



Testimony re: UH Presidential Search Advisory Group

1 message

University of Hawaii Association of Emeritus Regents <aeruh@hawaii.edu>

Tue, Mar 5, 2024 at 2:00 PM

To: bor.testimony@hawaii.edu

Good afternoon Board of Regents Staff,

We submit the attached testimony re-affirming our support for the UH Presidential Search Advisory Group proposal, including the nominations of Regent Emeriti Duane Kurisu and Brandon Marc T. Higa. We further support the proposal to maintain the working relationship with Vice Chairs Gabe Lee and Ernest Wilson to ensure the success of the UHPSAG.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,
James Lee, Chair
Brandon Marc Higa, Vice Chair
Joseph Blanco, Secretary-Treasurer

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Association of Emeritus Regents
University of [Hawaii](#)
[2444 Dole Street](#)
[Honolulu, HI 96822](#)
Web: [RCAC](#) • [AER](#) • [Board of Regents](#)



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Association of Emeritus Regents University of Hawai'i

James Lee, Chair
Brandon Marc Higa, Vice Chair
Joseph F. Blanco, Secretary-Treasurer

Testimony to the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents

Hearing Date:

12:45 p.m., Thursday, March 9, 2024

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Information Technology Building

1st Floor Conference Room 105A/B

2520 Correa Road

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822

Submitted by:

**ASSOCIATION OF EMERITUS REGENTS
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII**

Chair Nahale-a, Vice-Chair Lee, Vice-Chair Wilson, and Members of the Board of Regents:

The Association of Emeritus Regents (AER) of the University of Hawai'i respectfully submits testimony in response to the agenda item, *Board Approval of Presidential Search Advisory Group Members*. The Association of Emeritus Regents offers the following **testimony in strong support of nominees Regent Emeritus Duane K. Kurisu and Regent Emeritus & AER Vice-Chair Brandon Marc Higa** on behalf of its members, who include emeritus regents who served on the Board during prior recruitments of the UH president.

Regent Emeriti Kurisu and Higa will ensure your next president will have the support of his/her constituents - the students, the faculty, the administrators, the alumni and the public – by ensuring these stakeholders are meaningfully involved in the selection process. Regent Emeritus Duane Kurisu offers a broad perspectives UH's contributions to public higher education and our economy through his extensive background building well-known organizations locally, nationally, and internationally. He remains loyal to the UH community and is certain to attract the interest of high-profile leaders who are suited to apply for the president position.

Regent Emeritus Higa offers a unique perspective as a recent former Regent who has remained active in university governance in his capacities as a student and staff member. His understanding of the UH president's role is further reinforced as a two-time alumnus of the UH President's Emerging Leaders Program, through which he benefitted from the mentorship of President David Lassner, Vice President for Academic Strategy Deborah Halbert, and other UH cabinet members. He has since contributed back to the development of future leaders at UH as a member of the PELP Advisory Committee and is actively recruiting the next generation of leaders who will play a critical role in leading UH forward under its new leadership.

We further emphasize the expertise and network Regent Emeriti Kurisu and Higa offer in recruiting leaders with the right qualifications to lead UH in expanding its reach into the Asia-Pacific region. Regent Emeritus Kurisu currently serves as a board member for the Nippon Golden Network, which is among the most prestigious media companies in Japan. Similarly, Regent Emeritus Higa is a recipient of the prestigious National Security Education Program David L. Boren Graduate Fellow with several publications featuring law and international relations topics in Japan. He is an associate member of the U.S.-Japan Council and is completing a doctorate degree while serving as a lecturer-in-law at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa William S. Richardson School of Law. He recently presented his publication on Japan's fight for marriage equality, drawing upon legal arguments and policy perspectives from a landmark decision in the Hawai'i Supreme Court to offer potential litigation strategies to lawyers based in Tokyo who are leading this effort in Japan's High Courts.

We additionally support the recommendation to designate Vice Chairs Gabriel Lee and Ernest Wilson as Board liaisons to the UH Presidential Search Advisory Group. The success of this process depends on close relationships built on trust between the UHPSAG and the Board, which is the very crux of shared governance principles. We commend the wisdom of the Board in empowering the university shared governance leaders with the opportunity to present their proposed UHPSAG members for the Board's consideration.

Mahalo for your consideration of our comments. Finding the next president for the University of Hawai'i System is probably the most important task in which you will have as a sitting Regent. We wish you much success in finding the next president to lead the University of Hawai'i.



Testimony related to the Presidential Selection

1 message

Bronson Azama <bazama@hawaii.edu>
To: bor.testimony@hawaii.edu

Thu, Mar 7, 2024 at 12:44 AM

Aloha mai kākou,

Here is my testimony related to the Presidential Selection Process for the BoR

Mahalo,
Bronson



Azama_BOR Testimony Presidential Selection.pdf
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Thursday, March 7, 2024

TO: University of Hawai'i Board of Regents

FROM: Office of the President of ASUH

Concerns Related to **Agenda Item IV. B and D**

‘Ano‘ai kākou,

My name is Bronson Azama, I write in my capacity as President-elect of ASUH Mānoa.

