



HAWAI‘I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

State of Hawai‘i · Bishop Square, 1001 Bishop Street, ASB Tower 970 · Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

November 6, 2024

Via email: tauasosi@hawaii.edu

Tina Tauasosi-Posiulai, Ph.D.
Community Partnership and Research Specialist
Pasefika Student Advancement Program
University of Hawai‘i at Manoa
2600 Campus Road, QLC 309
Honolulu, HI 96822

Re: Request for a Good Cause Exemption to Nepotism Prohibition
(REQ-2024-0116)

Dear Dr. Tina Tauasosi-Posiulai,

Thank you for contacting our office regarding your request for a good cause exemption to the Nepotism Law. As a Community Partnership and Research Specialist with the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, you requested an exemption to allow your son, Jordan Posiulai, to be hired as a student mentor. The student mentor program you oversee aims to enhance the recruitment, enrollment, mentoring, and graduation success of Pacific Island students in Hawai‘i secondary schools. The position in question necessitates the proficiency in a Pacific Island language.

Six applicants responded to the position, and only three (including Mr. Posiulai) were deemed qualified. While you hired the other two applicants, you additionally seek to hire Mr. Posiulai.

The position was initially advertised for approximately seven to ten days. Following our feedback, the position was re-advertised from October 3rd to October 16th through the University of Hawai‘i’s student hiring website and social media platforms. No new applicants responded to the re-advertised position.

The compensation package for this position is commensurate with other student positions and is primarily funded by a limited state budget allocation and federal work -study funds.

Dr. Tina Tauasosi-Posiulai

November 6, 2024

Page 2

Regarding the supervision of your son, you indicated you will train all student mentors during the initial week or two. Subsequently, the student mentors will be assigned high schools or communities to tutor and mentor. Student mentors are independently responsible for conducting weekly team meetings with their assigned students. Your supervision will primarily involve reviewing a weekly work journal submitted by the student mentors, which details the work completed, the date, and the time. Your direct supervisor is aware of this arrangement and can address any concerns regarding your hiring or ongoing supervision of your son should any unforeseen circumstances or conflicts arise.

Based on the information provided, we are satisfied that you meet the criteria necessary to qualify for a good cause exemption. The position itself has a reasonable requirement, namely knowledge of a Pacific Island language, which narrows the pool of qualified applicants. Reasonable efforts were made to advertise the position (approximately twenty days), with additional targeted efforts made to Pacific Island communities through social media. Only three qualified applicants expressed interest in the position, and you intend to hire all three applicants.

Consequently, you may hire and supervise Mr. Posiulai for the duration of this student mentor position (presumably until the end of the academic year). Should any material facts change, or if the information provided is inaccurate or incomplete, you may need to reapply for another good cause exception.

Furthermore, if you have any objections to any portion of this letter, you may, pursuant to the Order Regarding Applications for Good Cause Exceptions to the Nepotism Law issued on May 17, 2023, appeal to the full Ethics Commission for reconsideration.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me at 808.587.0460.

Sincerely,

/s Robert D. Harris

Robert D. Harris
Executive Director & General Counsel

RDH/lo