

University of Hawai'i
Candidate Advisory Council

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March 30, 2023

The Honorable Josh Green
Governor, State of Hawai'i
Executive Chambers
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Governor Green:

On behalf of the Candidate Advisory Council (CAC) of the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents and in conformity with the provisions of Act 72, 2013 Session Laws of Hawai'i, I am pleased to present the following candidates to you to fill the following seats for the term to begin July 1, 2023.

One (1) Honolulu County seat for a five-year appointment (currently filled by Regent Randy Moore)

1. Neil Abercrombie
2. Keith Amemiya
3. Matthew Matsunaga
4. Mary Oneha
5. Wai'ale'ale Sarsona

One (1) Maui County seat for a five-year appointment (currently filled by Regent Eugene Bal)

1. Lauren Akitake
2. Sheri Daniels
3. Beverly Stanich

One (1) Hawai'i County seat for a five-year appointment (currently filled by Regent Alapaki Nahale-a)

1. Michael Miyahira
2. Kona Moran
3. Alapaki Nahale-a
4. Steven Pavao

Governor Josh Green

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The CAC complied with the statutory requirements and assessed candidates in a confidential, fair, independent, and nonpartisan manner. All candidates, as required by law, were asked to disclose any existing or anticipated contracts or financial transactions with the University of Hawai'i. Finally, with the assistance of licensed and accredited external firms, the CAC had background checks done on each candidate. Based on the applications and CVs submitted, interviews with candidates, contacts with references and background checks, the CAC believes that these candidates are able and willing to discharge the responsibilities of a member of the Board of Regents.

Brief biographies drafted by the candidates are attached.

If you have any questions, please call 956-9083 or email at borapp@hawaii.edu.

Sincerely,



Brigitte Yoshino, Chair
Candidate Advisory Council

Attachments

- c: Senator Ronald Kouchi, President, Hawai'i State Senate
- Representative Scott Saiki, Speaker, Hawai'i House of Representatives
- Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education
- Representative Amy Perruso, Chair, House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
- Regent Randy Moore, Chair, Board of Regents
- President David Lassner, University of Hawai'i
- Members, Candidate Advisory Council

FINALISTS

HONOLULU COUNTY SEAT

- **Neil Abercrombie**
- **Keith Amemiya**
- **Matthew Matsunaga**
- **Mary Oneha**
- **Wai'ale'ale Sarsona**

Neil Abercrombie

Former Governor Neil Abercrombie has had a long and varied public career spanning five (5) decades as an elected official. He served as the seventh Governor of Hawaii from 2010 to 2014 which capped a remarkable record at public service.

From 1975 to 1979 he served in the Hawaii House of Representatives and was subsequently elected to the Hawaii Senate. Abercrombie won a seat in Congress in a special election to complete the term of a resigning member of the US House of Representatives in 1986, and afterwards served on the City Council of Honolulu from 1988 to 1990. He returned to Congress and served ten consecutive terms from 1990 to 2010 serving on the Armed Services Committee and the Natural Resources Committee. During his years in Congress he was especially committed to the protection of the Northwest Hawaiian Islands – Papahānaumokuākea, and he co-authored landmark legislation to build, manage and maintain housing for military families.

He made a successful bid for Governor of Hawaii in 2010 and was sworn in as Hawaii's seventh Governor on December 6th of that year. His term as Governor was spent grappling with the effects of the recession including restructuring of state contracts and pension obligations.

He is an author and he holds an M.A. in Sociology and his Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Hawaii.

Keith Y. Amemiya, J.D.

Keith Amemiya is seeking a University of Hawaii Board of Regents (“BOR”) position because he has a passion for serving our communities and doing what he can to make Hawaii a better place for everyone, especially our younger generations. In particular, he has a passion for public education, as a strong educational system with opportunities for all is critical to any successful and thriving society.

Amemiya began his professional career as a litigation attorney and next became the Hawaii High School Athletic Association’s Executive Director, where he oversaw the athletic programs of all 95 high schools and their 33,000+ student-athletes statewide.

Amemiya was then selected to be the BOR’s Executive Administrator and Secretary. As BOR Secretary, he helped prepare for and run the monthly BOR meetings, participated in weekly consult meetings with the U.H. President and the BOR Chair and Vice Chair, and worked with all the Regents. Similarly, he worked closely with the U.H. President’s executive team, as well as the Chancellors of the 10 campuses. Moreover, he visited all 10 campuses across the state regularly.

