



Board of Regents <bor@hawaii.edu>

UH Student Caucus - Testimony 3/22

Jannah Lyn Dela Cruz <jldc2@hawaii.edu>
To: Board of Regents <bor@hawaii.edu>

Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 9:27 AM

Aloha,

Attached is a letter from the UH Student Caucus.

Thank you,

Jannah Lyn Dela Cruz
Chairperson, UH Student Caucus
University of Hawai'i



 **Letter to BOR Regarding Merging of President and Manoa Chancellor.pdf**
486K



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII STUDENT CAUCUS

March 21, 2018

Chairperson Jan Naoe Sullivan and Members
Board of Regents
2444 Dole Street
Bachman Hall 209
Honolulu, HI 96822
bor@hawaii.edu

Dear Chairperson Sullivan and Members of the Board,

The University of Hawai'i Student Caucus (UHSC) is formally authorized to serve as a system wide association of all UH campus student governments. After much deliberation, UHSC has unanimously agreed to oppose President David Lassner's proposal of potentially merging the positions of UH System President and UH Mānoa Chancellor. UHSC student delegates have discussed this matter amongst their respective campus student governments, at several UHSC meetings, and with President Lassner directly in order to make an informative decision.

Serving as the official voice of all University of Hawai'i System students, UHSC would like to elaborate on its opposition of President Lassner's proposal by sharing some concerns with the Board of Regents. First and foremost, the way that it is currently structured, Dr. David Lassner serves both as the President of the University of Hawai'i and as the Interim Chancellor for the University of Hawai'i flagship campus, UH Mānoa. Since President Lassner serves in dual capacity roles, UHSC believes that UH Mānoa does not retain its own leadership autonomy from the rest of the University of Hawai'i System. Compared to the other UH Community Colleges, UH Hilo and UH West Oahu Chancellor's, there is no separate adviser that the Chancellor of UH Mānoa may consult with. Additionally, the proposal of combining the President and UH Mānoa Chancellor positions defeats the purpose of shared governance. By combining these positions, UHSC is concerned it may appear to accreditors that the UH System is incapable of practicing shared governance despite reporting to UHSC that UH Mānoa would be able to manage with a combined position.

Furthermore, being that UH Mānoa serves as the UH System flagship campus and Research - I institution, UHSC is deeply concerned with merging the responsibilities and workload associated with the Chancellor of UH Mānoa with the duties of the UH System President. UHSC is also concerned that the combination of positions may act as a disservice to

the other UH Community Colleges and Universities. Additionally, there is no concrete evidence or precedence that the combination of roles or having one personnel serve in both roles will prove to be more effective than the current structure of leadership. There is no tangible evidence or precedence that having one role to oversee the System and Mānoa had or would bring more success to the University System or UH Mānoa.

During an UHSC meeting, President Lassner reported that, if both positions were to be combined, that he intends to separate the positions back to their original format after his tenure. However, UHSC is concerned by the fact that there is no concrete plan of this occurring and rather serves as hearsay. UHSC cannot be assured that the positions will be separated again nor that in the event that they are not, that the next future President of the University will perform as carefully as President Lassner did when separating his role and responsibilities as the President of the University and a Chancellor for UH Mānoa.

UHSC thrives from learning and working with the different perspectives that the UHSC delegates offer. Collectively, UHSC strongly feels that the different institutions within the University of Hawai'i System should be provided room for their own growth and unique leadership. Additionally, UHSC delegates are strong advocates for fairness and equality across the entire UH System and that the President of the UH System must remain objective pertaining to decision making matters and discussions across the different Colleges. The UH System, in its original structure, currently operates this way by providing a Chancellor for each campus, who all consults with the President. Ensuring that each College has its own form of representation in regards to leadership and responsibilities will assure that the President of the UH System will remain objective. By preventing the combination of positions, this allows for a separate adviser to be made available to the President from each campus. Lastly, that the UH System practices the model of shared governance by retaining the autonomy of each campus, and being leaders by working together rather than consolidating efforts.

The University of Hawai'i Student Caucus would like to thank the Board of Regents for their time and kindly ask that they take UHSC opposition of combining positions into consideration.

Sincerely,

Members of the UH Student Caucus, 2017-2018