

Student Media Board, UHM

July 14, 2020

RE: Testimony Regarding Impact of Resolution 20-03 on Student Media at UHM

As the governing body responsible for overseeing the routine and proper administration of student media on the Mānoa campus, we are alarmed by the recent issuance and urgent tone of Resolution 20-03. We believe that Resolution 20-03, while shrouded in language urging immediate action on behalf of the UH administration in response to the impending and unpredictable fiscal crisis caused by COVID-19, is an overzealous attempt to privilege short-term fiscal outcomes over the long-term needs of the University. Of deeper concern is the authority and power with which Resolution 20-03 imbues the UH administration as well as the lack of consultation with the community, stakeholders, and, most importantly, students during the proposed duration of plan-making.

We contend that it is not enough for the Board of Regents to accept the UH administration's inclusion of consultation with the appropriate groups and individuals only after a plan has been generated. While Chair Kudo has expressed concerns about the ability for existing administrative structures to address the crisis, namely that those structures are "constrained by statutory time and process requirements," we believe that empowering the UH administration to sidestep those constraints would allow for an unchecked administration that would no longer answer to the community it most needs to serve—the student body.

Student media has, for 98 years, operated on the Mānoa campus with the express purpose of affording students access and opportunities to platforms that empower them. Part of that empowerment means that the programs and its governing board have the ability to determine how best to utilize the funds and reserves at their disposal, in accordance with the "educational responsibilities" that guide Chartered Student Organizations and their decisions, as Haw. Rev. Stat. § 304A-2257 makes clear. The Student Media Board's governing philosophy has always been to protect and preserve student media and its interests, which benefit the University as a whole in immeasurable ways. We ask, therefore, that the Board of Regents reject Resolution 20-03 and its alluring but dangerous language and refocus their efforts on supporting procedures that will not abridge student rights or student processes, that will not endanger student platforms or student organizations, that will not silence student voices or student expression.

We are concerned not only for our program's continued existence and fiscal future—which is endangered in particular by #3, 4, and 6 of Resolution 20-03—but indeed the right of students and student media to be consulted as privileged stakeholders rather than as an afterthought.