Note: On August 5, 2021, Governor David Y. Ige issued a proclamation related to the COVID-19 emergency that temporarily suspended Chapter 92, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, relating to public meetings and records, "only to the extent necessary to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19 and its variants".

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Simeon Acoba called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m. on Thursday, October 7, 2021. The meeting was conducted virtually with regents participating from various locations.

Committee members in attendance: Chair Simeon Acoba; Vice-Chair Eugene Bal; Regent Kelli Acopan; Regent William Haning; and Regent Ernest Wilson.

Others in attendance: Board Chair Randy Moore; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Diane Paloma; Regent Robert Westerman (ex officio committee members); President David Lassner; Vice President (VP) for Community Colleges Erika Lacro; VP for Legal Affairs/University 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; UH Mānoa (UHM) Provost Michael Bruno; UH Hilo (UHH) Chancellor Bonnie Irwin; UH West O'ahu Chancellor Maenette Benham; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Kendra Oishi; and others as noted.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regent Wilson moved to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2021, committee meeting, seconded by Regent Acopan, and the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Board Secretary Oishi announced that the Board Office did not receive any written testimony, and that no individuals signed up to provide oral testimony.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Coaches Corner: Maureen Cole, UHM Women’s Water Polo Coach

UHM Athletic Director (AD) David Matlin introduced Maureen Cole, the UHM women’s water polo coach who would be providing a report on the UHM women’s water polo program. He noted the numerous accomplishments achieved and awards received
over her ten-year career as head coach which includes being a three-time Big West Conference (Big West) Coach of the Year award winner; producing nine winning seasons with an overall win-loss record of 155 and 78; securing four Big West championships; and leading the team to four National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) national championship tournament appearances. Under Coach Cole's leadership, the program has also produced 20 NCAA All-American athletes; 37 All-Big West athletes; four Big West players of the year; 57 NCAA All-Academic awardees, and 44 Big West All-Academic awardees.

Coach Cole spoke about her personal background and athletic experiences, from playing water polo at Punahou School to being a member of three national-championship teams at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to time spent on the United States National Water Polo Team, and noted the impact water polo has had on both her personal and professional life. Upon completion of her athletic career, she returned to UCLA and served as the women’s water polo assistant coach for six years during which time the team won another national title. In 2005, she returned home to Hawai‘i and began a 16-year coaching career with UHM Athletics, the last 10 of which have been as head coach of wahine water polo.

Coach Cole shared her coaching philosophy stating that her job was not only to inspire and challenge young women to be champions in the pool but to also assist young women in understanding their full potential and become strong, confident champions in the classroom and life. She spoke about the value system adopted by wahine water polo, highlighting the emphasis placed on communication, academics, and community involvement as important life-skills; reviewed adversities overcome by wahine water polo during the COVID-19 pandemic; underscored the academic and cultural diversity of the team; and noted several of the team’s athletic and academic successes.

Regent Acopan congratulated Coach Cole on the wahine water polo team’s academic successes stating that she was impressed with the academic diversity of the team. Coach Cole thanked Regent Acopan and attributed the academic successes to the hard work of the student-athletes, as well as the staff and advisors in Student Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) at the Nagatani Academic Center.

Referencing the athletic successes of wahine water polo, Chair Acoba asked Coach Cole about her philosophy with regard to winning games. Coach Cole replied that her philosophy towards winning matches is to stress the importance of always doing what is best for the team which makes addressing tough decisions easier and leads to better decision-making.

Chair Acoba questioned how the wahine water polo team addressed the challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Coach Cole replied that addressing the adversities faced by wahine water polo during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the cancellation of matches, uncertainty of having a season, anxiety among international students about returning home, and the inability to train in a pool setting, were difficult and challenging. However, the team was able to address some of these challenges through the use of social media to remain connected, using the ocean as a training
facility, and having a problem-solving mindset to adapt to and overcome obstacles faced in the best manner possible.

