

MINUTES

BOARD OF REGENTS SPECIAL MEETING

March 18, 2022

Note: On January 26, 2022, Governor David Y. Ige issued a proclamation related to the COVID-19 emergency that temporarily suspended Section 92-3.7, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), "only to the extent necessary to suspend the requirement to have at least one meeting location that is open to the public".

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Randy Moore called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. on Friday, March 18, 2022, noting that this was a special meeting of the Board of Regents, with regents participating from various locations.

Quorum (10): Chair Randy Moore; Vice-Chair Alapaki Nahale-a; Vice-Chair Benjamin Kudo; Regent Simeon Acoba; Regent Eugene Bal III; Regent William Haning III; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Diane Paloma; Regent Robert Westerman; and Regent Ernest Wilson.

Excused (1): Regent Kelli Acopan.

Others in attendance: President David Lassner; Vice President (VP) for Administration Jan Gouveia; VP for Community Colleges Erika Lacro; 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; VP for Advancement/UH Foundation (UHF) Chief Executive Officer Tim Dolan; UH-Mānoa Provost Michael Bruno; UH-Hilo Chancellor Bonnie Irwin; UH-West O'ahu (UHWO) Chancellor Maenette Benham; Associate VP for Legal Affairs Gary Takeuchi; Associate VP for Academic Programs and Policy Debora Halbert; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents Kendra Oishi; and others as noted.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The Board Office received written testimony from Matthew Lynch, relating to the mission, vision, and roles of the University of Hawai'i (UH); and Von Kenric Kaneshiro, Lloyd Lim, and Randall Yanagi relating to the direction of the UH system and future plans for UH.

Late written comments were received from: Dolores Guttman, suggesting recommendations to be included in the reimagining of the UH system; Herbert Nakamura, providing suggestions related to UH's future; Jimmy Kuroiwa, relating to UH's strategic plan and Hawai'i's multi-cultural environment; and Kuawela Aiona, citing technology issues.

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

[Written Testimony Comment Received](#)

Late Written Testimony Comment Received

Late written comments and oral testimony were received from the following: Jonathan Okamura, summarizing his written testimony regarding UH's role in addressing inequities in Hawai'i; Kioni Dudley, summarizing his written comments on an impending food crisis in Hawai'i; and Nalani Minton, summarizing her written comments in opposition to Senate Bill No. 3269, relating to academic tenure at UH.

Regent Acoba commended Professor Okamura for calling the board's attention to the need to address the underrepresentation of Hawaiian and Filipino students and staff at the university.

III. AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Moore prefaced the meeting by explaining that this was the board's version of a "retreat," which the regents have been desiring and were surveyed as to the topics that should be included. Regents also indicated a preference for hiring a facilitator. As such, the facilitator for this meeting was Peter Adler, who has experience with the university and with facilitation in general. Chair Moore also introduced members of administration who were sitting at the table with regents.

Mr. Adler provided some introductory remarks, citing goals for the meeting including stepping away from the usual formalities of regular board meetings, exploring ideas for a new long-term vision for the university, generating ideas to be used for developing the university's next five-year strategic plan, and accelerating the board's effectiveness.

Mr. Adler explained that the Regents and University Officers were assigned "[homework](#)" to generate a list of visualizations or "snapshots" in response to the following scenario: *"March 18, 2032. A high-level delegation from WASC [Western Association of Schools and Colleges] has arrived and is touring UH's ten campus system. The Chair of the BOR and UH's president are showing them some of the specifics of the vision and strategy established ten years ago. What specifically will they show the delegation?"*

A. Based on what Hawai'i needs from us ten years from now, how should the University of Hawai'i help to get there?

Mr. Adler facilitated discussion on whether there were any additional snapshots. There were some observations including that in addition to looking forward, we also need to review and learn from the past, assess the present-day environment, and look ahead to the future. Discussion occurred around the need for more engagement of students and faculty beyond the formal educational role.

Participants were asked whether there were certain themes that emerged. Many of the responses were campus-specific and not as many were system-oriented. Chancellor Irwin commented that she was highly informed by her own campus and observed that she would like to see cultural change and attitude change, which is hard to visualize. Other emerging themes included: logistical support for the mission of the

university, such as finances and facilities; the students we serve and support services; and collaboration across the university system.

