

MINUTES
BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING
APRIL 18, 2024

A video recording of this meeting may be viewed at the Board of Regents website as follows:

[Meeting Video #1](#)

[Meeting Video #2](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Interim Chair Gabriel Lee called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. on Thursday, April 18, 2024, at Kapi'olani Community College, 220 Grille, 'Ōhi'a Building, 4303 Diamond Head Road, Honolulu, HI 96816, with regents participating from various locations.

Quorum (8): Interim Chair Gabriel Lee; Interim Vice-Chair Ernest Wilson; Regent Lauren Akitake; Regent William Haning; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Laurel Loo; Regent Diane Paloma; and Regent Laurie Tochiki.

Excused (3): Regent Neil Abercrombie; Regent Abigail Mawae; Board vacancy.

Others in attendance: President David Lassner; Vice President (VP) for Administration Jan Gouveia; VP for Academic Strategy Debora Halbert; VP for Community Colleges Erika Lacro; VP for Legal Affairs/University of Hawai'i (UH) General Counsel Carrie Okinaga; VP for Research and Innovation Vassilis Syrmos; VP for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer Garret Yoshimi; VP for Budget and Finance/Chief Financial Officer Kalbert Young; VP for Advancement/UH Foundation Chief Executive Officer Tim Dolan; UH-Mānoa (UHM) Provost Michael Bruno; Honolulu Community College (HonCC) Chancellor Karen Lee; Kapi'olani Community College (KapCC) Chancellor Misaki Takabayashi; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Yvonne Lau; and others as noted.

Interim Chair Lee announced that Agenda Item V, the Quarterly Governance Group Report – University of Hawai'i Student Caucus, would be taken up at this time.

V. QUARTERLY GOVERNANCE GROUP REPORT – UH STUDENT CAUCUS (UHSC)

Bronson Azama, Chair of the UHSC, presented information on the organizational structure of the UHSC noting that it is the officially recognized shared-governance body for undergraduate and graduate students across the 10-campus university system and serves as the liaison between these constituencies and the university administration. He spoke about the achievements of the UHSC over the past year, including the filling of all available positions on the executive council and the securing of representation from every campus; highlighted a few of the challenges the UHSC continues to face, in

addition to some of the activities it has been engaged in; and noted meetings held, or scheduled to be held, with university administrators to discuss topics which students have deemed important.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 16, 2024, AND MARCH 7, 2024, MEETINGS

Interim Chair Lee announced the need to amend the minutes of the February 16, 2024, meeting to correct an error related to the number of responses received for a faculty work-life survey conducted in 2022 noting the change was being made to information contained within Agenda Item V, Report of the All Campus Council of Faculty Senate Chairs. He then asked if there were any other corrections to the minutes of the February 16, 2024, meeting or the minutes of the March 7, 2024, meeting. Hearing none, the minutes for both meetings were approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Board Secretary Lau announced that the board received late written comments from Ashley Maynard regarding the general education curriculum. A few individuals also signed up to provide oral testimony.

Bronson Azama and Dianne Deauna provided oral comments on conflicts between the university's mission as a public, indigenous-serving institution and work being conducted through the University Affiliated Research Center (UARC) and Applied Research Laboratory utilizing United States Department of Defense funds. As such, they requested an audit be conducted on the relationship between the university and UARC.

Interim Chair Lee informed Mr. Azama and Ms. Deauna that their remarks were not connected to any of the topics noted on the agenda and asked them to wrap-up their comments. The testifiers maintained that their statements were applicable to the reports from the Committee on Institutional Success and Committee on Student Success listed on the board agenda as the university's association with the UARC directly impacted these subject matters.

Regent Higaki pointed out the board's past practice of only accepting testimony on items specifically noted on the agenda and informed Interim Chair Lee of his imminent departure from the meeting until such time comments regarding the UARC were concluded.

Regent Higaki left the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

Jill Nunokawa provided general comments on student success relative to the selection of the next university president. She also opined that the board was taking part in the censorship of voices by restricting public testimony to agenda items and then requested a moment of silence for the children who died in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, the Gaza Strip, and Ukraine due to bombings and to use this time to reflect on the mission of the university as a public institution of higher education.