Currently, Amemiya is the Central Pacific Bank’s Senior Vice President of Community Relations, where he’s again able to work with and in communities statewide to support their respective residents and businesses, particularly those in need and those that serve our most vulnerable populations. As the CPB Foundation’s Executive Director, Amemiya worked closely with and supported various U.H. causes such as the College Opportunities Program, the Pacific Asian Center for Entrepreneurship, the U.H. Economic Research Organization, the Shidler College of Business, the William S. Richardson School of Law, U.H. Maui College, and U.H. Athletics.

Amemiya has served on numerous statewide education-based Boards and Commissions:

- Hawaii State Board of Education
- Teach for America
- Assets School
- The Learning Coalition
- Hawaii High School Athletic Association
- Advisory Commission on Gender Equity in Athletics

In sum, Amemiya has a passion for the University of Hawaii and he has direct experience with and knowledge of the U.H. System and the BOR Office, and the Regents themselves. Additionally, he has extensive public and private sector executive leadership experience and has worked with and in our communities statewide throughout his career.

Matthew Matsunaga

Work Experience

- U.S. House of Representatives Page, Washington, D.C., Summer 1975.
- Yard boy, Maryland, Summer 1976.
- Accounts Payable Clerk, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., Summers 1977, 1978 and 1979.
- Certified Public Accountant, Price Waterhouse, Washington, D.C., 1980-1982.
- Summer Associate, Carlsmith Wichman Case Mukai and Ichiki, Honolulu, Hawaii, Summers 1983 and 1984.
- Summer Associate, Wender, Murase and White, Washington, D.C., Summer 1984.
- Attorney, Carlsmith Ball LLP, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1985-2005; Partner, 1992-2005.
- State Senator, State of Hawaii, 1992-2002.
- Attorney & Partner, Schlack Ito, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2005-Present

Civic and Community Activities

- Founder and Coordinator, Aloha Peace Week.
- President, United Japanese Society of Hawaii, 1991-1992.
- President (1990-1992), Director and Legal Counsel, Moiliili Community Center.
- Chairman, Japan-U.S. Science, Technology & Space Applications Program.
- President (1991-1992) and Director, National Kidney Foundation of Hawaii.
- President, Matsunaga Charitable Foundation.
- Member, Pacific Congress on Marine Science and Technology (PACON International)
- Member, Governor's Task Force on Science and Technology.
- Member, Board of Advisors, Asia Pacific College.

Honors and Awards

- Named one of six best Senators in Honolulu Weekly, February 2, 1994.
- Ocean Services Award, awarded by PACON International, June 1996.
- Ohana Award, awarded by Junior League of Honolulu, June 1997.
- Named "Best Legislator of the Year" in Honolulu Weekly, August 13, 1997.
- Named one of six best legislators in Honolulu Weekly, May 13, 1998.
- Archangel Award, awarded by Sisters Offering Support, August 30, 1999.
- Millennium Award, awarded by Japan-U.S. Science, Technology & Space Applications Program, November 12, 1999.
- Ocean Services Award, awarded by PACON International, June 2000.
- 2000 Legislator-of-the-Year Award, awarded by Mental Health Association in Hawaii, February 2001.
- Special Recognition Award, awarded by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, May 2001.
- Named one of Best Lawyers in Hawaii for Business Organizations (including LLCs and Partnerships), 2023.

Mary Frances Mailelauli'i Oneha, APRN, PhD, FAAN

Dr. Mary Frances Mailelauli'i Oneha has worked in community health centers for over 30 years and has served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Waimānalo Health Center since 2012. Her collaborative research and publication efforts with other community minded researchers has aligned with her commitment to improve the health of Native Hawaiians. Her most recent community-based research project examined the added value of Native Hawaiian healers and their healing practices integrated in primary care. She supports the perpetuation of Native Hawaiian cultural practices in healthcare and advocates for this value-added service. Dr. Oneha serves on the Boards of AlohaCare, Hawai'i Primary Care Association, and the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations. She is also a member of Na Limahana o Lonopuha Native Hawaiian Health Consortium. Dr. Oneha is a graduate and past faculty member of the University of Hawaii School of Nursing & Dental Hygiene. She has served as a nurse for over 10 years in acute and critical care settings in various states, 5 years in a joint academic and community clinical practice position before committing her remaining years practicing in community health centers.

