



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®

January 20, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee Member

FROM: David Lassner
President

SUBJECT: URM (Under Represented Minorities) Committee

The University is committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have made great strides over the last 10 years as we have collectively worked to ensure that our student population reflects the ethnic diversity of the state, and we have worked to reduce equity gaps in graduation rates. However, there is still much work to be done.

As our efforts to increase access and success for all students continue to strengthen and evolve, we feel that it would be useful to review and possibly redefine our current definition of underrepresented and underserved populations. Establishing a clear system-wide definition is foundational to broader strategy to assess our current policies and practices through an equity lens, which we are committed to pursuing over the next few years. Recent participation in Lumina- and NASH-sponsored policy workshops made it clear that we can do better.

I have asked Pearl Iboshi, Director of the Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning Office, and Debora Halbert, Associate Vice President for Academic Programs and Policy, to lead a committee that will look at two important foundational questions: 1) what groups should be included in our definition of underrepresented and underserved populations; and 2) are we currently collecting the right data on ethnicity/race. The committee will be charged with creating a set of recommendations to address each of these questions.

I would like to ask you to serve as a member of this committee. The breadth and depth of your experience regarding these issues will provide valuable insights to inform the committee's work. I hope you will consider adding your voice to this very important conversation.

c: Pearl Iboshi, Director, Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning
Debora Halbert, Assoc. Vice President, Academic Programs and Policy