


From: [Jeff Todd](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Written testimony for Senate Hearing Friday 1/7/2022
Date: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 1:37:22 PM

Aloha-

Please accept my written testimony regarding the public hearing regarding the University of Hawaii Football Program.

- **UH Football is important** as it brings pride and spirit for the University and State as well as providing financial revenue supporting all of the other non-revenue sports
- **There has been inexcusable negligence on the House and Senate** to let funding lapse for the upkeep of Aloha Stadium which left UH football with no stadium to play in with little notice. This has had an impact on current players and that being an added incentive for them to leave the program and enter the transfer portal
- **Is there an ongoing investigation of the Stadium Authority** and how they allowed this disaster to happen and what is being done to expedite the bid, design, and building process of the new Aloha Stadium?
- **Congratulations in the miracle of completing the renovation of the Clarence T.C. Ching complex** in such a short turn around period. Those involved should be commended and should be a model for other projects within the state.
- The **Governor not allowing any fans** at the first 4 home games due to Covid restrictions had a huge impact on the morale of the team and on fans. It's useless to debate whether or not this was a wise decision in retrospect, but it definitely impacted the mental health of our players when they could see the cheering crowds on TV at every other D1 college football game across the country and their own family members weren't even allowed to come and watch them play.
- Coaching style and methods is a performance issue and should be addressed though it is not appropriate for the State Legislature to get involved.
- Go UH!!!

Key summary: Senate Ways & Means Committee and Committee on Higher Ed needs to secure more funding for the UH football program

Mahalo-
Jeffrey Todd
Kaneohe, Hawaii


From: [Warren Ishii](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Written Testimony re: UH Football Investigative Hearing
Date: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 1:17:10 PM


Aloha,

I am concerned regarding the upcoming hearing of the UH football hearing. This concern is shared amongst some of my friends and we share common thoughts as listed below and would appreciate if it can be provided consideration.

- **The importance of UH football** - financial revenue that it brings in that supports all of the other non-revenue sports; pride and spirit for the university and state
- **Inexcusable negligence of the House and Senate** to let funding lapse for the upkeep of Aloha Stadium which left UH football with no stadium to play in with no notice - impact that has on current players and that being an added incentive for them to leave the program and enter the transfer portal
- **Why is this committee not investigating the Stadium Authority** and how they allowed this disaster to happen and what is being done to expedite the bid, design, and building process of the new Aloha Stadium?
- **The miracle of completing the renovation of the Clarence T.C. Ching complex** in such a short turn around period should be commended and should be a model for other projects within the state.
- **The Governor not allowing any fans** at the first 4 home games due to Covid restrictions had a huge impact on the morale of the team and on fans. It's useless to debate whether or not this was a wise decision in retrospect, but it definitely impacted the mental health of our players when they could see the cheering crowds on TV at every other D1 college football game across the country and their own family members weren't even allowed to come and watch them play.

Key summary: Senate Ways & Means Committee and Committee on Higher Ed needs to secure more funding for the UH football program

Mahalo,
Warren Ishii



From: [L.Dolan](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Date: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 4:27:55 PM

concerning the UH football program....personally, I think baseball, volleyball , etc should be supported....football...needs to go...out, permanently... good players from Hawaii don't stay...we can not support a program.... time to end it...mahalo

From: [from wina's iPhone](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: re: investigative hearing concerning UH football program
Date: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 7:03:24 PM

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**To: Senate Ways & Means Committee and Committee on Higher Education
Testimony re: investigative hearing of UH football program**

We would like to express our thoughts regarding this investigative hearing by the Hawaii legislature of the UH football program.

UH football has long been part of our family. We have followed the Rainbow Warriors, now the UH warriors, for generations. To see it attacked and systematically torn apart by members of the senate is very distressing. It does not help the morale of the team and the university to feel they are under attack by the leaders who should be supporting the program.

It is one thing to criticize and point out faults and another to pare away at the resources they depend on. One cannot expect the program to excel and improve without the financial support of our leaders.

May we remind you that UH was the only team not allowing fans to attend games which generate revenue while allowing other events to proceed under Covid precautions.

The legislature should not be controlling every aspect of UH-let the university have some control and autonomy. Instead the legislature should be focusing on more pressing issues such as the rising cost of living, housing affordability, the pandemic's effect on our economy.

We feel that conducting a hearing on UH football is a waste of the legislature's time and resources. It seems very clear that this hearing is to appease and mollify a small number of disgruntled individuals. We have discussed the present controversy among many of our friends and colleagues and we feel that Senator Kim's motive is suspect.

Yes, the UH football program is struggling at this time. This is not the time to add fuel to the fire but show support to UH's athletic leaders. After all, Hawaii has only one state university. Let's not burn it to the ground.

sincerely,

William and Edwina Gosnell



January 5, 2022

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz and Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran
Senator Donna Mercado Kim and Senator Michelle Kidani

Re: **Testimony for Informational Hearing regarding UH Football on January 7, 2022**

I would like to submit the following testimony in support of head coach, Todd Graham and in advocacy for substantial needed funding and support of the UH Football program.

My nephew is a walk-on freshman on the current UH football team. He wishes to remain anonymous. As a former football player, he and I talk story frequently about his experiences on the team. He has told me that it's been a really tough year on the team for a variety of reasons. He's felt pressure from some of the more senior players who were recruited by the former coach to speak out against the new head coach, Todd Graham. However, my nephew has told me that he doesn't agree with their complaints but he doesn't feel comfortable about speaking out in support of Coach Graham due to peer pressure.

According to my nephew, Coach Graham is tough, he expects a lot and he's very vocal when players aren't meeting his expectations. But my nephew says he has learned a lot from him in the short time he's been with him – and from the technical standpoint, he is the best football coach he's ever played for.

He also says that morale is not good on the team right now, but that is due to so many factors:

1. Not being able to play in front of family and fans was the biggest downer this season. EVERY OTHER COLLEGE GAME HAD FANS THIS SEASON EXCEPT FOR HAWAII. One of the benefits of choosing to play for your home team is that you get to play in front of friends and family, but that wasn't the case this year. In many cases, families of players from Hawaii actually had to FLY TO THE MAINLAND FOR THEIR ONLY OPPORTUNITY TO WATCH THEIR SONS PLAY AT AWAY GAMES THIS SEASON
2. We were prohibited from doing a lot of normal activities together as a team – things like just eating meals together, having team bonding activities, or even having in person meetings as a large group. It was all due to covid restrictions and we get that, but it still didn't help team morale.

The fact that the state legislature has the nerve to call the qualifications of the head coach and the leadership of the athletic department and the university into calling is ludicrous. They have all had to function in extremely trying circumstances during this pandemic and yet they somehow managed to pull off a miracle and provide a very decent home field stadium on campus in a record setting amount of time. If anything, the Senate should be investigating the Stadium Authority to determine how they mismanaged Aloha Stadium and how the state legislature let funding lapse for appropriate maintenance of the Aloha Stadium.

Sincerely,
George Dela Cruz

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [Darlene Nakagawa](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Testimony for Amended Informational Briefing on Friday (January 7, 2022) at 2:30pm
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 1:55:40 AM

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To the Senate Ways & Means Committee and Committee on Higher Education:

As a resident of Hawaii for the past 54 years and a graduate of the University of Hawaii at Manoa (both undergraduate and graduate degrees), I respectfully suggest the following:

- Instead of micromanaging the UH Football program (when there are so many bigger issues facing the state), **it's time to secure more funding for the UH Football program so that the AD and university don't have to continue to settle for "working with/making do with what little they have."** The time is way past due. Basically, without more funding you are setting them up to fail. At the very least, the lack of adequate funding contributes to or perpetuates the problems. As my mom says, "Money isn't everything -- but it certainly helps!"
- **It is imperative that the Stadium Authority be investigated for the inexcusable negligence that let funding lapse for the upkeep of Aloha Stadium -- that subsequently left UH Football with no stadium to play in with no notice.** This certainly negatively impacted the current football players and added incentive for them to leave the program and enter the transfer portal. How was this disaster allowed to happen on your "watch" and what is being done to expedite the bid, design, and building process of the new Aloha Stadium A bit more transparency, please. Again, there should be an investigative hearing on THIS.
- Whoever orchestrated and had a hand in the **miracle** of completing the renovation of the **Clarence T.C. Ching complex at UH Manoa** in such a short turnaround period should be **commended**, and it should be held up as a positive model for other projects within the state.

Sincerely,
Darlene Nakagawa

January 5, 2022

THE SENATE
THE THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE INTERIM OF 2021

Re: Informational Briefing Regarding the University of Hawaii
Football Team

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing this testimony to be considered at this Friday's meeting regarding the UH Football Program. Although Todd Graham had a history of not being an ideal head football coach in a losing situation (great in a winning situation), we, the citizens and government of Hawaii may not have met our obligation to the program. There were many other factors that blemished the UH football program this year such as not playing at the Aloha Stadium but playing in a much smaller complex at the TC Ching Stadium and not playing in front of an audience during the first four games this season which normally would energize the players, which is all what was hoped for this year's coaching staff and football team when they were first engaged to lead this team.

I think the Senate needs to look at the cause; the scenario that led to this situation rather than the result. We, the citizens and the government also contributed to the downfall of the Program by not providing the support that we have historically provided to the program as discussed in the paragraph above, such as great facilities and fans physically present to cheer the team on. I also think that Dave Matlin has done an amazing job as the Athletic Director for our program. He has made many decisions that has had a positive impact on our Athletic Program that has promoted and/or maintained National presence.

Yours truly,

Valerie Shintaku

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Please consider my testimony at this Friday's briefing as the Senate deliberate the funding and loss of players of the UH Football Team.

Yours truly,

Valerie Shintaku

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [Matthew Felix](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: University of Hawaii/Budget/ToddGraham/Player Transfer
Date: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 8:01:48 PM

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Aloha,

In regards to the situation at the University of Hawaii-Manoa. The culture of Hawaii sports has always been filled with Aloha and respect. If the accusations of Todd Graham and the transfers of players are true to form, Coach Todd Graham and AD David Matlin should be relieved of their jobs. Quick research shows Todd Graham has shown this type of behavior at his past employment at the University of Pittsburgh and Arizona State University. It is unnecessary to call your student athletes useless, jackass etc, and belittle them. Alienating Walk-on players and favoring star players is ridiculous. Had David Matlin done any homework on Todd Graham we would not be in this mess.

As for athletic budget cost is concerned, I personally feel it is necessary to invest in our state's only division 1 athletic program. UH Manoa is essentially our professional franchise and it should be treated that way. Does a coach deserve to be paid a base salary of 800,000 annually? I do not, but I do think it is necessary to reward a coach with incentives. In my opinion, the University should be able to run it's athletic program off of revenue but it's not in a state where it is able to. The state needs to put UH in a position to succeed, that includes academic help and first class facilities. I do feel UH can and will be able to succeed once they can establish a foundation to build off of.

Off topic, if you go out into the public and ask residents if they feel the NASED project is necessary, 90% of us will say no. Provide UH with an on campus stadium and build affordable housing in Halawa. Build it similar to what Kapolei and Ho'opili has. A state ran stadium fell apart and should have been torn down a long time ago, a lot of wasted money went into trying to save that stadium. Provide UH with a facility that they can run and build revenue from. Halawa will still provide a lot of jobs with shops, hotels and affordable housing. Revitalize Manoa and the Moi'li'ili area and bring back a stronger business area as well.

Best Regards,
MF

From: [Spencer Gibu](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Written Testimony
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 6:44:06 AM

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For Athletic Director:

1. Did you do your due diligence and research Todd Graham's past employment with Arizona St on why he was let go?
2. Did you know at the time of hiring him, his son was removed from the ASU coaching staff because of an inappropriate relationship he had with a student and yet Todd Graham hired him as one of his assistants here at UH?

For HC Todd Graham:

1. What is stopping you from going about into the community to do public services to get people to recognize you? You could do commercials, or wear mask in public to get out into the community.
2. Why did you change the offense, something you said you wouldn't do at the press conference when you got hired. Last year's and this year's offense looked nothing like the Run and Shoot offense coach Rolovich left us with.
3. What are your plans on finding a qualified Offensive Coordinator to remove all doubts of nepotism?
4. Why are former Warriors not allowed at any of your practices?

Mahalo

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Beth Adams](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: UH Football program and Coach Graham
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 7:35:58 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello- my name is Beth Adams and my son Nate is a freshman football player for the University of Hawai'i. I wanted my testimony to be heard in regards to the agenda items concerning UH Football on Friday, January 7.

My son has had a great experience with his teammates and coaches since he moved to Hawai'i in June of 2021. Coach Graham had told Nate that he is a strong believer in strict discipline to create a focused- driven- disciplined team. In Nate's experience- that is exactly what it has been- a disciplined program very similar to the disciplined program he had in high school just at a higher level. The coaches he's had direct contact with- coach Todd Graham- Coach Alique Terry- Coach Sam Bennett have all been excellent leaders and mentors to Nate and to our family! They have been great coaches to him - on the field and at a personal level as well. All that to say- Nate has also made so many friends- brothers within the Warrior Ohana! He has felt kinship with his teammates like he had never experienced!!! He has learned so much about the Hawaiian culture and people! It has been awesome!! He has embraced the food- traditions and people and has felt warmly welcomed by all! He has had a very positive experience with Coach Graham and all of his coaches!

Thank you very much!!! I do appreciate you looking out for the players and staff at UH.

Sincerely,

Beth Adams

From: [Brian Goto](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: UH Football Public Comment
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 8:02:36 AM

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Honorable Senators,

I am a past football season ticket holder and Spectrum football package subscriber and it pains me to see so many student athletes leave the program either through the transfer portal or by quitting the game they love. While the transfer portal is a challenge for many teams nationwide, our situation is particularly concerning because of the large number of starters leaving the program. There have been reports through various sources of a toxic environment created by Coach Todd Graham that in my opinion amounts to verbal and psychological abuse of student athletes. Our players are students first and are also blessed with the ability to compete as college athletes. With so many student athletes demoralized about playing for our Warriors, there is clearly a problem with the program. The UH football program is already at a competitive disadvantage because of our geographical location, "temporary stadium", and mediocre athletic facilities. At this critical juncture, coaching controversy and player defections is pushing the program in the wrong direction. Doctors are sworn to "do no harm" and coaches and teachers should likewise be held to the same standard. I urge the proper entity to fully investigate the situation and if the reported ill treatment of student athletes is substantiated, the coach or coaches involved should be fired for cause. Yes, for cause because there is a lot of emotional trauma on this team that is manifesting in student athletes making difficult decisions to abandon their dreams of playing for the home crowd or totally abandon their athletic careers.

