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Testimony for the BOR Joint Academic & Student Affairs and Personnel Affairs & Board Governance Meeting

1 message

Tetine Sentell <tsentell@hawaii.edu>

Tue, Jan 5, 2021 at 7:11 PM

To: bor.testimony@hawaii.edu

Aloha,

I am submitting this testimony for the BOR Joint Academic & Student Affairs and Personnel Affairs & Board Governance Virtual Meeting Hearing on Thurs January 7. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Tetine

Tetine Sentell, PhD

Professor and Director

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Testimony for the BOR Joint Academic & Student Affairs and Personnel Affairs & Board Governance Virtual Meeting

January 5, 2021

Aloha Chair Wilson, Chair Westerman, and Committee members,

Public health is a critical need for the state and the nation generally, and has clearly become even more urgent in the pandemic. As the Chair/Director of the Office of Public Health Studies (OPHS), one of the two academic units located in the Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), I would like to provide some perspective and comments on ASA-PABG III.A Reporting Faculty Workload Assignments.

Two distinct entities (the School of Social Work and Public Health and the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene) have been aggregated on slide 14 of Current Status of Faculty Workload Data by Major Unit, UH Manoa Faculty Assignment (2). This is unusual. These are 2 separate schools with separate leadership, workload policies, priorities, and reporting structures. No other distinct schools have been combined in this way in this document and we believe these schools should be similarly disaggregated. We are particularly concerned as this aggregated unit shows that only 84% of faculty assignments met "standard" according to the metrics.

In OPHS, 100% of Instructional faculty met or exceeded the standard workload (excluding our faculty who fell into the "N/A" category). I understand that the Department of Social Work, the other academic unit in the Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health, also reported 100% of relevant Instructional faculty to be meeting or exceeding the standard workload. Disaggregating the schools allows us to better see the contributions that the Thompson School units make to the University and the public at large in teaching, research, mentorship, and service.

Public Health Background for Context

The OPHS at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is on the frontlines of public health in the State of Hawai'i generally and specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic response in research, training, and practice. Faculty, alumni, and many current students also provide their diverse/specialization expertise to the State of Hawai'i, including invaluable support and human resources to the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) and other major health care and social service organizations; sharing epidemiology insights and lessons learned to the public to understand the spread of the disease and how to mitigate it; contextualizing bigger picture perspectives of the health care system and our community health needs in chronic disease prevention and management; engaging in innovative health communication campaigns; participating in collaborative, community-driven pandemic responses; and publishing in major scholarly journals on COVID-19-related topics. We are also supporting the university's response with faculty participating in UH COVID advisory committees. Our faculty are additionally helping the state as part of the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency: State Essential Function 8 Community Care Outreach and other units and Mayor Caldwell's COVID19 Advisory Working Group among many other service activities. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, faculty have participated in advisory roles for the World Health Organization and National Institutes of Health among other noteworthy national and international organizations. Relevant to this discussion, it is instructional faculty members who have been doing much of this work along with specialist and research faculty. OPHS does not have any E&M positions at this time. Despite taking on significant additional duties in response to the pandemic, our faculty have continued our student field work, teaching, research activities, and pivoted our major community events online.

We are fortunate to have many strong, hardworking, engaged, and dedicated faculty. Besides successful mentorship of students towards degree completion and into nationally competitive awards, public health faculty publish more than 75 papers a year and last year brought in over 4 million dollars in extramural funds. We collaborate with many other UH units, 10+ branches of the Hawai'i DOH, as well as many other academic, community and health systems partners locally, nationally, and internationally. We have collaborations with individuals in 50+ international universities.

We have 274 students in our fully accredited BA, MPH, MS, and PhD programs. We currently offer the Bachelor of Arts in Public Health, the Masters in Public Health (MPH) in four specializations (Health Policy and Management, Epidemiology, Social and Behavioral Health Sciences, and Native Hawaiian and Indigenous Health), and two PhDs (Community-Based & Translational Research and Epidemiology). We are planning to expand into an online program in 2022 while also increasing our non-credit course offerings in 2021.

Our OPHS faculty are working not only beyond “standard,” but in many cases beyond capacity. Key faculty and administrative positions have been swept/frozen/held in last year in response to this crisis, while more was asked of us in administration, research, teaching, and service. While we are striving to meet this moment, it is almost impossible to fully build on our assets in this moment of opportunity and grow to meet workforce demands, student interests, and/or research opportunities while we are getting smaller. Our administration team is also under strain, which compromises our abilities to manage research projects, hire students, and carry out the day-to-day tasks of running an academic unit. Besides their own workload, many faculty and staff are taking on additional responsibilities to cover the losses from these positions.