Critical years serving in communities have taught her to be community centered and community based. Living through the early years of the COVID-19 pandemic in a community healthcare setting plainly reflected the immediate need for community organizations to voice and meet the needs of its residents.

Dr. Oneha received her PhD in Nursing from the University of Colorado, a Master of Nursing from the University of Washington, and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Hawai'i. She is a 2018 Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, a 2016 inaugural inductee to the University of Hawai'i School of Nursing Hall of Fame, a 2016 Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu Na Wahine Puuwai Aloha honoree and she was recognized by the White House in 2013 as an AAPI Woman Champion of Change.

M. Wai‘ale‘ale Sarsona

Dr. Wai‘ale‘ale Sarsona is Vice President of Kamehameha Schools’ Hi‘ialo Group. The group includes Nā Kula Kamali‘i o Kamehameha — KS’ 30 Hawaiian-focused preschools statewide and Community Engagement, Partnerships and Supports through its new effort called KS Kaiāulu; which brings together KS’ and community partners’ rich Hawaiian culture, ‘ōlelo and ‘āina-based opportunities and resrouces that grow ‘ōiwi leaders across the pae ‘āina.

Born and raised on the Waimānalo Hawaiian Home Lands, Sarsona is a proud graduate of Kailua High School. As a first-gen college graduate, she holds a Doctorate of Education degree in educational professional practice and a Master of Education degree in private school leadership from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, an M.B.A from Hawai‘i Pacific University and a bachelor’s degree in education — with emphasis on Hawaiian language and culture — from UH Mānoa. She also earned the status of Manalima under the ‘ūniki process of Ka Pā O Lonopūhā, which focuses on restoring traditional Hawaiian health practices.

Sarsona has held several leadership positions at KS prior to becoming VP, including serving as managing director of KS’ Kūamahi Community Education Division, interim VP of Strategic Planning Implementation and Community Education, and as director of KS’ Ho‘olako Like Division supporting Hawaiian-focused public charter schools. Before KS, she was chief of staff for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. She also served as the Po‘o Kula of Ke Kula O Samuel M. Kamakau Hawaiian language immersion public charter school. Early in her career she was the CEO of INPEACE a Native Hawaiian education non-profit, where she focused on expanding early learning in Hawaiian homestead communities.

She recently served on the state’s Early Learning Board and the Waimānalo Neighborhood Board. She also volunteers on a few community-based non-profit boards, all of which serve and advance Native Hawaiians and community through education and/or health.

Sarsona has three children; two graduates of and a sophomore at Kamakau. Currently, all three are enrolled in the University of Hawai‘i system.

FINALISTS

MAUI COUNTY SEAT

- **Lauren Akitake**
- **Sheri Daniels**
- **Beverly Stanich**

Lauren Akitake

Born and raised on Maui, Lauren Akitake is a private practice attorney and per diem District Court Judge who taught Business Law at the University of Hawaii Maui College. She earned her Juris Doctorate from the University of Kansas School of Law. She also obtained a Master of Science degree in Applied Social Research from the University of Stirling, Scotland, while on a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Policy Analysis/Politics from Pomona College in California. She graduated as a Valedictorian from Baldwin High School class of 1999.

Ms. Akitake has over 15 years of experience in diverse areas of law, including estate planning, probate and trust litigation, estate and trust administration, civil litigation, business law, collection law, and representing clients in conservatorship and guardianship proceedings. Prior to starting her law office six years ago, Ms. Akitake practiced in state and federal courts for law firms on Oahu and Maui, served as a law clerk for the Honorable Shackley F. Raffetto, completed the Elder Law Clinical Program at the University of Kansas School of Law, and interned with the office of the late U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye.

Ms. Akitake is a 2020 Ka Ipu Kukui Fellow, 2020 Hawaii State Bar Association Leadership Institute Fellow, and 2016 Hawaii Emerging Legal Practitioners Access to Justice Fellow. She taught Business Law at the University of Hawaii Maui College from 2015-2021 and is a former Maui County Bar Association board member. Ms. Akitake is a 2022-2024 elected parent representative to the Pomaikai Elementary School Community Council and is a current board member of Women Helping Women and member and co-President nominee of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Maui.