Respectfully,
Brian S. Goto

From: [Alison Brown - Carvalho](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: UH Football
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 8:28:19 AM

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Dear Senate Committees on Ways and Means and Higher Education and Donna Mercado Kim:

I am writing to you as a resident of Oahu, a UH Alumni and a major donor to the UH Foundation. Hawaii needs to continue to support UH Football for the following reasons:

- I attended UH in the late 80's, early 90's. As a student I remember attending many sporting events on and off campus. I remember feeling proud to represent UH in the crowd, dressing out in green, and enjoyed cheering with fellow students. It allowed me to show pride of being part of the UH Manoa family. If UH Football were to be no longer, it would negatively impact student pride, student comradoree, and student support for the school in general.
- The monies UH Football generates helps support the rest of the sports that don't have the opportunity to charge entrance fees. If you were to get rid of the Football program, what will happen to the rest of the non-revenue sports? We will have to say bye to way more than just the Football program which will be devastating for the entire UH sports program.
- I have to praise AD David Matlin. He was faced with an incredible challenge when the stadium made their last minute decision to close up. As part of the general public, I have no idea what really went down with this decision, but why is no one looking into this? There is no support for UH from the top down when it came to the stadium. So what is one to do? He builds his own stadium on campus. How was he able to accomplish this during this challenging time of Covid, shipping delays, supply shortage, staffing shortage, I do not know. But THIS IS SOMEONE YOU WANT ON YOUR TEAM. This stadium was built faster than any other state construction project! How does that happen? You need to really commend the AD.
- The people of Hawaii, students, and supporters all over the world need this program. I'm sure the Football program was not built in a year. It takes time to build things up. Clearly we are at a time where we need to continue to build the program but ending it is NOT THE ANSWER.

So I ask you to put all your resources and efforts into rebuilding the program. I have faith in our state and the people that run it, I have faith in the people of Hawaii. Let's discuss how to build up the program instead of breaking it down.

Thank you for your time. I hope you all realize the negative impact your decisions will have should you get rid of the program and all the positives and important reasons for keeping it.

Sincerely,

Alison Brown-Carvalho

From: [Carla Houser](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: UH football
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 8:48:15 AM

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Aloha Senators,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this waste of legislative time and energy. Please allow the UH athletic department leadership to do their jobs. Legislators should have the upmost confidence in the athletic director, senior women's administrator and other athletic department personnel to address the mental health needs of the young men who are choosing to stay and represent the university.

We need to have trust in the athletic department leadership to prioritize the needs of the student athletes and empower them with a voice in what their football team needs. I have confidence the athletic department leadership is listening to these student athletes and has the leadership skills to find balance.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony.

Carla Houser

From: [Colby Burton](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Coach Graham
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 8:43:46 AM

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I would like to start this off by saying God does everything for a reason, and I thank coach Graham and his staff for giving me a chance in the transfer portal, after being out of football for two years. I've grown tremendously in my 1 year tenure at hawaii university, spiritually mentally and also physically. Coach Graham has played a major role in my development on and off of the field as a football player and as a man. I know a lot of guys are transferring from the university and that could be more of a need for a fresh start, some of these guys have had multiple staffs, I experienced the same thing at mcneese state university, while having three different coaching staffs in 3 years, it can cloud the vision & decision making of a 18-23 year old man. I think what's going on at hawaii is good for the program and the direction they are going. We are all human being at the end of the day also and the main thing is helping people become better in life whether you see eye to eye or not. I firmly believe hawaii football will be a complete different program in the 2022-2023 season due to the system in place. Much love to this program and how I became family in less than a year.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Dayton Toney](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Coach Graham
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 9:03:52 AM

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Hello,

I am currently a sophomore who plays for the university of hawaii. Since I have come to hawaii with coach Graham as my head coach, I have learned an abundance of things that I will not only use as a student athlete, but as a man for the rest of my life. Coach Graham has taught me lessons that could not be taught nor learnt easily nowadays. His intentions have always been pure for the kids that he coaches. Claims of coach graham being “verbally abusive” are absurd, and not true. A coaches job is to strain his players into being successful not only on the field, but also off the field, to shape us into REAL men. Coach grahams word usage is nothing out of the ordinary as any level of being a coach, and only shows his true passion for what he does!

Dayton

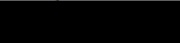
From: [Jake Farrell](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Coach Todd Graham
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 9:14:27 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi,

My name is Jake Farrell, a sophomore student athlete at Hawaii. Coach Graham gave me the opportunity of lifetime to play football in this great state. Ever since I came here he has always showed me his full support and have learned so much from coach Graham over the past few years. Coach Graham doesn't only prepare you for football season, he is preparing us to be husbands and fathers. He only wants the best from us in life and a lot of the hate he is getting is simply not true. He is a tough leader, but that is needed in order to succeed on the field and in life. This whole situation has been blown out of proportion. I have learned so much from coach Graham and looking forward to the rest of my years here with him at Hawaii. I truly believe if anyone can lead us to a championship, it is him. There is no one else I would rather have as my head coach!

Thanks so much,

Jake Farrell 

From: [Julie Shiroma](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Football
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 10:09:02 AM

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Hello,

I love Hawaii football. Given the states lack of support of the program, salaries that are below what coaches make on the mainland, and the need for improvement of the facilities, Coach Graham is doing well under these circumstances.

Thank you,
Julie Shiroma

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kevin Adams \(Logistics Plus Inc\)](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: UH Coach Graham Abuse
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 8:21:51 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Committee,

My son is a redshirt freshman on the university of Hawaii football team. He even travels with the team got games just in case they need him.

All along the journey this past fall, Nate (my son) has shared with me ups and downs, goods and bars, disappointmenp and triumphs, etc. We are very close and open.

In his words, coach Graham is tough but not abusive and the things that have been said about him, he has never seen or heard him do. We support coach Graham because our son does and he is there right with him.


As a parent, we want what is best for our son. He had made many friends there including strong relationships with locals and some that left the program. He represents Hawaii with pride.

I don't think any executive hearing or decision should ever be made or heard without hearing directly from the players themselves, those that are staying and those that left. The thought that this meeting is driven solely by complaints (per an article) with out seeking out the other sides view point (not the coaches but ALL players) is a bit disturbing regardless of how credible the people are that "complained".

Coach Graham has been nothing but helpful and encouraging to our son Nate Adams and we want to go on record that we support him.

Thank you.

Kevin

Kevin Adams
GM, FF&E Project Teams
Logistics Plus – Dallas, TX


From: [Nathaneal Adams](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: UH Football Hearing
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 8:40:37 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hey my name is Nate Adams and I am currently a freshman football player at UH. I don't have much to say, but I just wanted to put a few thoughts of my own into the conversation. Throughout the recruiting process and since I've come to Hawaii, coach Graham and the state of Hawaii have been nothing but good to me. I can't speak for others, but as far as my own experiences with coach go, he has not lied to me or personally attacked me. That's all I have to say, and I am honored to represent the university and state of Hawaii each day!

Thank you,
Nate Adams

From: [William Wilson, III](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: TG
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 8:52:26 AM

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Towards the committee I just wanted to reach out and place some input on what I think of Coach Graham and the effect he has on the Hawaii football team. I believe that Coach Graham is a man of God and that he loves all of his players. And that the way he coaches is pursued by a great deep passion for the game of football. In today's society's the culture Coach Graham stands by is something rare and unique. And that's truly why I believe a lot of kids have left the program. I stand by Coach Graham because of the wonderful opportunity's he's giving me to play for a great university and school. Just as the Bible says no man is perfect and of course mistakes will be made but Graham's intentions are for what's best for these players in the University as well striving to not only set them up for great student athletes but even better people for when it's time to face the real world.

From: [Marci Farrell](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: University of Hawaii Football
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 11:07:55 AM


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To Whom it May Concern:

I am the parent of a preferred walk on player on the UH Hawaii Football Team. I can't stress enough how much we appreciate and applaud Coach Graham and the lessons he is teaching our son. Not only is he a god loving man coach but he teaches lessons that are invaluable in life.- discipline, responsibility, structure , respect, camaraderie and the sport of football. Yes he is tough- but life is tough and not easy ...No one is perfect but really its all about how to learn and grow as we go along and to change and adapt. My son has not played yet a single down but feels part of the team and has never felt abused or left out. He feels welcome and part of the team . Lets not all forget that Coach Graham was hired during Covid with no stadium , no fans and the inability to bring the team together socially due to Covid- an extremely difficult start in unprecedented times.

We look forward to Coach Graham leading the Rainbow Warriors for many years and only getting better with time!

Thank you -
Marci Farrell



From: [Moton Hopkins](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Hearing WAM-HRE 01-07-22 Testimony
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 11:20:23 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Committee Members,

As a former player of Coach Todd Graham's, I wanted to share my experiences of having him as my Defensive Coordinator and Head Coach across 3 football seasons.

Coach Graham has always instilled high expectations, maintaining a disciplined work ethic, and constantly expressing his winning mindset. He has built great on and off the field relationships with myself and other players over the years. He has always cared about us beyond being just football players. He has had multiple conversations with me about how I will go into the world as a man after graduating from University, impacts of personal character on my future family, and using the skillsets/mindset learned in collegiate sports in the workforce after football inevitably ends. Many of his teachings/ coaching philosophy standards, expectations, and drive to be successful has helped me in my professional career and personal drive to obtain excellence. I hope these shared experiences add some value to the conversations you will have at the hearing and effectively portray the man I know and call Coach.

Thank you,

Moton Hopkins

From: [Will Lee](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Testimony for UH football hearing on 1/7/22
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 12:18:46 PM

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Senate Ways & Means Committee and Higher Ed Committee:

I would like to submit the following testimony to be considered for the informational hearing regarding the UH Football program on January 7, 2022.

I am a lifelong Hawaii resident and taxpayer who was born and raised here. I have cheered on our Rainbow Warriors going back to my childhood days at the old Honolulu Stadium. I don't know all of the facts and figures about the finances of the program, but I can state without a doubt that UH football is a vital asset to our university and the entire state of Hawaii. UH football is a source of pride and spirit for the university and the whole entire community. When they do well, the whole state benefits. I mean who can forget the incredible amount of pride and unity everyone felt back in 2007 when our team had an undefeated season and went to the Sugar Bowl? The academics don't want to admit it, but a strong football team drives higher attendance, a more positive profile, and better sponsorship for the school and a stronger university is crucial to our state.

It's an embarrassment that these 2 Committees are wasting taxpayer dollars and time by calling this hearing to look into the job performance of one coach. Everyone can see past the facade, **this is just the typical grandstanding opportunistic move by Senators Donna Mercado Kim and Donovan Dela Cruz to seize on a sensationalized story** and appear to be the watchdogs for player's mental health. If they truly want to do some good, these 2 committees should be supporting more funding to expand the "temporary" stadium our team has had to move to on campus so the players and fans have a true home stadium to play at. The committees should also be looking at how to speed up the process for determining what to do with NASED as we don't have any time to waste lest it turn into another rail project. THAT is really what this committee should be investigating.

Respectfully,
William G. Lee, Jr.

From: [Marc Devon](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: TESTIMONY REGARDING UH FOOTBALL PROGRAM
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 12:41:09 PM
Importance: High

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Aloha,

My name is Marc Devon Lau.

I'm 37 and been going to UH football since 1985....I was an adopted baby from Seoul and my family took me as a 1 year old.

Now what I've been hearing in the news has bothered me.

Bothered me in terms of feeling like a very vocal bunch of one side is overtaking the impartiality of the search for what really happened.

I feel that people that didn't want Coach Graham to be the head coach are flooding UH FB fans group and pages on various social media platforms and are doing so simply by "what they heard from someone in the program".

Let's not forget that social media is what gave us things like the tide-pod eating challenge, toilet bowl licking challenge, and false reports about celebrity deaths.

So let's not be so quick to rush to elevate what we hear on social media.

I feel like there is a misinterpretation of what's happening in the program.

I feel like with players leaving the program, people are assuming that there is something wrong with Coach Graham; that he's a bad person; that he's an a-hole.

Comments have been brought up about his background in Texas and his buzzcut hairstyle.

But I feel as though it's a matter of coaching style that's in question.

I'm not criticizing whether people like a particular style or not, but feel like people are misjudging a coach's style with his character and integrity.

In addition to being a lifelong UH fan, I've also been a fan of the University of Michigan football program since the days Desmond Howard in the early 90's.

The coaching tree at the U of M includes Lloyd Carr, Gary Moeller, Bo Schembechler. These guys were strict and rough in their approach.

They knew in order to keep a tight unit they needed to have their student-athletes disciplined and focused. They needed to have their guys be receptive to criticism and willing to put in the work their coaches feel they needed.

Now I'm not saying that I would be able to handle that tough style of mentorship. I'm a very sensitive guy myself.

But to have these accusations enflamed because of "anonymous sources" seems a little ridiculous.

Yes mental health is something important to consider and times have changed since the days of coaches like Bo and Woody Hayes at Ohio State.

But people forget that guys like them were tough on them on the field but fiercely loyal and supportive outside of the athletic realm.

I feel as though Coach Graham is like that.

He's tough on the guys, but cares for their development deeply which would explain why he's so tough.

I love Coach Rolovich. And if we're going by "what we hear", I've been told some assistants left because he was too lenient with the student-athletes.

Now I have yet to hear of anything specific and concrete from these accusations.

The last time I checked, the justice system requires there to be proof because someone is considered guilty.

So in conclusion, my hope is that people will consider that there are differences between judgment of personal character and integrity, and judgment of operational style.

Go Rainbow Warriors!

God bless,

Marc Devon Lau

P.S.= If you're questioning whether coach wants to be really be here or not consider the fact that he stayed out of coaching for two years, had offers to coach elsewhere where he'd probably make a whole lot more than being the head man at Manoa. But he chose us.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Testimony on Information Briefing on the University of Hawaii Football Program

Greetings Chairs Dela Cruz and Kim and Committee Members

As a proud alumnus, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony to discuss the University of Hawaii Football program. It is unquestioned that sport plays a pivotal role in diverting our attention from today's current issues, such as lingering effects of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (COVID-19).

There has been recent increased visibility on the University of Hawaii's football program due to the cancellation of the Hawaii Bowl, and the departure of team members entering the transfer portal. In absence of fully understanding of all the dynamics of the situation, there seems to be performance issues associated with the coaching staff at the University. However, as in all organizations, performance management issues should be left to the University leadership, and the committee should focus on providing a platform to enable the University to succeed both academically and athletically.

The University of Hawaii Football program along with the University's National Championship volleyball program generate financial revenue to augment allocated precious State resources to support a variety of athletic opportunities for all of Hawaii's student athletes. In absence of professional sports based out of Hawaii, the University's athletic program has provided the ability for some identity, emotional spirit, and school pride desperately needed in our great State. It was unfortunate that the Governor exercised his authority to prevent any fans from attending the first four home games due to COVID-19 restrictions. The inability for our student athletes to minimally have their families attend these events certainly impacted the morale of the team.