In light of some of the comments regarding the acceptance of public testimony noted above, Interim Chair Lee stated the board office would be seeking advice from the Office of General Counsel as to whether comments on a committee report constituted public testimony.

Written testimony may be viewed at the Board of Regents website as follows:

[Late Written Testimony Received](#)

Regent Higaki returned at 10:17 a.m.

IV. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

A. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Update and Impacts on UH

President Lassner updated regents on the FAFSA challenges being encountered by students and their families which he initially spoke about during the March 21, 2024, board meeting. Despite progress being made in addressing some of the issues reported on, such as the ability for institutions of higher education to receive a student's Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) from the United States Department of Education (USDOE), a record which helps to determine eligibility for various federal student aid programs, troubles persist. After ISIRs started to be received by campuses, miscalculations requiring the reprocessing of these reports were discovered with USDOE reporting that up to 30 percent of FAFSA forms are potentially affected by known processing or data errors. Although the USDOE is forging ahead with the reprocessing of ISIRs, the rate at which this is occurring for individual reports differs based upon error type. As such, universities are not yet able to determine a timeline for the completion of work on ISIRs awaiting reprocessing. While the USDOE has suggested schools and states exercise their best judgment on whether to use the original ISIR data when making financial aid offers and awards, doing so may lead to the revision of financial aid offers should reprocessing of the report deem the original information provided to be incorrect.

In addition to processing errors, students also make mistakes when submitting the FAFSA forms which also can delay the process. Nationally, as many as 16 percent of FAFSA forms filed with the USDOE have required a student to make a correction with the most common mistakes being, among other things, missing signatures and failing to provide consent for the accessing of federal tax data.

Regardless of the aforementioned challenges associated with the FAFSA application process, the university continues to forge ahead in its efforts to provide financial assistance to students. The common scholarship application deadline of March 1, 2024, was retained thus allowing the university time to review completed applications such that campuses can begin to inform students of their receipt of financial awards like the Provost Scholarship, Chancellor Scholarship, Regents and Presidential Scholarship, and other merit-based aid not requiring FAFSA information in May. All campuses also remain committed and are working diligently to start packaging FAFSA related aid as soon as possible.

Though the issues facing FAFSA submissions and processing may have a negative bearing on college enrollment in Hawai'i and across the nation, the true nature of their effects on the university's Fall 2024 enrollment still remain uncertain. However, completion of FAFSA applications both locally and nationally have decreased significantly. Nationally, 40 percent fewer high school students had completed the FAFSA as compared to the same time in 2023. In Hawai'i, only 25.7 percent of current high school seniors have turned in a FAFSA application as opposed to 53.8 percent for the class of 2023. Still, the university remains hopeful and is doing everything it can, including working with the Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education, to encourage Hawai'i students to complete and submit their FAFSA.

B. Broadband Project Update

President Lassner briefed regents on the university's ongoing role in leading broadband infrastructure initiatives for Hawai'i at the behest of Hawai'i's Congressional delegation, the State Legislature, and the last two governors. He noted that one of the major goals of these projects is the implementation of an open access interisland fiber network and landings for the purpose of advancing resilience and competitiveness of vital communications across our islands. At least two of the new interisland landings being planned for are also intended to position Hawai'i for greater global connectivity at lower costs as part of the rapidly expanding transpacific global submarine fiber optic network interconnecting continents and islands.

As was hoped, the federal investments leading to hundreds of millions of infrastructure dollars supporting new open-access submarine fiber landing stations in Hawai'i have attracted substantial commercial interest in re-establishing Hawaii as a hub in the Pacific, a role largely lost 20 years ago with the advances in technology that allowed long transpacific runs to bypass Hawaii. The best public evidence of this was the announcement last week as part of the United States-Japan White House meeting between President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at which Google announced the next steps in its Pacific strategy including new fiber interconnections between the West Coast of the United States, Hawai'i, Guam, the Northern Marianas Islands, and Japan. As such, other private parties have now expressed interest in establishing new transpacific connections to Hawai'i and the university is working hard to bring these private infrastructure investment opportunities to reality.