In 2022, Ms. Akitake was awarded an AAUW Career and Leadership Development Grant, which funded her attendance at a National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA) Women in Law trial training in Seattle, Washington.

Ms. Akitake has been appointed by Maui Circuit Court Judges as Kokua Kanawai (a special master) in contested guardianship and conservatorship cases and Special Administrator in contested probate/estate cases.

Appointed in November 2021 and retained in November 2022, Ms. Akitake is a per diem District Court Judge for the Second Circuit Court, State of Hawaii. She has been sitting for criminal, traffic, environmental court, landlord-tenant, small claims, regular claims, civil temporary restraining order, and preliminary hearing calendars in Wailuku, Lahaina, and Lanai. She also reviews judicial determination of probable cause and information charging documents, and meets with Maui Police Department detectives to review and approve search warrants. Recently she had the honor of presiding on Community Outreach Court, which is held at the Kihei Public Library.

Having played tennis for Pomona College and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, Ms. Akitake is also a 1998 Hawaii High School Athletics Association tennis doubles champion. She enjoys working out, running, swimming, and spending time with her sons – Scott and Evan, 11 and 9.

Sheri Daniels, EdD, CSAC

Sheri has been leading Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board since 2016. Papa Ola Lōkahi (POL) is the organization charged by the United States Congress with administrative oversight of the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act [Public Law 102-396]. In this role, she leads efforts to improve the overall health and well-being of Native Hawaiians and their families, through strategic partnerships, programs and public policy.

Born, raised, and currently residing on Maui, she has close to three decades of experience in social service programs along with years of supervisory experience, including both government and non-profit management. It is through these capacities that Dr. Daniels has worked closely with Hawai'i's unique and diverse population to overcome inequities.

Sheri is actively involved in various community and civic organizations locally, nationally and internationally. In 2019, Dr. Daniels was added to both the Advisory Council on Minority Health (Office on Minority Health). She is one of the co-leads for the Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Hawai'i COVID19 Response, Recovery, Resilience Team that involves over 60 organizations throughout Hawai'i that is focused on addressing the needs and advocating for these communities.

A graduate of Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, Dr. Daniels received her bachelor's in family resources from the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She carries a master's in counseling psychology from Chaminade University of Honolulu, in addition to a doctorate from Argosy University, and currently holds several license certifications.

Beverly Stanich

Beverly Kehaulani (Sylvester) Stanich is a professional educator and administrator with extensive experiences with children and youth from birth through graduation from high school. Her perspective provides her with unique insight into what is required to create and support an optimal educational environment for youth entering the workforce, our community colleges and university.

She was born and raised in Kailua, O'ahu and moved to Maui over forty years ago to accept a teaching position with the Department of Education. She settled in Wailuku and raised her family. She has three sons, all graduates of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa; all of them now living on O'ahu. As a teacher, she worked in elementary, middle school and high school settings on both islands: Hawai'i State Hospital (Adolescent Ward), Kailua Elementary, Kailua Intermediate, and Maui High School. She also taught at Maui Community College for one summer with the Upward Bound Program for high school students from Maui, Moloka'i and Lana'i transitioning into college. She has worked as a Hawaiian Studies Resource Teacher for Maui District, recruiting, training and supervising kupuna and makua of Maui Nui as they taught in kindergarten to Grade 6. Based on the encouragement of a Vice Principal at the high school while she was teaching, she applied to and was selected to enter the School Administrator's Certification Program, taking classes at the University of Hawai'i in the Educational Administration Dept. while continuing to teach. Upon completion of these requirements, she was selected as a Vice Principal at Hana High and Elementary, followed by Kahului School, and was then promoted to become the Principal at Lahaina Intermediate, followed by Wailuku Elementary from which she retired in 2019 after 26 years. In 2021, she found an opportunity to work with a Hawaiian nonprofit agency, Keiki O Ka 'Aina, serving families with children from birth to age 5. Her position involved reaching out into the community to agencies to connect at-risk families with resources, and to partner them with Home Visiting professionals who met with them weekly. She appreciated the intensive training received in early childhood development and the cultural professional development re: trauma informed care and the long-lasting impact of trauma into adulthood, particularly for our Native Hawaiian population. After a year in this fulltime position, she needed to assist her siblings as a caregiver for her mother on O'ahu on weekends, so she resigned from this job. After her mother's passing, she was able to return to work part-time with the Dept. of Education and is presently working as a Maui District Coordinator for the After School (A+) programs in elementary schools across Maui.