As part of providing this essential foundation, and the Legislature's support of the University, it seems reasonable that the Committees should inquire why the condition of Aloha Stadium has been allowed to deteriorate to its existing condition. Considering that this was the primary venue for the University of Hawaii football team, as well as the Hawaii Bowl, it seems that either resources were not adequately allocated to support the stadium, and/or considerations should be given to understand the role the Stadium Authority whose sole responsibility is to plan, program, budget, and execute the maintenance of Aloha Stadium. Additionally, if there is a plan related to a new stadium and entertainment district, it seems concerning that the request for proposal has been deferred.

I applaud the University for expeditiously completing the renovation of the Clarence T.C. Ching complex in such a short turn around. This process should be replicated for other State executed projects. While much of the season was impacted by COVID-19, it was fortunate to have in-person attendance for part of the season.

Sincerely,

Aaron Y. Poentis

Aaron Y. Poentis
Civil Engineering '85

From: [Dane Wicker](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: WAM-HRE Info Briefing Testimony
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 2:20:06 PM

From: Charlie Wade [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 6, 2022 2:20 PM
To: Dane Wicker [REDACTED]
Subject: UHAD information hearing

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Aloha Kakou,

I would like to submit testimony in support of UH president David Lassner and UHAD David Matlin.

I have been a part of the UHAD for nearly thirty years. In my opinion David Lassner and David Matlin are the best combination of UH President and Athletic Director this University has had during that time.

Without their leadership and dedication to our student athletes our program would not be experiencing our current level of success.

They are explicitly responsible for helping us navigate the 2020 and 2021 seasons and we are National Champions because of their wisdom and commitment to the UHAD.

Please continue to support and find ways to fund the UHAD to allow all UH sports the resources necessary to enhance the student athlete experience. In addition, please continue to support these two highly respected, dedicated, and effective leaders.

Respectfully,

--



Charlie Wade
Head Coach - University of Hawai'i
Men's Volleyball

2021 National Champions

1337 Lower Campus Rd.

Honolulu, HI 96822

808-956-9931

[Warrior Volleyball Home Page](#)

From: [Gaylen Shintaku](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Testimony Regarding UH Football
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 2:02:47 PM

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January 6, 2022

THE SENATE
THE THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE INTERIM OF 2021

Re: Informational Briefing Regarding the University of Hawaii Football Team

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am submitting this testimony regarding the UH Football Program, which I understand will be discussed at your meeting on Friday. I understand that the discussion may focus on Coach Todd Graham, who may be currently be having a difficult time with his players.

University of Hawaii football is very important to the community. Unfortunately, Aloha Stadium has not been available as it's apparently unsafe and not repairable. However, UH did a great job making the TC Ching Stadium available. While playing in a much smaller complex and not playing in front of an audience during the first four games this season must have been very difficult, at least they had a home season.

The Senate needs to look at the challenges the team faced this past season which may have led to the disappointing situation the team now faces. The community needs to provide support to UH during these very difficult times. I think that Athletic Director Dave Matlin is working through these situations, making good decisions, and is doing a great job for our program.

Thank you.

Gaylen Shintaku

From: [James Shiroma](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Senate Hearing for UH Football
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 2:23:00 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Senate Leaders:

Thank you so much for doing your best to make Hawaii a great place to live today and in the future. I am writing this to share my support for University of Hawaii Athletic Director Dave Matlin, UH Football Coach Todd Graham, UH football program and UH Athletics.

In recent weeks, there has been great negativity directed toward the University of Hawaii football team, Coach Todd Graham and David Matlin. While there are issues that the UH football team and Coach Graham will need to address, I believe that we have enabled negativity to control the narrative. As a result, Coach Graham has been made the scapegoat and lightning rod of issues that are beyond his control.

Coach Graham took the job two months before COVID. He had to deal with uncertainties due to COVID--protocols, would the team even play, keeping the team safe, getting to know players over Zoom, recruiting over Zoom, stress and mental health issues due to COVID, contact tracing, keeping everyone safe, following City and State guidelines, etc. The limited contact with people, the community and even players would have made it challenging for anyone to build relationships and know our culture.

Over time, challenges that COVID and COVID restrictions placed on the football team mounted. The UH football team faced COVID protocols and limitations not faced by any other football team in America. In addition, the football team lost Aloha Stadium as their home field, had to retrofit a new "stadium" on their practice field, and fans were not allowed to attend games until later in the season. These struggles added up and definitely affected morale and team unity--it was bound to happen.

Previous to COVID, the University of Hawaii athletic department continually operated on a very low budget. Even in the best of times, this was a huge struggle. COVID revealed what many of us already knew--that Hawaii's budget was too low and that maintaining a competitive athletic department on that budget was not sustainable. I would encourage members of the Ways and Means and Higher Education Committees to see how poorly our athletic department is financially supported. We need to have a bigger vision for what our athletic program can be. There is huge potential.

Our athletic department presents so many opportunities for Hawaii that go beyond athletics and our student athletes. Athletics gets the name of our school out and helps with name recognition--this provides UH with great identity on a national level, which also helps with overall name recognition of the school. The athletic platform can be a huge tool that unifies the State of Hawaii. These are all possibilities if we invest well in our athletic program and support it. We have the opportunity to leverage the athletic department in a way that will be very beneficial for Hawaii.

Unfortunately, for whatever reason, the state has not invested in the athletic program like we

could or should. COVID has only escalated the eventual consequences of our neglect. We are starting to see some of the realities of those consequences over the last few months with our football program.

I am pointing all this out to say that the problems are bigger than coaches salaries and players leaving. It is our lack of commitment to support an athletic department and football team in a way that is fair and in a way that allows the teams to prepare on an even playing field.

To put the blame on Todd Graham and David Matlin shows we are not dealing with the root of the problem. The reality is that Coach Graham has been a successful coach everywhere he has been. Those who know him speak of his character and ability to build up young men to be the best husbands, fathers and leaders they can be. I agree that if the allegations of mental and physical abuse are true, they need to be dealt with and that Coach Graham and his staff must deal with the consequences. But those actions must be taken only after a fair and thorough investigation of what took place on the football team. I am pretty confident that Coach Graham will make the necessary adjustments needed to address the harsh criticisms he faced this past year. He will make sure that the Hawaii football team will have the right culture, steer clear of mental abuse and build Ohana. I am pretty sure that David Matlin will do the same. The question is whether our State government will do the same?

I would encourage the State to:

1. Not cut the athletic budget but increase the athletic budget to help Hawaii at least be competitive.
2. Increase coaches and assistant coaches' salaries to at least be competitive. Their salaries do not have to be high end. However, they should also not be near the bottom either. We must look at what is reasonable. Most coaches come to Hawaii not expecting to be rich. In fact many come because of other things Hawaii offers--they know that being here means that we all make financial sacrifices. It is about helping coaches know they are valued.
3. Improve athletic facilities.
4. Provide funds to build an on-campus football stadium (30K minimum).
5. Show the public that lawmakers who make financial decisions for the athletic department have at least a foundational understanding of how athletics works. Politicians must look beyond the bottom line figures and hear past the negative voices. They must be able to see and understand what it takes to have a competitive athletic program and what that can mean to the community--their decisions must be made from that perspective.
6. Give Coach Graham an opportunity to lead his team well. Do not make decisions based on the critical voices. Make decisions based on your own thorough investigation.
7. Give financial support to the UH athletic department. Also, give moral support to David Matlin.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I know that

Sincerely,

James Shiroma
Mililani, Hawaii

From: [Kevin Farrell](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: University of Hawaii Football Program
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 1:49:18 PM

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Dear Committee Members,

I really hope this meeting is truly to find more money for the football program and how to improve the program and facilities. You do not seem to understand how lucky you are to have Coach Todd Graham as your head coach. His coaching pool is so deep..... His assistants are Now Head Coaches at Florida State University, University of florida, Oregon, Memphis, Utah State and many more.

He has had to deal with NO Stadium, No Fans, No Locker Rooms, Outdated Weight room, He has even pitched in to buy new equipment out of his own pocket. The State is so worried about Covid but sends the players on Commercial Flights! Coach Graham even paid for some of the Chartered flights when it was too dangerous and hard to get too.

With that said he still managed to get the players to two bowl games. He even purchased bowl rings for the players because that is how much each player means to him. If you are looking for a reason why Players are transferring, look at all the rest of the programs across the country. Many have players going in the portal at an alarming rate. How do you think these players feel when stadiums are packed across the country and Hawaii would not even allow their parents to attend the games? You don't think there were conversations that you need to go somewhere else next year?


He is all about Faith, Family and Football!
The man is so passionate about his job and really asks a lot of the coaches and players. But that is why they go on to head coaches and great men when they leave his program.

If you give him a chance and support with funds and support him with the faith in him when you hired him, he could make Hawaii Football Special Again.

Sincerely,

University of Hawaii Rainbow Warrior Football Fan..!

--

Kevin Farrell


From: [Norman Nakanishi](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Testimony re: UH Football Program
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 1:29:41 PM

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Aloha,

I serve as chaplain to the coaching staff for the UH football program and have previously served as overall team chaplain for Coaches June Jones and Greg McMackin during their tenures.

I have begun meeting with Coach Todd Graham to enhance coach to player relational connection and cultural sensitivity. I do believe that he has what it takes to build the program, perpetuate its winning tradition, and make the changes necessary to forge a greater cultural bond. There is a plan for moving forward.

Allow me to share a perspective: Leading a program as a new coach in the middle of the Pacific through a worldwide pandemic while losing Aloha Stadium, seeing very few fans, and having to enforce the most stringent restrictions in the country has been a daunting task. Qualifying the team for two straight bowl games and winning one on the road last year over the same Houston team that ranked among the nation's best this year has been no small feat.

I stand in support of Coach Graham, his staff, and AD David Matlin. And I do so while committing personally to be part of the process for healing, growing and winning. Thank you for the time given to share because I know everyone cares.

Go Bows and God bless,
Norman Nakanishi
UH Football Coaching Staff Chaplain
Pastor, Pearlside Church

Good afternoon. My name is Kim McCloud. I am a former UH player and currently the interim Cornerbacks Coach. I have over 25 years of college coaching experience and a few years combined experience with the NFL and CFL as both a player and coach. I have experience with nine college head coaches – 2 as a player and 7 as an assistant football coach. I love Hawai'i, the University of Hawai'i and Hawai'i Football. I am speaking from a position of experience and in-depth knowledge of college football.

I want to specifically address Coach Graham. Yes, he is firm and demands excellence. It is not a toxic environment. He's a hard coach but he loves his players. There are things that Coach has done that people outside the office don't know. He and Penni have used their own money to provide for the players. I will let them elaborate if they want but when the players or fans say they don't care that only means that they don't know them well enough. He wants the best for his players. He has advocated for players when they've had trouble off the field. I wouldn't recruit or continue to coach for Coach Graham if I thought he didn't love the players

As a coach, we have long, demanding hours. During the season, coaches work seven days a week. We usually start at 5:30am and leave the office around 9:30pm. We work more than 15 hours a day, seven days a week during the season and this is the minimum time if you count away game and travel time, then it is more. If you are discussing coaches' salaries, I would invite you to consider what is competitive in Division I football, our league and keep in mind Hawai'i's cost of living.

I could discuss the need for adequate funding and more support but I will leave that to the administration to discuss in depth what is needed for Hawai'i Football. But before you discuss our salaries, I want to make you aware of how many hours coaches' work. This is true throughout college football. And the time commitment doesn't end at the end of the season. There's recruiting which is a constant and then spring ball.

Hawai'i is an incredible, unique and beautiful place. It is home. My wife grew up here. Our family is here. We, as you do, want Hawai'i Football to succeed. In order to do so, we need some positive voices to represent our alma mater. Come and see what is needed and help us to promote the University of Hawai'i and Hawai'i Football.

As far as the portal is concerned, it is a new entity that is changing the landscape of college football. Even Power Five schools are losing their starting players to the portal. There are almost 1500 players in the portal. Each player entering the portal has their own reasons. Some of our players left for reasons such as to be closer to an ailing family member, to play for a Power Five team, and to study in a degree program that wasn't offered. Not every player can be grouped in the same argument. We, as coaches, can do better. We can grow and learn. I think I have a unique position as a former player and being known as a players' coach to bridge the gap and keep some players home in Hawai'i. But again, we can't do it alone we need your help. We need funding and support.

We also need the help of our fans to show up, to show love, to speak positivity and support us as we move forward. Players now can get NIL endorsements. Local players would be more apt to stay home and play for Hawai'i if they had NIL endorsements. As coaches, we cannot advocate this for a player or recruit but the fans of Hawai'i Football can. Hawai'i fans now have a powerful tool that can be used to support Hawai'i Football players.

As soon as the Covid restrictions eased and the season ended, we were able to have the players over to the house for a meal. This has always been one of the best ways to be able to build relationships between players and coach. Coach Graham asks his coaches to go into the locker room, to be a mentor, to be a liaison between football and their lives off the field. We've had challenges with Covid restrictions that wouldn't allow our players together as large group socially. One of our first gatherings was during bowl week. Going forward, we will have more gatherings, more team building and more communication.

I would like to conclude by saying that it is far more supportive of the team and Hawai'i Football to see the whole picture and not listen to only the negative voices. Hawai'i Football is a priority in my life. It's not because I currently work for the University of Hawai'i but as a former player and alumni, my deep desire is to see Hawai'i Football to be the best it can be with more funding, more support and more aloha for the team.

Respectfully,

Kim McCloud

From: [Rick Eichor](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Informational briefing related to the UH Football Program
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 1:40:23 PM

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Written Testimony of Rick and Susan Eichor
to the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Higher Education
for Informational Briefing related to the UH Football Program
on Friday, January 7, 2022

Submitting In Support of the UH Athletic Department and UH Football Program

Aloha Chairs Dela Cruz and Mercado Kim,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. We testify as individuals in support of the UH Athletic Department and the UH Football Program. Under Athletic Director Matlin's leadership, the UH Athletic Department has time and again demonstrated their outstanding leadership of the program, while keeping the best interests of the student athletes paramount. Most recent examples include:

Stadium. The UH Athletic Department was put in a position that no other football program has been or should ... no home stadium with just months' notice before the 2021 season. Rather than dwell on the huge issues of accountability that remain unaddressed, the UH Athletic Department focused on solving the problem. Not only did they succeed in building a beautiful venue that met the immediate requirements, but they did so within the same confines and processes that have stymied other government projects to great delay and cost.

Student Transfers. Much has been written about the NCAA transfer portal policy changes that have resulted in the huge increase of student transfers throughout the country. UH's transfer numbers are no different. What we believe is uniquely UH, though, is that the UH Athletic Department has consistently put the best interests of their student athletes first, even when the individual's decision may have some short term impact on the football program's wins and losses. The UH Athletic Department understands that the student athlete's future is the much more important win.

