



Testimony For the University of Hawaii Board of Regents Meeting - August 17, 2023

Wesley Machida <w.machida@capitol.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Aug 16, 2023 at 2:53 PM

To: "bor.testimony@hawaii.edu" <bor.testimony@hawaii.edu>

Cc: "jkomeiji1@gmail.com" <jkomeiji1@gmail.com>, "Kanaka'ole, Ryan KP" <ryan.kp.kanakaole@hawaii.gov>

Chair Alapaki Nahale-a and Members of the University of Hawaii Board of Regents,

On behalf of the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority, I am sending their testimony from Chair Komeiji regarding agenda item VI.A.1. (Resolution 23-01) for the Board of Regents consideration at the upcoming meeting on August 17, 2023.

Thank You,

Wesley Machida



2023-08-16 Testimony to UH BOR re Resolution 23-01_rev.docx
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MAUNA KEA STEWARDSHIP AND OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY

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August 16, 2023

To: University of Hawai'i Board of Regents
From: John Komeiji, Chairperson, Mauna Kea Stewardship Oversight Authority
RE: Agenda Item VI.A.1. Approval of BOR Resolution 23-01 Regarding Maunakea

Aloha Members of the Board of Regents,

On behalf of the Mauna Kea Stewardship Oversight Authority, I respectfully request that this Board defer discussion and action on proposed BOR Resolution 23-01 *To Further Act on Items Relating to Maunakea Management and Repeal of Regents Resolutions 19-03 and 21-02*.

At its August 10, 2023 meeting, the consensus among MKSOA Board members was that the operative clauses of BOR Resolution 23-01 raised issues that require additional consideration and discussion by the MKSOA Board before providing comments. The MKSOA Board is planning to continue its discussions on the resolution at its next meeting, which will occur after this Board's meeting. As such, I am requesting this Board defer Agenda Item VI.A. to allow the MKSOA Board time to review and offer comments on the proposed resolution.

Testimony presented to
University of Hawaii Board of Regents, 08-17-23
by
Dr. Jan Minoru Javinar, Faculty in Student Affairs
University of Hawaii West Oahu (UHWO)

Related to SCR 201 TASK FORCE WORK & ACTIONS BY CAMPUS CEO

Regents:

I stand before you seeking your kokua and intervention on matters related to actions taken by my campus chancellor, Maenette Benham, to fulfill the SCR 201 Task Force work. These actions negatively impact those of us who are faculty in student affairs on the front lines serving student needs. Chancellor Benham's actions attain three less than desirable outcomes:

- 1) Institutionalizes a "second rate" educational experience for residents on the leeward coast of Oahu;
- 2) Impacts negatively, the persistence of UHWO students who hail from under-represented backgrounds towards college completion;
- 3) Negates good management practices in higher education and quashes the academic norm of shared governance and shared authority.

I am requesting Regents intervention to direct the Administration to **cease and desist** its "slow death" actions to eliminate faculty in student affairs and to seriously **weigh the feasibility and desirability of alternatives** proposed herein.

I am testifying on behalf of some of my faculty colleagues at UH West Oahu, three of whom are physically here with me. Others not here have indicated their reluctance to speak up or show up for fear of future retaliation when they apply for contract renewal, tenure, or promotion. I have served in state employment since 1978 and with the University since 1982. I proudly serve as a faculty member for 35 years this fall and have been tenured for at least 30 years.

Less than Desirable Outcome #1: Institutionalizes a "second rate" educational experience for residents on the leeward coast of Oahu

- A. Chancellor Benham's action to abolish two vacant faculty positions in student affairs and replacing them with non-faculty professionals dilutes the qualifications of professionals needed to serve students with purposeful intent. Having professionals with diluted qualifications only perpetuates the narrative that residents on the leeward coast of Oahu can and should live with a "second rate" educational experience and support.
 - On Monday, 06-26-23, our campus chancellor Maenette Benham pronounced that she would be abolishing two vacant faculty positions in student affairs and replacing them with non-faculty professionals, the Administrative-Professional-Technical (APT) employee classification. On 07-27-23, she initiated the online process to attain that abolishment.
- B. Hiring non-faculty professionals will hurt students on the leeward side of Oahu since qualifications of these non-faculty professionals do not require an advanced degree and

the attendant knowledge of subject matter centered around how students learn, grow, and develop.

