MINUTES

BOARD OF REGENTS COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND INNOVATION MEETING

OCTOBER 3, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jan Sullivan called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 3, 2019, at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Information Technology Building, 1st Floor Conference Room 105A/B, 2520 Correa Road, Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96822.

Committee members in attendance: Chair Jan Sullivan; Vice-Chair Michelle Tagorda; Regent Kelli Acopan; Regent Eugene Bal; and Regent Randy Moore.

Others in attendance: Board Chair Ben Kudo; Regent Simeon Acoba; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Robert Westerman; Regent Ernest Wilson Jr. (ex officio committee members); Interim 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 Budget and Finance/Chief Financial Officer Kalbert Young; University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) Provost Michael Bruno; University of Hawai‘i - 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 OF THE JUNE 6, 2019, MEETING

Regent Moore moved to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2019, meeting, seconded by Regent Tagorda, and the motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Board Secretary Oishi announced that the Board Office received no written testimony, and no individuals had signed up to provide oral testimony.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Committee Goals and Objectives

Chair Sullivan referenced previously circulated draft committee goals and objectives for consideration by the committee.

Regent Moore questioned the item on energy costs associated with research and whether such costs were charged centrally. VP Syrmos replied that predominantly energy costs at UHM are paid from tuition and special funds, but that there are some facilities that pay their own costs from Research and Training Revolving Funds, such as in Kakaako. VP Syrmos added that this would be a good item to review expenditures from a holistic perspective.
Regent Moore commented on the second item regarding metrics and agreed that they should be simplified. He observed that the metrics considered by the board should be high-level, whereas administration can review metrics more in-depth.

Regent Moore made a motion to adopt the committee goals and objectives, Regent Tagorda seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Update on University of Hawai‘i Innovation Spaces

VP Syrmos presented an update on innovation spaces and explained the functions and importance of spaces such as the UH iLab, sPACE (Shidler Pacific Asian Center for Entrepreneurship), the Mānoa Innovation Center (MIC), and the Atherton Innovation Center, which is expected to open in 2021 and 2022. He also explained the differences between the spaces, as well as how they work together.

VP Syrmos explained the MIC in more detail and how it is a home to small high-tech start-up companies, which serves as a tech park and incubator. He described the benefit of being in proximity to intellectual capital. VP Syrmos described how PACE will move from Shidler to Atherton and how the dorm will house up to 300 students with a demonstrated interest in entrepreneurship to create a live-learn environment.

C. Update on the UHealthy Hawai‘i Initiative

Dr. Aimee Grace, Director of Health Science Policy, presented an update on the UHealthy Hawai‘i Initiative, which aims to improve health and health care in Hawai‘i and the Pacific by leveraging the UH System’s health sciences programs and forging meaningful collaborative partnerships. She highlighted four priority areas and noted that the initiative has gained many more partners since the last presentation eight months ago.

Dr. Grace highlighted the priority to ensure a robust statewide health workforce and noted health provider shortages in the state, and outlined next steps to make improvements in this area, including a focus on collaborative solutions.

Regent Tagorda asked if they were working with the Department of Education. Dr. Grace replied that they have been working with health academy leaders to try to put more programs in the high schools, and have been talking with the community college team.

Chair Sullivan asked how the initiative was funded and if there is continuity of funding. Dr. Grace said that they are currently funded through the Office of the VP for Research and Innovation, but are working with the legislature to attain more permanent funding. She noted that they were not successful with a federal budget request, although they continue to apply for grants and seek federal funding opportunities.

D. Research and Innovation Year-in-Review and Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-2020 Outlook

Vice President Syrmos presented a review of FY 2019-2020 and outlook for the current FY. He noted that extramural awards increased about eight percent, resulting in a total of approximately $421 million in awards for FY 2019-2020.
Board Chair Kudo asked what the most significant factor that influences the amount of extramural awards. VP Syrmos replied that there are numerous factors, but that faculty is a key factor. He credited President Lassner and Provost Bruno with many strategic hires. He noted that in addition to the intellectual capacity of the faculty, entitlements are another avenue for universities to receive extramural funds.

Board Chair Kudo asked how to encourage people to apply for grants. VP Syrmos noted that the biggest motivation to apply for grants is professional development. He also cited programs to support grant applications. Chair Sullivan noted that this issue will be further explored by this committee. She added that ASU doubled its enterprise in ten years and that the strategy behind that is worthy of discussion.

Board Chair Kudo asked if the reason that the UH research awards from the Department of Defense are only at 25 percent was because the program is not robust. VP Syrmos replied that there is room for improvement and that he and Provost Bruno are working on enhancing resources.

E. Strategic Directions: Update on Metrics

VP Syrmos presented an update on the Strategic Directions metrics and noted the importance of trend lines and that the trend line has stabilized, which he attributes to strategic faculty hires. A five percent growth rate per year was used to create targets.

Regent Moore commented that inflation should be factored in when considering trend lines.

Regent Acoba asked the purpose of combining research and non-research data and if they related to one another. VP Syrmos said that they do relate and that non-research grants advance research, innovation, and training.

Regent Acoba asked about the strategy involved with regard to strategic hires. VP Syrmos replied that there was a robust strategy in place. Provost Bruno added that the most significant change made was centralizing control of positions, rather than allowing them to be retained within individual departments.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Regent Moore moved to adjourn, Regent Tagorda seconded, and with unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned at 1:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/S/

Kendra Oishi
Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents