



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two-Year Tentative Agreement for University of Hawai'i Faculty To Help with State Budget Projections and to Keep Tuition Affordable

Unprecedented Agreement Accommodates Hawai'i Revised Statute Requirements for Collective Bargaining

Gov. Neil Abercrombie, University of Hawai'i (UH) Interim President David Lassner, the UH Board of Regents, and the University of Hawai'i Professional Assembly (UHPA) Board of Directors, have reached an agreement over the terms of a faculty contract that will succeed the current contract set to expire on June 30, 2015.

This is the first time a public sector successor contract has been reached a year in advance of the expiration date of a current Agreement. Past negotiations with UH administrators have been contentious; however, this year all the parties were motivated to reach an agreement prior to the expiration of the current contract.

Gov. Abercrombie initially reached out to UHPA to consider working on an early agreement last summer because public higher education remains one of his priorities.

"The University of Hawai'i is one of the state's most precious resources," Gov. Abercrombie said. "Faculty members provide quality higher education and retraining that prepare local residents to take their place in society and the local economy. They also attract funding to conduct internationally renowned research that helps to enrich the education for our students, create jobs in our islands, and improve the quality of life throughout the world. When we meet the needs of the UH faculty, they are able to focus on their work and serve others in our community."

The UHPA Board of Directors unanimously voted in favor of ratifying the tentative agreement and recommend ratification by the faculty. An electronic ratification vote is being conducted among the nearly 4,000 Bargaining Unit 7 members across the 10 UH campuses statewide. Faculty have until August 25th, the first day of the fall semester, to vote. The two-month voting period will provide time to address any questions faculty may have regarding the new contract. "Ratification of the new, two-year contract is a win-win for everyone; the citizens of our state, students, faculty and the UH administration," said UHPA President David Duffy.

"The University is pleased to have reached this early agreement with UHPA leadership and for the support of the Governor and his administration," said UH Interim President David Lassner. "The salary and benefits provisions in the tentative agreement are consistent with those in the settlements of other public unions, including HGEA, UPW and HSTA, for the same two-year period."

The early agreement accommodates the requirements of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes regarding collective bargaining. Under the statutes, contract negotiations must begin 90 days before Feb. 1, 2015 and the start of the 2015 Legislative Session. The tentative agreement must then be approved in the next legislative session, which ends in early May 2015, a month before the current faculty contract expires on June 30, 2015.

J. N. Musto, UHPA Executive Director and Chief Negotiator stated that, "The new UHPA/BOR Agreement will make budgeting more predictable, create stability for faculty employment, and relieve downward pressure on tuitions by using general fund support for the salary increases."

Musto noted that the successor contract will not go into effect if the legislature does not appropriate general funds for faculty salary increases before the July 1, 2015 effective date of the contract.

Highlights of the tentative agreement include an across-the-board 4 percent increase for all UH faculty and lecturers on July 1, 2015 and another across-the-board 4 percent increase the following year. It will also address minimum salaries and the increased employer contributions to the health insurance premiums provided through the Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund.

In addition, the parties have agreed to establish three working task forces that will begin upon ratification of this Agreement to address issues of workforce housing, childcare and child care leave, and distance and online learning. It is the mutual hope of the union and the UH administration that these task forces may lead to solutions that could be applied beyond just the university.

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About University of Hawai'i Professional Assembly

The University of Hawai'i Professional Assembly (UHPA) represents nearly 4,000 faculty members at 10 campuses in the University of Hawai'i system statewide. It has been the exclusive bargaining agent for all UH faculty since 1974.