The group discussed some of the bigger shifts and changes that could emerge from the snapshots: breaking down institutional and disciplinary silos, becoming borderless, and the resulting occurrences; using our unique indigenous culture to bind the silos; engaging with the communities that we serve; developing seamless pathways and melding of student experiences across various levels of education; strengthening exit strategies and removing barriers for students to transfer from community colleges to four-year campuses; ensuring that students and other constituents have a voice in the decisions that are made; Hawai'i having a transformed economy that is not dependent on tourism or the military, as a result of the work of UH; UH as a leader in identifying and serving as a convener to solve the State's major issues, including equity and reconciliation of Native Hawaiians.

Participants were asked to come up with a tagline that might capture UH's vision:

- "UH, we are a part of you, you are a part of us."
- "A meaningful life for all."
- "Where everyone has access and everyone is successful."
- "We are the institute for the advancement of mankind. No one left behind. To be of use to all."
- "Great minds for restoring our 'aina and our sea."
- "Rise up. Rise together. Soar together."
- "Access to all."
- "Educating Hawai'i now and for the future."
- "Moving, improving, and educating Hawai'i. Educating the world."
- "Our employment needs and incomes make Hawai'i affordable."
- "Rooted in 'aina, engaging the world."
- "Hawaiian soil, Hawai'i tree, global fruit."
- "Leading Hawai'i to a globally preeminent sustainable thriving caring future for all our people and our islands."
- "A sustainable future. Malama Hawai'i."
- "Breeding success by building leaders."
- "UH: a place of excellence from distant galaxies to the oceans and everywhere in between."
- "A place or space to solve tomorrow's problems today."
- "Together, for Hawai'i's future."
- "With generations behind us leading the generations of the future."
- "Our students are the solution."
- "Passion never rests, aspire to make a difference."

The meeting was recessed at 10:30 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 11:00 a.m.

B. UH as an Indigenous-Serving Institution

One of the items from the survey that was conducted on possible retreat topics was on UH as an indigenous-serving institution; Mr. Adler asked specific participants what success would look like. Responses included the following thoughts and concepts:

- That the community embraces the genuine meaning of aloha, not just the indigenous people; embrace the humanity of everyone.
- Native Hawaiians have a right to self-governance and to design and implement their own systems. Hawaiian well-being will not be achieved in the current system. UH could be the premiere leader and ally for returning self-governance to Hawaiians and create a system of governance that implements values including taking care of our natural resources and ensuring our keiki and kupuna are taken care of first. UH has educated the vast majority of Native Hawaiian leaders with varied perspectives.
- “Indigenous-serving” goes beyond metrics such as the percentage of Native Hawaiians in the institution.
- The university needs to help to ensure there are exemplars of Hawaiian excellence, such as graduates of the medical school or student-athletes, to serve as models of what Native Hawaiians can do in the State of Hawai‘i.
- It is difficult to explain to an accreditation body how we live and breathe Hawaiian culture and not just respect and embrace it. How do we make the experience that students, faculty, and staff create a foundational knowledge that is respected in the community? Some things are learned through cultural practice that can’t be quantified in an academic degree-granting program and need to be addressed in other ways.
- UH could be a better organization to support Hawaiians in their endeavors to be successful and be a place where they can grow to be leaders for the State and for our cultural community. This should not be different from everybody else in Hawai‘i. It would be ideal for the majority of Hawaiians, regardless of their political beliefs, to identify UH as the singular source that brings all of them together to achieve their desired success.
- UH is indigenous-serving because of federal designation and applies to Hispanic, African Americans, Native Alaskans, etc. We are the only Native Hawaiian institution in the world - what does it mean to be indigenous-serving in Hawaii? There are unresolved issues that go back to pre-overthrow. UH has a role to play in helping to resolve those issues.
- There has to be reconciliation in some form. In New Zealand, they established educational institutions called Wānanga which are Maori universities that provide education in a cultural context.
- Success will only come when we don’t have to say we’re an indigenous-serving institution and when Native Hawaiians feel they are no longer discriminated against or on unequal footing, and no longer have to rely on the label “indigenous-serving” for assistance. This as an ongoing journey.
- Regent Acoba noted that Chief Justice William Richardson ran his court with aloha and imbued that to his law clerks. The university needs to make a commitment to Hawaiian values and community – to a certain extent we have, in the way we approached Maunakea. This is an evolving question that won’t get

settled soon. Other political and social entities need to help resolve this, either outside or in conjunction with UH. UH can serve as an example and exhibit leadership.

