



Prevailing Winds

Representative Isaac W. Choy

District 23 - Mānoa, Punahou, University, Moili'ili



In the movie *A Few Good Men*, Marine Colonel Nathan Jessup shouts, “You can’t handle the truth,” this precisely describes the feeling I had as I concluded the marathon informational briefing of the House Committee on Higher Education. The administrators, managers, students and concerned constituents of the University of Hawaii testified in a forthright and open manner for over seven hours.

My original observation that the University is an entity that has physically and fiscally over built itself, is a reality. The University now finds itself challenging well-meaning people to manage a “champagne taste” on a “beer budget.”

The Cancer Center will be the litmus test. It is not sustainable, no amount of budgeting, cutting, firing, or restructuring, will make that place financially feasible or sustainable. As a presenter outlined, all of the business assumptions that the Cancer Center was built on, did not materialize. The Cancer Center was built based on a good presentation instead of sound business principles. This could probably be said for most of the growth of the University. The sad part of this whole episode are the top notch scientists and researchers, which I have met, may be adversely affected. They are not bean counters, just people trying their best every day to make life better for others. To add to the irony, the University is asking for more money to double its research capabilities. If the University cannot manage a research facility like the current Cancer Center, what makes the University think it can manage a larger research facility? But I am sure that the justification for this new initiative will be outstanding.

A similar situation is the Athletic Department. Bottom line, unless we get about ten thousand more people in the seats for every game, athletics cannot sustain itself. Solutions such as raising student fees, taking money from academic programs are off the table. So where does that leave us?

The University’s Office of Capital Improvements (OCI) is hurting. This department manages hundreds of millions of dollars and is under-manned and poorly managed. The mistakes created by this office makes all other deficits in other departments look like a rounding error. The new administrator said it is going to take two years to restructure this department, and yet as I pointed out to her, there are budgetary requests for over a hundred million dollars a year for construction.

These are just some of my impressions from the informational briefing. Well-meaning people placed in an untenable position. People who have been at the University for a long time justify and rationalize each and every decision that was made in the last fifty years. New people just sit and ponder why. Each one of these situations would be a great case study in management for any student. The University of Hawaii has autonomy except that it must get its money from the taxpayers. This is going to be a great legislative session, *the agent of change versus the defenders of the status quo!*

I was unable to participate in the Annual Manoa Holiday Parade this year as I was celebrating my first grandson’s first birthday in California. Maybe during this legislative season, my energies should be spent creating jobs so my kids can all come home. That would be nice.



Aloha,



House Higher Education Informational Briefing
Thursday, December 18, 2014

Hawaii State Capitol

415 S. Beretania Street, Room 404, Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-586-8475 Email: repchoy@capitol.hawaii.gov
Capitol Website: www.capitol.hawaii.gov

Community Meeting



Representative
Isaac W. Choy
House District 23



Councilmember
Ann Kobayashi
Council District 5

Date:
TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2014

Time:
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Location:
**MANOA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
CAFETERIA**
3155 Manoa Road

Come and Discuss Legislation for the Upcoming Session.



Free Training
(Must attend 3 sessions)

1st Session: April 12—8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
2nd Session: April 19—8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
3rd Session: Diamond Head Dept. of Emergency Mgmt. (DEM) site

Please call **Helen Nakano** at 927-0993
if you have questions or would like to sign-up.



CERT trained Hirokazu Toiya from the Dept. of Emergency Management and Raleigh Ferdun of Be Ready Manoa



Helen Nakano, Grand Marshal at the Manoa Holiday Parade, Saturday, December 13, 2014.



Members of the Manoa Neighborhood Security Watch Network and Be Ready Manoa gather for a photo before the parade begins.

A big **Mahalo** to Major Kimura who brought Roosevelt High School JROTC members and color guard to march alongside Helen Nakano to publicize the CERT Program.



The 28th Legislature Convenes on Weds., January 21, 2015

If you are interested in any of the bills introduced in the 28th Legislature, and would like guidance on how to track bills, submit testimony, etc., please contact our office at 586-8475.