



testimony on the Mānoa Phase I Reorganization

Laura Lyons <lelyons@hawaii.edu>
To: bor@hawaii.edu

Wed, Feb 27, 2019 at 2:07 PM

Dear Regents,

I write in support of the proposed Phase I Reorganization of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, which includes the combining of the President and Chancellor and the creation of a Provost, as the Chief Academic Officer for UHM. I served on the Mānoa Design Team that reviewed the challenges that the current organization of the upper administration faces and that developed the proposed structure in order to integrate more thoroughly our educational and research missions and to address more adequately the needs of our students. I also serve as the interim Dean of the College of Languages, Linguistics & Literature as well as the interim Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. In these positions, and from the perspective of someone who came to this university twenty-five years ago as an assistant professor, I have long been concerned about our inability to attract and retain strong leadership in the upper administration of our campus and thus to move UHM forward.

A research university, such as Mānoa, can be organized in multiple ways, and as the documents before you clearly demonstrate since the whole UH system was reorganized so that each campus is lead by a chancellor, UHM has lacked stability at the top. Each successive chancellor, including those that were acting or interim, have felt the need to put their mark on the campus, and yet few of them have been in their position long enough to determine the efficacy of their various initiatives. The changes in leadership have made it hard for the campus to develop long term plans to address some of our most intractable problems, such as declining enrollments and the backlog of deferred maintenance. In looking at other models through the work we did on the Design Team, I came to the conclusion that a provost model would work best for UHM which like other campuses, notably Indiana University-Bloomington and University of Washington (Seattle), is the flagship university in a system with multiple schools throughout these islands.

For UHM, and indeed the system as a whole, to be successful, Mānoa must have a strong voice at every level. Even faculty who might not support the Phase I proposal agree on this point. The creation of a Provost, **who significantly also serves as a Vice President**, ensures that the interests of our flagship campus will be represented by an independent voice within the system as a whole. For me this change is perhaps the single most important aspect of the Phase I reorganization.

One of the challenges that any R-1 university faces is the integration of the educational and research missions. The role of the deans is to advocate for their units; however, the differing mix of degree programs and research in each unit (college, school, center) means that each dean understands what is most needed in quite different terms. By contrast, a provost is, in a sense, an orchestra conductor, who must ensure that research and academics are driving and delivering on the promises in our mission in a way that makes sense of their cacophony of interests. The proposed model gives the provost the necessary focus to think everyday about how the educational and research enterprises at UHM will better serve our students and the interests of the people of Hawai'i. At the same time, the proposed structure usefully includes a budget office that provides a check on the provost so that whatever initiatives we pursue are done in a context of financial responsibility.

As you have before you not just the proposed Phase I Reorganization but a request to appoint Michael Bruno as Provost, let me conclude with a few observations about our history of leadership at UHM. Since the time that we went to the chancellor system, UHM has, in my opinion, suffered from the ways that the president of the system and the Mānoa chancellor have too frequently been at odds. The proposed reorganization gives the president a different stake in the Mānoa campus and makes that position accountable for some of the most visible parts of the campus, like athletics, without putting that person in a position to micromanage and second guess the provost. This change requires the president and provost to work together in a different, and again more integrated, way. Such a team approach was, in fact, one of the guiding principles of the Design Team.

Having served on the last, unsuccessful chancellor search, I appreciate the real learning curve any leader at Mānoa would face and how difficult it is to pick a leader who is equally acceptable to our diverse set of administrators, faculty, researchers, staff and students, and who can truly understand the challenges faced by this university, which is indigenous-serving; comprised of academic and organized research units, several professional schools, and which must maintain access to higher education for a diverse population. Although I appreciate the concerns of those who would be more comfortable with a search for the new provost position, I do not think the time is right for an external search, which involves considerable investment of campus resources. Our challenges at this moment are too great to wait out another, potentially unsuccessful, search. Moreover, Michael Bruno has already been doing much of the work of a provost in his combined VCR/IVCAA position.

Over the last three years, I have witnessed Michael Bruno, Kathy Cutshaw, and David Lassner develop a team approach to leading Mānoa. Are they always on the same page? No, but when they are not, they pause and realign. They are not afraid to own their missteps, do not blame each other, genuinely seem to have good will and appreciation for the work each is doing, and crucially put the need for the campus to succeed over their individual needs to look successful to any constituency, including you, the Board of Regents. I see that their skills and strengths complement rather than replicate each other, and I know that their

decisions and positions, even those that I disagree with most strongly, are made with thought and attention to ideas that differ from their own.

