

30 June 2010

TO: Martin Rayner, Chair  
University of Hawaii at Manoa Faculty Senate (MFS)

FROM: David P. Ericson, Vice Chair  
MFS Committee on Administration and Budget (CAB)

SUBJECT: Level 3 Review of UHM's Office of Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education's Proposal to Reorganize the Pacific Biosciences Research Center (PBRC)

On 29 May 2010, CAB was alerted by the Senate Executive Committee's (SEC) liaison to CAB that the Office of Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education (OVCRGE) was moving ahead formally on its proposal to reorganize – in effect to “abolish” – the Pacific Biosciences Research Center (PBRC). This proposal was initially signaled in 2007 by the OVCRGE. The current notification to the SEC stipulated a 45-day response period by the MFS, as negotiated between the MFS and the UHM Administration as part of the policy concerning reorganizations.

The request for a response deadline was, therefore, set at 12 July 2010 by the OVCRGE. This deadline occurs during the “non-duty” summer period for most UHM I faculty, a time during which the MFS and CAB do not usually meet. In anticipation of possible Administrative action, CAB had sponsored an unanimously approved MFS resolution during the Senate meeting of 5 May 2010 requesting that the Administration refrain from formally moving forward on reorganizations during the faculty non-duty period in order to fulfill its shared governance responsibilities. Since the Senate/Administration agreement on the reorganization process made no reference to a summer “time out” for reorganizational proposals, Chancellor Hinshaw, in her e-mail communication of 18 May 2010 to incoming Senate Chair Rayner, declined to honor the Senate's request viewing it as a Senate attempt “...to unilaterally alter the terms of this agreement [and] would seem to violate the cooperative spirit in which it was adopted. Therefore, in the interest of sustaining our shared governance approach and collegial relationship, I feel it necessary to continue to work on such issues throughout the summer, just as we have in the past.”

Regardless of one's view concerning whether the Administration's formally moving forward on the PBRC reorganization during the summer when (1) the Manoa Faculty Senate does not meet, (2) CAB does not typically meet, (3) the SEC cannot take any final action in the name of the Senate, and (4) the Administration may seek final Regental action during the faculty non-duty period is ‘sustaining our shared governance approach and collegial relationship,’ CAB had a difficult decision to make in this review. Given that most faculty serving on CAB are either off-duty or have off-island summer commitments, CAB could decide to refuse to meet and provide no comment on the OVCRGE's proposal or else meet, as best it could, through smaller face-to-face gatherings and less than satisfactory e-mail

communications with physically absent committee members. The first option would undercut any appropriate notion of shared governance and CAB's important role in it, while the second option would deprive CAB of the wisdom of all fully-involved, physically-present members and require that available off-duty members sacrifice their time in service unrecompensed by the University. In service to the principle of shared governance, however, CAB decided at its emergency meeting of 3 June 2010 to proceed with its Level 3 review of the PBRC proposal in order to meet the 12 July 2010 deadline.

As part of its review, CAB members examined all relevant documents including the OVCRGE proposal, comments on the proposal by the wider campus community and extensive ones from PBRC, and the rejoinder to these from the OVCRGE. Available CAB (usually six of ten) members also met a total of four times during June 2010 including lengthy separate meetings with VCRGE Gary Ostrander (10 June) and five representatives from PBRC (15 June). In addition, CAB members (whether on campus or not) carried on an active and vigorous e-mail discussion so that the views of all participating could be heard and considered. Even though the time for consideration has been brief, CAB's deliberations have been intense and thorough.

### CAB's Findings

After canvassing the final considerations of off-island CAB members, CAB met for a final time on 22 June 2010 to conclude deliberations. As a result, five members of CAB agreed with the OVCRGE recommendation to reorganize ("abolish") PBRC, while four members opposed the recommendation (one member did not participate). This split vote and slim majority in favor of reorganizing PBRC was conditioned on the following claims of the OVCRGE proposal and verbal assurances by the VCRGE at our meeting together on 10 June:

- (1) The reorganization does not mean the retrenchment (loss of job) of any current PBRC faculty (tenured and non-tenure track) or staff member.
- (2) PBRC faculty members will be allowed to request a new home for their underlying position and the VCRGE will do everything to honor that request.
- (3) PBRC R-Classification faculty members will not be required to teach in their new home, if that new home is a teaching department.
- (4) PBRC grants and contracts will follow the PBRC Principal Investigator to his or her new home.
- (5) PBRC faculty will maintain their current office and, if appropriate, lab space.
- (6) The Kewalo Marine Lab is not a part of this reorganization (see CAB's recommendation below).

Were any one or more of these conditions absent in the OVCRGE proposal and the VCRGE verbal assurances, in the 10 June meeting, or were they to change in the future, CAB's overall support/opposition to the proposal might very well be different, most likely with increasing opposition to the proposal. Thus, we

recommend to the VCRGE that he take great care to ensure that these conditions are satisfied, if the proposal is accepted at higher levels.

### The CAB Majority Perspective

The five CAB members in favor of PBRC's reorganization note that UHM currently has too many units with too many dean-level administrators and their support staff. The majority considers PBRC as one of the weakest UHM units with no permanent director and a scattered focus that only recently has settled on the theme of "biodiversity" for its focus (and only after threat of dissolution). They also question whether biodiversity is a sustainable or important theme and likely to enhance the unit's productivity in the future.

They note that only a few new grants/contracts are moving towards developing the biodiversity theme in the last two years, while most researchers are continuing to do what they have always done (thus reinforcing a continuing scattered focus). In order to develop fully a biodiversity focus, several new hires would have to be made at high expense to the UHM budget at a time that the campus can ill afford it.