Staff Matters. As with any organization, the UH Football Program has acknowledged that they have areas of improvement that they are focusing on. AD Matlin's and Coach Graham's public comments both reflect their commitment to continuous process improvement. To our knowledge, none of these issues rise to a level that require public involvement. As one of Hawaii's most beloved institutions, the UH Football team is everybody's business ... a mixed blessing indeed. It is our belief that style and related organizational issues are most effectively addressed internally; said another way, they are actually worsened by public magnification.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask you to support funding in the upcoming session to enable UH to finish the build out of the stadium at the Clarence T.C. Ching field complex. AD Matlin and his team have proven that they will optimally steward investment for the UH Athletic Department, the student athletes and the entire Hawaii community. We further ask that you entrust UH's established chain of command to lead and manage the UH Athletic Department and Football Program, a trust that they have earned in the most difficult of times. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Rick & Susan Eichor Sent from my iPad

From: [RoAnne Matsuura](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: testimony 1/6/22 hearing 2:30
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 2:00:28 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Senate Ways and Means committee:

I would like to support the UH football program and the Athletic Director, David Matlin, and UH President Lassner. Let them do their jobs.

I understand you all are curious about what is going on with the UH Football program, I am too. You should have made a phone call to the Athletic Director at this point to gather information. I don't think a hearing was necessary at this point. Everybody is cooperating, a hearing wasn't necessary.

The Athletic Director has shown he can manage the UH Athletic department most recently by facilitating the buildout and raising of funds for the TC Ching complex in 9 months, which is pretty miraculous given the short time frame and State bureaucracy.

Any budget evaluation of the UH football program needs to consider the limitations out of the programs control by Covid and the Governor's restrictions on fans in the stadium.

WAM committee should be focusing efforts on securing funds to pay for much neglected computer systems and software in our public State departments so we don't have bad outcomes when the systems are pushed to the limits similar with the Dept of Labor Unemployment system.

Thank you for your consideration.

RoAnne L. Matsuura



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From: [Kolby Wyatt](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Hawaii FB Senate Letter
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 3:55:38 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom this may concern,

Good evening my name is Kolby Wyatt. I am a senior tight end on the football team at UH. This is my second year in the program after transferring here from the University of Georgia in January 2021.

My time here on the island has been a transformative one. I have learned a lot about this team, this program, this island, and the culture of the people who call Hawaii home. In this short time I have also grown to have immense pride in this program even more so than my alma mater UGA. Despite my time at UGA, where I experienced playing on a National Championship contending team every year, won a Rose Bowl, competed in two Sugar Bowl's while winning one, I still will be a Warrior until I die. Despite the love I have for UGA, UH Manoa is my alma mater now. When I continue on in my football career, this is the program and team I'll forever claim and represent. Because of the love and respect I have for this program I decided to write this letter with hopes of improving things for this program, this upcoming season and for the future.

I know that this meeting has come together to discuss the future of this program. Recently we have had a lot of bad news about the program in the media. But there has also been great news we have many former Warriors going on to play at high major Power 5 FBS programs such as UCLA, Oklahoma, Liberty and more. While others have earned offers from schools like USC, UGA, LSU, Virginia Tech, etc. And coming from a national championship team myself, I've played with numerous All Americans and First round draft picks. And coming here the first thing I realized is that HAWAII HAS TALENT and these other coaches around the nation notice it too apparently. So the question remains if we have so much talent why does that not show up in championships and why do all these high caliber players want to leave. The answer to that is complicated. Many people want to blame the Athletic Director and the Coach. And quite frankly they are not blameless but they are not the only ones to blame. However the AD and our Coach have admitted to their wrongs and committed to do better moving forward. That is all that can be asked admit your wrongs and do your best to correct them. Now as a player I control what I control and I am not offering my opinion about what should happen with them because in all honesty they cannot do better for this program with the support of the school and government.

As a team and organization we cannot continue to try to compete with these other schools without funding. I have spoken to players on this team who say that St.Louis HS has a better meal program than the current UH football team now. I used to play around 250 pounds now I play around 230 pounds and that is not by choice. Meals provided are scarce while most schools get three meals a day the most we get is 2 a day and that's ONLY during the season and spring practice. During off-season workouts we are not fed AT ALL. Also the adjustment for cost of living that every program has in their stipend allotment to players is not proportional to the actual COST of living that goes on in Hawaii. Players need money just simply for food. Also the weight room has been flooded for weeks. Facilities are lagging behind every other team in this conference and this nation. This is a Division 1 program and

funding should reflect that. All I am saying is the people of this state want this team to be competitive with the other teams around us and we can do that we just need help. One thing I have noticed that is different about the Hawaiian culture is that it is truly based on family and being there for others. So I truly hope that this letter helps shift the narrative away from what the state can do for coaches or their salaries or firing somebody and instead start thinking about what can the state do for the student athletes who live and breathe football. The ones who have left our families 10+ hours away through multiple time zones. The ones who have families on the island who drive an hour daily from Laie. We are dedicated to giving our all to this program and I hope that the state will do the same for us.

Mahalo
#808vseverybody

--

Kolby Wyatt
University of Georgia '20
B.S Sociology

Curtis & Loretta Yuen

January 6, 2022

Hawai'i Senate
Committee on Ways and Means
Committee on Higher Education
wamcommittee@capitol.hawaii.gov

Re: University of Hawaii Football Program

To Whom it May Concern:

We are submitting this testimony in support of University of Hawaii Athletic Director David A. K. Matlin and his leadership of the Athletic Department, and specifically the football program. Mr. Matlin has done an exemplary job in leading the program through these unprecedented tumultuous times, which notably included financial limitations facing the University, the sudden loss of a playing venue for the program, and the challenges of dealing with Covid restrictions.

The current issues regarding Coach Todd Graham's coaching of the football team which have come to light and the resulting exodus of players is an issue that the Athletic Department needs to deal with, not the State Legislature. The Athletic Director, who has firsthand knowledge of the program, should be allowed to handle these personnel issues without intervention by the State Legislature. The loss of players may also be due to low morale of the players attributed to Covid restrictions, including being unable to play before family and fans, especially in light of other college football programs being able to do so.

At this juncture, the focus should be on securing more funding for the UH football program and allowing the Athletic Director to do the job that he was hired for. The UH football program is an important source of pride for the community, and also a vital source of financial revenue that supports other athletic programs within the UH system that do not produce revenue.

Mr. Matlin should be commended for doing a terrific job in these difficult times - including spearheading the renovation of the Clarence T. C. Ching complex in record time so that the football team had a home venue to play games in when the season started.

Sincerely,



Curtis Yuen and Loretta Yuen

From: [Makana Duncan](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Fwd: Discrepancies regarding Todd Graham
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 9:37:16 PM

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Makana Duncan [REDACTED]
Date: Thu, Jan 6, 2022 at 5:57 PM
Subject: Discrepancies regarding Todd Graham
To: Chandra Kinilau [REDACTED], Charlinda Ioane [REDACTED], Jeannie Lee [REDACTED], Landon Keopple [REDACTED], Lois Manin [REDACTED], Vince Baldemor [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Aloha,

I am a family member of student/athlete Keliam Brunn, and I have been moved to express feelings concerning Todd Graham.

From my understanding, since the moment he began coaching, we had heard and experienced numerous discrepancies by this coach unlike any other. It is understandable to put the boys through boot-camp-like training to build team bonds and warriors, for that matter, but this is the 21st century, and frankly I don't believe anyone should tolerate any racism or inequality; especially in Hawai'i - towards Hawaiian and local boys. Amongst that, I can assume that not you nor your own family would take anything from anyone with a superiority complex. Moving on. The actions to be followed have been going on and mentioned about more than a year ago, now, and has since been swept under the rug.

This player, amongst others, had experience racial discrimination since August/September of 2020, first beginning with minor matters of: lack in playing time (regardless of athletic abilities), making suggestions and giving reminders to other players and then watching them get praised for it and Then getting poorly treated & shunned when players mentioned who their suggestions came from, to further hogwash like experiencing segregation between 2 groups of players. Things like not being allowed to study film, separate lift rooms, separate protein, separate treatment, should not be accepted at a D1 university. Being rejected the opportunity to study film doesn't make sense on the premises of wanting the best for every athlete including the opportunity to become better. In my opinion, taking players (who are clearly far more capable) and making them practice dummies, as if they were in Pop Warner football, gives no demonstration nor representation of D1 athleticism, and worse amongst that, to choose the local, Hawaiian boys with more skill than "coaches picks" goes to further show that authorities within UHM don't truly care for their Hawaiian students (given we are in the Kingdom of Hawai'i).

In regards to my family member, in January of '21, during a rather difficult time in our lives, he was honest with Graham and beyond sincere in asking advice as to how he could get more playing time and recognition - for how is he to show his capabilities if he isn't granted field time or film study? Worried that maybe it was his speed or agility, he then became one of the fastest on the team. Worried he didn't know his opponent well enough, he'd sneak into film. All this, only to be punished. I understand the tactics of using players as pawns, but with as

much skill and knowledge as this athlete has, it just doesn't make sense as to why Graham continues to choose to lose/disregard such potential, in every athlete he neglects. Resuming Graham's and Brunn's conversation, Keliam had spoken out about things happening to his baby sister, and how he felt the need to step up around the house, ke mālama nei (taking care) where he could, and his coach went on to express that it seems like with having each of his feet in two separate doors, football is too much of a commitment for Brunn's current situation. So, coach not only suspended Brunn, but gave him false hope in his return during the Spring. I say false hope on the grounds that coach swore and promised that with retrospect to Brunn's athletic abilities and capabilities, he "can play at any D1 school and be successful beyond measure" and that he could call on coach for anything, that he would be back come Spring. That would have been the last Keliam has heard from coach. He was ghosted as if coach were a fake friend in high school only concerned with what benefited himself. Now, I need you to understand that we, as a family, withheld from acting due to said false hope planted within this athletes mind, hoping that maybe things would change or that the other players would share their own perspectives and shine light & clarity on the situation. Unfortunately, it's taken a year for them to do so, but fortunately it's happening. So, with that, please understand that what Graham does to his players isn't okay, as we can tell by the growing absence of wonderful players, and if this association can keep or let go of Todd Graham without taking action to get back its star players like Hunter Cordero, Laulu, Chevon, and Brunn, I fear the success and glory days of UHM football are over. Mahalo for taking the time and consideration to read through this. I know it was lengthy, and I apologize.

Me ke aloha,
Makana

From: [Micha Brunn](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Todd Graham
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 11:23:13 PM

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Dear WAM COMMITTEE State of Hawaii,

I am humbly requesting a verbal testimony or someone to hear my voice in all this regarding Todd Graham. I am a single parent widow who works 10-12 hours 6 days a week and only recently found out about the opportunity to submit a testimony. I approximately one year ago anonymously placed a complaint to the University of Hawaii Mediation regarding what has finally come to fruition.

Regardless of me being given a opportunity I am thankful that someone has finally listen to the silent cries of many of our young brilliant men of Hawaii. Played down segregation, racism and mental abuse by Todd Graham and his coaching staff must stop!

I am not a sugar coating white gloved parent when it comes to sports. I do believe in the philosophy of coaches being mentors and leaders in the development of young vulnerable minds. Todd Graham has none of such qualities in any division to be coaching.

What my son personally experienced would be considered appalling by who ever heard it. I know this is not the belief and philosophy of our wonderful University of Hawaii. I pray that this hearing will not go void and that the concerns of our future be heard. Thank you

Sincerely,
Micha K. Brunn



From: [Scott Turner](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Hawaii Football
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 3:23:22 AM

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Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

As a parent of a University of Hawaii student athlete (football), I am writing in support of Coach Todd Graham, his staff and the Hawaii football program.

Although there have been some obvious changes with young men departing the program for others in the country. Hawaii football is still a viable and up and coming program. This scenario is not exclusive to Hawaii football as it is the case in many football programs around the country. Young men transfer from one program to another for a myriad of reasons and purposes.

Coach Graham and his staff are committed to learning and growing through difficulty and giving their best in developing not just great football players, but young men who will be responsible citizens off the field.

I have experienced that often times, growth can only come by pruning and pruning at times can be painful. Together as a state, university, coaching staff and players with a clear cut vision and execution, Hawaii football will once again be a thriving program and shining example in college athletics. This will require steadfastness, patience and perseverance on the part of all parties mentioned.

I write this in support of Coach Graham, the staff, players and the Hawaii football fans and family!

Thank you for your time and sincere consideration.

Scott Turner

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Sheri Mitchell](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Todd Graham
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 3:58:39 AM

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To Whom It May Concern;

I would like to tell of our experience as part of the Tulsa football team under the leadership of Todd Graham. My son played under Todd Graham at Tulsa University and today I see in him so many positive attributes that he learned from Coach Graham. My son's name is Roy Roberts. He was and still is a very strong headed young man. In my opinion, he might not have been the easiest to coach, but thanks to Coach Graham and his staff, today he is a very productive, hard working family man. We have discussed within my family, on numerous occasions, the positive impact that Coach Graham had on him. Was he tough on him? Absolutely! But he was always there to talk to me as a parent and he welcomed Roy in to his office any time he felt angry or needed to just talk.


Coach Graham instilled a work ethic in Roy that I could not have done. Roy is now 37 years old, has a beautiful family and has his own trucking company. He wasn't always been driven like he is now. I have heard him tell his own boys several of the lessons he learned from Coach Todd Graham. Just as any other teenager, he didn't understand the tough workouts, the many team meetings, the togetherness that Coach Graham demanded of them, but I am so thankful that I did not allow him to come home on the weekends he wanted to, or to quit the team, especially his red shirt year. Thanks to coach Graham's ability to show Roy how strong he really was and to help him to always dig a little deeper and to not be afraid to take risks in life, Roy is shining now in life as much as he did back then on the field.

My family and I will forever be grateful for what Todd Graham brought out in Roy, You all have a quality coach and I really hope that you recognize the positive things that he brings to a program. Please feel free to contact Roy or myself if we can be of any assistance. Thank you Coach Graham for the leadership that you showed to Roy and for always being available to me as a single parent.

Sincerely,

Sheri Mitchell
Ardmore,

Oklahoma


Roy Roberts

(Former T.U. player)





From: [Warren Brannoch](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: State of the Hawaii Football program
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 7:46:07 PM

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Good evening,

My name is Warren Brannoch, I am a high school football coach, youth football coach, a former college football recruiter, and most of all I a citizen of this great country, who has been following the state of the Hawaii football program the last 2 seasons.

I would like to bring to your attention a couple of things in regards to what I have seen happen from afar in the program, as well as bring to your attention some accomplishments of the current head coach of the Hawaii football program, Todd Graham.

