Dear Virginia, Gary, Kathy, Francisco and Peter:

On behalf of the SEC, I want to thank you for attending our recent “Advance.” We are reassured that you are as much committed as we are to frank discussions and improved and open communication between UHM faculty, as represented by the SEC and Senate, and the UHM administration. We are also reassured that you agree that we need to address issues of interest to faculty and the administration proactively, rather than only reacting to emergencies, and we are pleased by your renewed commitment to shared governance, an issue that UHM Senate and faculty feel very strongly about. In that sense, the "Advance" was successful.

There are a few relatively specific items on which we seemed to agree in principle. They are:

- having a focus on campus energy reduction this year
- working to develop processes for consultation, for improved information flow, and for developing and prioritizing potential campus changes
- starting work on a chairs’ handbook
- working collaboratively on efforts to change the application form that students use when applying to UHM, and perhaps to require an application essay
- working to pilot and introduce a paperless curriculum proposal process
- continuing the project to reduce paperwork associated with tenure and promotion
- encouraging academic partnerships between student affairs and academic entities, such as dorm clustering
- continuing work to update list of committees and perhaps lower their number

If this list matches yours, we suggest that we need to follow up with the relevant Vice Chancellors so that we are sure to make appropriate progress on each item during this academic year. Despite our areas of agreement, each worthy in itself, we came up short with respect to what we think our fundamental need: to determine the substantive meaning of our shared “Mānoa identity” and thereby to highlight our foci as a vital campus community. Many critically important activities (such as UHM publicity and marketing, recruitment, planning for faculty replacements, and prioritizing campus initiatives) seem dependent on this.

We are intrigued by the Chancellor’s renewing of the proposal for freshman seminars, but disappointed that we did not talk about the financial and organizational arrangements needed to make effective freshman seminars successful – indeed, possible. Similarly, we strongly support the Chancellor’s suggestion that we organize leadership training for department chairs, but wonder who will organize, provide, and sustain such a program.

There are many ways to organize planning sessions, and perhaps we ought to organize our January “Advance” differently. (That is something we are happy to discuss with you.) But however we go about it, we need clear priorities, timetables for accomplishing them, and benchmarks to ensure that we are remaining on task. We are looking forward to working with you in the coming weeks to make progress toward such a goal. We hope that you will work with us to identify a few key shared priorities and to commit ourselves to meaningful implementation processes. If we can do that, we can really advance toward becoming a campus of choice during the new academic year. In our view, that would make our "Advance" planning ever so much more meaningful.

Mahalo and Aloha,
Klaus Keil, Chair, UHM SEC