April 20, 2017

John Casken SEC Chair Testimony
Presented at the UH Board of Regents

Madam Chair, Regents, President Lassner,

Good Morning. First of all I would like to look at two of the major concerns of faculty.

You will be receiving or may have already received copies of the Resolution of the Mānoa Faculty regarding the proposed Framework for Academic and Facilities Planning. As a System-wide initiative, Mānoa faculty are fully aware that there are many forces at play here. However the faculty vote – almost 98%, indicated that we are very concerned that academic changes will be made that affect the quality of the education and research at the State’s only Research I University. So we would respectfully remind Regents that, by your policy, academics are clearly the kuleana of faculty. So we look forward to an expansion of language in the Framework that recognizes that policy.

You will also be receiving the results of a comprehensive survey of Mānoa faculty on your decision to retain President Lassner as Interim Chancellor for up to an additional two years. As I intimated at your last meeting, most Mānoa faculty are seriously concerned about the lack of an independent voice for Mānoa – a position that we note is held by some of the Regents. As the Survey was completed by almost 40% of the faculty - broadly spread among disciplines, longevity and tenure we feel that the results do call for careful consideration. We look forward to your comments back on the Survey.

However, in spite of these two major concerns, Mānoa faculty are also still very engaged when it comes to the issues of teaching and research as both these involve students – the reason that most faculty chose this
profession. So in spite of our major concerns there are many areas where the Regents, Administration and faculty can find common ground. I would note that early this week VC Bruno was involved in a meeting of Mānoa Department Chairs looking at ways to strengthen recruitment and retention of students. There was palpable excitement in the room as faculty began to suggest ways that, at the beginning of this Fall semester, we could work on welcoming students to the Mānoa campus and thus build a firm foundation for these new students’ success.

Similarly I would note that on May 1st the faculty nominees for Excellence will be honored. And this includes the Regents medals for Excellence. The short paragraph that accompanies each awardee does not do justice to the incredible achievements of your awardees. These faculty represent the face of Mānoa that should be celebrated. If you have the opportunity to be present on May 1st, I would urge you to attend the celebration.

We must all continue to strengthen the ways in which Regents, Administration and faculty can work together to ensure Mānoa’s continued excellence. Thank you.

John Cusken, Ph. D., MPH, RN
Mānoa Faculty Senate Chair