While I bring some of these things up, I encourage you to look at this from my lens, not only as a coach, but a fan of the game, the program, and most importantly an advocate for what is best for student athletes.

I will start by saying, from what I have observed the last 2 seasons, with 1 of those of course being a COVID year, please understand that EVERY program struggled last season to fight the many obstacles put in their way because of COVID, only in this case, I personally believe Hawaii was a special instance.

As you all know, the state of Hawaii has been pretty tough on COVID protocols within the state, which not only prevents fans from attending games, but takes away from any athletes perspective on the Hawaii gameday experience as a whole. Now, it is my opinion that the UH administration and Athletics department leaders, have not only done a terrible job at allowing the football program to gain more exposure, but have deterred current players from being able to really experience what it is like to be a College football player in general. College sports is not only about fans, but it's about student athletes, and if you are setting them up to succeed to reach their highest potential on and off of the field. As you also know, Hawaii was one of the only College football programs to not allow fans at its events for the first part of the season. This plays a MAJOR factor in the success of a program. As you also know, this season the team was moved away from Aloha Stadium and to a much smaller Stadium in Ching. You tell me how a football program and a coaching staff can compete if set up to play games under those conditions.

Secondly I would like to bring to your attention what Coach Todd Graham has done throughout his coaching career to not only develop student athletes on the field, but off of the field as well.

When Coach Graham took over at Arizona State, the program was in shambles. While fans and people who follow the program closely did not know much of Coach Graham or who he was, they were fast to adapt to his coaching style and his personality. Arizona State was one of the most penalized teams in NCAA Division 1 football before Graham got to Tempe. Now, these werent just your ordinary penalties, they were mostly personal fouls, which is embarrassing to see as a fan of college football, and a coach myself. After Graham took over,

In a very short amount of time, Arizona State became one of the least penalized teams in the NCAA. One of the things that I observed about Coach Graham when he was at ASU was the character of the young men who Coach Graham coached while at Arizona State. A perfect example would be after games, players would stick around the sidelines, and make sure they left the sidelines better than what they found it. These are the little things that help develop young men into grown men, which is what you want as a coach and a fan, and heck, even a person in general. Coach Graham has won everywhere he has been, and led ASU to many of its most successful seasons, while under his watch. Coach Graham remains the winningest coach at ASU since Frank Kush, who is the most successful football coach in the history of ASU, and left ASU in 1979. So, as you can tell, if given time, and the tools to run a successful program, Coach Graham has been successful at every coaching stop he has made, on the field and off.

Now, let's talk about the transfer portal. Man, where do I begin? The transfer portal is a complete mess, and in my opinion, it not only sets student athletes up to take the money (NIL Deals) and run, but teaches kids that if they aren't necessarily fitting in with a certain program, to just transfer out, and put their name in the portal. While Hawaii has had a mass exodus of players put their name in the transfer portal, many other programs, including some within the Mountain West Conference, have a lot of players in the portal as well. Now, I encourage you, take a seat back and think about how that puts every program and the coaching staff in a sticky situation, once a kid is recruited and receives a scholarship, especially schools like UH. While UH is a great campus, has great fans, has a rich heritage, and overall is a great place to play, you cannot put them up against schools from Power 5 conferences like the SEC, PAC 12, BIG 12, ACC, and BIG 10. It's simply not fair. Any player who sees that they might be able to get more scholarship money, or quite possibly have a better chance at getting a look by the NFL, is going to consider those other schools. So, in my personal opinion, the transfer portal is setting not only smaller schools up to fail as a whole, but coaches in general.

In closing, I appreciate your time, and I want you to consider a few things.

- 1) The decisions made by UH administration and its Athletic director that directly impact the UH football program and its student athletes.
- 2) The young men Coach Graham has developed throughout his coaching career on and off the field, and his coaching record
- 3) The transfer portal, and how potentially great programs like UH, are being set up to fail, and compete against programs within Power 5 Conferences, and how it is effecting the decisions student athletes make when choosing one school, and then deciding to transfer a year later.

May God Bless you, and keep you and may he guide you to make the right decisions in regards to what is best for not only the student athletes at UH, but what is best for the community at UH in general,

Warren Brannoch

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Al Serafin Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:19:08 AM

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Toxic coach costs UH more than money

University of Hawaii, wake up!

What don't you get about at least 14 players going for the transfer portal? Please get your priorities in order and protect the local and mainland players who chose to play for UH.

Please ask yourself if it's more important to admit that you made a bad decision in hiring the wrong coach or lose the potential of having more local players stay at home and play for UH. If money is the main factor in your decision, then a greater loss will be suffered at the gate by keeping this toxic coach in place.

There are plenty of good local coaches who could do a much better job than a coach who was fired from a mainland team.

Please get your priorities in order if you want local people to support the UH program.

Al Serafin

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Darryl McBride Jr Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:26:11 AM

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Darryl McBride Jr

To whom it may concern, Hello my name is Darryl McBride, Former UH warrior and alum. I am writing this letter over my deep concerns regarding the football program, that same program that has shaped me to be the man I am today. I am writing to you after various phone calls, voicemails and messages to AD Matlin and Coach Graham none of which has responded to and I'm not sure why. I wish the best for my brothers wearing the Warrior uniform and the coaches leading our guys out to represent the State of Hawaii but feel as though if the coach or AD wanted transparency they would respond to alumni or listen to the players concern prior to the aftermath of the twitter space that took place following the departure of Chevan Cordeiro. Myself and former UH Warrior alum RJ Hollis hosted a twitter space one in which was only created so that us and a few alumni could speak on what we thought was happening in the locker room and what needed to happen following the departure of two guys who impacted our offense tremendously. What we didnt know is that the twitter space would be popularized over the next 4 hours with current and former players, school administration, local media and fans. Being as though the twitter space is an open forum we invited players up to speak not knowing what testimony they would give regarding their status or the state of the program but just to see how they felt regarding the recent transfers, unknown to anyone was the alarming details that they expressed going on within the program. In no way did we predict our conversation about the program would turn to this we heard the following statements, "players just aren't happy, Coach Graham doesn't care about the culture, He alienates scholarship guys from walk on guys etc" I understand that everyone thinks these players are kids but have to realize these players range from 18-24yrs old, these guys are men and to say that all these guys that had the courage to speak up are being untruthful that is alarming. The transfer portal is new and many coaches are finding ways to navigate around it but to have 19 warriors enter the portal since Aug 10, 2021 raises a red flag especially being as though we still have the same coaching staff. I am all about transparency and believe that though both AD and HC have vowed to be transparent through media and public statements their actions speak otherwise. I have no problem with the Coach Graham nor AD Matlin but a response on how we alumni could help the program would suffice. What I do not want to happen is that these testimonies are heard but continue to be fed the politically correct answers. I look forward to working with staff to help Warrior football thrive again and continue to use my platform to speak positive and show that I am an alum who cares deeply about the program. Thank you,

To whom it may concern,

I was a Football Manager at UH Manoa from July 2020 - September 2021. Let me first start off by noting that I appreciate you taking the time to read my letter and my concerns for this football program. I was born in Hilo, Hawaii and grew up watching Hawaii football with my parents and friends. It is something I hold dear to my heart and was so privileged to end up working for.

I became a Student Manager during Todd Graham's first year as head coach of the team so I have seen his transition from a coach who wants to get to know his players to a coach who wants to micromanage everything about the program, is verbally abusive to his players, coaches, and support staff, and a coach who pushes his religion onto his players and staff, something which I do not find appropriate for a public university. During my time working here, I have worked at every practice, and specifically helped the defense with their drills which is the side that Todd Graham is with during practice, so I am used to working closely with Todd Graham and the other defensive coaches. I have also worked at all of the games, home and away during my time there.

Early into his first year, Graham would verbally abuse his players and coaches. Name calling was a common occurrence with him constantly calling players "dumbass, jackass, good-for-nothing, idiot, and loser." He would also threaten to take players' scholarships away from them if they backtalk him and not do as he says. The coaches also received verbal punishment when they did something he didn't like. For example, if the scout team was running a play he disagreed with, he would threaten the coach's job and tell them "I ought to fire your ass." This was said to multiple coaches and Graduate Assistants.

Personally, he made little to no effort to get to know the support staff, including the equipment staff of which I was a part of. We were also not safe from his tirades as on multiple occasions he would berate me, telling me "you don't know shit about football, you don't know what the hell you're doing, why the hell did they hire someone who doesn't know shit about football?" He would say that I was "incompetant" at my job and "couldn't do shit right." Earlier this year, Graham said to me "you've been with us over a year and still can't figure shit out." These comments were made after small mistakes I would make after I would follow the practice script spotting the ball in the marked hash marks and yard line, however he would often run plays not marked on the script which would require me to make adjustments to the ball placements, resulting in him being upset with me. At the last Spring scrimmage game this year, my job was to hold the line of scrimmage down marker which indicated what down the current play is. In the second half of the game, a player who was missing a screw in his helmet asked me for help replacing the screw. As I was multitasking at this point, holding the player's helmet in one hand and the down marker in the other, for one play I forgot to change the down marker to the current down. Todd Graham immediately blew his whistle, stopping all play from the game. He pointed at me and yelled from the other sideline "It's third down! Not second down! Can we get someone over there who knows what they're doing! He doesn't know what the hell he's doing! Do your damn job!" Now all of the players and coaches were looking at me and I felt extremely embarrassed and ashamed. Some of the players on the sideline tried to console me saying things like "just ignore him" and "keep doing your thing you're doing your best."

Because these instances would affect me mentally and physically, I would start getting panic attacks everyday before practice. Thinking that I needed to do everything right otherwise I will be yelled at and scrutinized. I started to see a psychiatrist who prescribed me alprazolam (brand name xanax) to deal with the daily stress and panic attacks. Xanax is an anti-anxiety medication that belongs to a class of drug known as benzodiazepines which can be very addictive and habit-forming. Before long I was taking a xanax pill everyday before practices just to get through the day and not feel extremely anxious and nervous. Currently, about a year after I was prescribed this medication, I am still dealing with the addictive aspects of the drug and in the process of trying to get off of it, months after quitting my Football Manager job.

I feel like it is also relevant to note his pushing of religion upon the team and staff. After each practice, he would have all of the players kneel and say prayer, regardless of what they believe in. This also occurred after games when he would even invite players from the other team to gather in the center of the field to say a prayer. To me, especially the prayers after practices, this always seemed more like a requirement more than a suggestion. One instance that I took offense to was when Todd Graham came to the equipment room (which he rarely does) holding a box full of bibles. He gave one to me and the other Student Manager who was working with me at the time, and told us to start reading it as we needed the bible, then gave a suggestion on where to start. I am not sure what he did with the rest of the bibles but I assume they were given to players and coaches. I realize and understand that a person has the right to express their religion freely, however I find it somewhat inappropriate to be preaching and trying to convert others in a public university setting.

After a culmination of events and discussions, as of September 2021, I quit my Football Manager position partly as a result of my poor treatment as a staff member. I did not feel valued in my work environment as I was constantly being put down, specifically by Todd Graham and Bo Graham. I felt like I needed to focus on my mental and physical health first and school second. In the end, working with someone who yells at me on a daily basis who doesn't even know my name or the hard work I have put into the job was just not worth it.

As I stated earlier, Hawaii football is something that means so much to me and I want nothing more than to see the players and team succeed as a whole. I truly believe Todd Graham has done more harm than good in his first two seasons for this team and hope to see coming changes. I thank you for taking time out of your day to read my letter and process the things I've said.

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Justin Hemsley Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:18:46 AM

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To whom it may concern,

My name is Justin Hemsley, and I recently attended the University of Hawaii for four years as a player on the men's basketball team from 2017-2021. The time I spent on the island was full of first time experiences and I was able to meet so many people who treated me like family. I am truly thankful and blessed to have developed relationships on the island that will last forever. However, when it came to my basketball career/experience, it was completely different than what I expected it to be. From the moment I got there as a 17 year old fresh out of high school I saw how most, if not all, of the players on the team had a strong dislike for practice, games, or anything involving the basketball program. This was extremely shocking to me, but I would quickly find out why everyone had such a draining approach. As the year went on it was obvious to me that the head coach of the program did not play any high level basketball himself because he lacked not only having a feel for how to teach the game, but also how to read and understand his players. My freshman year I was dealing with a gruesome groin injury which hindered me for my first two years at the university. During this timespan, there were multiple occasions where the coach would accuse me of faking my injury which, as someone who loves and respects the game of basketball, made me feel absolutely disrespected and frustrated. I really struggled mentally my first two years because at no point did I ever feel comfortable enough to have a real conversation with my coach about anything. Any time I would make an attempt to meet with my coach and express any feelings I had been struggling with, he would just manipulate the conversation in a manner that allowed him to talk and me to remain quiet and listen. After making a few attempts and getting the same results, I told myself that I would never try having a real conversation with him again because it does absolutely nothing. There have been many players who have transferred because of this fact. Fast forward to my 4th year in the program where I felt like it would finally be my time to showcase my talents for the island, and I was still being neglected of my opportunity. So much that uber drivers would even ask me why I don't play when I am so much better than most of the people playing ahead of me. Around August of 2020 myself and a few other seniors at the time decided to contact the athletic director to express our concerns as a team about our coach. As players, all we wanted to do was to win and it was clear that we would have another average season if we did not try to get a new head coach. Although Eran Ganot had a very successful first year as head coach for the program, I found out that the reason he succeeded was because the previous staff got relieved and he was left with a bunch of high level players that he had no part in recruiting. Even the players from that 2015-16 team have told me that nobody respected or listened to Ganot because he didn't know how to coach so they took it into their own hands to make themselves successful. If you look at the conference records from 2016-2021 there is nothing that would put the team above a 4th place finish. Ganot has a measly record of 42-40 during conference play since 2016. As players, we also did not feel like Ganot was physically and mentally stable enough to be head coach of a program because he already had to go on medical leave for a few months during the 2019-2020 season. After gathering all 15 players and conducting an in person meeting with athletic director Dave Matlin, there was absolutely no action taken on his part. All he did was inform Eran that we met with him. This was extremely frustrating because our season ended up being exactly what we predicted it would be..AVERAGE. In all of my

years at Hawaii, not once did we make it past the **first round** of the Big West Tournament. After another first round exit in spring 2021 I decided that I wanted to transfer. After entering the transfer portal, nobody within the athletic department contacted me for an exit interview or even bothered to ask me why I wanted to transfer. This truly showed me how little they cared. After transferring to Azusa Pacific University I am finally able to play freely without the noose of an anxious head coach around my neck. I am currently playing the best basketball of my life. Although I am saddened with how my career turned out at Hawaii, I am also thankful because I was able to learn and grow through my tribulations.

