations of bullying, sexist remarks, retaliatory, and anti-Asian sentiments. A question comes to my mind as to: Who is adjudicating this issue? It appears there are no parameters, no boundaries. This action by executive management needs to stop immediately!

**Budget/Fiscal Crisis**

In the area of the budget, I Mua Mānoa requested that President Lassner conduct a system-wide conversation on the budget crisis. President Lassner
agreed to the open forum, and instructed Interim Chancellor Bley-Vroman to coordinate it. If administration cannot even arrange a forum to discuss the budget crisis, how will stakeholders ever have confidence that this leadership team can tackle the crisis? While the budget is in disarray at UH Mānoa, there is clearly no evidence of stopping the overspending of $31 million. The status quo is indeed killing us! Conversely, I Mua Mānoa has sent budget proposals to administration in October 2014 (with no response), has not received substantive answers from the Chancellor’s Budget Task Force, and has been stonewalled when requesting budgetary information from the OVCAFO. Furthermore, this all-volunteer group conducted a campus-wide conversation on the budget last week to update the faculty, staff, and students on fiscal crisis and the team provided substantive solutions to rectify the budget woes, but our ideas and information have fallen on the deaf ears of our administration.

**Recommendations**

1. It is critical that the senior management team at UH Mānoa be replaced with more competent, honest, objective and genuine leaders. They must be held accountable for the ongoing fiscal disaster, for the low morale of the faculty, staff and students, and for the continued bullying, sexist and racist remarks by an executive of the UH Mānoa executive team, and those administrators who fail to root out these destructive behaviors.

2. It is paramount that BOR immediately work to fix the budget crisis at UH Mānoa as the budget task force committee was established in September 2014 and there is still NO report as far the new allocation model, which is so disheartening as schools, colleges, units need to plan for the academic 2015-2016 school year. Laziness of this magnitude is unacceptable!

3. With all these concerns in the areas of a Hawaiian place of learning, management and budget, the UH president needs to be immediately evaluated and that the BOR ensure that the future of the UH system will work in the best of the public, the taxpayers of the State of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui loa for allowing me the opportunity to testify.

Keali‘i‘olu‘olu Gora
Member of I Mua Mānoa