AGO Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 18, 2020
3:00 p.m.

Attendees: Candy Branson (Faculty Senate Chair), Alex Sosa (Student Congress President), Shannon Sakaue (Student Congress Advisor), Kapulani Landgraf ('Aha Kalāualani Kīpū), Raphael Lowe (Staff Council Chair), Louise Pagotto, (Chancellor) and Joanne Whitaker (Notetaker)

Approval of the Minutes from the AGO meeting on October 21, 2020

Raphael Lowe moved to approve, Alex Sosa seconded.
The minutes were approved.

Shared Governance

- Chancellor: The university has policies that specify what shared governance means on the campus. There are roles for the various AGOs. There is a distinction between shared governance and participatory governance. There are only four authorized governance organizations.

- Candy: Lassner is coming to the ACCFSC (Systemwide Faculty Senate) meeting. The Faculty Senates felt they were left out of shared governance. There was no Faculty Senate representation on the UHPA Work group and no minutes. For the COVID-19 committees, AGOs were added. Unless the representatives reported back, she doesn’t get the information. The Chancellor shares information on a weekly basis. Sometimes there are important decisions that are made, but instead of going to the AGOs, the administrators make the decision. We aren’t having the tough conversations. They want to be in the planning process and not only in decision making. We need to have a process on how we are going to move forward.

- Alex: If Student Congress doesn’t have a seat at the table, but you are making the decisions for the students, how are administrators making decisions? They are making decisions based on the information that is available to them. If the student body was not engaged in the conversation, how can we change that? We need to change the approach on how to communicate to students. Student Congress will have a student town hall, where they can update students in real time, to have a dialogue on what they are trying to do and be specific about the initiatives. The team wants to collaborate with as many departments as possible to align with the feedback from the student survey. At the end of the semester, he would like to be able to speak to the information and that they moved the conversation forward.

- Chancellor: We need to find an entrée for conversation with the students. The communication has been challenging. We need to reach out more for the student voice and include students in the campus committees. I appreciate that you want to be more involved. There will be a need for participation in the next several weeks. We need to ask what is best for the students. Student Caucus meets with the VP Lacro. Rethinking of the community colleges will impact the students.

- Raphael: Staff shared that, in the past, decisions are not always given to them early enough. Another challenge is that when they are asked to make a decision, they are not getting the full information. In the budget, they see the numbers but when they looked at the granular level, they didn’t get the details. If they are asked to participate in giving advice, are they rubber stamping decisions that have been already made? When they disseminate the information, they can’t address the questions.
Chancellor: Every time you ask a question, you don’t get answers?
Raphael: Generally, there are no details to the response. They don’t get the information they were looking for. They don’t get direct answers so it feels like they are asked to rubber stamp decisions.
Chancellor: There are some things we can’t tell you because they are confidential or there are union rules. If there are no constraints, it worries me that you aren’t getting satisfactory answers.
Alex: If we make a request and we don’t get the answer, what is the action we can take? There is always a level of appeal to the person’s supervisor. If you ask the Chancellor a question that is within her scope of authority to respond and the answer is not forthcoming, you can alert VPCC Lacro. If you don’t get a satisfactory answer, you go up to the next level. AGOs have constituents. You have a right to ask questions that affect your constituents.
Kapulani discussed the role of AGOs in shared governance with the Mole. “Shared governance is the opportunity for various AGOs to provide input and recommendations to administration. Administration must seriously consider this input when making a decision and be transparent by explaining their reasoning when recommendations are not approved. ‘Aha Kalāualani’s by-laws includes verbs such as advocate, advise, and guide. This is the role of an AGO in terms of representing their constituents. They advocate for them. And they advise and guide administration on issues, but the final decisions must be made by administration, especially on issues that impact the entire campus and budget and not just the constituents of an AGO. Administration needs to make those decisions because they are held accountable not the AGO’s.”
Chancellor: In Board of Regent documents, the AGO’s role is input on policies. There are many other things that you would like to have input on. Were there certain processes that are particularly egregious in the lack of input by AGOs?
Candy: The reimagine process. How can you reimagine without shared governance? Why were we not included? When Faculty Senate sent a resolution about the process, they continued to meet without AGOs. They should have been included.
Chancellor: What steps should be taken to make the involvement more direct? What would success look like to you?
Alex: If you want input from students, get 5 students to give feedback. Then, document it.
Chancellor: Would you expect the administration to go through Student Congress if we need student input? The reimagine process included many faculty but I didn’t go through Faculty Senate. Should I have to go through the AGO leaders for representation?
Alex: During COVID, yes. Communicating with our age bracket is archaic. We are not communicating effectively.
Candy: The Chancellor gave Faculty Senate two action requests. If something is perplexing, can it be sent to all of us? Each AGO will get perspective from their constituents. We want to be productive. Ask for feedback from the AGOs early so they can get the feedback from their constituents. When Faculty Senate chooses someone to serve on a committee, they have a process. Candy doesn’t personally recommend anyone.
Chancellor: We need to be more open and transparent.

UHCC Memo

Chancellor: The next steps for the systemwide work groups on consolidation and centralization. Our campus will need to respond to the UHCC decisions once they are solidified. Whatever recommendations are decided at the UHCC will impact what will happen on our campus. The Chancellor will send a memo to ask the AGOs about a process for the subsequent decisions. It will be happening fairly soon.
● Alex: A Student Caucus meeting was on Saturday – Visit the UH Office of Sustainability (opens in a new window). Dec. 4 is the ‘Āina Aloha Economic Futures webinar. UH has already developed sustainability and how it will help the system. No other campus has reached out to this department to give input on next steps. How are we responding to sustainability?
● Chancellor: We have a sustainability plan - Sustainability & Climate Action Plan 2017-2021 (PDF) [opens in a new window]. Krista Hiser is one of the leaders. She is driving the system conversation as an academic discipline. If you are interested in driving sustainability, talk to Krista. Wendy Kuntz led the sustainability academic subject certificate.
● Alex: It is not only climate based but economic and academics, aligning programs with economic sustainability.
● Chancellor: Do you have comments on the Board of Regents process or the memo from VPCC Lacro? Are there areas that need to be terminated or restructured based on low enrollment? Are there programs that are no longer relevant? How is it going from the perspective of the AGOs?
● Candy - What do we do when we have faculty with just 3 or 4 students? In the past, they were tenured, so we need to give them a class.
● Chancellor: In the short term, if the class didn’t fill, we let the course proceed but it generates a situation of inequity. It is not a full load for the faculty. Most likely, we will cancel the low enrolled classes and give the faculty non-instructional TEs to do something for the college.

What’s on your minds?

● Alex: Fuel for Finals on Dec. 7 from 10am to 5pm. Volunteer hours are 12-2pm.
● Chancellor: If you can’t feel you can’t speak to me or if you are not getting answers from a Vice Chancellor, talk to her. If you aren’t getting answers from the Deans, talk to the Vice Chancellors.
● We can be honest and speak freely.