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January 6, 2021

Aloha HPFEB Members, Alternates and PLA Coordinators:

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted so many of our plans in 2020. Throughout, our primary goal was to offer the best Pacific Leadership Academy (PLA) experience for the 2020 Senior and Emerging Leader classes who began the program prior to the pandemic. Unfortunately, increased community spread, travel/gathering restrictions and the need to keep our PLA Fellows safe all required significant modifications to the course delivery. The program for FY-2020 was modified by postponing the second and third weeks of in-person instruction later into 2020 and ultimately completed through a distanced learning model, with a virtual graduation ceremony at the end of Week 3 instruction for both courses on January 29, 2021.

Over the years, PLA has evolved and adapted to continuously offer an exceptional professional development and networking experience for Hawaii-Pacific's Emerging and Senior leaders. As many graduates and alumni can attest, the interpersonal and rigorous group activities associated are fundamental values of PLA. For this year's cohort, the SL & EL fellows and the PLA administrators have overcome myriad challenges to effectively engage the subject matter through distance-learning in lieu of the classroom instruction. Relative to many development opportunities that are moving to virtual environments, we are of the opinion that PLA Fellows are best served by an in-person training experience.

For these reasons, HPFEB, after consultation with the course managers and the HPFEB Executive Committee, has elected to cancel the FY-2021 class and resume with the FY-2022 class starting on the traditional timeline in the fall of 2021. Compressing the program into a shorter cycle and administering a large portion of it through virtual environments would be a substandard situation for this year's cohort. We recognize the important role PLA plays in developing our future leaders and want to honor that responsibility. Returning to our traditional calendar, additional information will follow in the Spring of 2021 (with quotas/applications in June-July 2021). As in year's past, there should be an opportunity to utilize FY21 or FY22 funding, depending on your agency's internal policies. We appreciate your understanding and continued support of the Pacific Leadership Academy and your Honolulu-Pacific Federal Executive Board.

More to come, just wanted to keep all of you informed.

Respectfully,

Christopher J. Conklin
Executive Director
Honolulu-Pacific Federal Executive Board