- C. This shift will ensure an inferior educational product as less qualified non-faculty professionals endeavor to teach, coach, advise, and support leeward coast students with less than the optimal knowledge base and skill sets that faculty professionals holding advanced degrees bring to bear.
- D. Such a shift would reduce the excellent quality education and support UHWO currently provides.
- E. UHWO should not be reduced to a “second rate” institution as residents on the leeward coast of Oahu deserve a “first rate” institution of higher learning on par with the flagship campus, UH Manoa.
- F. Hiring faculty in student affairs would ensure the high academic quality the leeward coast communities deserve from faculty professionals providing quality higher education and intentional student support.

Less than Desirable Outcome #2: Impacts negatively, the persistence of UHWO students who hail from under-represented backgrounds towards college completion

- A. Faculty, whether in the traditional classroom or in the co-curricular settings outside of the classroom, possess advanced knowledge of their subject matter through research of the literature or investigation of best practices.
 - This knowledge is regularly translated by faculty to inform their teaching, advising, and student support functions to prepare students for the workforce or as engaged citizens in the community.
- B. Research findings posit that students from racial minority and lower socio-economic backgrounds increase their sense of belonging and mattering when the faculty and staff in the college environments reflect their own under-represented backgrounds (Cole, D. et al, 2019; Hoyt, J.E., 2021; Kezar, A. & Kitchen, J., 2019; & Moore, M, 2022). With a greater sense of belonging and mattering, students from under-represented backgrounds persist towards college completion.
- C. They learn, grow, and develop best when their faculty members not only look like them, but also recognize the challenges they face, understand their ways of doing, and welcome and work with their differing expectations.
- D. UHWO’s faculty was described as the most diverse in the nation (Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, 2020-2021) with diversity seen as an asset for “providing students a diverse and fulfilling experience” (ibid).
- E. By eradicating faculty positions in student affairs, Chancellor Benham has moved towards erasing faculty diversity in the student support arena since 100% of faculty in student affairs at West Oahu come from similar under-represented upbringings as the students they serve.
- F. With less diverse faculty in student affairs, Chancellor’s move will foster an environment that reduces students’ sense of belonging and mattering to the campus and thus, adversely affect their persistence towards college completion.

Less than Desirable Outcome #3: Negates good management practices in higher education and quashes the academic norm of shared governance and shared authority

- A. In her pronouncement on 06-26-23, Chancellor Benham asserted in no uncertain terms, that her decision is a management one that she is authorized to take. She moved to abolish the two vacant faculty positions in a memo dated that same day.

- B. Her rush to abolish these faculty positions in student affairs without meaningful consultation with the professionals impacted fails to reflect good management practices in higher education.
- C. Chancellor's action not only contravenes Regents Policy 1.210 which provides for faculty involvement in the development and maintenance of a **collegial approach** to academic decision-making and policy development (boldface, italics mine), but also belie the **shared governance and shared authority standards** that undergird the academic norms and traditions articulated in the joint statements formulated by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) in the 1960s (Mortimer, K & Sathre, C., 2007).
- D. Chancellor Benham's actions need to be viewed in the context of her inability or unwillingness to explain why alternatives presented could not be attempted, chanced, or tested.
 - One alternative was proposed as early as December 2021 and yet another one year later in December 2022.
- E. The immediate dismissal of these alternatives without policy or program justification fails to recognize that sharing authority among the university constituents requires an understanding that "some areas of decision making require **joint endeavor** and that others are essentially separate jurisdictions in which one constituent has **primary, but not exclusive responsibility**" (Mortimer, K. & McConnell, T.R., 1978; boldface, italics mine).

Conclusion

Chancellor Benham's action to immediately eliminate faculty in student affairs will impact the work of the student affairs division in addressing the learning and developmental needs of our students, as well as the existing workload imbalances of the faculty and staff endeavoring to meet those needs. Her actions will result in hiring professionals who lack the intimate knowledge, responsive skill sets, and expert abilities to:

- craft instruction
- engage with distressed students and students with disabilities
- foster campus community building for the students' sense of belonging
- guide students through drafting resumes, cover letters or scholarship essays
- coach students for successful job interviewing
- promote effective interpersonal interactions in career and life settings.

