

**DISCLAIMER – THE FOLLOWING ARE DRAFT MINUTES AND ARE SUBJECT TO FURTHER REVIEW AND CHANGE UPON APPROVAL BY THE BOARD**

**MINUTES**

**BOARD OF REGENTS SPECIAL MEETING**

**MAY 16, 2024**

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

[Meeting Video](#)

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Interim Chair Lee called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. on Thursday, May 16, 2024, at University of Hawai'i (UH) at Mānoa, Information Technology Building, 1st Floor Conference Room 105A/B, 2520 Correa Road, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822, with regents participating from various locations.

Quorum (11): Interim Chair Gabriel Lee; Interim Vice-Chair Ernest Wilson; Regent Neil Abercrombie; Regent Lauren Akitake; Regent William Haning; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Laurel Loo; Regent Abigail Mawae, Regent Michael Miyahira; Regent Diane Paloma; and Regent Laurie Tochiki.

Others in attendance: President David Lassner; Vice President (VP) for Legal Affairs/UH General Counsel Carrie Okinaga; VP for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer Garret Yoshimi; UH Mānoa Provost Michael Bruno; UH-West O'ahu Chancellor Maenette Benham; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Yvonne Lau; and others as noted.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 21, 2024, AND APRIL 18, 2024, SPECIAL MEETINGS**

Interim Chair Lee inquired if there were any corrections to the minutes of the March 21, 2024, and April 18, 2024, special meetings which had been distributed. Hearing none, the minutes for both meetings were approved.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Board Secretary Lau announced the Board Office's receipt of written comments from the Senate Executive Committee of the Mānoa Faculty Senate and Ashley Maynard regarding the proposed presidential profile and selection criteria for the presidential search.

Late written comments on the proposed presidential profile and selection criteria for the presidential search were received from Carolyn Stephenson, Marguerite Butler, Kahea Faria, Kēhaulani Custino, Julie Kaomea, Alethea Ku'ulei Serna, Candido Barbieto Keokapukoa Kaohelauii, Erin Kahunawaika'ala Wright, Sean Nagamatsu,

Nicole Reyes, Kirsten Mawyer, Kenika Lorenzo-Elarco, Brian Faria, Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala, and Jill Nunokawa.

Pearl Bachilller, Kawaiola Kapuni, Marguerite Butler, Sarita Rai, Erin Centeio, Ashley Maynard, Montserrat Montanes i Arbo, Carolyn Stephenson, and Jill Nunokawa provided oral comments on the proposed presidential profile and selection criteria for the presidential search.

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

[Written Testimony Received](#)

[Late Written Testimony Received](#)

#### **IV. AGENDA ITEMS**

##### **A. Approval of the Proposed Presidential Profile and Selection Criteria for the President Search**

Jaret Leong and Dr. Erin Centeio, Co-Chairs of the Presidential Search Advisory Group (PSAG), provided a report on the collective work of the PSAG to develop the presidential profile and selection criteria currently before the board for approval. They reviewed the PSAG's role in the process to formulate the profile and search criteria; went over the course of action used to create the document noting the numerous hours of work involved in this effort, the due consideration of feedback received from various outlets including public forums and the presidential search survey, and the length of deliberations on multiple drafts of the profile prior to arriving at the final version for which approval is being sought; and emphasized the document presently before the regents was a collective voice of both the PSAG and all of the feedback submitted through the various outlets. Although 100 percent consensus was not reached on every item, Mr. Leong and Ms. Centeio stated the PSAG feels this document represents many collective voices, including its own, and should be approved so as to begin recruitment for the position by the end of the month.

Regent Abercrombie expressed his concerns about what he believed were linguistic discrepancies in the profile, particularly with respect to the inconsistent use of the phrase "Hawai'i as a multicultural community" throughout the document, most especially in the section related to the university's Kuleana Imperative. He also voiced his disappointment with the continued use of the word "colonization" in the profile and search criteria.

As one of the regent liaisons to the PSAG, Regent Tochiki spoke about the group's ability to engage in civil discourse and its outstanding effort to include as much of the input received from numerous and diverse constituencies in the final draft of the presidential profile and search criteria. She also disagreed with Regent Abercrombie about the need for consistency with respect to use of the phrase "Hawai'i as a multicultural community" throughout the document as, in her opinion, the term "Hawai'i" is intended to mean a sense of place which, by inference, takes into consideration the multicultural nature of its people.

Dr. Centeio clarified the rationale for use of the phrase “Hawai‘i as a multicultural community” within the executive summary of the profile as this section was intended to be as broad as possible. With respect to the phrase being used in the section pertaining to the Kuleana Imperative, Dr. Centeio stated the wording was taken verbatim from language used in the University of Hawai‘i System Strategic Plan 2023-2029 to describe the goal and objectives of its Kuleana Imperative.

Regents engaged in discussions about Regent Abercrombie’s concerns regarding the document’s consistency, as well as its use of the word “colonization”. Several regents also lauded the work of the PSAG.

Given her belief that amending possession of a terminal degree from a desired qualification to a minimum qualification as requested in some of the testimony received, Regent Paloma inquired if there would be any drawbacks to doing so. Zachary Smith, Executive Partner of WittKieffer, replied that requiring qualifications such as possessing a terminal degree, being a tenured professor, or having specific R1 university experience does limit the candidate pool. He stressed the importance of inclusivity at the outset of the search process; spoke about a number of recent searches for university presidents and chancellors undertaken by WittKieffer in which these types of criteria were considered preferred qualifications; emphasized the PSAG’s awareness of the various constituencies’ desires regarding the next UH president’s qualities and is something it can take under advisement when culling through applications and conducting interviews; and noted the impacts extensive and rigid minimum qualifications can have on decisions by women and minorities to apply for a position such as this one. He also underscored the amount of collaboration throughout the process thus far, stating that there has been more engagement with university constituencies and the public in this search than in any other presidential or chancellor search he has been involved with.

Interim Vice-Chair Wilson shared his thoughts on the presidential profile and search criteria relative to Hawai‘i and the understanding of its sense of place, as well as the university’s future role in an everchanging world.

Regent Miyahira moved to approve the proposed presidential profile and selection criteria, seconded by Interim Vice-Chair Wilson, and noting the no vote of Regent Abercrombie, the motion carried with all other regents present voting in the affirmative.

#### **V. EXECUTIVE SESSION (closed to the public)**

Interim Chair Lee announced it would not be necessary to have an executive session at this time.

#### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Interim Chair Lee adjourned the meeting at 2:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne Lau  
Executive Administrator and Secretary  
of the Board of Regents