While additional details on the private broadband infrastructure projects the administration is working on cannot be divulged at this time due to non-disclosure agreements, it does anticipate, after consulting with board leadership, bringing forward a request for board approval of new private partnerships in the context of the university's continued involvement in the larger, statewide broadband effort within the next two months. The private partnerships would complement and potentially be implemented synergistically with the contract transacted through the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i for the creation of a new, open-access interisland fiber system and landing stations via an innovative public-private partnership utilizing federal funds that was mentioned during the last board meeting. President

Lassner also noted the university is seeking to ensure these engagements result in direct benefit to the institution's mission of education and research.

President Lassner reported on extramural funding received by the university stating the half-a-billion-dollar mark has been surpassed for the third year in a row. To date, just over \$503 million in extramural funding has been awarded to the university which equates to an approximately 30 percent increase over same-day figures from 2023. Though UHM continues to lead the way, it was pointed out that the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu, and the community colleges are also all ahead of where they were at this time last year.

C. HonCC and KapCC Regional Presentation

Nāwa'a Napoleon, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at KapCC, opened the presentation with a land acknowledgment emphasizing the importance of both HonCC and KapCC in broadening an individual's horizons. He was followed by Kahele Cruz, Associate Professor of Arts and Humanities at KapCC and Kīpū of 'Aha Kalāualani, KapCC's Native Hawaiian Council, who shared her thoughts on former Chair Alapaki Nahale-a and his efforts to guide the board in addressing the university's kuleana as an indigenous serving institution.

Chancellor Lee and Chancellor Takabayashi began by describing some of the characteristics that differentiate HonCC and KapCC from other campuses within the university system, highlighting enrollment and demographic data points unique to their respective institutions, the regions served by each college, and the areas from which students at both campuses hail which appears to indicate that individuals are choosing to enroll at a particular institution based upon academic programming as opposed to geographic proximity. They went on to discuss the complementary ways in which KapCC and HonCC are attempting to address Hawai'i's workforce needs; note some of the goals of these endeavors, such as equipping every student with skills being sought by employers and developing career ladders which can lead toward family sustaining wages; emphasize the importance of non-credit programs to these efforts; review figures for the top job openings within the state requiring an associate degree or less, along with the median annual and hourly earnings, underscoring that KapCC and HonCC educate the clear majority of the workforce who can enter these jobs; and provide details on several of the academic programs offered at each campus to meet various workforce demands.

Additionally, Chancellor Lee spoke about collaborative efforts between the two campuses on several initiatives including E Ho'i Nā Wai, a one-year, Title III grant funded professional development program which is geared towards building HonCC and KapCC's capacity to implement indigenous education frameworks, as well as the development of relevant and culturally appropriate indigenous education methodologies. The two colleges also partner together to provide childcare services to KapCC students, faculty, and staff via the campus's Alani Children's Center, a facility which is operated under the auspices of HonCC's Early Childhood Education and Development Program

while simultaneously serving as a laboratory for training students enrolled in the Program.

To illustrate the success of KapCC and HonCC's educational strategies and programming and the impact this has had on students, Kamy Anthony, a HonCC student in the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technology Program, and Bradley Padama-Kinere, a KapCC student in the Registered Nurse Program, provided testimonials on the life-changing impacts of their decision to attend HonCC and KapCC respectively. They also offered personal insights into their unique educational journeys, stating the support received from faculty, staff, fellow students, and family were instrumental to their academic and personal successes.

Regents lauded the work of both campuses and praised the accomplishments of Kamy Anthony and Bradley Padama-Kinere.

Referencing enrollment data indicating a shrinking gap between male and female enrollment at HonCC, Regent Akitake inquired about HonCC's efforts to increase the number of females choosing to enter a trade as a profession. Chancellor Lee replied that HonCC has undertaken a number of outreach efforts to encourage more women to either enter the professional trades or stay in them including the holding of a panel discussion entitled, "*Women in the Trades*", and the creation of a six-week summer academy whereby high school students are exposed to three different career and technical education programs offered by the campus.