The "ASK"

I request your intervention to direct the University Administration **first**, to **cease and desist** its "slow death" approach to eliminating student affairs faculty by putting on hold, any abolishment of vacant specialist faculty at the Hilo and West Oahu campuses; and **second**, to **weigh the feasibility and desirability of alternatives** proposed by faculty in the trenches and **to report back to the Board** on the legal, policy, and program **bases that impede and preclude the implementation and testing of these alternatives**. I offer the following as initial alternatives or next steps that if implemented, will minimize interference with current faculty efforts to daily foster student learning, success, and development:

- Lift President's moratorium dated 04-06-22 on hiring any new tenured or tenure-track S faculty at UHWO and UHH.

- Institute an interim EP5.221 that extends relevant and applicable UHM faculty classifications to UHH and UHWO until such time that the SCR 201 Task Force completes its charge and consultative process so as not to interfere with the ability of faculty at Hilo and West Oahu campuses to respond to students' learning and success needs.
- Allow for one, if not both, of the Hilo and West Oahu campuses to pilot test the SCR 201 Task Force proposed unified "F" classification for all faculty prior to its full implementation.
- Consider the reclassification of S faculty to existing I faculty until such time the SCR 201 Task Force completes its charge.

Closing

I applaud the SCR 201 Task Force for rightfully taking an appropriate amount of time deliberating on this historic re-classification effort and consulting with the faculty constituents. Simultaneously, it would be detrimental if the delayed timing of the Task Force to complete its work is deleterious to the frontline faculty efforts to help students succeed intellectually and interpersonally towards their college goals. I know I speak for my faculty colleagues to say we stand ready from the trenches to participate meaningfully in this critical analysis by the University Administration.

Thank you for your support of the work of our university faculty in meeting student needs. Please feel free to contact me via email (javinar@hawaii.edu) or work landline (808.689.2671) if you have any questions or require additional information.

References

Board of Regents Policy 1.210 Regents Policy on Faculty Involvement in Academic Decision-Making and Academic Policy Development

Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, 2020-2021, as reported in UH News, 10-16-20.

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Mortimer, K.P. & Sathre, C. 2007. *The Art and Politics of Academic Governance*. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. in partnership with the American Council on Education.

Dwight Y. Takamine
Chancellor's Community Advisory Committee
P. O. Box 56 Laupahoehoe, Hawaii
August 17, 2023

Chairman Nahale-a and Members of the Board of Regents good morning:

My name is Dwight Takamine, and I am here to support the naming of part of the Palamanui Campus, the Rockne Freitas Way. I have known Rockne, going back to the days when I served in the State Legislature and he was the Chancellor of Hawaii Community College.

Even then, he displayed a strong sense of character and exceptional leadership skills. He was not only a shining example of a positive Native Hawaiian leader, but also was a very good friend. I also worked with Rockne when he became the University of Hawaii West Oahu Chancellor, and I became familiar with his success as the first Native Hawaiian all-pro in the National Football League.

Rockne Freitas never forgot his roots and he was well liked during his time at the University. He had strong ties to the broader community and through his personal experiences, he learned the legislative process and developed many relationships with legislators and other state leaders. Rockne capitalized on these relationships to further the interests of the students at the University of Hawaii.

He treated people with dignity and respect and despite his many personal accomplishments and honors, he remained a very humble person. He was an inspirational role model, and he always focussed on the mission of the University - to further the interests of the students! Rockne demonstrated his commitment to this principle, not only while he led Hawaii Community

College, but while he was Chancellor at West Oahu responding to the special needs of the surrounding communities.

In conclusion, Rockne Freitas was a special individual who believed in life-long learning, and he dedicated his life to maximizing educational opportunities for the many people he came into contact with. For his outstanding service to those he loved, and for the guidance he provided to the many lives that he touched, I proudly support the action that you take today. I also support other actions you may decide to take, to honor this remarkable human being.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dwight Takamine", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dwight Takamine