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Keleah-Aiko Kolo'i Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:16:49 AM

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Aloha Senators ,

My name is Keleah-Aiko Kolo'i, I was an athlete on the Women's Basketball Team at the University of Hawaii at Manoa during the 2016-2017 season. I am writing this email today to share my experiences and encounters with Coach Laura Beeman and Athletic Director David Matlin. The information provided below was also shared with the AD along with Lois during the 2017 school year. There was also an incident where I emailed Amanda Patterson kindly asking for my situation or any type of information about me to NOT be released to the press. I was informed about FERPA and told her that I would like my situation not be released to the media at all but Coach Beeman had mentioned myself in 2 separate interviews. My mother then emailed the Athletic Director and a few other on the Athletic board about the incident and nothing happened.

Myself, my mother, my father and my Uncle (Mufi Hannemann) met with the AD along with Lois Manin to discuss the way I was being treated and in hopes of there being changes for the future athletes not only in the Womens Basketball Department, but for all athletes in general that devoted their years to UH. It's a shame that because the Athletic Director over looks the wrong doings and actions that the coaches show their players, it forces student athletes to either transfer, quit or end up having to medically retire on some occasions. I am a local girl who grew up playing basketball, volleyball and softball. I admired former UH Athletes like Destiny King and especially Kalei Adolpho because she was a local girl representing her state at the collegiate level and always dreamed of being just like her when I grew up. Once that dream finally came true, it just as quickly came to an end because there wasn't anyone looking out for me and my well being.

I am sharing what I went through because I know there are young people growing up in Hawai'i and dreaming of one day wearing a jersey that says "Hawai'i" in big bold letters on their chest, representing the state they call home and playing the sport they love more than anything. If changes aren't made, more and more student athletes will refuse to commit or end up being forced to end their career or take it elsewhere for the sake of their health mentally and physically.

Thank you so much for your time, please see below for a thorough breakdown of my experience.

Mahalo,
Keleah-Aiko Kolo'i

To whom it may concern,

The letter below are statements to the best of my knowledge and are of my own thoughts and feelings only. I thank you in advance for your time.

- About a week prior to the Green and White scrimmage which was held on Friday, October 21st, I injured my knee at practice. I rehabbed for a week and was put back into full contact 2 days before re-injuring my knee again during the Green and White scrimmage.
- The day of the Green and White scrimmage, Trainer Erin said she was letting Coach Beeman know that I was good to play. I asked Erin if she was sure and she said "KK, you've been back full contact for 2 days now and you've been ok, you're good to play." I did not want to tell Erin I was afraid to play because I did not want to seem undependable and/or make Coach Beeman upset at me. Later, Dr. Inouye asked me how my knee was feeling and I told her it was still hurting a little. She asked if I was playing in tonight's game and I mentioned that Erin said I would be. Dr. Inouye suggested I didn't and said she was going to mention it to Erin.
- During warm ups, Coach Beeman asked me if I was ready to go and how I was feeling. I did tell Coach Beeman that I was ok, I was ok again, because I was afraid she would think I was undependable. During the scrimmage, I was running down on defense and as I approached Sarah, she told me to guard a girl at the top of the key and lightly pushed me in that direction but I was still moving in the forward motion and stepped on her foot. That was when I badly injured my knee again, the pain was so unbearable. Erin helped me off the court and Dr. Inouye came to check on me, asking me if it was my knee again, I told her yes and it was extremely sore. She had me lay on my back and she inspected my knee. I was put on crutches and was told by Trainer Erin to elevate and ice my knee throughout the weekend. The whole weekend in my dorm I did what I was told to do.
- On Monday following the Green and White scrimmage and my injury, I went to see Erin. She observed my knee and advised me to remain on my crutches, stay off of my knee as much as possible, ice and stretch. I continued to see Erin to do therapy and rehab my knee week after week.
- Shortly after I had an MRI done on my knee. The results read to me by a Kaiser Dr. stated I had a partial tear in my patellar tendon. I was advised to continue rehab and work on building the muscles around my knee. I was not advised to have surgery done to fix the tear at that time. This MRI was the first of many more MRI's to follow.
- I continued to do as instructed and did begin to build the muscles around my knee and rehab. After a couple weeks passed, I was finally able to run and start full contact practices wearing a knee brace. Slight pain was still present and at times it would be a little more intense than others. I continued to ice and do treatment after practices.
- I sat out of the games against UH Hilo, USC and Bakersfield. My first game was on November 18th against Youngstown. I felt good and felt I played really well. There was slight pain still in my knee but I was ok and played with my knee brace on. The adrenaline of being on the court and scoring and just playing my game subsided the pain. After the game I iced my knee and continued to receive treatment. Towards the end of season we played UC Riverside and I tweaked my knee again when waiting for a rebound. A player from the other team sat on the outside of my knee trying to box me out and instead of my knee popping out, it felt like it slightly popped inwards. I fell to the ground and walked it off, then continued to play. After the game I informed Erin about it and she gave an ice bag and told me come in to continue doing rehab.

- Throughout the remainder of the season I continued to play with my knee brace on, played and practiced through the pain and continued to rehab and received treatment. I continued to inform Erin of the pain in my knee after games and practice. I was instructed to continue rehab and treatment. At the end of the season, the pain in my knee had increased and I told Erin I wanted to discuss the possibilities of getting surgery done on my knee to fix the tear and be ready for next season.

"Prior" to my surgery, Coach Beeman asked me if I wanted to see about Red Shirting my sophomore year or did I think I would be ready to play? I told Coach Beeman I didn't want to Red Shirt and I will work hard on rehabbing and be ready for next season. Coach Beeman said ok. At no time during this conversation with Coach Beeman or after was I given the option to Red Shirt IF I was not 100% by season and then spend my sophomore year continuing treatment, rehabilitation and recovery. I truly felt I could do it, that I could be 100% ready to play my 2017-18 season. Unfortunately, my knee did not heal the way I hoped it would. Throughout all the therapy, rehab and treatment, I continued to endure the pain and kept on going.

- On May 1st, 2017 Trainer Erin took me to get the surgery done on my knee at Kaiser Moanaloa. After the surgery was done, Trainer Erin dropped me off at my dorm and gave instructions on what to do to take care of my knee.

- May 12th, 2017 I went home to Lana'i to spend my summer break with my family. My mother arranged for me to rehab at Venture Therapy Lana'i with certified trainers and therapists. **Dr. ***** who** performed the surgery on my knee approved the referral for my sessions to begin. I was scheduled an hour **three times a week** for the entire month I was on Lana'i. I also did stretches and exercises on my own at home.

- After every therapy session, I needed to take a picture of my weight while standing on a scale to send to Trainer Erin. I also needed to report my progress to her and I did.

- I returned to O'ahu on June 12th to start Summer School, I began physical therapy once a week at Kaiser Permanente while Trainer Erin was away on vacation. I also did rehab in the training room with Jason Goo.

- When Erin returned back from her vacation, I continued to do all the rehab and treatment with her and all that was required of me. Prior to me being cleared to start jogging the only cardio I could do was the arm bike.

- Around noon on July 10th, 2017 I got the phone call from my father that my grandmother (my moms mother) had passed away. I was asked to fly home to Lana'i on the next flight out. I informed TT and Coach Berry of the news and asked if I could fly home immediately to be with my family and say my good byes to my grandmother. Coach Beeman was away recruiting but I called her phone and left a message.

- The loss of my grandmother had hit me really hard. **All throughout** the year she was sick and I was not there to spend time with her. Times when I was able to fly home and be with her, **we would** watch all of my games that were televised. The fact that I was born on my Grandmother's birthday made **it** even more special to me. I tried my hardest to grieve and mourn on my own away from my family but I have to admit there were times that it was much harder than others.

- As soon as Coach Beeman returned from recruiting, I saw her Outside of Gym 2, that was when I informed her of my Grandmother's Celebration of Life being scheduled for Saturday, August 19th, 2017. She told me that was fine and to let her know if there was anything I needed. I explained how my flight home was being arranged for the 16th.

- Wednesday, August 16th, 2017 I flew home to Lana'i to help my family prepare for my Grandmother's Celebration of Life.
- On Sunday, August 20th I returned back to Oahu from attending my Grandmother's funeral. The next day on Monday, August 21st, the first day of school, I was informed by Coach Beeman that I was suspended indefinitely and she would let me know when I can get back on the team. Per Coach Beeman, the suspension was specifically due to me not informing her or Trainer Erin of leaving the island on Wednesday, August 16th 2017, for missing rehab the day I left and because she felt I was not committed to the team, that I am not where I'm supposed to be post surgery. Coach Beeman said I am not D1 committed. I tried explaining to her that I would never just leave without she knowing especially for my Grandmother's funeral which I told her outside Gym 2. I admitted to not telling Trainer Erin but I thought by me telling Coach Beeman that was enough.
- I was side blinded by this and tried explaining to Coach Beeman but there was nothing I could say. She pulled out a paper and told me I needed to sign it, said I can look it over first and sign it but I was so upset and hurt that unfortunately I didn't read it first and just signed the paper and left.
- I felt I did everything I was told to do regarding rehab, treatment and work outs. The only day I missed an appointment with Erin was the day I left O'ahu to attend my Grandmother's funeral.
- Wednesday, September 13th Coach Beeman called me into her office for a meeting. That's when she said "playing for me is not an option anymore KK." She said she feels I don't have D1 commitment, I did not meet my goal of dropping down to 180 pounds before my surgery and said I just have been gaining weight since then and felt I haven't been serious about being here. She mentioned transferring me to HPU, Chaminade or UH Hilo to finish school and play basketball at the D2 level because I don't have D1 commitment. I told Coach Beeman I didn't know what I wanted to do. She told me to take a couple days to think about it. I felt so hurt and depressed due to the fact that I had let her and my team down. How was I supposed to call home and tell my parents of this devastating news? How was supposed to tell my mother this while she is still mourning the loss of her mother? I started to feel that what **Coach Beeman** said was true, I was not good enough to play basketball. **I started to think** I shouldn't have done the surgery on my knee because it held me back from being in shape, I gained more weight and I was not able to work out and practice. So many emotions of failure was weighing down on me. I was very angry at the fact of the accusations being put upon me when I felt I gave it my all playing the entire season injured and not 110% **healthy**. I played my heart out from the first home game season opener to the last game of the season. I felt I contributed a lot more to the team injured than other players who were healthy. I played a total of 27 Games and made 5 starts as a freshman, it wasn't to my full potential but I played the best I could play. I felt that if Coach Beeman felt I wasn't contributing to the team and wasn't D1 committed, why did she trust me to play "injured" more than girls who were healthy? All these questions and more was truly now heavily on my shoulders. Knowing my teammates were soon to take our team photos for the upcoming season without me made me feel left out and so down.
- On Friday, September 15th at 12 noon, I met with Coach Beeman and told her I didn't want to transfer and that I wanted to stay at UH and finish school. I told her I was done with basketball and didn't want to play anymore because I didn't want to put

myself through anymore pain both physically and mentally. That's when Coach Beeman offered me to be Medical Disqualified. She said that she was concerned about me finishing school and that I would be able to stay at UH until I graduate and get my degree but I would not be able to play ball anymore. Coach Beeman told me that after the Medical DQ is submitted to the NCAA and they approve it, I will be able to stay at UH through my scholarship as long as I keep my GPA up, work 20 hours in the office and could still get treatment and rehab to help with my knee. Because I felt there was no other way of me keeping my scholarship so I can graduate from UH nor play basketball anymore, the only option I had was to accept the filing for Medical DQ option.

******But the question in my head was if Coach Beeman was so concerned about my Health and Well Being why was the offer to be Medically Disqualified not mentioned in our first meeting? I was only told that I was not D1 committed and that I should consider being transferred.

I've only done 8-9 weeks of physical therapy, rehab and treatment which after truly sitting and thinking about all of this and discussing my situation with my parents, I don't feel is enough time for me to fully recover from this major surgery. Although I thought I would be ready to play and perform, I am not, I feel I need more time to recover.

It has been a life long dream to play college ball as a UH Wahine for as long as I can remember and feel truly blessed with the opportunity to do so. I represent my school, my team, my family, my state of Hawai'i with pride. I would never do anything intentionally to take that away. Why was I not offered the chance to Red Shirt my sophomore year after realizing my knee was not 100% so that I can have more time heal properly and receive more treatment. I truly believe I've done everything I was instructed to do from rehab, treatment, show up on time to practices, open gym, weights, abide by the team rules, keep up my grades, help Coach Beeman and Coach Locke communicate with a potential recruit who she and her sisters are close friends of mine. Certain times I didn't feel comfortable contacting my friend because I didn't want to cloud her judgement on which college to attend, to play at UH where I'm at or attend the same college her sisters are playing ball at.

I played all of my Freshman year in college to the best of my potential, though the pain in my knee and shoulder and truly felt I made an impact on the team considering my injuries. With all this being said, I feel I deserve the chance to have a full year to recover like my fellow teammates who Red Shirted their freshman year to heal properly and be 110% ready to play. I was in compliance with all that was asked of me and I kindly ask for the opportunity to Red Shirt my sophomore year so I can have the chance as well to be 110% both physically and mentally ready to play come next season.