Regent Paloma asked if the university will be able to reconcile FAFSA submission and processing issues with its enrollment deadlines in time for the fall semester. President Lassner replied that, while many of the processing challenges related to FAFSA are beyond the control of the institution, the university remains cautiously optimistic that the situation will be rectified by the end of this month. Although the university can take some solace in knowing other institutions of higher education are facing similar circumstances with respect to FAFSA, he stated that, in his opinion, the number of students who may have decided to forego seeking a post-secondary education due to this debacle is of greater concern.

Regent Tochiki requested information on the deployment of resources to mitigate the situation and begin packaging FAFSA related aid as soon as possible. Farrah-Marie Gomes, Associate Vice President (AVP) for Student Affairs, remarked that she has remained in constant contact with campus financial aid officers, campus administrators, and various university system officers to keep them abreast of the FAFSA situation. Additionally, university administrators and financial aid offices have done their best to communicate with students about the delays in the development of financial aid packages. Although recent software upgrades will help to alleviate some of the FAFSA issues mentioned, campus financial aid officers have been a little hesitant in, and are taking a more cautious approach to, building financial aid packages for students since errors with FAFSA forms or information discovered after the fact can lead to further holdups or alter the amount of funding a student has been informed, they will receive.

Nevertheless, the university will continue taking a proactive approach to addressing the delays in developing financial aid packages as a result of the FAFSA situation.

In light of this response, Regent Tochiki remarked that it sounded like the university was ready to proceed with developing financial aid packages for students as soon as their FAFSA received the green light from the USDOE. AVP Gomes replied in the affirmative, although it was noted that almost all campus financial aid offices remain understaffed.

VI. COMMITTEE AND AFFILIATE REPORTS

A. Report from the Committee on Independent Audit

B. Report from the Committee on Institutional Success

C. Report from the Committee on Student Success

Acting Chair Lee referred regents to the respective standing committee reports from the April 4, 2024, committee meetings which were contained in the materials packet.

VII. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Legislative Update

VP Young highlighted a number of measures and priority issues that the university is following at the Legislature this year including the university's legislative package bills, as well as items of interest involving the administration and board. He briefly went over legislation regarding, among other things, the university's operating and capital improvement budgets, reviewing the major differences between the university's budget requests approved by the board and those authorized by the governor in relation to what was included in the House of Representatives' (House) and Senate versions of the State Budget; university procurement; collective bargaining; technology transfer; innovation and commercialization; the cigarette tax; public agency and open-meetings requirements as they relate to the board; the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i; and response, recovery, mitigation, and future planning issues relating to the Maui wildfires and wildfires in general. He also pointed out numerous resolutions related to the university that are either in the midst of hearings or have been referred to a committee and reviewed the legislative calendar for the remainder of the session which is expected to conclude on May 3, 2024.

Regent Paloma questioned whether additional burdens would be placed on the Dean of the College of Engineering at UHM should the bill designating the individual in this position as the university's Chief Procurement Officer be passed by the Legislature. VP Young replied in the affirmative stating the assignment of procurement responsibilities for the university to a dean of a college, which is in itself a full-time job, would be a significant undertaking and exponentially increase the individual's workload.

Regent Akitake asked VP Young if he could provide additional details about the funding for Hale Noelani renovations included in the Senate version of the State Budget.

VP Young remarked that the budget for the first year of the fiscal biennium appropriated \$63.517 million to the university for an artificial reef study project. However, it was unclear as to who requested these monies and what project it was to be spent on since the university did not ask for this funding. As such, the Senate force lapsed this funding and reappropriated the monies for Hale Noelani renovations as identified in its version of the State Budget. Additionally, the Senate provided \$20 million in revenue bonds for student housing renew, improve, and modernize projects, which could be used for Hale Noelani renovations, although it was noted the university lacks the authority to issue revenue bonds. VP Young also pointed out the board's funding request to address this matter was for \$80 million.

Interim Chair Lee sought clarification on the community college statewide access master plan and a value-added product development center on Moloka'i, both of which were funded via appropriations contained within the Senate draft of the State Budget. VP Young replied that the appropriation for a statewide access master plan was not a university ask but may be linked to communications occurring last year between the community colleges and the Legislature regarding the development of a master plan for college access. President Lassner added that the aforementioned funding is probably related to an initiative undertaken by the community colleges, based upon a legislative request, to identify areas where they believed training opportunities could be increased and lay out a possible plan for developing a number of programs at specific campuses. With respect to funding for a value-added product development center on Moloka'i, VP Young stated this appears to be for a facility similar to those already in existence on certain community college properties on O'ahu.