Given this landscape, the devaluing of our significant contributions in the public reporting of faculty workload is both confusing and demoralizing. This obscures the enormous contributions faculty in our Unit have made in this moment of crisis, thereby also understating the exceptional contributions the University has made locally and nationally.

This is an urgent matter as we are a strong unit with significant appetite and motivation to grow. If we want to leverage this moment, we need to support existing faculty and continue to build faculty and staff capacity to allow us to fulfill our current course responsibilities and meet these opportunities. We provide an excellent value to UH, and the need for the public health workforce was already strong and growing. As noted in this [article](#): “The rate of growth for public health jobs will more than double the average rate for all occupations across the US...even before the pandemic hit, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projected a rise in key public health career tracks—including epidemiology and health educators, and statisticians—of 5%, 11%, and 30%, respectively, between 2018 and 2028.”

Workload Metric Considerations

Finally, I would also like to speak to the workload metrics. The request to fill the table with these metrics was unexpected and another new administrative task, among many, in the middle of this crisis. Our department already has a rigorous annual review of research, teaching, and service in alignment with tenure and promotion expectations/guidelines and our department’s program accreditation expectations/guidelines. That review includes specific metrics that are reported consistently by faculty in a form and essential to our accreditation. We followed our approved workload policies to complete this workload metric request form. The metrics reported in that document thus meaningfully explain a level of workload equivalencies from a base currency of 24 teaching credits. However, these do not represent the many roles that OPHS, other Thompson School and UHM faculty play in research, teaching, advising, administration, public outreach and service. Many of the activities noted above would not be readily counted in this workload document. Nor do these metrics represent the requirements that would make an OPHS faculty member eligible for tenure and promotion in our department or any UHM department. The fact that those areas, expected in statement of endeavors for tenure and promotion, are not fully represented here speaks to the significant limitations of this document as a way to fully show faculty workload, value, and engagement with local and global academic communities and for the state of Hawai’i specifically. We hope that the richer meaning and value of the UHM and OPHS faculty in scholarship, service, teaching, advising, and engagement can be represented in other methods besides this spreadsheet and shared with the public, the legislature, and other stakeholders.

While the ability of these metrics to capture the full range of the important work of a R1 university like UHM remains a work in progress, we again note that our metrics were measured and reported in accordance with our approved workload policies and all the OPHS faculty met or exceeded the “standard.” Given how much we are doing in areas measured, and not measured, by these metrics, it felt important to write this document to be clear that our faculty are meeting “standards” and also doing many activities critical to our state and university and global health not captured in these metrics.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this issue on behalf of the tremendous work the OPHS faculty are doing. If you have questions, I can be reached at tsentell@hawaii.edu.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tetine Sentell". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Tetine Sentell, PhD
Professor and Director
Office of Public Health Studies
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health

Selected COVID-19 Related Activities by OPHS Faculty in 2020

- Mayor Caldwell COVID19 Advisory Working Group (Katz)
- Filipino COVID-19 Response Team, FilCom CARES Core group, Filipino COVID-19 material and resources developer, KNDI Radiothon speaker for COVID resources (Dela Cruz)
- Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency: State Essential Function 8 (HIEMA-S ESF-8) Lead [Modeling](#) (Lee), [Community Care Outreach Unit](#) (Sentell) and [Community Advisory](#) (Dela Cruz)
- UH Contact Tracer Training [Program](#) Support (Buchthal, Dela Cruz, Sugimoto-Matsuda, Sentell)
- Food distribution efforts to address food insecurity in Waimānalo by working with local farmers and food producers (Chung-Do)
- UH COVID19 Advisory Group with President Lassner (Katz)
- [Power of Public Health](#) Mask Wearing Campaign (Kehl and Hurwitz-Nelson)
- Native Hawaiian other Pacific Islander Response, Recovery and Resilience R [Next Gen Hawai'i Social Media Project](#) (Sentell)
- Hawai'i Covid-19 Equity Report Writing Group (Dela Cruz, Pirkle, Sentell)
- HJH&SW COVID-19 Special Issue (Pirkle, Sentell)
- [OPHS COVID Resource and Volunteer lists](#) (Pirkle and Kehl) and Community Engagement and Outreach COVID 19 Public Action Webinar: [Transforming Higher Education during Covid-19](#) (Pirkle and Talana)
- Food insecurity in COVID 19 (Pirkle and Sentell)
- Survey on abortion and contraception access during Covid-19 (Pirkle)
- [Mental health resources in COVID 19](#) for community distribution (Sugimoto-Matsuda)
- Over 20 public health students and faculty volunteering with the Hawai'i Department of Health [Medical Research Corps](#)
- Selected Media/Community Engagement by Faculty
 - [Time Magazine](#), [ESPN](#), NBC, [WebMD](#), [Civil Beat](#)
 - Dr. Catherine Pirkle urged the community to take a wider perspective of our health care system, which includes many critical players
 - Public health epidemiologist Dr. Al Katz reports on the [relationship of Hawai'i's geography and COVID-19](#)
 - Dr. Thomas Lee and [UH-developed tool helps forecast COVID-19](#)
 - Dr. Tetine Sentell about the importance of chronic disease prevention and management in the time of COVID-19
- Selected Media/Community Engagements by Students:
 - [Pandemic Highlights Health Disparities For Filipinos In Hawaii](#) (Talana, Unciano)