Chair Acoba noted that the Committee Work Plan agenda item would be moved to the end of the agenda.

C. Health and Safety Matters: UHM and UHH

AD Matlin began by commending the collaborative efforts between the university’s medical and health services staff and UHM Athletics medical, training, and strength and conditioning staff in addressing the ever-changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic during the past 18 months. He introduced Jonathan Sladky, M.D., who would be providing an update on the various health and safety issues involving UHM Athletics.

Dr. Sladky reviewed UHM Athletics’ COVID-19 testing protocols and associated resources, and noted the impacts of vaccinations as well as the COVID-19 delta variant on testing protocols and requirements. In the last academic year, UHM Athletics conducted 15,221 tests, 32 of which were confirmed as COVID-19 positive, for a positivity rate of approximately 0.21 percent. To date, approximately 1,125 tests have been conducted for the fall 2021 semester, 16 of which were confirmed as COVID-19 positive, for a positivity rate of 1.42 percent. Dr. Sladky stressed that the increase in positivity rate was due in large part to the significant decrease in surveillance testing among vaccinated student athletes. Vaccination rates among student-athletes continue to increase with the majority of sports at UHM witnessing rates above 85 percent. Nevertheless, it was emphasized that the COVID-19 situation remains very dynamic and UHM Athletics must maintain the flexibility to quickly adapt to ever-changing situations.

Dr. Sladky discussed UHM Athletics’ concussion program and tracking system stating that the concussion management plan is regularly updated in accordance with NCAA and medical requirements regarding concussion protocols and safety measures. He provided statistics on concussions experienced by UHM student-athletes over the past five years noting that there was a slight increase during the 2019-2020 academic year and a noticeable decrease in the last academic year which was mainly due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on athletic competition.

During a time in which mental health concerns are on the rise globally, Dr. Sladky stressed the importance of ensuring the mental well-being of student-athletes in addition to their physical well-being. He spoke about an initiative undertaken during the last academic year to meet the mental health needs of its student-athletes through the use of a web-based mental health platform that provided rapid access to services. While this initiative was successful, a review of usage data resulted in UHM Athletics moving from a reactionary system of addressing the mental health of student-athletes to one that is more proactive and preventative in nature. Dr. Sladky highlighted the work of Kelly Soler, a licensed clinical social worker with a Masters Degree in Social Work, and UHM’s Counseling and Student Development Center, as well as a number of private parties, on this initiative.
Given recent discussions locally and nationally regarding the return of normalcy to athletic events, Regent Haning asked if any resistance to maintaining testing protocols and other restrictions have been experienced among student-athletes. Dr. Sladky replied that there has not been resistance to testing protocols and other medical requirements by student-athletes at UHM and credited the efforts of Lynn Nakagawa, head athletic trainer, the UHM Athletics’ training staff, and the coaches for this compliance. He also stated his belief that with the protocols currently in place, allowing the fan experience to proceed, especially in outdoor settings, can be accomplished in a safe manner. AD Matlin added that, when fan attendance is allowed at university sporting events, mitigating protocols would be implemented to ensure public health and safety.

Citing student-athlete vaccination data provided in the materials, Regent Higaki questioned the reasoning behind the lower vaccination rates among UHM’s swimming and diving teams. Dr. Sladky replied that some of the lower vaccination rates among the different university sports can be attributed to the diversity of the student-athletes on those teams and differences in cultural, personal, and religious beliefs. However, vaccination numbers tend to increase as athletes begin to prepare for competition and realize some of the limitations and challenges faced because of their unvaccinated status. AD Matlin added that some of the international student-athletes have been vaccinated in accordance with protocols in their respective countries but that their vaccinations are not recognized in the United States.

