

Centennial Celebration and Inauguration Ceremony

**Remarks by Virginia S. Hinshaw, PhD
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November 19, 2007

Aloha! On this occasion, my heart is truly smiling for many reasons. Certainly because your presence honors UH Mānoa and emphasizes everyone's passion for the past, present and future of this university. I can also assure you that my heart is smiling in being inaugurated to serve as chancellor of this university – I feel both great joy and humility in beginning this new adventure with y'all.

As you can well imagine, I thought long and hard about my message for this occasion. What kept coming into my mind was the quote from Hawaiian scholar Mary Kawena Pukui: "Everybody paddle the canoes together; bail and paddle, paddle and bail, and the shore is reached."

UH Mānoa is our canoe and many folks paddled and bailed hard during this last 100 years to reach the shore of this centennial - we owe these folks our gratitude in accomplishing a first century of excellence. Now together we launch this same canoe making our way toward a new shore - a second century with the promise of greatness. I see us all digging in hard with our paddles at the same time with an even stroke, heading in the same direction and moving in harmony with a clear strength of purpose. I think of this time as the Mānoa Moment. A striking feature of this new adventure is how much our success depends on our paddling and bailing together as partners to reach that shore of greatness for the university and our island state.

Everyone here plays a role in this adventure and our university celebrates these gifts today to support us in this journey. This stage is filled with leaders who obviously support this university and its mission through their words and their actions as you have just heard. In addition, the folks in this room reflect the many partners who will paddle and bail with UH Mānoa to ensure that we reach new shores. UH Mānoa has friends, alumni, faculty, students, staff, state officials, business leaders, academic colleagues throughout the world, wishing us well because they truly care about our future. On behalf of UH Mānoa, mahalo for sharing your support, wisdom and guidance – such gifts strengthen our ability to define and reach our destiny.

On a personal note, I feel blessed to have such dear friends and family members here today. Certainly my husband, Bill, who was first my high school sweetheart and then became my lifelong partner – he's definitely a keeper. My daddy, Louis Snyder, who at 90 years young, has always been a source of love and support; he and my mother were the ones who always told me that their hearts smiled when they looked at me – that saying has given me much strength in my life, especially when I finally realized that not everyone felt that way. I am blessed by special friends and professional colleagues who help me continually learn and also refresh my soul. Mary's music is a great example of that. My university colleagues here at UH Mānoa, along with those from UC Davis and UW Madison, and the many friends who support our efforts are such highly principled, as well as highly accomplished folks – working with them is truly an honor.

Now it is my good fortune to have joined the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa at this auspicious moment in its history – our Centennial year. The Centennial provides us a chance to celebrate our accomplishments and encourages us to reflect on the impact the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has had on our State and beyond. And the celebration of our first 100 years assures us that yes, there will be another celebration 100 years from now – and what we do today is the foundation for what will be celebrated in the future.

This university is a living endowment that will keep on giving for centuries to come, and we are the stewards of that endowment. For the time we are at UH Mānoa, it is our duty, working together, to create the careers of tomorrow through research, educate people for those careers and prepare them to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens. We each contribute to the transformational power of education and research for both the individual and for society, so we are here today to recognize and celebrate the continuing vitality of that contribution.

Starting with the 10 students and 13 faculty who first gathered here in 1907, we have truly enjoyed a first century of excellence— ranging from technological advances in cloning to saving agricultural industries from pests to serving as a critical East-West connection in promoting language and cultural understanding to unveiling fascinating aspects of our celestial and aquatic worlds and the list goes on – clearly a rich history of success and impact, demonstrating the transformational power of public higher education and what this University means to Hawai'i.

I see that power each and every time I meet one of our alumni – truly our greatest accomplishment. We should all take great pride in both the number of our graduates and their successes here in Hawaii and beyond. Our alumni contribute to society through their work and citizenship, but, also, are staying connected with UH Mānoa and creating opportunities for others. UH Mānoa should be quite proud of its role in the success of our alumni because they are our greatest asset. I delight in interacting with our alumni, including multigenerational families of alums - and of course I recognize them because they are all proudly wearing their new UH Mānoa alumni pins. I thank our alumni for their continued passion for this university.

Now I joined this university because I was impressed by all UH Mānoa had accomplished and by the aspirations of this campus and community for the future. I do view this next century as brimming with the promise of greatness and I have frequently mentioned my three goals that I believe we must achieve for our State. UH Mānoa must excel as:

A destination of choice for great students, faculty, staff, the citizens of Hawai'i and beyond.

A global leading research university performing at the highest level in solving society's problems

And a respectful and inclusive community that welcomes and nurtures diversity.

How do we accomplish that greatness? Through unrelenting commitment to maintaining what is a strength and boldness in changing what is not a strength.

Everyone here that I have met celebrates the multicultural nature of this institution, this community, this state – certainly underscored by having a host culture, along with the many different populations who live together in our community. That is a blessing – folks here are global citizens in every way. And global citizens, in my view, are better local citizens as well. Also, there are many people here working hard to make UH Mānoa strong and their efforts are critical for our future. The vision of Mānoa's Strategic Plan is grounded in the Hawaiian ethic of sharing, collaboration, a respect for the land, and a deep sense of place. UH Mānoa seeks to learn from our host culture, and to preserve and perpetuate the Hawaiian culture, language and values. We must keep and build on those strengths.

