

Over the past three years, I have been a member of a group of Kamehameha Schools alumni who have been working to develop appropriate criteria for the selection of new trustees for our beloved institution and ultimately to create a process for the selection of trustees that is more internally driven, relying heavily on our stakeholders' deep understanding of our Princess Ke Ali'i Bernice Pauahi Bishop, her legacy and the Kamehameha Schools mission. We believe that the stakeholders include the alumni, faculty and staff members, the parents of current beneficiaries of Kamehameha's educational services and the greater Native Hawaiian community.

Privately, we have written letters to the Probate Court as well as to the Hawaii Supreme Court seeking to change the selection process. In the short term, our goal has been to ensure that the selection panel is comprised of the aforementioned stakeholders. Our letters have been ignored by two Probate Court judges. In the case of the Supreme Court, we received a letter from the court's legal counsel indicating that it would be inappropriate for it to intervene in the matter.

It bears mention that the Probate Court has also seemingly been ignoring the recommendations of former Kamehameha Schools Court Master Benjamin Matsubara relating to the composition of the selection panel.

ADVERTISING

In Matsubara's Petition for the Establishment of a Procedure for Selection of Trustees filed on Aug. 5, 1999, pages 27 and 28 state in part: "Each (selection) Committee member shall be familiar with and sensitive to (1) the history and role of the Trust Estate relative to the Hawaiian community and the community at large, and (2) Pauahi's legacy and her vision for the future of (Native) Hawaiian children."

As the deadline for the submission of applications passed on Dec. 14, 2018, I was alarmed to learn that the clear and dominating voice of Kamehameha stakeholders is once more absent from the panel that will select a replacement for trustee Corbett Kalama. I don't believe there is any other private educational institution in Hawaii that has a trustee selection process that involves non-stakeholders.

Furthermore, it is problematic that there is a lack of public transparency on how selection panelists currently are chosen as well as their qualifications vis a vis Kamehameha's special history and mission to serve in a capacity that will have a lasting impact on the management of trust assets as well as the delivery of educational services to our beneficiaries.

All panelists need to possess a knowledge and understanding of Native Hawaiian history, culture and values as well as the legacy of our Princess Ke Ali'i Pauahi. They should also all be able to demonstrate by their own personal lives and careers that they have a strong, longstanding commitment to improving the capability and well-being of our Hawaiian people.

I believe it's time for Native Hawaiians and all Kamehameha stakeholders to say in a very public way that we are capable and qualified to speak and make the decisions that affect us, which includes the selection of Kamehameha trustees. I call upon Probate Court Judge Mark Browning to discharge the current panel and appoint a new one comprised entirely of Kamehameha stakeholders.

In closing, allow me to state very emphatically that I have no interest in serving either as a Kamehameha Schools trustee or as a member of the selection panel. Nor is this writing intended to be a personal

attack on any of the currently named panelists. This is about the need for a clear, transparent process and the dominating presence of our stakeholders' voice.

Julian K. Ako, a Kamehameha Schools alumnus, is retired principal of Kamehameha High School Kapalama.