Chair Acoba questioned whether UHM anticipates vaccination rates to increase among student-athletes and asked about the high number of concussions experienced annually by the UHM women’s basketball team. AD Matlin replied that UHM Athletics anticipates vaccination rates will increase although it does not believe 100 percent vaccination will be achieved in all sports due to a variety of factors. Dr. Sladky concurred with this assessment adding that a number of student-athletes also have legitimate medical and religious reasons for remaining unvaccinated. With respect to the high number of concussions in women’s basketball, Dr. Sladky stated that UHM’s figures are consistent with national statistics and that the nature of the sport of basketball lends itself to increased incidence for concussions.

UHH AD Patrick Guillen provided an update on the various health and safety issues involving UHH Athletics reviewing protocols regarding COVID-19 screening, testing, return-to-play, and travel that are currently in place. He noted that 97.5 percent of the 231 student-athletes at UHH are fully vaccinated and stated that, as of September 28, 2021, UHH Athletics has conducted 5,031 COVID-19 tests, seven of which have been confirmed as positive, for an overall positivity rate of 0.13 percent. He also reported on several actions being taken by UHH Athletics to ensure the mental health of its student-athletes including conducting pre-participation mental health screenings; promotion of the Talk Campus App, which offers community peer-to-peer support; and increased encouragement of the use of both in-person and online counseling services provided by the UHH Student Health and Wellness Program. Data on concussions experienced by UHH student-athletes by sport during the 2020-2021 academic year was provided with AD Guillen stating that concussion protocols have been updated and that baseline testing of all student-athletes occurs upon their return to campus.
D. Ching Complex Status and Potential Uses and Update on Aloha Stadium

AD Matlin provided an update on the facility improvements to the Clarence T.C. Ching Athletic Complex (Ching Complex) and summarized a number of the facility upgrades that were made, including seating expansion to accommodate in excess of 9,300 fans. He noted that completion of the Ching Complex improvements was a total team effort and commended the work of the university administration and staff of UHM Athletics. He also thanked all of the student-athletes and the university community for their patience and understanding during this challenging time.

Although fans are not yet permitted, the Ching Complex is ready to host fans. Traffic and pedestrian management plans have been completed; numerous amenities to improve the fan experience including food and merchandising concessions, as well as restroom facilities, are currently in place; and game day programming, promotions, and contests have been planned. UHM Athletics also is continuing to communicate with student groups to discuss approaches on encouraging student attendance at sporting events in the Ching Complex.

AD Matlin summarized NCAA and Mountain West Conference requirements for fan attendance explaining that, while the requirement to average 15,000 or more fans per game measured over a two-year period were suspended for the 2020 and 2021 seasons, they will be reinstated for the 2022 and 2023 seasons which will necessitate the expansion of the Ching Complex or require UHM Athletics to seek a waiver from this requirement.

While the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District continues to be slated for completion by 2024, with demolition of Aloha Stadium anticipated in 2022, AD Matlin stated that UHM Athletics is unaware of any updates to these plans other than those contained within announcements already made by the Stadium Authority.

Chair Acoba asked about plans for expanding the Ching Complex to accommodate 15,000 fans. AD Matlin replied that the most efficient way to accomplish this expansion would be to construct a second tier above the hospitality rooms which would add approximately 5,000 seats and build stands at the Ewa end of the field that replicate the stands currently in existence on the Diamond Head end of the field which would add approximately 1,000 seats.

E. Academics Progress Report: UHM and UHH

Dr. Kapa Oliveira, Director of Academics/Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education, provided a synopsis of the academic performance rate (APR) for UHM Athletics and highlighted several of its academic successes. She noted that almost all academic support services for student-athletes since the Spring 2020 semester, including mentoring and tutoring, have been provided virtually; underscored the perseverance of both the student-athletes and SAAS in facing this challenge; and stated that SAAS has returned to the traditional provision of services this fall.