But there are definitely areas we need to embark on changing together. I am an optimist by nature and a realist by experience so I know we have tough issues to tackle, but I am confident that we can and will make progress. I was told the other day that the poor state of our facilities across campus is so overwhelming and depressing that it is hard to know how to start – there is truth in that statement but the important thing is to start, even with baby steps even though we know giant leaps are needed. For example, the electrical fire and subsequent flood in Edmondson stimulated me to relocate those teaching laboratories and faculty to temporary locations because of concern for their safety. The condition of Edmondson is simply not acceptable and the building must be totally redone – and that can't wait. The roof in Hamilton Library must be fixed now, not next summer, to protect the valuable materials housed there. I recognize that each time I move one repair up in priority, something else doesn't get done because there is a long list, but we must prioritize and move on these issues now. So I plan to beg, borrow, not steal but reallocate resources to repairing and replacing our physical infrastructure – this urgent need must be met for UH Mānoa to be a destination of choice. Facilities, whether dorms, classrooms, libraries, offices or laboratories, are critically important in recruiting students who have choices and also faculty who are predicted to retire in large numbers within the next 5 years – inadequate facilities will make us non-competitive in recruiting the next generation of scholars who will teach our students, your children and grandchildren. So, as an academic leader, I have to focus on this priority for Mānoa.

Other initiatives have certainly captured my attention as well. I am working with Arts and Sciences, the heart of our campus, on determining an academic structure that will position them for success and investment. I want the high school students of Hawai'i, particularly our Native Hawaiians, to come to Mānoa and graduate at a high rate in a timely manner so increased efforts in recruitment and retention are already underway. I know that our faculty and staff deserve to spend their time on the passion that brought them to the university, not on bureaucratic practices that don't add value – I am challenging such practices, so I encourage others to do so as well, particularly practices originating from my office. A lot of what we need to do is that, when we are starting to say, “we can't do that” – we stop and figure out a way to knock the “t” off the word can't. We can do a lot and make progress.

What does that progress look like to me?

I'll pretend that I am a student entering this university in the year 2017. What am I thinking and seeing? I'm very excited to be attending my first choice for college – UH Mānoa. I know the institution well because of campus programs that I was involved in from K-12 and the athletic and cultural events I've attended on campus. My heart is set on a double major in microbiology and Japanese and I know I can do that because the university has created a clear academic path enabling me to graduate in four years. When I decided to apply to UHM I received excellent advice and counsel during the process and my parents were grateful for the financial aid that will help me pursue my studies. I will get to live in a modern dormitory serving as a learning community, along with other Japanese majors and students from Japan, so I can share language and culture with them, as I study science and participate in the honors program. I'm already aware that I can work with students and professors in Japan on a research project via virtual connections between our universities and I am already planning on interning with a local bio-tech company in Hawai'i with divisions in Japan. I know I'll stay healthy and active working out at the new athletic recreational facility, also cheering with fellow students at athletic events and spending time at the restaurants and enjoying other retail opportunities now present right next to the campus. I know I'll study in laboratories and classrooms equipped with modern technology, thereby assisting my learning and creative explorations – from sharing virtual worlds to testing hypotheses about controlling contamination of food supplies with microbes. I know I will graduate with a valuable degree assuring my future and I plan on staying connected with UH Mānoa for my lifetime.

This is one hypothetical student's dream – but I think that a rigorous academic experience, facilities that well support our work, good friends and colleagues, extramural, exchange and research opportunities are all part of our students' collective dreams.

Our campus is devoted to fulfilling those dreams and I have dreams for UH Mānoa as well. In the next decade, I see a campus blossoming - capitalizing on the natural beauty of O'ahu and expanding intellectual delights. Modern classrooms and laboratories, native plants and public art accenting our Hawaiian heritage throughout the campus, affordable, quality housing and retail opportunities for faculty, staff and students adjacent to the campus, providing a vibrant sense of community for us and our neighbors, with walking from home to campus as a feasible option. Our varsity and intramural athletes compete successfully on fields and arenas that truly support their endeavors. The Honolulu community has easy access to well maintained gathering places on campus to share programs of music, dance, lectures – and, if they are not able to be present, they can participate electronically. People celebrate UH Mānoa as an exciting, progressive and connected community of learners who recognize and fulfill their responsibility to solve society's problems – and we truly are an Hawaiian place of learning.

I see a university respected for being accountable in its use of resources, and known for being nimble and flexible in doing its business. State and federal government officials know we are responsive in helping them do their jobs and they trust us; also, we are clear in defining priorities they need to help us address.

We have worked productively with our professional business communities to ensure we are anticipating trends and meeting their employment requirements. We are engaged providing expert information to help our communities solve problems. Businesses and industries compete for our students to pursue local careers and are actively engaged in demonstration projects on campus testing new approaches to sustainability and healthcare. Our research efforts are continually robust and well known to local and global populations.

Much of the success in securing this vision depends on our ability to partner well, both internally and externally – an attribute I call “Passing Sandbox 101” – working together, sharing and getting a better outcome for all. Actually that is truly the Hawaiian way.

We each bring different strengths to this endeavor. Some will provide the expertise that will move us forward. Some will pitch in as volunteers, mentoring students and providing internship experiences. And some will make philanthropic investments – helping transform the university to better achieve its potential. We each have a critical role to play, whatever it is, and I ask you to join me as a partner in the endeavor to move UH Mānoa forward toward its second century of greatness. Together, by committing to actions that will serve the best interests of UH – our faculty, staff and students – we will best be able to serve the interests of the people of Hawai'i and beyond - a healthy, vibrant, public research university is the foundation for a healthy, vibrant community. The people of Hawaii deserve nothing less.

Together, we will help this university fulfill our “Mānoa Moment”. This is the time for UH Mānoa, your university, to realize its full potential. And I am here to serve this university in accomplishing that goal. I look forward to paddling and bailing with my colleagues at UH Mānoa, folks throughout this community and the world in the years to come, to ensure that this wonderful 100 year old canoe, UH Mānoa, reaches new shores of greatness in serving the state of Hawai'i and beyond. Mahalo nui loa!

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