She has volunteered and served in civic and community organizations on Maui and currently is on the Maui County Commission on Persons with Disabilities which acts in an advisory capacity to Mayor Bissen. As a long-time resident of Maui County, she is involved in shaping the future of her community in a productive, positive way in areas that she has personal and professional experiences in.

FINALISTS

HAWAI'I COUNTY SEAT

- **Michael Miyahira**
- **Kona Moran**
- **Alapaki Nahale-a**
- **Steven Pavao**

Michael Miyahira

Mike Miyahira provides consulting services to owners of family owned and closely held businesses located across the state of Hawaii. He focuses on succession planning, family business governance issues, owner policy development, and strategic planning, serving clients on all islands.

Born on Maui, Miyahira graduated in 1971 from H. P. Baldwin High School in Wailuku and received his Bachelors of Science in Business Administration from Oregon State University. He later attended the National Commercial Lending Graduate School sponsored by the American Bankers Association, where he graduated with honors.

Prior to his retirement from banking in 1999, Miyahira spent more than 24 years with one of Hawaii's largest commercial banks on the islands of Oahu, Maui and Hawaii. He assisted with the creation of the bank's Business Banking Division in the late 70's and then spent the bulk of his banking career as a senior lending officer and manager of several of the bank's business banking units.

From 2002 to 2017, Miyahira additionally served as the chief financial officer for a real property development company which successfully developed 560 acres of land in Pepeekeo, Hawaii.

In addition to his consulting work, Miyahira also provides accounting and administrative services to the Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council, a non-profit that uses federal, state, and county grant monies to help several agricultural industry groups to develop marketing programs and provide technical assistance to agribusiness owners.

In addition to his business interests, Miyahira is a member of the University of Hawaii, Shidler Family Business Center of Hawaii and serves on its Big Island Advisory Board. The FBCH is a source of information and ideas for owners of family businesses.

Miyahira has also been a trustee of the Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection of the Hawaii Supreme Court from 1996 through 2021, serving as its chair for many years. He is also a past president of the National Client Protection Organization, an organization comprised of client protection fund administrators, trustees, and bar association committee members, with jurisdictions that span the US and Canada. He has been a presenter at the American Bar Association's Center for Professional Responsibility's annual Client Protection Forum as well as the National Client Protection Organization's annual Fall Workshop.

He is a member of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, the Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce, the Island of Hawaii YMCA, and the Japanese Community Association of Hawaii.

He is a past adjunct professor at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, College of Business and Economics, past president of the Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, Junior Achievement of Hawaii Island, the Big Island Business Council and the Hawaii Island United Way; past treasurer for the United Way Statewide Association of Hawaii, and past vice chair and corporate treasurer for the Island of Hawaii YMCA. He has also served on the board of Hawaii Care Choices, the State of Hawaii's Dept. of Public Safety, Hawaii Island Corrections Advisory Council as well as on the Advisory Council for the College of Business and Economics at the University of Hawaii at Hilo.

Kona Moran

Kona Moran is Principal Broker & owner of real estate company Hilo Brokers, Ltd. on the Big Island.

Born and raised in Hawaii, Kona received a Regents Scholarship to attend UH Manoa in 1993 and was a walk-on member of the UH Manoa men's basketball team for one year. Kona received his Bachelor's Degree in Economics and then began his career in real estate and finance, in California. In 2000 he continued his education at San Diego State University, receiving his Master's Degree in Business Administration in 2002.

During his time in California, Kona launched his own real estate finance business. In 2005, the Islands beckoned, and he moved back to Hilo to join his father, Kelly, in the family brokerage.

He is a supporter of UH-Hilo athletics, having served as President of the University booster club as President, Vice President, Treasurer and Director. He has previously served for several years as a lecturer in Real Estate and Finance at the UH-Hilo College of Business. Kona has lived abroad for several years, enjoys traveling, and supporting the Big Island community and non-profit organizations. In his free time, Kona enjoys hiking the slopes and exploring the natural beauty of the Big Island.