- We need to be as fair and equitable as we can for people of all ethnicities.
- Having conversations that indicate that some progress is being made would be an indicator of success.
- The university doesn't mirror the community at-large. We are a Native Hawaiian place. We should always be aspiring.
- Title III language is inadequate. "Native Hawaiian place of learning" is better than saying "indigenous-serving." It needs to be recognized that traditional western education is inherently colonial. "Empowerment" is a flawed word that infers that power is bestowed on others; as a leader, some power/authority needs to be ceded to reach the ideal place. A broader vocabulary than "aloha" and "mahalo" is needed – being a bilingual place of learning would be a great achievement.
- The university has a role to educate Hawai'i and the world about the history and politics. On Maunakea, one of the first things that was stood up was a university; UH is structured based on bureaucratic mechanisms. We have some exciting opportunities for transforming education.
- The way we operate, the way we plan, the way we treat one another, our culture. It's an evolution.
- We need to remember that we are the only state institution of higher education here in Hawai'i – we are responsible for educating all students that want to come to UH.
- There is too much historical definition attached to "indigenous-serving" – maybe we need to develop our own new identity. We can't let ourselves become paralyzed from being overwhelmed; rather than being too aspirational, perhaps identify baby steps.
- "Indigenous-serving" is not the federal regulatory term. President Lassner has used that term because it could lead to UH becoming the model for the country or the world in being an "indigenous-serving" institution. No one is even close to doing what UH is doing.
- UH should provide a path for every voice and every opportunity for Native Hawaiians. More Hawaiians will live outside of Hawai'i than in Hawai'i – we need to support finding ways to live and survive here.

The meeting was recessed at 12:08 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

C. UH's Role in Addressing Inequities in Hawaii

Mr. Adler posed several questions to the group, which are noted below, along with a summary of responses.

What is underway now at UH system-wide that you are proud of?

- The Hawai'i Promise Program at the community colleges opens more doors for students.
- Allowing transfer students to register in a more timely fashion in the four-year campuses has helped to address some inequities.
- The role UH played during the pandemic, particularly challenges with online learning. UH mobilized resources quickly, including UHF which raised funds to support students, IT infrastructure and mobile devices, and healthcare support.
- UH's efforts around workforce development, training, and IT literacy. UH is viewed as a leader in bringing stakeholders together in efforts that spans K-12, higher education, and private and public employers.

Mr. Adler asked President Lassner how he promotes the university when talking to others. President Lassner responded that he talks about why higher education matters. For example, people with a bachelor's degree earn about \$1 million in lifetime earnings, pay more taxes, and are less likely to be incarcerated or draw on social services. They are healthier, live longer, and are more likely to vote and more likely to volunteer. He also explained why we need to do a better job of reaching out to people who need higher education the most and noted that this is an intergenerational advancement since their children are also more likely to go to college.

Beyond campus footprints, what broader obligations does UH have, if any?

- UH alumni are leaders in Hawai'i, particularly in social justice and equity issues. This is something to be proud of, but also an obligation. The university as an institution has had over a period of decades the stability, capacity, and diversity to solve difficult problems that the State is currently facing and issues that will be brought forth in the future. Housing was raised as an example of an issue that UH could address.
- Mānoa is a premiere institution locally and globally in areas such as climate change, sea-level rise, food, water, land, and agriculture. The conversations and solutions can start in Hawai'i and be expanded in the Pacific and globally.

What are the big inequities in the State that the university can address?

- Public education: how do we partner with the State Department of Education (DOE) to advance education?
- General education: prepare students through general education to ensure they have a foundation of data science and analytics.
- Health disparities: UH is working on it as a system, but have a long way to go, especially in mental health in certain areas of the State. Also, health disparities in the Hawaiian community, particularly with regard to substance use.
- Transportation.
- West O'ahu has a lot of disparities. UHWO and Leeward Community College are anchor institutions of the region and can serve as the hub and convener to work with community partners to solve issues.

- Rates of high school students attending community colleges is lagging and students are being left behind. The university can work better with the DOE to help prepare students.
- East-West Center, issues in the Pacific and around the globe.

What kind of pet project would you create to address Hawai'i's inequities, if you could get the funding?