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Eletise Family Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:25:13 AM

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Marie & Nofu Eletise [REDACTED] Honolulu, Hawaii [REDACTED]

January 6, 2022 RE: Michael Eletise and UH Football

To Whom It May Concern, In 2021, our son, Michael Eletise, has been in the fight of his life for his physical and mental health, and he has done it with little help from the University of Hawaii Football Coaches. We have reached out many times to ask for help, looking for support and has been disappointed time and time again. He gave all he had to UH, and when he was injured, they did not help. Before Spring Ball in 2021, Michael went into his coach's office and shared that he needed help. He was functioning but was depressed, struggling in school, his sleep was off, he lost his focus, and he was more anxious. He played football well but everywhere else in his life suffered. Coach Bennett said that he would do something and let Coach Graham know. Two weeks went by, and Michael was struggling more. After the first week of spring ball, he went into the coach's office and resigned from the school, football, and anything to do with UH. Coach Graham wished him the best, and that was it. He was two classes short of graduation, and he dropped out so discouraged and disenchanted. He finally asked for help from his coaches, and no one listened. As parents, we listened and took action. We took Michael to a Dr. Kiefer at Brain Health Hawaii and got functional brain imagining done. Multiple brain scans revealed that Michael had Post Concussion Syndrome from playing Football. While not all of his concussions happened in his time at UH, some did. Dr. Kiefer lead us to work with the One Hit Away Foundation and Dr. Tanaka at KOS Integrative. Since May 2021, Michael has done hundreds of hours of Neuro Rehabilitation, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, and Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation. He has seen psychiatrists, ENT doctors, and even sleep specialists. To date, the University of Hawaii Football or UH Athletics has not helped with one penny of Michael's physical treatment, even through that is part of his athletic scholarship. After we sought treatment and began a healing plan for Michael, we felt called to reach out again to Coach Graham. We sincerely hoped for him to help us get Michael back into school and see if UH could help us pay for some of Michael's football injuries. On June 14, we met with Coach Graham in his office. While it seemed like a good meeting, many promises were made and very little kept. He directed us to see Dr. Sladky, the UH Team Doctor, and that one of his staff would send us insurance information. On June 21, we got an email from the office with a phone number for the Mayo Clinic. I guess they thought we could reach out to them. Honestly, how was that going to help? We couldn't even pay for what was happening on the island. On June 22, we had a meeting with Dr. Skadky to have Michael Medical Retired from football. A point to note, UH Medical Services billed our HMSA insurance for that appointment. (It cost us to get Michael medically retired.) UH Athletics offered to scholarship Michael for one additional semester so he could finish classes; we were thankful for that. They asked that Michael work in the football department. He showed up and did what was asked of him for a few weeks, but then they just didn't seem to need or want him. He had medical treatments six days a week, and if he could not help them during the specific times they needed, he was useless to them. There was no communication or working with or around these appointments. He was ghosted. Since that time, we have emailed and or texted Dr. Sladky, Coach Sam Bennett, and Coach Graham to try and get information about

how to get UH to help us pay for the treatment Michael needed for his Post-Concussion Syndrome. Sam Bennett has responded via text with promises a few times but never with actual information. When Michael registered for classes in the fall, we verbally told the Athletic staff, showed medical records, and wrote emails that his brain could not handle zoom classes. He was still put in one. The other type was asyncnicious (entirely online with no zoom). In his asyncnicious class, he did well. In the zoom class, he had to withdraw. Michael is still not graduated. He is signed up for a course in the spring of 2022, that we, his parents, are helping him pay for. (\$1864 was paid this week so he could finish.) We wanted you to hear all the details, but ultimately, we believe that the University of Hawaii Football Department and the UH Athletic Department by default, did not help an injured player who reached out for the help in the way that they should have. There was no clear path for help, even when they knew there was a problem. It has been beyond challenging and disappointing. We love our home and our island. We were so proud that Michael could play for UH, but that love and appreciation has died as our son has struggled to recover. We don't want UH Football to end, but we would like to see things put in place to help our players thrive, especially those injured. This coaching staff doesn't seem to be looking out for them. Sincerely, Marie & Nofo Eletise If desired or needed, we can submit documentation and copies of emails, texts, medical bills, and medical diagnoses for everything.

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Parent Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:10:06 AM

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First, I would like to say thank you for hearing and helping my son through the past few months. I know young adults can be challenging when it comes to supporting some of their viewpoints all while encouraging critical thinking.

My husband and I have always supported our children to stand up for what they believe in. We also teach that sometimes speaking out can be a lonely process that can have undesirable outcomes. The past few weeks have taught Lenny Jo lessons that can only be taught by life and as a family we go through it together. We listen and validate but also encourage seeing both sides of the situation.

My son has played football all his life. He was picked up by a PIMA College (full scholarship) in 2017-2019, only coming home after junior college football was no longer offered there. He moved away from his home, not an easy choice for the children of Hawaii but we all know that there are times this is necessary. He has played under countless coaches and he knows the value of a GOOD leader. He has a work ethic like all of us in this family. He shows up for the job, sometimes begrudgingly, but we all have those days. He is a leader himself, a faithful son and friend. He rallies for the good and the difficult situations. I say this as a person, not as a mother. We still expect our children to be contributing members of society. I want him to be a good human, I could care less about his football career.

I say all of that to share this. He recently shared with his father that his name had been taken off the locker he has at the UH campus. While this seemed to be an outcome that Leonard and his father anticipated and prepared emotionally and mentally for, I was slightly bothered. Not enough to write an email but as I watched the morning news I became incensed.

This Coach Gram speaks of bonuses for bowl games, inclusion in the football team and how he "understands that not everyone can be appeased". All of this despite players being surveyed, expressing feelings of low moral and exclusive treatment to specific teams of players. Calling players derogatory names is not a way to "coach" players although that seemed to be a common occurrence. Forcing chapel as well, a practice that I know violates civil rights.

So now, this simple act of removing his name from the locker room seems retaliatory to me. I could understand if Lenny Jo was difficult, poor performer, tardy or missed practices. Yet I see him showing up DAILY despite all that has been happening. I understand that both the game of football as well as the political game can have sore losers but this is unfortunate and I cannot at least say SOMETHING. I am not trying to change an outcome but merely letting the University Of Hawaii know that I see. I see what is happening and it is not ok.

I want to thank you for reading this, I know it was long. I love my son and he will continue to thrive with the help of his family as well as his football peers. I still believe what he did was right and true

to him. That's the best we can leave our children with right? To thine own self be true.

I hope UH does better for the students and Faculty in the coming years. I hope the choices for future coaches align with Hawaii's culture and values. It is clear that the choice of this Gram guy does not.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions and again, mahalo for your time and care.

Respectfully,
Melissa Luana Natividad

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: UH Parent Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:09:44 AM

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To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Tina Thomas. I am the mother of Derek Thomas, #48 for the Hawaii Rainbow Warriors Football Team. I recently posted a message on the Warriors Facebook page, when players were transferring out, and people were wondering why. My post is attached. I gave a small account on how my son was treated and how we were ignored even when seeing this coach five feet away in the hotel lobbies. Within minutes after making this post, I received a private message from the wife of head coach Todd Graham, Penni Graham. This message is also attached to this email. Her words cut deeply when she said "I'm sorry that your son didn't work hard enough". She isn't a coach, therefore she should have absolutely no idea about my son and how hard he works. I can only assume that my son has been discussed within the home of Todd Graham, that also has a son on the team, a son as a coach, and several other family members that are always on the field. Did they too hear this conversation that should have been privately held between my son and his coach? A coach that wouldn't give him the time of day for two years.

My daughter responded to Penni Graham privately. Penni Graham took a screenshot of the message and sent it to my son Derek, and several other people on the Hawaii Facebook page. Derek was confused because he was not aware of my original message. After that, Penni Graham tried to tell Derek that she never said anything to me. All of these messages are saved. I took down my original Facebook post because I felt attacked and my son was being bombarded with messages from Penni.

After my son started playing for Hawaii, his dad and I attended almost every game. Other coaches would personally thank us for the support. Todd Graham never said anything to us, and tried very hard not to make eye contact, even wearing sunglasses inside the hotel lobby at the Utah game as the Jump's, Derek's dad, and myself greeted the team as they headed out of the hotel conference room to load the busses.

I've seen a very obvious change in this program since we first visited in December 2018. At that time, we were shown a Hawai'i culture that we all fell in love with. That has changed. I don't see this love for the Hawaii football culture anymore. For Derek's birthday last year, we took him to a ukulele shop on Waikiki and let him pick out a beautiful instrument. He was teaching himself to play and was getting pretty good. Last year at the Wyoming game, he was playing his ukulele for 6 of us that went to that game in support. Todd Graham and Dan Phillips both told him to stop playing because it's f**king annoying. Dan Phillips even walked up to us and said you have a good son here but he needs to leave the ukulele at home. It was clearly an insult and Derek never took it on another trip. At the airport in Honolulu, Todd Graham was overheard calling Hawai'i a third-world country because the vending machine didn't have Dr.Pepper.

I have worried endlessly about my son and how I have seen a change in him. I've worried about the verbal and mental abuse he has suffered. I've seen the heartache he's been through. These boys leave from home and they need a coach that they can talk to. A mentor, a trusted experienced adult to help navigate the stress and hard work of being a student athlete. They didn't get this with Todd Graham. They got insults, name calling, belittling. Derek's Birthday was on game day this year, the one game that I was unable to attend because of work. His friend bought a box of donuts and brought it to the hotel for Derek to share with teammates. When Derek walked into a meeting Phillips made comments about the P**SY eating donuts. This was said in front of all the players on the defense team. This was said to my son. These men shouldn't have the privilege of coaching our boys. My son is now finished with Hawaii football, but I hope and pray that the remaining players will have an opportunity for fairness. My family and I will always be a Warrior. We love Hawai'i. I'm asking for change here. Please bring a coaching staff that will embrace this amazing state. Thank you.

Tina Thomas



For two years I've kept silent. Derek's dad and I attended almost every single game. Coach Rolovich and his staff used to personally thank fans for always making the trips and being supportive. For the past two years, the coach has done EVERYTHING to avoid having to make any attempts to talk to any of us. We're always at the buses upon arrival at the outrigger and when they leave for the games.

Tg and his minion phillips have verbally belittled and degraded my son and these other players. My son was even told " they've wanted him out since they got there".

Some of you men may say, if you can't take the heat, then get out of the kitchen. Well it goes so much deeper than that. When you're a D1 athlete, you work your ass off from early childhood

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Some of you men may say, if you can't take the heat, then get out of the kitchen. Well it goes so much deeper than that. When you're a D1 athlete, you work your ass off from early childhood to make it to that point. My son had a poster board on his bedroom door that he had when he was young, called goals, which included playing college D1 football and playing in the NFL. It's true that these men have the capability to ruin those dreams. They said they would, and for two years I watched him go from starter to third string. More than once he approached the coaches and asked why, what do i need to do, please tell me. He was NEVER given a meeting on why and he was told this isn't about him. Putting a starting athlete that loves the game, on the sidelines is like putting a top surgeon in a room full of plastic scissors and paperdoll cutouts. His

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a top surgeon in a room full of plastic scissors and paperdoll cutouts. His professional career may be crushed, but his spirit isn't because he knows who he is. He never became disrespectful and he continued to work hard, often staying late to clean locker rooms after a game. There was a time when I knew it was getting to him, but I told him to keep praying. I told him that he can sleep at night knowing that he cares about his team and himself. Tg hides behind that cap with a cross on it, but GOD sees and knows all! Don't question why these boys are transferring, but be thankful they did it before it's too late. I will always always be a Hawaii rainbow Warriors fan, but I do hope the upper-ups realized how the culture, the amazing Hawaiian football culture is changing, and do something before it's too late.

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Penni Leigh Graham

So sad that you choose social media format to destroy.



You can now message and call each other and see info like Active Status and when you've read messages.

Seriously required to say 6 feet away with mask. Everyone blames 'Todd for Covid restrictions. If you knew anything about him but you don't and I've never taken any time to communicate with him. So blatantly wrong.



You've blocked Penni Leigh Graham's Facebook account

You can't message or call them in this chat, and you won't receive their messages or calls.

Unblock

Something's wrong



Penni Leigh Graham

nim. So blatantly wrong.
I'm sorry your son didn't
work hard enough.



Seriously Penni?? What
about the naysayers that
you posted about. These
boys have been put
through pure hell. And
I've watched my son
suffer because of your
husband. There is a
reason why these boys
are transferring out. GET
A CLUE



This stuff just makes me

You've blocked Penni Leigh Graham's
Facebook account

You can't message or call them in this
chat, and you won't receive their
messages or calls.

Unblock

Something's wrong

7:56



Penni Leigh Graham

suffer because of your husband. There is a reason why these boys are transferring out. GET A CLUE

This stuff just makes me so mad, because it is just a sickness in our society.

Everyone's transferring out there's 2000 people in the transfer portal!



You keep telling yourself that and I'll keep praying for you. Take care



You've blocked Penni Leigh Graham's Facebook account

You can't message or call them in this chat, and you won't receive their messages or calls.

Unblock

Something's wrong

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Parent Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:07:18 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing this letter on behalf of my son who was a starter for multiple years on the Hawaii football warriors. My son was born and raised on Oahu and is a 100% local boy who my wife and I thought would never leave Hawaii. After the third game of this season our son came home and said if Todd Graham is the head coach next year I'm going to transfer because he makes me hate football and I no longer love playing it under him. As a parent I was a fan of Hawaii football before my son played for them and I'm still a fan even after he left. This program will not survive if Todd Graham continues to be head coach and is able to mistreat these players and some assistant coaches. There's also a disconnect with him and the local culture that he will never understand. We also met with Dave Matlin to try and see what can be done but we were told that he will not get involved and the issues should be resolved between my son and coach Graham. So we basically got nowhere with Matlin. We also told him that if nothing is done a lot more players will transfer. My son met with Todd Graham at the end of the season to see if there was gonna be any changes offensively and was told that it will be the same staff but he will be more involved next season. I hope this letter helps the leaders of Hawaii make the right decision to save the Hawaii football warriors football team. Thank you for your time.

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Parent Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:10:31 AM

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Aloha,

To whom this may concern: We are writing this out of our Love & Appreciation for the University of Hawaii Ohana to bring to light some of the issues surrounding the football team so that we can quickly find solutions to redirect the ship to smoother waters.

1. During Covid Lockdown 2020 Summer Training Camp, our son never received meals on Multiple Occassions & went hungry.

- Suggested Solution: Set specific meal times, Provide nutritional meals, early treatment Covid protocol, group chat to inform players meal has arrived,

2. During COVID Lockdown 2020 Summer Training Camp, our sons food was left on the floor outside of his room out in the hallway when he wasn't in his room. They never called or texted him to let him know his food had arrived. This happened on multiple occassions.

3. When the entire team went on lockdown (15 days for Kilohana) 2021, our son tested positive for Covid & wasn't properly cared for. Medical staff & Coaches missed multiple meals. Did not check on my son everyday to make sure he was fine. The food that was provided to the team lacked nutritional value. Example: One nights dinner was 1 frozen burrito & a small bag of chips.

- Suggested Solution: Check in on the kids daily, Nutritional wholesome meals, early Covid treatment protocol.

4. A player on the team told me Coach Todd Graham often used derogatory racist slangs toward many of the players. Example:

- "Porch monkey" was one used towards the African American kids. (worse than being called the N word.)

- "Pineapple Pickers" towards the Polynesian kids.

- Suggested Solution: Should never be tolerated, Counseling.

5. Players told me the relationship between Todd & his son Bo is like a soap Opera. Bo Graham often spoke negatively of his father to his offensive players. He would challenge his father's credibility & mumble things under his breath in disgust when he didn't agree with what Todd Graham was saying in team meeting's. This would undermine team chemistry, morale, respect, etc. Bo told his brother Michael Graham in front of the team " I hope Dad treats you better than he treated me" referring to his mother & father divorcing when Bo was younger. Todd Graham's sons are everything to him, which it should be. But not at the detriment of the University of Hawaii's Football team chemistry, morale, respect, etc.

- Suggested Solution: Family issues should stay at Home, Councilman.

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Parent Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:20:37 AM

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing this on behalf of my son who had played under Coach Graham.

He was on a scholarship and was looking forward to the new season and ready to compete. Then things changed when Covid came about. My son noticed that towards the beginning of fall practice that his position Coach Bo Graham started to pressure the guys and tell them they have to take the vaccine in order to be a part of the team. When the guys would ask what options they had they were given none. They were told that they have no rights, and just need to sign up if they want to play. I would hear things from my son regarding how they were handling the situation and it just seemed like they were coming off and intimidating, and manipulating the athletes. With the previous coaches there was communication and relationships that had been formed to where these guys were treated as young men, they led by example. My son has played football for many years and played under Coach Rich Miano, Nick Rolovich and worked with Coach June Jones, he knows what an example of a good coach is, and it was apparent that this Coach was not.

My son had reached out to Coach Graham & Coach Bo to ask for a meeting to discuss what options he had regarding the vaccine, they just ignored and dismissed him. It was apparent that they didn't care. Coach Graham would tell the guys to have respect but they displayed the opposite. I could tell my son was losing his passion.

So the week fall camp was about to start the coaches really started to pressure and threaten the players to take the vaccination. I remember the night before my son came home from a team meeting and very discouraged, he was told that if he didn't sign up to take the shot he's off the team. My son had to make a personal, religious and medical decision that he had continually asked to talk to the coach about and they disregarded him. When he showed up the next day in a meeting he was thrown out and told not to return with no reason. The way these adult coaches handled this situation and how they treated him uncalled for and a poor example. My son was kicked out of all team meetings and position meetings and fall camp with no explanation. When he showed up to the locker room the trainers were the ones who told him they took him off the roster.

When you watch your son work so hard everyday of the week leaving the house at 5am coming home after 7pm all for practice and training and school and to have never missed a practice (only due to catching covid from someone on the team) putting in the hours of school work, etc. This was his passion and dream to play for a D1 school and get a degree to better himself and his future so one day he could give back to his community, now to have it stripped away for no reason. I feel like this coach came in and did for himself, his two sons and didn't care about the team. It's too bad it all ended like this but I'm proud to say that my son will take this and learn from it. He will not allow this told hold him back and he will move forward.

Thank you

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: UH Player Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:05:33 AM

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January 7, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in regards to the current situation of the University of Hawaii Football team.

My son has played for the UH Warriors for 4 years. I am disheartened by all that is currently going on with the football team under Coach Graham. I write this letter with some hesitance as my son's scholarship is on the line; however, I felt that a point of view from a parent was needed.

My son has played football since the age of 4 years old. We watched his love of the sport grow as he played flag, pop-warner, and high school football. He was beyond blessed to receive an offer from UH under Coach Nick Rolovich. I remember him coming home from UH's football camp in his junior year and him yelling, "Mom, Coach Rolo offered me a scholarship!" His dream of playing D1 football had come true! In a sport that is not predominate of Asian athletes, we were proud of him for attaining his goals through dedication, hard work, and perseverance.

My son's first two years on the team were awesome. He enjoyed going to practice every day, hanging out with his boys on and off the field, going to meetings and studying film, and playing for UH. He had an excellent position coach that taught him so many things. He told me, "Mom, Coach Batoon is so good.....He will take me to the League." This was his next dream, to play in the NFL.

His first year playing under Graham was challenging. For what he had told me, he was not learning under his position coach. It appeared that practices were hard, but the players in his group were not going over techniques and fundamentals. Lots of yelling from coaches, but no teaching or showing. My son told me that his position coach could not go over film well and that he (son) could not even take notes in the meetings because nothing new was being taught. He was disappointed that he felt like he knew more than his D1 position coach. My son had to go to coach Graham to get one-on-one sessions to go over plays.

Second year, the position coach was switched; however, things on the team were getting

worse. My son does not share much with us usually so when he does talk, I know it must be weighing on him deeply. I would ask him "How was practice?" The replies started from "Okay" then towards the end, he would say "It sucked!" He has never ever complained about practices in all his football career until playing under coach Graham. My son wasn't smiling, was always moody, and I had to 'walk on eggshells' around him.

My son has told me about the verbal abuse he hears every day and how coach Graham treats players differently. Saying it nicely.....If you're not a starter then forget it. If you're on the injury reserve team, then forget it. It appears that the verbal abuse demeans, disrespects, and disregards them as players of the UH team. It did not promote confidence, pride, cohesiveness or teamwork. It was said that coach Graham invited only starters to his residence. My son, although a starter, was not one of them.

Towards the end of this season, I believe my son 'had enough' playing under coach Graham. He told me that he had kept playing for the team and his brothers this whole season up to now, but that he was not going to play another snap for Graham. He was taken off the UH roster without being informed first. As a parent, I was devastated! How could UH do this to an athlete who had represented the school and Hawaii proudly for 4 years? How could coach Graham do this to him?

I think I was more disheartened than my son after he was off the team. I didn't know how unhappy he was during these last two years of playing for coach Graham. This is what my son told me the day after coach took him off the roster: "Mom, you know, I woke up this morning and was happy. I smiled to myself and I felt happy that I don't have to go to another practice for him." Tears flowed in my eyes and it still does as I type this letter to you.

After taken off the roster, he has been offered by another D1 college, but he did not put himself in the transfer portal. He took many things into consideration including graduating soon, family and friends, and future. My son's football dreams and passion has been crushed. I, as a parent, am torn and feel helpless as I cannot do anything for him. Can there be a light at the end of this dark tunnel, soon?

Thank you for taking the time to listen to a once proud alumni but now disheartened UH supporter.

Mahalo,
Anonymous

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Player Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:06:52 AM

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To whom it may concern Per player who wants to remain anonymous: Its bad. Worst coaches of my entire life. Not just being petty but knowledge wise. I know more then coach figg. Last year we had the same problem cause cruz was my coach and he was worst he couldn't even break down film. And graham is a sociopathic liar. He says all these things and acts like hes all about God but if you heard the shit he says or the way he coaches youd think its the complete opposite. He has favorites and does the most to play who he wants to play. "He treats his players like his tools". And dont get me started with his son. Really? Backing up kb? This guy gets bullied on special teams how is he gonna play stud which is basically a hybrid linebacker. He moves all the local boys to different positions. Graham is chaos on game days. All he does is swear and hes constantly mad the entire game. Hes threatened my teammates with playing time. And i quote he has said "do what your told or you wont play another snap" "hes told gene dont talk back or you can kiss your senior year good bye". Worst coach of my life and he is for most of my teammates. Everyone doesnt like how he runs shit. If you arent agreeing with him or if someone talks back to him He will just get rid of them simple as that. If something isnt going his way he throws a fit. When we were playing colorado state this past game and they were catching up in the 4th He was being a baby and getting all mad. He said "we are gonna lose this game" and DT had to say"thats a great fucking attitude you have coach". He talks shit about his own players constantly. "He is dogshit" "he will never go to the league" he talks shit about other coaches and other teams. That is why all the coaches are in fear of him and do everything he says and doesnt question it. Also probably why coaches dont know how to teach or know anything for that matter cause they all just go off what graham says. Ppl are gonna see. After this season theres most likely gonna be some big changes. Starters will leave. I dont wanna speak in the thing cause im not home but graham has threatened players with their playing time "stop talking back or imma take away your senior year" "do as i say or you wont play another snap" you can tell everyone that i said this and everything i sent you before^ You can ask the other players but me and a lot of others can truthfully say graham has killed the love and passion for football Wanna know whats crazy. The love i had for football i dont enjoy it like i used to and maybe thats just cause him and the way he coaches and had us practicing but i wouldnt feel the same motivation if i was anywhere else. I came to UH with a chip on my shoulder because UH was my only offer out of highschool. I felt like when i got to UH i was the best man coverage db as a 17 yr old. Id always show out in one on ones. My whole motivation was playing in front the people of this island. I wanted everyone to know anyone from hawaii can do it no matter your ethnicity, size, weight, speed it doesnt matter. I played most of my games at 170lbs and ppl think "hes to light to play d1 football" all it is is a mindset. I felt so much better at man coverage and even tackling as a

redshirt freshman then i was this past season. Playing in front of my parents and this island was why i played football and for everyone who doubted me. No one believed i could make it to d1 nor actually play not even my own mom. And now that ive done what ive done im happy to move on and have no regrets. I get dms all the time from asian athletes saying im a inspiration and i think thats my purpose in life.

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Solomon Matautia
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 11:54:01 AM

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Aloha David Matlin,

My name is Solomon Matautia, I was on the football team from 2015-2019. Through my experience I seen first hand how football players can struggle with mental health issues. During my time at UH I personally struggled with mental health issues. There were times where problems I was dealing with were too overwhelming. It was affecting my performance in the classroom and more importantly on the the football field. I am not the only one who struggles from mental health issues. I lost my brother Scheyenne Sanitoa from mental health issues. I do not want to lose another brother, so this is not something I take lightly.

When Coach Rolovich was our head coach, he understood the culture in Hawaii. He experienced all the amazing things about this program as a player and showed it to us as our coach. He loved us and cared for us and that's how we became a 10 win team. When I speak to my brothers who are currently on the team, that is not the case with Todd Graham. What he is doing to the players and staff is MENTAL ABUSE. Over the past two years I have only heard negative things from the players and staff. Todd Graham has become a dictator to this program.

I am reaching out to you because I know that the players or staff will not speak up about this. I am speaking up because I know what its like to struggle with mental health issues. I know what my brothers are going through. I do not want to lose another brother. Something needs to be done! Please do not over look this email.

Sincerely,
Solomon Matautia

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Fwd: Testimony from Strong Rainbow Warrior Supporter
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 12:00:36 PM

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To whom it may concern:

It's troubling to see that state of University of Hawaii Football. As a long time fan and as an affiliated member of the program, it's disappointing to hear direct allegations of what's transpiring in the program. From what I've heard and what you'll hear through testimony, stories seem to be consistent across the board. Stories ranging from mistreatment of players, name calling, lack of respect and lack of communication. All in which are completely unacceptable and should not be tolerated at any level in any sport.

It's evident on the field, that players cannot have open communication with their coaches. It almost seems as though its a dictatorship and an ego that drives some of the staff. In particular with both Todd and Bo Graham. Here are some of the instances.

1. **San Jose State Game:** As we know, this game was close. On multiple occasions you could see a disconnect between the staff and their players. Coaches were seen away from the players with no coaching. Coach Bo was nowhere to be found with in game adjustments. On top of that there were incidents with some of the O-Line asking to change some of the play calls based on what they see on the field. Coach Bo directly told them that to mind their own business and do what they are told. You could also hear Coach Todd tell some of them that if they don't do what they are told, they won't play. If you are any sort of Football fan you would be able to understand some of the concepts that Hawaii was running was absolutely ridiculous. During the game there was no short or intermediate passing game. Everything was made to go deep. It was evident that it wasn't working. Chevan Cordeiro, captain and QB of the team, expressed this on multiple occasions. At no point in time was he acknowledged or given the time of day. You could see the agitation growing and again some of the O-Line spoke up. Again, some of the members were told to sit back down ensuing a brief altercation which had to be settled on the sideline.

2. **San Diego State Game:** Another close battle in which Hawaii took the L. This is where things got very heated on the sideline. At one point in the game, Bo Graham asked Chevan Cordeiro what he saw on the field. Chevan was trying to explain what he thought would work. In the midst of the conversation, Coach Bo told him to do what the f*** he was told and run the plays he was calling. Coach Todd even stepped in which was a very animated conversation and escalated quickly. Some members of the O-Line had to step in to defend Chevan and you could see the frustration coming from everyone involved. How does a coach ask a player what he sees and then turns against him immediately after getting quality feed back? That's not coaching. That's ego. That's the inability to work together towards a common goal. It also shows that there was a lack of control and at that point ,nothing good could turn out of the situation. And why is Penny Graham trying to chime in and tell the players to calm down and show some respect? Is she a coach? How is the coaches wife even allowed on the sidelines? Mind boggling.

This isn't coaching. This is an inability to work together for the common good of the team. There is no trust amongst the players and once you lose that, its hard to get back. I do want to note, out of all the coaches on staff, THREE always stood out in a POSITIVE WAY. These coaches showed a genuine care for the team! Coach Abraham Elimimian, Coach Jacob Yoro and Coach Victor Santa Cruz. Every time I saw them, they were the most communicative coaches on staff. The sad part, they were instructed never to speak to media, never speak about the culture of the team and if you did, Coach Todd Graham would fire them. He basically made it known that you could not have relationships with people outside of the coaching staff. I find that completely ridiculous! These coaches deserve more and deserve to be treated

with the same respect as others. They would never publicly come out and talk about this because of fear of losing their jobs. That to me constitutes a hostile work environment and should never be tolerated.

Everyone is looking for answers. Everyone wants this program to be successful. The University of Hawaii Football team is Hawaii's team. I don't know what repercussions will come out of this BUT our program deserves more. People talk about the transfers and its apart of football. The transfer portal is not something that just "happens". The players who left WANTED TO BE HERE. They bled Hawaii Football. Read their statements. Read between the lines. Did they thank Coach Todd Graham at all? If things were different, they wouldn't leave and I know this as a fact. The culture and what has transpired was the main reason why they wanted out. There's been pleas, letters and talks, yet nothing was ever addressed until now. And now, its too late. The only hope is to get to the root of the problem and address it ASAP. Because if we don't, Hawaii football will never be the same again. For the sake of this state, Hawaii Football Fans, Hawaii Football players both former and current...do what's right. Follow the facts. Follow your heart. Be proactive and find a resolution. We're all counting on it. It's because we love Hawaii Football.

Sincerely,

The Rainbow Warrior

From: [UH Hearing 1.7.22](#)
To: [WAM Committee](#)
Subject: Parent Testimony
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 12:24:57 PM

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TO: University of Hawaii Football program

Subject: Direction of the program

As an athlete from Hawaii who played collegiate football on the mainland and has a son that plays for the team today, it is disheartening to see the direction that the program has taken over the last 2 years under this coaching regime.

- Coach Graham's personality towards the players seems to be one of indifference, he says one thing and does another. He doesn't seem fully engrained to the Hawaii program or fully embraced the in local culture.
- He's a coach that has left programs in the past looking out for the best interest of himself and not his players. As coach you should have his players best interest at heart which is not the case for the Hawaii program.
- The viewpoint of some players is that the assistant coaches have no say as to personnel decisions on the field. Graham controls every aspect of the team.
- The players feel that the best athletes are not put on the field putting them in a position to win. When a player knows this, it affects their moral and effort and kills the enthusiasm for the game.
- Coach Graham has stated many times that he does not need this job. By stating that why would any UH football athlete put his heart and soul into this program.
- Coaching staff seemed confused on the side lines during the games in regard's to the personnel on the field and play calling both on offense and defense.
- When your Offensive Coordinator, who is Graham's son, is berated by the head coach in front of the players, how do players follow that coach knowing that all will be second guessed?
- That to me is the key issue. The assistant coaches lack the support and confidence of the players. How do you coach players who lack respect and enthusiasm when they know their position coaches don't get that support from the Head Coach.
- Coach Graham needs to lead by example and respect his players and coaches. Currently, I don't believe he has the confidence from the

players to move forward as an effective head coach for the University of Hawaii.