Regent Akitake referenced a number of community college funding requests not included in any version of the State Budget to date and asked VP Young to share his thoughts on this subject. VP Young responded that funding for the university of the last two-to-three years has been dominated by appropriations for the community colleges. Overall, this year's budget contains a fair amount of spread across the university system, although monies designated for the community colleges does appear to be tighter in comparison to funding received in prior years.

Discussions ensued between Regent Akitake and VP Young on funding specifically attributed to the Culinary Institute of the Pacific and whether this money was for expansion of the program.

Given the lack of funding for some of the community colleges initiatives and projects, Regent Akitake asked about the course of action the university would be taking to address these requests. VP Young replied that the administration would need to have conversations with the community colleges on how they would adapt to the situation in light of requested funding not being received from the Legislature.

B. Regent Report on [Association of Governing Board \(AGB\) National Conference on Trusteeship](#) per 92-2.5(e), Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS).

Interim Chair Lee, Regent Akitake, Regent Loo, and Regent Tochiki provided reports on the AGB National Conference on Trusteeship (AGB Conference) which they

attended last month. Regent Loo stated she participated in a number of sessions at the AGB Conference, chief among them being those centered on topics related to university presidential searches, board interactions with a university president, and the student mental health issues which is a serious concern at numerous institutions of higher education across the country.

Regent Tochiki spoke about some of the sessions she participated in noting she took a particular interest in subjects related to, among other things, students and their collegiate experiences and needs; the leadership roles universities can have in helping to resolve national and global concerns; the importance and value of a college education; the educational opportunities afforded by universities to non-traditional students such as older adults; university and board independence; innovations and investments in teaching modalities and educational training initiatives to address a different style of learning in today's world; and shared governance. She also espoused the tremendous number of resources made available to attendees all of which can be accessed via AGB.

Regent Akitake shared a little about her experiences at the conference stating it was refreshing to meet individuals facing the same struggles and challenges as those being faced by members of this board. She discussed some of the sessions she participated in including a pre-summit workshop and meetings related to strategic planning, endowment funds, athletics, and presidential searches. However, for her, the highpoint of the event was a roundtable discussion about the roles of audits in the university setting where she met a board member from Texas and a board member from Massachusetts, both of whom are involved in changing the way audits are viewed at their respective universities. Although most boards continue to take a more traditional approach to conducting audits, others have begun to utilize them as proactive rather than reactionary tools for addressing issues at a university.

Interim Chair Lee concurred with his colleagues about the breadth and diversity of information at the conference highlighting his participation in discussions on the presidential search process and legislative relationships with public university boards.

All of the attendees stated that the AGB Conference was an excellent learning and networking experience and encouraged every regent who has not done so to attend this conference in the future.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION (closed to the public)

Regent Akitake moved to convene into executive session, seconded by Regent Paloma, and with all members present voting in the affirmative, the board approved convening in executive session to consult with the board's attorneys on questions and issues pertaining to the board's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities, and to consider the hire, evaluation, dismissal, or discipline of an officer or employee, where consideration of matters affecting privacy will be involved, pursuant to Sections 92-5(a)(2) and 92-5(a)(4), HRS.

The meeting recessed at 11:48 a.m.

Interim Chair Lee called the meeting back to order at 1:18 p.m. and announced that the board did not have the opportunity to conclude its executive session discussions. In light of the special board meeting scheduled for 1:00 p.m., he suggested recessing this meeting and reconvening in executive session after the conclusion of the special board meeting. Regents concurred with this proposal.

The meeting was recessed at 1:19 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 1:51 p.m. and the board went back into executive session.

Interim Chair Lee called the meeting back to order at 3:20 p.m. stating the board met in executive session to discuss the matters as noted on the agenda.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Interim Chair Lee announced that the next board meeting was scheduled for May 16, 2024, at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Interim Chair Lee adjourned the meeting at 3:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/S/

Yvonne Lau
Executive Administrator and Secretary
of the Board of Regents