Moreover, the majority notes that the current PBRC faculty members enjoy an extremely high level of staff support, far beyond even larger research units on campus. While this has permitted PBRC to act nimbly when new grant opportunities emerge, staff resources might be more equitably used on campus, especially since PBRC is not considered to be a hugely productive research unit overall.

In addition, the majority notes that there is no reason that PBRC's current activities could not be undertaken by current PBRC members in other units on campus.

In sum, the CAB majority views PBRC as leaderless, without true focus as a research unit, and too expensive to maintain in its current form.

### The CAB Minority Perspective

The four CAB members opposed to PBRC's reorganization note that PBRC has a proud history and enjoys a national and international reputation. Over its existence, it has been a research incubator of the current JABSOM and the new UHM Cancer Center. Given time to develop its new (only two years old) theme of biodiversity using the ahupua'a approach ("from the mountains to the seas"), it is in a strong position to reinvent itself for the future. Even without a permanent director, it remains a viable unit. And by appointing a permanent director from within its ranks, there is no need to bring in a new, expensive director from outside. So, if it isn't broken, why eliminate it? This is especially so if there is no further cost savings through salary savings going forward. Why kill an organization that is nationally and internationally recognized amongst its peers? Why terminate a research center whose focus precisely fits the Chancellor's declared priority of "sustainability"?

Those CAB members opposed to PBRC's reorganization do recognize the high level of staff support that it enjoys. But they also note that if equity is the issue, one or more staff members might be transferred to other units on campus. Moreover, they point to the high level and national and international reputations of a number of PBRC researchers – people who might well leave the university if PBRC is eliminated. Finally, they note the unit's history of and continued willingness to provide research training opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, especially many native Hawaiians and other under-represented minorities. If the faculty and staff of PBRC are dispersed throughout other units on campus, what guarantee is there that this important PBRC function will be sustained?

In sum, CAB members opposed to PBRC's reorganization note that there are no great and urgent reasons to eliminate it. It would not save any money going ahead, especially after the refusal by the Administration to replace departing faculty. Even in its current leaner form, it is generating respectable grants and contracts, however counted. (CAB members note a significant discrepancy between the OVCRGE proposal and PBRC concerning the amounts of external funding generated by PBRC. CAB believes that the discrepancy results from the proposal's reliance on PBRC expenditures per year vs. PBRC's reliance on total external funds awarded and adjusted for multiyear awards. In order to accurately compare PBRC with other research units, it may be necessary to use both accounting methods. CAB has not had sufficient time to perform such a comparison.) Moreover, it would eliminate a UHM research unit with a national and international reputation and may cause highly respected and productive researchers to leave the university. And, finally, it may end important research training opportunities for some of our most underserved and underrepresented students.

#### CAB's Recommendation on the Kewalo Marine Lab to the MFS and UHM Administration

Despite CAB's split on the issue of reorganizing PBRC, and no matter what the ultimate determination for PBRC, CAB is united in raising the important issue of the fate of the Kewalo Marine Lab (KML). The OVCRGE proposal explicitly leaves the issue of the KML out of the PBRC reorganization proposal, at least in its current iteration. Yet we believe that it is an issue that must be squarely and fairly faced the sooner the better.

Though UHM has what appears to be a solid lease from the State of Hawaii that remains in effect until 2030 – a lease that appears unlikely to be overturned through the State's exercising "eminent domain" – the VCRGE has explicitly stated that he intends to close the KML in 2013 and transfer the property back to the State. He reasons that the KML requires repairs in excess of \$500,000 to remain functional, that functional lab space can be found on campus, at the UHM Aquarium, or on Coconut Island to maintain the research activities now undertaken at KML, and that

research training activities for students at KML can be conducted at one of these other sites without significant difficulty. Moreover, he believes that the State will relieve UHM of all liabilities concerning the property, if it is transferred in 2013. The VCRGE's final point is that UHM simply can no longer afford to support two marine science labs: KML and Coconut Island.

While CAB has no reason to dispute the VCRGE's estimation of costs and expenses in keeping KML open well past 2013, CAB members do believe that KML is an extremely valuable and accessible facility that cannot easily be duplicated elsewhere and that it is truly unclear that the current research and research training activities at KML can be undertaken at one of the other sites. An investment in KML would fit President Greenwood's "Project Renovate to Innovate" initiative. Coconut Island appears to be an overcrowded facility with its own set of infrastructure challenges that is far less accessible to researchers and, especially, students who can ill afford the travel costs and time. The UHM Aquarium may not be a feasible site under any circumstance. And currently, there are no on-campus facilities. Furthermore, even downscaled laboratory space and equipment at any of the other sites would seem to require considerable new expenditures, more than any maintenance investments in KML might entail.

Thus, CAB would like to recommend to the Manoa Faculty Senate and the UHM Administration that there be a full-scale examination of all marine science research facilities and needs for the future. Marine science is a priority area for UHM and questions surrounding the value and future need of all UHM marine science research facilities -- including KML -- require systematic address. CAB would like to see the MFS and UHM Administration jointly sponsor a series of meetings involving all UHM marine scientists utilizing any of the three facilities to examine their present and future use and projected needs. CAB, for its part, offers to the MFS and the UHM Administration help in facilitating such meetings. It just may be that the prospective closing of the Kewalo Marine Lab presents a real opportunity to move UHM's excellence in marine science to higher heights for all our research efforts in this area.