I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eugene Bal called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m. on Thursday, October 7, 2021. The meeting was conducted virtually with regents participating from various locations.

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

Others in attendance: Board Chair Randy Moore; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Diane Paloma; Regent Robert Westerman (ex officio committee members); 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; UH Mānoa (UHM) Provost Michael Bruno; UH Hilo 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 Acopan moved to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2021, meeting, seconded by Regent Wilson, 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 no individuals signed up to provide oral testimony.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Research Project Presentation: *Kāhuli: Research for a Changing World*”

Presentation by Dr. Melissa Price, Assistant Professor, Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Management, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, UHM
VP Syrmos introduced Dr. Melissa Price, provided her educational background, and highlighted accomplishments achieved during her career at UHM. He stated that Dr. Price is a top researcher in the areas of ecological conservation biology, as well as restoration and natural resource management, and that the university is becoming a leading research institution in these fields due to Hawai’i’s unique but volatile natural environment.

Dr. Price provided a synopsis of her research and conservation work on the Kāhuli, or Hawaiian tree snail, which began during her postdoctoral work at the Pacific Biosciences Research Center in 2012, noting that these efforts revealed the magnitude of the ecological challenges facing Hawai’i. She also underscored the importance of the research conducted on the Kāhuli and its impacts on the larger realm of ecological conservation and management including the exploration of mitigation measures to address the multi-dimensional environmental challenges facing plant and animal species on a global level.

While Hawai’i has the unfortunate distinction of being the extinction capital of the world due to the large number of endangered species presently found on the main Hawaiian islands, its unique environment provides the university with an opportunity to become a world leader in ecological conservation biology and restoration and natural resource management. Dr. Price detailed the breadth of ecological threats facing plant and animal species throughout Hawai’i and the world stating that these threats are part of a complex, intertwined sphere of social and ecological factors which makes the development of definitive, formulaic solutions to address these problems difficult. She noted research and information gathering efforts currently being undertaken by the university to address some of these issues using an integrated-solutions approach, which will allow for improved decision-making processes regarding wildlife management thereby increasing positive outcomes, and provided details on some of these efforts. Through this work, as well as increased collaboration on conservation efforts and the establishment of partnerships between the university, public and private agencies, community groups, and individuals throughout the state, Dr. Price believes that Hawai’i can be transformed into the ecological restoration capital of the world.

Noting Dr. Price’s remarks about implementing big, bold solutions as quickly as possible to resolve the issue of species extinction, Chair Ball asked about actions that she believed were necessary to achieve this goal. Dr. Price replied that species extinction is a complex problem and that finding solutions for this problem will require a multi-faceted approach that includes changes to policies, increases in conservation funding and resources, and greater use of collaborative efforts among a wide spectrum of scientific fields, public agencies, and community groups. Additionally, the lens through which species extinction and preservation strategies are viewed must change with greater emphasis being placed on workable solutions that can be achieved through the use of currently available technology. Refocusing these approaches and efforts would be the best means of achieving success in species preservation.

VP Syrmos provided historical background on the creation of OII and commended the efforts of various individuals in establishing this office. He introduced Mr. Kamuela Enos, Director of OII, citing the numerous accomplishments he has achieved since beginning his tenure.

Mr. Enos shared his educational and professional background noting his long-term relationship with the university including that he was a proud graduate of UHM, has encouraged numerous students from the Leeward Coast of O'ahu to pursue a post-secondary education at the university, and continues to serve the university as both a lecturer and Director of OII.

Mr. Enos stated that the mission of OII is based upon the idea that traditional indigenous knowledge and technology are a science. As such, the mission of OII is to serve as a catalyst, convener, and pathway for students, faculty, indigenous organizations, and regional communities of practice to support and increase the contemporary application of ancestral knowledge and systems as a means of solving local and global challenges. By capturing innovation occurring in the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities with respect to indigenous knowledge and technology and functioning as a conduit to attract fiscal resources to support this effort, OII believes that community-driven enterprises can be built and scaled to strengthen social, economic, and environmental resilience.