On the Design Team, we were cautioned not to think first in relation to the actual people in positions we were discussing because a structure has to be able to work as people move in and out of positions. That said, if people in positions of leadership do not work well together, they will not be effective regardless of the structure. Given all of this, I think that the proposal before you puts the right people in the right positions for our campus at this pivotal moment.

Sincerely,
Laura E. Lyons, PhD
Interim Dean of the College of Languages, Linguistics & Literature and
Interim Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs
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Written Testimony for Feb. 28th meeting concerning Manoa Reorganization phase 1

1 message

Peter Arnade <parnade@hawaii.edu>
To: Board of Regents <bor@hawaii.edu>

Wed, Feb 27, 2019 at 2:17 PM

Aloha Regents;

As Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities at Mānoa, I wish to note my support for phase one of the proposed Mānoa reorganization. In my seven years at UH, I have experienced instability of senior leadership and have thought substantially about how best to address this ongoing challenge--one whose dynamics predate my arrival to UH---and the most productive relationship of Mānoa to UH System. I believe the proposed Phase 1 of this reorganization pragmatically and thoughtfully addresses institutional and academic challenges with a solid solution. The Provost at a Flagship model, used elsewhere in American higher education, is an appropriate one for our ten campus system in a state whose distinct attributes, unique mission, and smaller size calls for an approach right for Hawai'i.

The proposed Provost position, if invested with the proper autonomy, authority and responsibility, will create a chief academic officer at Mānoa who will also have a seat at Bachman Hall as a Vice President too. It will help to solve the historical challenging dynamics and institutional ambiguity about the relationship of a flagship Chancellor to the System President. Other much larger states and higher education systems----Indiana and Washington are two examples---employ this model successfully. What is more, any debate on whether this is "right or wrong" (the Provost or Chancellor question), while understandable, is not really what I believe should be our primary focus. Instead, the quality of our education we provide, how we best serve our native Hawaiian community, our outstanding research reputation, our kuleana to our state and its residents, and our need to be rightfully proud of our academic and research accomplishments while focusing on how to improve and keep abreast of contemporary higher education developments matter more. I am deeply concerned, for example too, about our aging infrastructure and the need to provide our citizens and students with a modern twenty-first century campus. There is simply no other flagship research university in the United States like UH Mānoa--an indigenous-serving high-research activity university which advances its kuleana to the people of Hawai'i and balances research excellence with a commitment to educational access to our students and partnership with our other campuses. Mahalo.



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LATE TESTIMONY

Board of Regents <bor@hawaii.edu>

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HSBK Dean's Office <hshk@hawaii.edu>
To: bor@hawaii.edu, Jon Osorio <osorio@hawaii.edu>

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Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge
Office of the Dean

February 27, 2019

To: **Chair Lee Putnamk and the Board of Regents, University of Hawai'i**

Re: **Reorganization Phase 1 and Appointment of the Provost**

Aloha mai Kākou

I am writing this testimony in strong support of President Lassner's initiative to reorganize the leadership of Mānoa and his recommendation that Michael Bruno be appointed the provost for Mānoa. I have been the interim dean and dean of Hawai'inuiākea for just over two years, but I have been on this campus, more or less continuously since 1984. My impression of the leadership at Mānoa is that it is as good as it has been in the 35 years that I have been here.

Yet we have been experiencing difficult times with enrollment declines, revenue shortages and a maintenance backlog that would challenge any institution, and I am impressed with the way that the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor Bruno have been able to maintain a positive morale among the deans and among the other senior staff. I think there has been growth and vitality in programming and curriculum over this period, and I appreciate that they have consistently championed change and transformation of this institution even when there is no large pot of money to fund it.

Their ability to work with each other and the fact that they share many of the same values and educational ideals translates into a greater trust among the deans and a willingness to put the interests of the whole campus at least on a par with the interests of our individual colleges. This trust is not something that has always existed on this campus, and in my opinion, the opposite has been more generally true.

I do not see the need of conducting another expensive national search, and in fact, I believe that we have not always been well served by assuming that external candidates possess skills and talents that will positively affect our institution. I think that there is much to be said for giving a stable leadership time to develop its vision and to implement it. I believe the current leadership is stable and trusted and I hope that you will take President Lassner's recommendation and appoint Michael Bruno provost.

Mahalo for accepting my testimony



Jonathan K. Osorio, Dean
Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge
University of Hawai'i Mānoa