

October 23, 2009

Dear President Greenwood,

We have all acknowledged these are difficult times, and this letter isn't intended to send merely another salvo your way. While we appreciate your acknowledgement at the recent Board of Regents meeting of what you described as "inelegant" remarks from your previous letter, our concerns about the advocacy for the future of the University of Hawai'i system remain. As evidenced by the testimony at the same October regents meeting, these are concerns shared by ALL sectors of the university.

Our concerns center on how we can meet our obligations to our students and the future of the state if the current climate degenerates into adversarial name-calling and loaded rhetoric. As the ASUH president pointed out, none of this helps the university or current negotiations. It also might leave students wondering who is really protecting THEIR interests.

Our concerns and our reaction to your earlier letter, sadly, reflect a disappointment that you chose language that was divisive. When you visited our campuses, you met with our faculty senates and said, "I've been a faculty member all my life." However, at some level, even as an administrator new to the UH system, you must have known that your remarks could be interpreted as high-handed and patronizing to those of us in the classroom. Instead, it seems as though they were written to portray the administration and the regents in the best possible light while denigrating the faculty. These contract negotiations cannot be about who wins the public relations wars.

Our concern is that our counterproposals at the bargaining table haven't been given due consideration and that whatever gains have been made in recent years to strengthen the university system, to help students move ahead in their careers and to retain good faculty will be lost as the state scrambles to close its budget deficit. In the face of record enrollments, it seems someone needs to be saying there must be a better way than to continue to cut education. We can join as a collective voice, but we'd like to think that you will lead that charge.

Our students are telling us daily of their concerns as they try to find open classes to fulfill their requirements or wonder if there will be jobs when they graduate. They see their education as a path of hope in the face of often challenging personal circumstances. They also worry that the quality of their education will be compromised as good faculty leave the UH system.

The UHPA vote to reject the proposal was a message that we hear their concerns for the future of higher education. As chairs of our respective faculty senates, we need to have confidence that you, the Board of Regents and the UH administration hear that message, too.

We hope we can move forward in a way that keeps the lines of communication open.

Harry Davis (on behalf of the KapCC Faculty Senate)
Harry Davis, Kapiolani Community College
Faculty Senate Chair

in deliberation at the Senate
Fumiko Takasugi, Honolulu Community College
Faculty Senate Chair

Linda Curriwan (on behalf of the LCC Faculty Senate)
Linda Curriwan, Leeward Community College
Faculty Senate Chair

Elizabeth Young (on behalf of the WCC Faculty Senate)
Elizabeth Young, Windward Community College
Faculty Senate Chair

Ellen Okuma (on behalf of the HawCC Academic Senate)
Ellen Okuma, Hawaii Community College
Academic Senate Chair

Michele Katsutani (on behalf of the Maui CC Academic Senate)
Michele Katsutani, Maui Community College
Academic Senate Chair

Richard Randolph (on behalf of the Kauai CC Faculty Senate)
Richard Randolph, Kauai Community College
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