Agenda Item IV B. Board Approval of Presidential Search Advisory Group Members

I support both Lindsey Millerd and Dominique Bonifacio to the Board of Regents, but would request the Regents consider broadening representation beyond leeward O‘ahu, as requested by my fellow Senators at UH Mānoa.

I would also reinforce the Student Caucus’s position on the appointment of Brandon Marc T. Higa. In his former capacity as a Student Regent, he did not vote in alignment of student positions on issues such as the University system restructuring, tuition, and several other issues. While representing students there was an ethical concern since he was working as a full time staff at the KCC, while misrepresenting students as shown on his voting record. Quite the ethical dilemma. Therefore, when Brandon had the opportunity to serve the best interest of students, he did not, so how can we expect him to consider our needs now.

Having past Regents on the advisory group, while already having a selection committee consisting solely of Regents, reinforces regent selection over the principles of shared governance.

In my personal capacity I would also reinforce the point of the caucus that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs should be granted a seat as part of the Advisory Group Members

Agenda Item IV D. Discussion and Potential Action on Assignment of Tasks to the Presidential Search Advisory Group

I would request that members of the Advisory Group be required to attend all Open Forums in the respective counties, and be tasked with assisting in the development of the position profile. The Board of Regents should provide the survey results to the Presidential Search Advisory Group, to help inform the position profile. The members of the codified groups should also be tasked with planning visits of any finalists to said groups. I further request that the Advisory

Group provide adequate time for respective representatives to meet with their respective codified groups prior to making decisions.

I would request the Advisory Group should it be tasked with vetting candidates and recommending finalists, be allowed to conduct interviews and evaluations only after attending open forums, and the development of a Position Profile.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Azama". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a stylized "Azama".

Bronson Azama
111th ASUH President



Special BOR Meeting 03/07/2024 Written Testimony

Ismael Salameh <salameh2@hawaii.edu>

Tue, Mar 5, 2024 at 8:40 PM

To: bor.testimony@hawaii.edu

Aloha,

Please find my written testimony attached below in regards to the special BOR meeting occurring on March 7th 2024.

The written testimony is in regards to Agenda Item IV. B., Board Approval of Presidential Search Advisory Group Members.

Thank you!

‘O wau nō me ka mahalo,
Ismael "Ish" Salameh



Salameh_Ismael_Special_BOR_03_07_24_Written_Testimony.pdf

155K

Salameh, Ismael
Salameh2@hawaii.edu

March 05, 2024

University of Hawai'i Board of Regents (UH BOR)
2444 Dole Street, Bachman Hall, Room 209
Honolulu, HI 96822

Re: Special BOR Meeting 03/07/2024 Agenda Item IV. B.
Board Approval of Presidential Search Advisory Group (PSAG) Members

Written Testimony in **support of Regent Emeritus Brandon Marc T. Higa, J.D., Esq.**
nomination for PSAG committee member

To the distinguished Chair Nahale-a, Vice Chair Lee, Vice Chair Wilson, and Board of Regents members,

Thank you for the invitation and consideration of public opinion in regard to your vital role of crafting the advisory committee tasked with selecting the next University of Hawai'i President. My testimony's intent is to persuade you in considering, and ultimately approving, Mr. Brandon Marc T. Higa as a member of the PSAG committee.

With a diverse and prolific career, Mr. Brandon Marc T. Higa has worked toward a monumental conquest of achievements and accolades that deem him worthy of your consideration. I would like to specifically speak to Mr. Brandon Marc T. Higa's unwavering support and commitment toward student success by referring to his tenure as the Board of Regents Student Regent, which spanned from 2016-2019. During Mr. Higa's time as Student Regent, I served as Kapi'olani Community College's Student Congress (ASKCC) Secretary, Vice President, and President spanning from 2015-2018. Additionally, I have also served as a Senator on the 106th and 107th Senate of the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i (ASUH) at Manoa from 2018-2020.

As the State of Hawaii Constitution provides the UH BOR the power to formulate policy and to exercise control, along with having exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the University system, Student Regent Higa served as the fundamental and integral bridge between student leaders and policy makers. Student Regent Higa's dedication toward students was evident as he made himself available to necessary general meetings of different UH student governing bodies to provide knowledge and share his insights on important matters that required student voices. Moreso, at the level of community college,

where many students were in critical phases of personal, professional, and academic development, Student Regent Higa assisted with providing necessary resources and tools to help further our understanding of the complex system we resided in. Student Regent Higa brought to our attention pertinent issues that we, otherwise, were not aware of and encouraged us to provide testimony and student representation in discussions that directly affected our livelihoods. Student Regent Higa always ensured to be accessible to students by instilling an open-door policy to his office, being present in general and community meetings. Student Regent Higa also made it a point to travel and be present in every Student Caucus meeting. His support during these system-wide student body collaborations was invaluable in uniting the various student leaders to best advocate collectively for the best interest of all students. Student Regent Higa played a vital role in the character and leadership development of student leaders, which effectively allowed us to better represent our constituents.