It was noted that success in innovation through the use of indigenous knowledge and practices is best attained when ancestry is viewed as an asset and the practice of utilizing ancestral sciences and technologies in ways that optimize contemporary innovation to restore Hawai’i biosystems through community-driven projects is demonstrated and applied at scale. Success in this arena is also dependent upon transforming the traditional, siloed approach of obtaining a post-secondary education to an approach that creates longitudinal, matriculated, community-centered pathways from education to employment, with investments being made across this broad spectrum during each step of the process.

Mr. Enos reviewed the guiding principles used by OII to provide a foundation for the future of indigenous innovation that is grounded in ancestral prerogatives, knowledge, and practice; went over the strategic goals of OII and evaluation metrics to measure its success; provided information on partnerships with organizations; mentioned the receipt of a $1 million grant to advance indigenous innovation specific to Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander health initiatives; and described future work plans.

Regent Paloma left at 12:59 p.m.

C. Committee Work Plan

Chair Bal referenced the Committee Work Plan noting that it would be used as an outline of the work to be performed by the committee during the coming year and that it was developed in conjunction with the VP for Research and Innovation.

D. Research and Innovation Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Year-in-Review and FY 2022 Outlook
VP Syrmos reported on the extramural awards received for FY 2021; provided a breakdown of trends, significant awards, and award amounts by campus; and summarized data pertaining to various research and innovation metrics. He noted that the university received $121.9 million in award revenues for the fourth quarter of FY 2021, which was 54.2 percent more than the same period last year, and a total of $485.5 million in extramural awards for FY 2021, which was $3 million shy of the record amount of $488 million received in FY 2012 and the third year in a row this amount exceeded $400 million. He also reviewed the number of invention disclosures made, the number of patents applied for, and the number of licenses/options awarded for research projects for FY 2021.

While extramural awards received for FY 2022 to date are lagging slightly behind the amount received during the same period last year, the university has received approximately $196 million to date and remains cautiously optimistic that growth in extramural funding will continue with projected total extramural award revenues anticipated to be near $450 million for FY 2022.

Regent Haning inquired as to what accounted for the increase in indirect costs with regard to extramural expenditures. VP Syrmos replied that an increase in both construction and research investments over the last three years, particularly at UHM and the university’s Kaka’ako facilities, was responsible for the majority of the growth in indirect costs.

Regent Westerman asked whether the university experienced any return on investment (ROI) for patents and licenses awarded to university personnel. VP Syrmos replied in the affirmative stating that, once a utility patent has been issued, the university can realize an ROI by either assisting the faculty member receiving the patent in obtaining a license through creation of a start-up, or licensing the patent through an existing, third-party company outside of the realm of the university. He added that, while the university wants its faculty members to succeed and therefore provides as much support as possible in securing a license through their own start-up company, obtaining a license through an external company provides a better ROI.

Referencing the Atherton Project which contains an innovation center, Regent Westerman questioned whether the university anticipated work occurring at that facility to lead to an increase in patents and licensing. VP Syrmos responded in the affirmative.

Regent Acoba stated that targets for extramural award metrics appear to be lower than what they tended to be over the past several years and asked if this was due to a recalculation of how the administration establishes these targets. VP Syrmos replied in the affirmative and explained the process and assumptions used to recalibrate the extramural funding targets.

E. Strategic Directions: Extramural Awards Targets vs. Actuals FY2014 - FY2021

VP Syrmos stated that, after conducting a review of historical data and the accuracy of assumptions used to establish extramural award targets, the administration amended
the methodology used to establish these targets. The university now determines extramural award targets based upon historical trends as well as an assumption of a growth rate of five percent per year. He provided historical trend data of annual targets versus the actual amount of extramural awards received since 1975 and reviewed both research and non-research extramural award targets versus actuals for each of the major units of the university during the last five years. A comparison of the revised targets established using the new calculation methodology in relation to the original targets established was also provided for FY 2021.

Chair Bal stated that this presentation is intended to provide more detailed information on extramural awards received by the university to the committee. VP Syrmos concurred with this assessment and added that it also provides insight to the committee on how the university internally views its extramural award figures.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Regent Wilson moved to adjourn, seconded by Regent Haning, and with all members present voting in the affirmative, the meeting was adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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