- Establish a recovery high school for addiction treatment.
- Establish a think tank or organization dedicated to removing inequities and getting to the root of why inequities exist in response to early childhood trauma.
- Establish a program for parents to understand why it's important for children to learn.
- Provide high-quality early childhood education, including training early educators. There's a huge gap of what is needed and what we are able to produce.
- Work on growing our own or increasing the numbers in workforce areas such as teachers, doctors, and nurses which serve a large population and are known shortage areas.
- Develop infrastructure to address health disparities on the neighbor islands, which are also starting to appear on O'ahu too.
- Establish a community service academy and perhaps require all graduates to provide service to another community.
- Establish a state immigration center staffed with individuals to contact families and make referrals.
- Communicate the difference between inequities and inequalities and provide data to support influencers, policymakers, and philanthropists.

How should UH communicate key focus areas to the public?

- Develop strategic communications in a coherent and consistent manner, discerning what is particularly important.
- Develop strategic communication themes around other people, particularly around economic and social mobility, that demonstrate what UH does to solve the State's issues.
- Attract and retain underrepresented leadership. Connect theoretical solutions to real-life individual learner solutions.
- Anchor institutions to serve as a convener around priority areas and accomplish things in partnership with communities. Need more staff to do this.

The meeting was recessed at 1:59 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 2:11 p.m.

D. The Future of Online Education

Mr. Adler asked President Lassner to share his thoughts on online education and the mix of learning modalities. President Lassner noted several focus areas including: (1) online learning as a method of reaching students without access to higher education by

breaking down barriers of time and location, such as a student who lives in a remote/rural area or a working parent who cannot attend class at regular times; (2) all students want variety in their teaching and learning and even those who live in student residence halls like to take some online classes, although data shows that freshmen are less likely to succeed if they take more than one online class and have different needs than working adults; and (3) that the university needs to consider how it projects itself globally in terms of branding, noting that UH doesn't need to become an online mega-university, but that opportunities exist in Hawai'i's strategic location and UH's unique programs of excellence that could be shared well beyond Hawai'i and the Pacific through technology and hybrid forms of education.

President Lassner noted that the method of instruction during the pandemic was a quick pivot to "remote education" and not the same as well-designed online education, which is more intentional, interactive and engaging. He also distinguished between fully online programs of study, which enable students to obtain a full degree or certificate without coming to campus, and online classes, which provide additional learning options for traditional students.

Mr. Adler then asked about the appropriate mix of learning modalities, noting that it may be different at four-year campuses compared to the community colleges. VP Yoshimi noted the importance of systemic changes that have occurred, and not just the pivots that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic in the shift to remote learning, and stated his belief that over time, the learning modality will likely be a mix determined by customer demand, including high-value online programs. Significant investments in time, resources, commitment, and will of the institution are needed going forward.

VP Lacro commented that the pandemic illustrated opportunities on the neighbor islands, including identifying what individual communities need and designing programs utilizing the expertise of all its campuses. Because four-year students can automatically enroll in community college courses, there was an increase in cross-registrations in the past year.

Mr. Adler asked about the big policy issues with respect to online education. Chancellor Benham responded that faculty have to be certified to teach online and courses are reviewed by faculty, and observed that online learning has to be faculty-driven. She added that UHWO is determining the appropriate balance of hybridity, noting that some students are required to be in a classroom to receive certain financial benefits and others are not apt to online learning.

Mr. Adler then questioned whether there are policy issues that need to be considered by the board. Vice-Chair Nahale-a credited UH and the faculty for pivoting and responding during the pandemic, and opined that emerging learners will demand a hybrid learning experience and that the business community needs the university to provide more training and credentialing. He underscored the mistaken belief that online learning is more cost-effective, and stated that it requires a shift in resources, but also presents opportunities.

Regent Wilson noted the importance of ensuring that the quality of instruction does not deteriorate. President Lassner responded that accreditors review quality very closely, including distance education. He added that a potential board issue could arise if there was a desire to establish an “online campus” that is distinct from the ten accredited campuses, but noted that administration has not recommended this approach. Because the university has been providing online education for over 30 years, the preference has been to encourage every campus to incorporate online learning and student support services.

Vice-Chair Kudo emphasized that the vision of the university should include the different modalities of delivering education and that a target needs to be identified as well as the required resources so that the direction of the university is clear.

VP Yoshimi noted that the delivery method differs by customer, particularly traditional versus non-traditional students. Regent Haning expressed his concern that the technology is going to “age-out” before the student does.

E. Are the UH Mission and Vision still responsive to today’s world?

Mr. Adler posed the question of what form a vision should take – whether it should be long, short, granular, etc. Sentiments included that the longer it is, the less likely anyone will read or understand it, and as such, it should be short, concise, aspirational, and inspiring. VP Syrmos read the eight design aspirations of Arizona State University as an example. Vice-Chair Nahale-a observed that what inspires faculty is different from students, the Legislature, and others, which can pose a challenge. Several commented that the vision should be about the university and its people, and should specifically mention students. A preference was also expressed that direction be provided toward equity, e.g. “every student.”