An example of this is during my tenure as ASKCC-Student Congress President in 2017, where Student Regent Higa provided assistance and guidance to our executive team during our efforts of implementing a mandatory student fee to provide all KCC students with a U-Pass for TheBus in our effort to promote alternative transportation methods. Over the course of two academic school years, our initiative gained the BOR approval for Fall 2019.

It is my strongest belief that Mr. Higa will play a vital role as a member of the PSAG committee because he is well-versed in the UH policies, procedures, culture, challenges, and strengths. Moreso, he has proven his commitment to the success of students and their development through the UH system. These are notable traits that shall be sought of from the next President of UH.

I strongly recommend that the distinguished members of the Board of Regents approve the nomination of Regent Emeritus Brandon Marc T. Higa J.D. Esq. as a committee member of PSAG.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ismael Salameh', written in a cursive style.

Ismael Salameh



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII
SYSTEM

LATE TESTIMONY

BOR Testimony <bortest2@hawaii.edu>

Testimony for the special meeting

1 message

Kyla-Marie Kauhahao <turner20@hawaii.edu>

Thu, Mar 7, 2024 at 11:55 AM

To: bor.testimony@hawaii.edu

Aloha,

Kala mai for the late email and late testimony. This is testimony for today's special meeting. Mahalo for your understanding.

Me ke aloha,

Kyla-Marie Kauhahao



BOR 03.07.2024 Testimony.pdf

69K

Thursday, March 07, 2024

TO: The University of Hawai'i Board of Regents

Comments for the Special Meeting

Aloha e Honorable Board of Regents,

My name is Kyla-Marie Kauhahao, and I am a graduate student of UH Hilo. Today I would like to provide comments about the different agenda items in regard to the presidential search. In regards to agenda IV A, I once again am requesting transparency about the selection process of the search firm, and ask that you regard for the search firm to not only have "Hawai'i expertise and/or [have] a Hawai'i focus", but should be a firm that is rooted in our community. I strongly believe that "For Hawai'i, by Hawai'i" should be our priority in choosing a delegated search firm, and urge the BOR to consult a Hawai'i-based and community-centered Search Firm, who can help us find a worthy next UH President. I am also asking the Board of Regents extend their self-appointed deadlines, extending the deadline past June, opening the application and screening period past April. All good things, as I have mentioned before, take time, and we should want our next President to be a great thing for the UH System, hence why I urge for the extension of these deadlines and for an Interim President to be put in place.

In regards to agenda item IV B, I want to bring to all of your attentions the concerns I have in regards to a certain person on the candidates list. Mr. Brandon Higa, who was a former Student Regent and is now on CAC, is being nominated as a candidate for the Search Advisory Group. To this, I must vehemently oppose. This is nothing against his character, but rather the decisions he has made as a student regent which did not reflect or support student concern and interest, as well as the conflict of interest in which I have noticed in regards to the recent recommendations made my CAC of the next student regent.

To start, I would like to mention how Mr. Higa back as a student regent had voted on multiple manners which went against student interest, the most pressing in which I can recall being student tuition and the combining of the UH President and UH Manoa Chancellor positions. Both matters had student testimony against it, and yet Mr. Higa both times voted yes. These issues are no small thing, both something that can and has greatly affected students through their implementation. This to me as both an alumni and now as a graduate student show how Mr. Higa disregarded student opinion, concern, and interest, hence why I oppose his nomination. In regards to the CAC nominations of the next student regent, I have come to know that one of the nominees has a personal relationship with Mr. Higa, and though I believe everyone should offer have an opportunity to serve their community, knowing that Mr. Higa is on CAC while also being nominated for the Search Advisory Group, while being a part of the council which has nominated someone he has a personal relationship with to possibly become a student regent...it is a little concerning to say the least.

Again, this is not an attack on Mr. Higa's character. I just want to ensure that there is no conflict of interests, and I want to ensure that we have people in the Search Advisory Group who will be able to represent the interest of the broader UH System, the students, and the communities in which the UH serves. I hope the Board of Regents can take in my concerns, and calling for the Board to come to a decision about the UH System President position and the UH Mānoa Chancellor position are separated into two different positions. My main reasoning is because UH Mānoa deserves a leader of campus who is committed solely to the well-being and needs of UH Mānoa, just as the system needs a President who can guide the system as a whole in projects and initiatives that benefit the entire system. More than just being somewhat of an imbalance of power, the UH System deserves the good that can come from all campuses having an equal seat at the table alongside a UH Mānoa Chancellor and a UH System President who are two different people.

I urge the Board of Regents to take the decision to split this position into two separate positions, and for this to take immediate precedence so that position descriptions can be created and the two positions can be filled around the same time. I am also emphasizing the need for the extension of the self-appointed recruitment and hiring deadline of the president position, so that all of these things can be accomplished. And lastly, I am asking for a reconsideration of the candidates nominated for the Search Advisory Group. These are my earnest requests of the Board of Regents, the very people who hold the power to create change and to ensure the peoples' voices who you serve are heard and reflected. Mahalo for listening to my voice.

Kyla-Marie Kauhailhao

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kyla-Marie Kauhailhao', written in a cursive style.