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MINUTES

**BOARD OF REGENTS COMMITTEE ON KULEANA
MEETING**

MARCH 6, 2025

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

[Meeting Video](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Diane Paloma called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. on Thursday, March 6, 2025, at the University of Hawai'i (UH) at Mānoa, Bachman Hall, 1st Floor Conference Room 106 A/B, 2444 Dole Street, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822, with regents participating from various locations.

Committee members in attendance: Chair Diane Paloma; Vice-Chair Ernest Wilson; Regent Neil Abercrombie; Regent Mike Miyahira; and Regent Laurie Tochiki.

Others in attendance: Board Chair Gabriel Lee; Board Vice-Chair Laurel Loo; Regent Lauren Akitake; Regent Joshua Faumuina; Regent William Haning; Regent Wayne Higaki (ex officio committee members); President Wendy Hensel; Vice President (VP) for Legal Affairs/University General Counsel Carrie Okinaga; VP for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer Garret Yoshimi; UH-Hilo Chancellor Bonnie Irwin; UH-West O'ahu Chancellor Maenette Benham; UH-Maui College Chancellor Lui Hokoana; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Yvonne Lau; and others as noted.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Paloma inquired if there were any corrections to the minutes of the May 2, 2024, committee meeting which had been distributed. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Board Secretary Lau announced the Board Office did not receive any written testimony and no one signed up to provide oral testimony.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Presentation on the Genealogy Leading to the Kuleana Imperative

Chair Paloma stated the intent of this agenda item was for regents to gain a better understanding of the genealogy of the university's Kuleana Imperative and introduced

Kaiwipunikauikawēkiu Punihei Lipe, Director of Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao who would be presenting on this matter.

Dr. Lipe began by providing historical context to the establishment and framing of the Kuleana Imperative, stressing the importance of recognizing where we have been in order to move forward, and going over what “Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao” can refer to which includes a report setting goals and objectives to address the ways the university can become more reflective of Hawai'i; the working group tasked with developing, implementing, and assessing strategic actions to make the university a leader in indigenous education; or the philosophy of Hawai'i, and the things truly or deeply rooted in Hawai'i, being the foundation of enlightenment and knowledge. She then proceeded to speak about the beginnings of the movement to establish the university as an indigenous serving institution specifically mentioning the Ka'ū Report of 1986, which laid the foundational principles for this effort; discuss the rationale for, and creation of, the Pūko'a Council as a formal advisory body to the University President and systemwide advocate for Native Hawaiian programs, activities, initiatives and issues; and recount the commissioning of the Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao report, highlighting some of its contents and recommendations. She also noted the establishment of the Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao Working Group in 2015 to begin working on implementing the recommendations contained within the Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao report; talked about efforts undertaken with respect to the development of the Kuleana Imperative and the inclusion of this imperative in the University of Hawai'i System Strategic Plan 2023-2029 (Strategic Plan), summarizing its goals and objectives; mentioned the appointment of a part-time director for Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao in 2018 and full time director in 2024; touched upon the composition, expertise, and responsibilities of Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao and the Pūko'a Council, in addition to the relationship between the two entities; and reviewed the next steps expected to be taken by Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao, inclusive of those for which activities are already in progress or have been completed, in the context of three Hawaiian words – A'o, Alu, and 'Auamo.

Regent Miyahira asked if metrics have been established to measure progress being made in achieving the Kuleana Imperative's goals and objectives. Dr. Lipe responded by saying work on developing metrics to measure attainment of the Kuleana Imperative's goals and objectives began about two years ago and is ongoing. Currently, she is working with representatives from Native Hawaiian councils across the 10-campus system to develop a strategy for evaluating and measuring the university's success in achieving these goals and objectives and create the tools necessary for accomplishing this task.

Given the abovementioned response, Regent Miyahira suggested Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao may need to seek assistance from entities outside the bounds of the university system to effectively determine whether or not the Kuleana Imperative's goals and objectives are being met and inquired as to whether this idea has been given any consideration. Dr. Lipe responded in the affirmative stating conversations about the creation of partnerships with entities such as Kamehameha Schools, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and the State Department of Education are already occurring.

