May 20, 2013

TO: University of Hawai`i Board of Regents

FROM: University of Hawai`i at Mānoa Faculty Senate Executive Committee

SUBJECT: Selection of the Next University of Hawai`i President

Given one of the most important and serious governance tasks ahead of you, please allow us to address the issue of the qualifications of the next UH President. As a representative body for a large segment of the faculty in the University, we share a deep professional interest in the efficient, effective, and successful operation and management of the University of Hawai`i going forward. While we join in taking pride in the evident progress of the University in recent years, we also note some disheartening missteps by the UH administration that have cast a pall over the repute of the University with the larger community of the state. It will take a talented new UH President, working collegially with other UH executives and the faculty as a whole, to disperse this cloud and restore community confidence once more in this great state institution.

Given this context, we believe that the next UH President should possess the following minimum qualifications:

• An earned doctorate in a recognized academic or professional discipline from a respected institution of higher education.
• A background as a faculty member at a respected institution of higher education with a well-regarded record of teaching, research, and service that would qualify for tenure at the University of Hawai`i at Mānoa.
• Five years, or more, successful leadership experience in higher education at the school/college, campus, or system levels.
• A demonstrated capacity and ability to understand the needs and demands of a multi-campus system with differing institutional missions.
• A demonstrated ability to work in a facilitative leadership manner with all segments of the University community, especially in raising external funding for innovative research, teaching and community service.
• A demonstrated ability to speak effectively about and project the University’s interests well to the wider community at the local, national, and international levels.
• A demonstrated capacity to understand and to work effectively with all major stakeholders in the State of Hawai`i and the wider community in the islands.

In light of the acknowledged missteps referenced above, it might be concluded that the next UH President should move towards greater centralized decision making in the UH President’s office. Given the multiple institutional missions of the UH System, we think that would be a grave mistake. Indeed, several of these missteps originated through presidential interference with normal channels of decision making at the campus level. The faculty have noted, as well, the growth of a duplicative bureaucracy at the UH System in functions and decisions that are better left to the individual campuses. This enlargement of the UH President’s office in
people and functions consumes ever greater university resources that are better directed to the actual educational missions of the individual campuses.

Thus, we hope that the Board of Regents will examine the Office of the President and conclude that its main functions lie in the area of coordination and facilitation, not a heavy-handed, imperious role. We hope that in the end you will select an individual -- whether internal or external -- as the next UH President who is able to exercise a wise facilitative leadership and who can promote the University’s interests at once both effectively and with all due humility within our fair state.

Thank you for your time and patience in considering this faculty perspective. If you have any questions, please contact Bonnyjean Manini, Senate Executive Committee Chair, or the Senate Office at uhmfs@hawaii.edu.