- [Protect Our Hotel Workers As Hawaii Reopens Tourism](#) (Raquinio)
- Noteworthy international/national COVID-19 scholarship:
 - BMJ Invited Editorial on [Evidence based care for pregnant women with covid-19](#) (Pirkle); [The lower COVID-19 related mortality and incidence rate in Eastern European countries are associated with delayed start of community circulation](#) (Wu, Pirkle, Sentell) *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Health Literacy: Research Around the World: More Important Than Ever in a Time of COVID-19* (Sentell)

Recent, selected committees/task or workgroups/caucus activities for state of Hawai'i:

- Hawai'i Obesity Prevention Task Force (Buchthal and McGurk)
- Board of Directors Hawai'i Health and Harm Reduction Center (H3RC) (Katz)
- Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce, Board of Directors for Hawai'i Chapter of American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), Mental Health Taskforce (Sugimoto-Matsuda)
- DOH Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion Division strategic planning advisory board (Pirkle, Sentell, Dela Cruz)
- Hawai'i Healthcare Workforce Advisory Board (Sentell)

Many faculty participate in other local, national, and international advisory activities as well, including for the World Health Organization, National Institutes of Health, and Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute.



Public Testimony Form - University of Hawaii Board of Regents

Please provide your testimony on this form for the next University of Hawaii Board of Regents meeting. Make sure you include all the requested information so that the Board of Regents is able to clearly understand the testimony provided.

Your Name (required) *

Jing Guo

Your Organization (optional)

Your e-mail address (in case we need to reach you) *

jingguo@hawaii.edu

Board of Regents Agenda Item (required) *

ASA-PABG III.A. Reporting Faculty Workload Assignments

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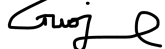
January 5, 2021

Aloha Chair Wilson, Chair Westerman, and Committee members,

My name is Jing Guo, I am the current Chair of the Department of Social Work, located in the Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I would like to provide comments on ASA-PABG III.A. Reporting Faculty Workload Assignments. Thank you for reviewing this important document. On slide 14 of Current Status of Faculty Workload Data by Major Unit, UH Manoa Faculty Assignment (2), the aggregated data for School of Nursing and School of Social Work and Public Health show that 84% faculty assignments met standard. I would like to provide our unit record for your information. The 100 percent of Instructional faculty in the Department of Social Work met or exceeded the standard workload (excluding faculty in "N/A" category). I understand that the Office of Public Health Studies, another academic unit in the Thompson school also reported 100% of relevant Instructional faculty to be meeting or exceeding the standard workload.

The vision of Thompson school is to achieve social justice and health equity for the people of Hawaii and citizens in a changing world. The mission of the Social Work Department is to provide educational excellence that advances social work with its focus on social justice. The principal responsibility is the generation, transmission, and application of knowledge for the global enterprise with special attention to Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander, and Asian populations in our state and region. The Department of Social Work has three degree programs (BSW, MSW and PhD), including Distance Education/Online options for both BSW and MSW programs. We serve more than 300 students in our major programs, with 30% of the students are Native Hawaiians. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, our faculty have been working and serving for the University and the State in their COVID-19 response efforts, as we have a keen understanding of the needs of the communities regarding the pandemic's drastic economic, health and mental health impacts. Social workers are the largest provider of mental, behavioral and social care, and many of our alumni have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic as an essential workforce in numerous settings.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the testimony. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at jingguo@hawaii.edu.

Jing Guo, PhD 
Chair, Department of Social Work
Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health