Mr. Adler then asked what needs revising in terms of language and the direction of the mission and vision. President Lassner responded that we need to decide if we are willing to embrace a responsibility to serve everyone in Hawaii – for example, “every resident in Hawaii has to access and can succeed in a high-quality UH education or training program that helps them improve their quality-of-life.” Regent Acoba commented that it should recite fundamental principles that are comprehensive enough to allow the university to include local and global concepts while allowing for adaptation to changing circumstances to accommodate unforeseen circumstances.

Vice-Chair Nahale-a observed that as the only state university, there is an obligation to the State and its residents, but there is an opportunity for global impact, and both can be accomplished. He added that the first is an obligation, while the second is an option, and that the obligation is to ensure that Hawaii’s residents are taken care of first. Chancellor Benham added that we are ‘ohana to many Pacific Islanders and that this is an obligation that should be included in the vision.

F. Are the Board of Regents committees and agendas optimally organized?

Mr. Adler asked for thoughts on how to improve the function of the board, including committee structure and meetings. The following were some of the observations shared:

- We need to be cognizant of burnout and that colleagues need to rely on each other for reinforcement and reassurance. It was also noted that necessitating transparency sometimes constrains the free communication of ideas.
- Newer members have perspectives where they can readily question why things are being done a certain way.
- Regents receive criticism by people who are only concerned with a narrow area. This has created unreasonable expectations for volunteer board members who also have other life obligations, thereby leaving a large burden on the administration. How do we, as volunteers, get the most value out of our time together? Expectations should be more reasonable.
- This is an attractive board to join, but recruitment is difficult. We need to continue to attract a quality caliber of members.
- A discussion should occur (at a future meeting) about changing the committee structure.
- Regent Acoba stated that being a regent is a challenge and serves an unparalleled function in advancing the State's welfare and ensuring that everyone that wants a quality education receives it. Regents should look forward to doing more work. It was observed that the board has little staff for the amount of responsibilities it has, and that it is critical for the administration to keep the board informed on what is occurring in the university.
- More of these types of discussions should occur. Many meetings have been detail-oriented and relate to things that happened in previous administrations. It can be difficult to balance the responsibilities with a full-time job and family obligations. Everyone is working toward a shared vision. The relationships we have with each other are important in building the work that we do.

Mr. Adler asked everyone to share a closing thought for the day. Participants shared their sentiments regarding:

- The importance of keeping student outcomes in mind and improving the autonomy of students.
- Recognition of the responsibilities the university and regents have to the State of Hawai'i; recognition of the regents for their commitment as volunteers to the university; appreciation of other, sometimes opposing, perspectives while acknowledging that everyone wants the best for the university; expression of pride and gratitude to everyone for what they are doing for the university and for the State; and noting that the public should be reassured by the level of thought and commitment demonstrated by those that serve the university.
- Expressing appreciation for the openness and authenticity of the conversations and observing the value of building relationships in the retreat, particularly after two years of remote meetings, and that civil discourse will help move the university forward.

- Emphasizing the importance of continuing to press the administration that they are better than they think they are for the sake of improving the university for the students; emphasizing to administration that the role and responsibility of the regents is to press for information; noting that there is a need to strike a balance between transactional board items and drawing from the wisdom and experience of regents for strategic advancement.
- Encouraging the university and its leaders to be less risk-averse, which can lead to unintended paralysis and hindering the ability to dream big.
- Recognition and appreciation of including Native Hawaiian women as part of the executive team.
- Recognition that trust is difficult to achieve and easy to lose.
- Expressing pride in our one-of-a-kind institution which has seen improvement over the decades; the need to protect the diversity of things that occur within the university and allow it to flourish, as it may inspire the next person to change the world; and striving to make the university the first choice for everyone...students, faculty, as an employer.
- Recognizing that people have worked hard and are tired from the pandemic, and that the vision should reenergize the community.

Chair Moore closed the meeting by expressing his appreciation to everyone and noting the need for organizations to strive for continuous improvement. He added that the work done by the participants will be the basis of consideration for the university's strategic planning process.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Moore adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/S/

Kendra Oishi
Executive Administrator and Secretary
of the Board of Regents