

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF REGENTS COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE**  
**MEETING**

**MAY 2, 2024**

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

[Meeting Video](#)

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Laurel Loo called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. on Thursday, May 2, 2024, 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 Laurel Loo, Vice-Chair Ernest Wilson, Regent William Haning, Regent Wayne Higaki, and Regent Gabriel Lee.

Others in attendance: Regent Neil Abercrombie; Regent Lauren Akitake; Regent Abigail Mawae; Regent Diane Paloma; Regent Laurie Tochiki (ex officio committee members); President David Lassner; Vice President (VP) for Academic Strategy Debora Halbert; 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 Provost Michael Bruno; UH-West O'ahu Chancellor Maenette Benham; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Yvonne Lau; and others as noted.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Loo inquired if there were any corrections to the minutes of the February 15, 2024, committee meeting which had been distributed. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

Regent Abercrombie arrived at 9:04 a.m.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Board Secretary Lau announced the Board Office's receipt of written testimony from Jim Shon offering comments on the strategic plan imperative to fulfill kuleana to Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i. Late written comments regarding this same imperative were also received from Jill Nunokawa. Additionally, three individuals signed up to provide oral testimony.

Bronson Azama, Pearl Bachiller, and Jill Nunokawa provided oral comments on various aspects of the imperative to fulfill kuleana to Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i as it relates to one of the tenets of the university's educational mission - to be a Native

Hawaiian place of learning. Mr. Azama and Ms. Bachiller also spoke about the incongruence between the imperative and the university's relationship with the United States military and the work being conducted through the University Affiliated Research Center utilizing funds from the United States Department of Defense.

Written testimony may be viewed at the Board of Regents website as follows:

[Written Testimony Received](#)

[Late Written Testimony Received](#)

#### **IV. AGENDA ITEMS**

##### **A. Board Review and Discussion on Strategic Plan Imperative – Fulfill Kuleana to Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i**

Chair Loo provided the rationale for the committee's review and discussion of each imperative contained within the University of Hawai'i System Strategic Plan 2023-2029 (Strategic Plan) highlighting a lack of familiarity with the overall Strategic Plan and its imperatives among regents who were relatively new members of the board and did not take part in the current Plan's creation. She noted the purpose of this exercise, which was for regents to conduct in-depth discussions on each imperative and reaffirm the board's commitment to these imperatives or propose changes to them; asked more seasoned regents to share their thoughts about, and provide insight on, the development of the Strategic Plan and its imperatives; went over the goal and objectives of the imperative to Fulfill Kuleana to Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i, along with the metrics being used to evaluate achievement of its objectives; and invited input from regents on this matter.

Referencing discussions on the Strategic Plan imperatives that took place at the November 2, 2023, Committee on Governance Meeting, Regent Abercrombie continued to stress the need for the exploration of the humanities to be explicitly referenced within the Strategic Plan. He went on to discuss the importance of the humanities as a core and fundamental educational subject at institutions of higher education and its relevance to all of the Strategic Plan imperatives, including the one being reviewed and talked about at this meeting. Chair Loo suggested working with the administration towards inclusion of language regarding the humanities within the metrics portions of the Strategic Plan.

Regent Akitake inquired as to when the detailed plan to implement this imperative and achieve its objectives would be presented to the board. Chair Loo stated an update on plans for the imperative was to be presented by Hawai'i Papa O Ke Ao during the following meeting of the Committee on Kuleana.

Discussions ensued on the use and meaning of the term "colonization" within the context of the imperative's objectives. While some regents stressed the importance of gaining a better understanding of this period in Hawai'i's history to achieve a Native Hawaiian consciousness of these islands, its culture, and its indigenous people, other regents expressed their belief in the need for broadening the scope and more clearly

defining the concept of colonization, possibly via the implementation plan or the imperative's metrics. Regents also shared their opinions on the role of academic curricula in addressing the notions of colonization and reconciliation, as well as meeting the other objectives of this imperative.

Regent Paloma arrived at 9:29 a.m.

**B. Committee Annual Review**

Chair Loo referenced and went over the committee annual review matrix provided in the materials packet stating that it sets forth the actions carried out by the committee throughout the year relative to its goals and objectives. She also mentioned the conducting of a board self-assessment, which is one of the committee's goals, later on this year. Chair Loo asked committee members if they had any questions or comments about the activities of the committee over the past year or the board self-assessment. None were raised.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chair Loo adjourned the meeting at 9:42 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/S/

Yvonne Lau  
Executive Administrator and Secretary  
of the Board of Regents