

MINUTES

BOARD OF REGENTS COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND INNOVATION MEETING

OCTOBER 6, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eugene Bal called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. on Thursday, October 6, 2022, at the 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.

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

Others in attendance: Board Chair Randy Moore; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Alapaki Nahale-a (ex officio committee members); President David Lassner; Vice President (VP) for Community Colleges Erika Lacro; VP for Research and Innovation Vassilis Syrmos; VP for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer Garret Yoshimi; UH Hilo Chancellor Bonnie Irwin; UH West O'ahu Chancellor Maenette Benham; Associate VP for Legal Affairs Gary Takeuchi; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Kendra Oishi; and others as noted.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Bal inquired if there were any corrections to the minutes of the May 5, 2022, committee meeting which had been distributed. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

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 Briefing: “University of Hawai'i Center for Indigenous Innovation and Health Equity (CIHE)” Presentation by Kamuela Enos, Director, Office of Indigenous Innovation, and Dr. Aimee Grace, Director, Office of Strategic Health Initiatives

VP Syrmos briefly spoke about the origins of the CIHE initiative as well as its founders, Kamuela Enos, Director of the Office of Indigenous Innovation, and Dr. Aimee Grace, Director of the Office of Strategic Health Initiatives, citing their numerous individual and joint accomplishments. He introduced Director Enos, who would be presenting on this matter, and noted that Dr. Grace was scheduled to speak at a conference and could not attend this meeting.

Director Enos provided background information on the establishment of CIIHE, including the rationale for and roots of its genesis, stating that the initiative was based upon a hypothesis that the most effective intervention to reduce health disparities and achieve health equity was the restoration of ancestral practices for indigenous communities. He recognized the core collaborators and community partners involved with CIIHE; reviewed the key premise of CIIHE which posits that the contemporary application of ancestral knowledge and systems is a means of addressing the current healthcare and poverty inequities facing indigenous populations and frames equity as an exit strategy from this disparity; and spoke about projects and studies that influenced the creation of CIIHE, including the Maui Ola Study, MA'O Youth Leadership Training Program, studies on the health benefits associated with hula and the revival of native languages, and a project about the potential for indigenous post-war ceremonial cleansing practices to be utilized in reducing post-traumatic stress disorder.

It was noted that one of the initial actions taken by the CIIHE initiative upon being awarded grant funding was the onboarding of team members. Director Enos highlighted the work of these individuals as being key to the success of CIIHE and asked each member to introduce themselves. Jonny Tudela Aldan, Jr., Sharde Freitas, Shanda Delos Reyes, and Ikaika Ramones each introduced themselves, spoke about their backgrounds and projects they are working on, and extolled the beneficial impacts CIIHE can have on indigenous communities across the globe.

Director Enos reviewed activities undertaken by CIIHE during the first year of its existence, including the creation of an indigenous framework that would be used to guide the initiative's actions; the performance of a landscape analysis survey to ascertain and examine the types of indigenous innovations that were already in existence; the holding of landscape analysis workshops to encourage collaborations between indigenous populations; and synthesizing data obtained from the survey and workshops. He also spoke about CIIHE's second year plans which will be focused on establishing more stable sources of program funding, strengthening internal capacities, completing work on research initiatives that have already been instituted, launching a research incubator, advancing policy strategies to expand indigenous innovation practices, and exploring economic development as well as commercialization opportunities for indigenous innovation practitioners and organizations.

Regent Wilson asked how the actions taken by CIIHE and the processes used to develop the initiative's activities could be expanded to benefit more indigenous communities throughout the Pacific region. Dr. Enos replied that CIIHE falls within the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health and therefore has the potential to impact Native American and Alaska Native populations in addition to Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. While CIIHE intends to collaborate with indigenous populations across the Pacific region, he noted that overcoming challenges to empowerment and scaling of these activities will require working with communities to gain a level of trust among their members. Nevertheless, CIIHE has received a groundswell of support from native populations for its efforts.

Regents commended the inspiring work of Director Enos, Dr. Grace, and the CIIHE team, noting the impacts of their efforts on the community.

Citing a general need for project scrutiny, Vice-Chair Haning questioned whether individuals have leveled any criticisms against the work of CIIHE and, if so, what the concerns entailed. Director Enos replied that rigor is a hallmark of indigenous thinking. Although he was unaware of specific criticisms about the work CIIHE was doing, concerns have been raised regarding the representation of Pacific Islanders residing on the continent as well as the protection of indigenous knowledge once it enters the larger realm. CIIHE intends to collaborate with communities of practice, faculty, and others to address these concerns, as well as attend to any criticisms brought forth. Vice-Chair Haning thanked Director Enos for his response but suggested that CIIHE retain an individual that has reservations about the program's work to review its projects. Director Enos stated that constructive criticism either leads to affirmation of an idea or refinement of a concept and CIIHE would welcome any and all such feedback.

Chair Bal stated his belief that the work being done by CIIHE is powerful and necessary but expressed his concern with the Center's avenue for funding noting its current reliance on grant funding and donations to remain operational. He encouraged CIIHE to build its reputation and engender the confidence of the federal government to the point where the initiative can receive regular programmatic funding in the future. Director Enos agreed with Chair Bal's assessment and stated that the development of a financial sustainability plan is a priority for CIIHE.

B. Research and Innovation Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Year-in-Review and FY 2023 Outlook

VP Syrmos reported on the extramural awards received for FY 2022; provided a breakdown of trends, significant awards, and award amounts by campus; and summarized data pertaining to various research and innovation metrics. He highlighted that the university received a record \$505 million in extramural awards for FY 2022 and noted that extramural funding obtained for the first quarter of FY 2023 is approximately 10 percent higher than the same period last fiscal year. 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 2022. The administration remains cautiously optimistic that the university's extramural funding efforts will continue to experience success with total extramural award revenues predicted to be near \$495 million for FY 2023.

VP Syrmos credited administrators, faculty, staff, students, colleagues, and his predecessors for the achievements that have been made with respect to the receipt of extramural research funding stating that a feat of this magnitude is the result of years of work. He also expressed his belief that the university must continue to invest in research and development initiatives in order to sustain this success.

Board Chair Moore asked whether inflation was factored into extramural research funding requests, particularly with respect to multi-year proposals. VP Syrmos replied in the affirmative stating that faculty members use a cost-escalation modeling factor of

between two and three percent to adjust for inflation when developing their research proposals. However, he noted that the unprecedented and unanticipated surge in inflation that has recently been experienced has resulted in the underfunding of some projects which is problematic and something the administration is currently working to address.

C. Strategic Directions: Extramural Awards Targets vs. Actuals FYs 2015 – 2022

VP Syrmos provided historical trend data of annual targets versus the actual amount of extramural awards received since 1975, noting that information of both research and non-research extramural award targets versus actuals for each of the major units of the university during the last five years was provided in the meeting materials. He stressed that research takes time to produce results and emphasized that, with patience as well as timely and appropriate investments, the receipt of extramural funding can and will continue to increase for the university.

Chair Bal referenced discussions with VP Syrmos and others regarding the importance of strategic hiring and investments in the growth of extramural funding stating that he was heartened to see things coming to fruition.

D. 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. He stated that it was a living document that may be modified as needed, highlighted that the timing for the presentation of extramural award reports was changed from quarterly to semiannually, and asked committee members if they had any questions or comments about the Work Plan. None were raised.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Bal adjourned the meeting at 12:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/S/

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