Alapaki Nahale-a

Alapaki Nahale-a is the CEO of the Global Resiliency Hub at 'Iole in Kohala, Hawaii. 'Iole's name was chosen to honor the 2408 acre historic ahupua'a it manages where they are modeling how regenerative governance can create a world that is not only sustainable, but regenerative, leading to abundance for people and the environment.

Born and raised in Hilo, Nahale-a is a 1986 graduate of Kamehameha Schools and holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Pennsylvania.

Nahale-a has spent more than 30 years serving the community in a variety of roles including as director and chairman of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. He served in a variety of roles for Kamehameha Schools' including senior director of community engagement and resources for Hawai'i Island and senior director of community strategies statewide. Nahale-a has also worked extensively for charter schools as president and executive director of the Hawai'i Charter School Network, director of Laupāhoehoe Community Public Charter School and director of Ka 'Umeke Ka'eo Hawaiian Immersion Public Charter School.

Nahale-a has served on a variety of community boards and commissions including chairperson of the County of Hawai'i Cultural Resources Commission, member of the County Charter Commission, board member of the Boys and Girls club of the Big Island and board member of the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation.

President Obama appointed Nahale-a to serve on the Presidential Scholars Commission where he helped to set commission policy and select top high school scholars from around the country.

Nahale-a is an experienced strategist, facilitator, and problem solver. In professional and volunteer capacities he seeks to bring communities together, identify key opportunities, and inspire achievable and impactful action.

Nahale-a is one of the Hawaii Island Regents for the University of Hawaii and currently serves as Vice Chairman. He believes that no institution has more potential impact on the future of Hawaii than UH and is committed to helping UH embrace and fulfill that role. In his four years as a Regent Nahale-a served as second vice chair for one year and vice chair for two years. He has also chaired the Planning and Facilities Committee for the past two years. When issues arose over TMT and Maunakea, Nahale-a stepped up to chair the Maunakea Permitted Interaction Groups.

Steven G. Pavao

Steven G Pavao is a Public Health Program Manager and Branch Chief of the Hawaii Island Community Mental Health Centers Branch, a Branch of the Department of Health's Adult Mental Health Division. Mr. Pavao has served in a variety of positions with the Department of Health to include, Section Supervisor of the West Honolulu Treatment Services Section, Section Supervisor of the West Hawaii Rehabilitation Services Section as well as the Section Supervisor of the East Hawaii Mental Health Clinics Section. In 2019, Mr. Pavao was named the Department of Health's employee of the year.

Mr. Pavao began his professional career in Hilo as a Clinical Supervisor in Hawaii's model Healthy Start program. Mr. Pavao then worked for the Department of Human Services in its East Hawaii Child Welfare Section where he supervised the Intake and Assessment Unit. Mr. Pavao has also been the CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of the Big Island as well as Hale Kipa's Director of Neighbor Island Programs.

Mr. Pavao currently serves on the Hawaii County Salary Commission. He has served as the Chair of the Hawaii Island Advisory Committee to the Hawaii Reapportionment Commission in 2021-2022. Mr. Pavao has served as the Chair of the Hawaii County Environmental Management Commission and as a member of the Hawaii County Reapportionment Commission. He has also served on the State Health Planning and Development Agency's Hawaii County Subarea Planning Council. Mr. Pavao has served as Chair of the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Hawaii and as President of the Hawaii Public Health Institute. Mr. Pavao has served in a variety of roles with the HGEA to include, Unit 13 Steward, Hawaii Island Division Political Action Committee Chair, Member of the state PAC and member of the Hawaii Island Executive Council. Mr. Pavao has been the Hawaii Island Region Director for Hawaii Pony Baseball for over twenty years. Mr. Pavao has been an active member of the Hawaii Democratic Party. He has served as a Precinct, District, County and State Officer to include being the Hawaii County Chair.

Pavao was born and raised in Hilo, graduated from Hilo High School. He attended the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Hawaii Community College and received a bachelor's degree in Psychology with Honors from the University of Hawaii at Hilo. Pavao also received a master's degree in Human Resource Development from Clemson University.