UHM Athletics has improved its APR score for seven consecutive years with an APR score of 986 being achieved for the 2019-2020 academic year, which is slightly above
the national average APR score of 983 for the 2018-2019 academic year. Ten of UHM’s 18 teams posted perfect, single-year APR scores of 1,000 during the 2019-2020 academic year with the men’s volleyball team achieving its fourth perfect score in four years and women’s tennis team achieving its seventh perfect score in eight years. Twelve teams also posted multi-year APR scores of 980 or higher.

Dr. Oliveira provided an overview of the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semester and cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for both student-athletes and each of the athletic teams at UHM noting that student-athletes have earned a semester GPA of 3.0 for 17 consecutive semesters and a both a semester and cumulative GPA of 3.0 for six consecutive semesters. She also stated that for the 2020-2021 academic year, 356 student-athletes were considered scholar-athletes, a title bestowed to any student-athlete achieving a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher and/or two consecutive semester GPAs of 3.0 or higher, which is the highest number ever recorded by UHM Athletics and the first time this number has surpassed 300. It was stressed that much of this academic success can be attributed to the efforts and hard work of the student-athletes and SAAS staff.

Chair Acoba requested clarification on the significance of the APR. Courtney Tsumoto, Director of Academics for SAAS, replied that APR is based upon the assigning of points for the academic eligibility and retention of each student-athlete for each academic term and is calculated using a specified formula. Low APR scores can result in the loss of scholarships while high APR scores can result in additional funds being received by an athletic department due to incentives established by the NCAA.

AD Guillen presented an overview of the academic performance of student-athletes at UHH for the 2020-2021 academic year. He noted and commended the academic success of UHH student-athletes mentioning that a record number (154) were placed on the UHH honor roll earning a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. UHH student-athletes have earned a one-year GPA of 3.173 and cumulative GPA of 3.192 for the academic year, with 114 student-athletes earning a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher. Additionally, 70 percent of UHH student-athletes earned a spring semester GPA of 3.0 or higher with 65 percent earning a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. AD Guillen also presented a three-year, historical perspective of GPA by sport stating that academic progress has shown continued improvement.

An overview, by sport, of the academic success rate (ASR), overall student-athlete retention rates, and graduation rates was also provided by AD Guillen. He mentioned that UHH Athletics experienced an average retention rate of 78.2 percent as compared to the campus retention rate of 71 percent and that graduation rates have continually increased since 2015 with 35 student-athletes graduating this year.

AD Guillen also highlighted the achievements of UHH senior women’s volleyball standout Bria Beale who has been selected as an NCAA Woman of the Year Top 30 Honoree which recognizes female student-athletes that have distinguished themselves in academics, athletics, service, and leadership throughout their college careers and noted that Ms. Beale is currently under consideration to receive the 2021 NCAA Woman of the Year Award.
Chair Acoba asked for clarification of ASR and whether it had any impacts on UHH Athletics. AD Guillen replied that ASR is a metric used by NCAA Division II schools that tracks the six-year graduation rates of freshman, mid-year transfer, and transfer student-athletes that are on an athletic scholarship and does not impact UHH Athletics.

Regent Haning asked about the possibility of UHH establishing a swim team given that the campus has an Olympic-sized pool. AD Guillen clarified that the pool is more akin to a lap pool and that it would take significant resources to establish a swim team at UHH.

B. Committee Work Plan

Chair Acoba referenced the Committee Work Plan (Work Plan) noting that it would be used as an outline of the work to be performed by the committee during the coming year. He also stated that reference materials specific to the committee, including statutes, as well as board policies and bylaws, were provided along with the Work Plan and suggested that committee members review those documents. Chair Acoba then requested a motion to approve the Work Plan.

Regent Haning moved to approve the Work Plan, seconded by Regent Wilson, and the motion carried with all committee members present voting in the affirmative.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Regent Wilson moved to adjourn, seconded by Regent Bal, and with all members present voting in the affirmative, the meeting was adjourned at 12:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kendra T. Oishi
Executive Administrator and Secretary
of the Board of Regents