

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA

John A. Burns School of Medicine
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Department of Public Health Sciences

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Eric Martinson, Chair
University of Hawaii Board of Regents
Bachman 209
University of Hawaii
2444 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822

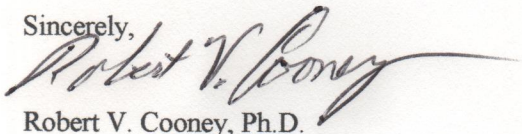
Dear Chair Martinson and Board Members:

As a faculty member and past Chair of the Manoa Faculty Senate I offer this testimony in support of the Board taking a new approach to the function of the UH System office and corresponding search for a President for that entity. When the position of Chancellor of Manoa was reinstated it was expected by the faculty that the System office would be correspondingly downsized, moved off campus and function as a liaison office between campuses and the State government. Inherent in this expectation was the concept of empowerment of the Chancellors of the various campuses and in particular, clear responsibility for the Chancellor in the operation of UH Manoa. Unfortunately that did not occur and what exists today at the System level is a shadow administration that duplicates many of the functions and positions of the individual campuses and inappropriately exerts authority that should be the responsibility of the Chancellor's office in conjunction with the BOR. As was seen in the Stevie Wonder affair this results in blurred lines of authority, lack of responsibility and waste on a monumental scale.

The current system has not only produced the botched Stevie Wonder concert, but has also led to an imperial IT system that is unresponsive to the needs of Manoa, a lack of appropriate faculty input into the governance of the University, the arbitrary and detrimental transfer and threats of transfer of units across campuses in opposition to faculty needs (e.g. Marine Fisheries), a lack of accountability of the office of research services under the VP for Research facilitating highly inappropriate actions toward faculty (e.g. refer to the academic freedom grievance of Dr. Laurence Kolonel and the role of ORS), corruption in the awarding of construction contracts, inappropriate interference in collegiate athletics usurping the proper authority of the Chancellor and faculty, misleading and inappropriate actions by the Vice President for Academic Affairs damaging the reputation of the University, a bloated legal staff, and general confusion as to who actually runs this institution.

It is time for the BOR to deal with this issue and select an individual as President of the System that is prepared to significantly downsize the System administration and delegate authority and funding to the campuses. Such a person should not have the expectation that he or she leads the flagship campus at Manoa, its sports teams, research institutions or any other aspect rightfully entrusted to the Chancellor. Budgets and administrative priorities must be handled at the campus level in consultation with faculty and students, while the duties of the office of President must be clearly outlined and limited with the selection of an individual capable of meeting those specific duties. Such a person is unlikely to be found by traditional headhunter organizations or search committees without clearly delineated criteria that define the unique nature of the person they are looking for. An individual that understands the unique aspects of Hawaii and the intricacies of higher education in an island state is essential to correcting the errors of past imperial presidencies at UH. It is time to end the selection of UH presidents by kingmakers behind the scenes with their own agendas and select an individual in a transparent process that has education of Hawaii's students foremost with significant faculty input from across the system.

Sincerely,



Robert V. Cooney, Ph.D.