A conversation took place between Regent Abercrombie and Dr. Lipe about the practicality of implementing actions on the Kuleana Imperative across the university system in a coordinated fashion, especially in light of what is currently occurring at the federal level with respect to education in general, and higher education in particular; the manner in which the director of Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao believes this issue needs to be addressed; and the collaborative activities in this realm which have been taking place on the Mānoa campus, including the creation of the Cohort Kumukahi program to support and assist individual schools and colleges in developing and implementing five-year Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Action Plans. Dr. Lipe also mentioned some of the innovative ways she has seen other campuses address this issue in the context of their unique organizational structures noting part of her job is to gain a better understanding of all the actions occurring across the university system to see if they can be shared systemwide as part of the overall effort to meet the goals and objectives of the Kuleana Imperative.

Chair Paloma asked if her understanding that individual campuses, schools, and colleges will be looking specifically at how the goals of their action plans interface with the goals and objectives of the Kuleana Imperative contained within the Strategic Plan was correct. Dr. Lipe responded in the affirmative stating much of the work done by the campuses, schools, and colleges to date already align with the goals and objective of the Kuleana Imperative within the Strategic Plan. The task now will be to cross map and connect the dots between all of these actions, hence the need to gather more specific information on, and gain a better understanding of, the activities on this matter occurring at individual campuses systemwide.

Regent Tochiki expressed her appreciation for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Cohort Kumukahi program. She also asked Dr. Lipe to speak further on the 'Aha event scheduled for the end of May. Dr. Lipe stated she felt it was time to bring people together to collectively discuss how to move forward on the Kuleana Imperative. As such, the 'Aha, tentatively planned for the end of the Spring semester, is meant to serve as an opportunity for all of the parties involved in this issue to come together and delve deeper into, among other things, policies, plans, activities, obstacles, and opportunities related to the Kuleana Imperative and its associated action plans. Additionally, the 'Aha is intended to build a sense of community across the system particularly since Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao has heard from several Native Hawaiian campus groups about their feelings of isolation and the need to comprehend the bigger picture of the situation systemwide.

Regent Abercrombie inquired if Dr. Lipe was involved in the ongoing discussions about general education requirements which is something he believed to be of great importance. Dr. Lipe stated she has not been invited to those conversations since she is not a faculty member but noted a number of faculty who are Native Hawaiian council or Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao members have been involved in discussions on the general education requirements because of their faculty positions. Regent Abercrombie shared his thoughts on the need to integrate the ideas and concepts expressed by Dr. Lipe with respect to the Kuleana Imperative into discussions on the redesigning of general education curricula.

Chair Paloma suggested Regent Abercrombie inquire about this matter during the Pūko'a Council's presentation at either the next board meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for April 17, 2025, or the next committee meeting. She also noted her and President Hensel's involvement with the Pūko'a Council. President Hensel added that she has seen the work of the general education redesign effort as it relates to this matter. While the proposals are in draft form and it would be premature to have discussions on them at this point, she assured regents work on this issue is ongoing and will eventually be reported on.

Remarking that she continues to hear concerns raised by members of the Pūko'a Council regarding the underrepresentation of Native Hawaiians in administrative, faculty, and staff positions, Chair Paloma asked if Dr. Lipe has been hearing similar concerns during her campus visits. Dr. Lipe responded in the affirmative stating she still hears about resource needs from Native Hawaiian groups and individuals on the different campuses. She also provided background information on the formation of the Pūko'a Council and the reasons for establishing this governance body, as well as the work it has conducted over the years; emphasized the Pūko'a Council's important role as a formal advisory body to the University President; and spoke about the symbiotic and cooperative relationship between Hawai'i Papa o ke Ao and the Pūko'a Council.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Paloma adjourned the meeting at 11:51 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne Lau
Executive Administrator and Secretary
of the Board of Regents