

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF REGENTS SPECIAL MEETING**  
**APRIL 18, 2024**

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

[Meeting Video](#)

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Interim Chair Lee called the meeting to order at 1:18 p.m. on Thursday, April 18, 2024, at Kapi'olani Community College, 220 Grille, 'Ōhi'a Building, 4303 Diamond Head Road, Honolulu, HI 96816, with regents participating from various locations.

Quorum (9): Interim Chair Gabriel Lee; Interim Vice-Chair Ernest Wilson; Regent Neil Abercrombie; Regent Lauren Akitake; Regent William Haning; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Laurel Loo; Regent Diane Paloma; and Regent Laurie Tochiki.

Excused (2): Regent Abigail Mawae; Board vacancy.

Others in attendance: President David Lassner; Vice President (VP) for Academic Affairs Debora Halbert; VP for Community Colleges Erika Lacro; VP for Legal Affairs/UH General Counsel Carrie Okinaga; 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; UH Mānoa (UHM) Provost Michael Bruno; Honolulu Community College Chancellor Karen Lee; Kapi'olani Community College Chancellor Misaki Takabayashi; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Yvonne Lau; and others as noted.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 16, 2024, AND MARCH 7, 2024, SPECIAL MEETINGS**

Interim Chair Lee inquired if there were any corrections to the minutes of the February 16, 2024, and March 7, 2024, special meetings which had been distributed. Hearing none, the minutes for both meetings were approved.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Board Secretary Lau announced the Board Office's receipt of late written comments from the Mānoa Faculty Senate in the form of a resolution related to the presidential position description and search criteria.

Erin Centeio and Marguerite Butler provided oral comments on the presidential search process relative to the contents of the abovementioned Mānoa Faculty Senate resolution.

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

[Late Written Testimony Received](#)

**IV. AGENDA ITEMS**

**A. Report from Regents Tochiki and Wilson on the Presidential Search Advisory Group (PSAG)**

Regent Tochiki provided a report on the activities of the PSAG stating the group has begun its work and held its first meeting earlier this week during which time discussions took place on the group's roles and responsibilities, confidentiality and ethics, the milestones needing to be met, the county forums, prospective agendas, and, in consultation with WittKieffer, future meeting dates. She also informed the board about Mr. Livingston "Jack" Wong choosing to step-away from the committee and the PSAG's decision to forge ahead with its work despite this vacancy. Additionally, PSAG members agreed with the idea of retaining Erin Centeio and Jarret Leong as Co-Chairs of the group with such action being confirmed at the entity's first formal meeting. All in all, it was a productive and thought-provoking first meeting.

Interim Vice-Chair Wilson concurred with Regent Tochiki's assessment of the meeting.

**B. Guidance and Direction to the PSAG and WittKieffer on the Presidential Search Profile and Position Description**

Interim Chair Lee pointed out information about the selection criteria and President's Agenda from the 2014 Regents' Committee on the Presidential Selection Final Report, as well as the most recent version of the position description for the President of the University of Hawai'i from 2019 provided in the material packet. He stated these materials were intended to assist the board in providing guidance and direction to the PSAG and WittKieffer with respect to the development of the presidential search profile, selection criteria, and position description. He then called upon Zachary Smith, an Executive Partner of WittKieffer, to provide a broad summary of information gleaned from initial discussions with regents and others about the presidential selection process.

Mr. Smith provided an overview of some of the themes WittKieffer has come across through preliminary discussions with regents, PSAG members, and others thus far and spoke a little about the process used to gather this information. Salient topics which have arisen with relative consistency throughout these conversations have included, among other things, improving the culture across the different campuses of the university system and establishing more cohesiveness among administrators, faculty, staff, and students; increasing trust and integrity among the university constituencies, as well as between the institution and outside interests; building productive relationships with state government officials, including the Legislature; separating the position of UHM Chancellor from the University President and the impacts of this action should the board decide to go in this direction; taking into account operational matters including things like infrastructure and facility needs, academic programming, and student well-being; and respecting the institution's role in serving the community, particularly the native Hawaiian community. Additionally, individuals expressed their belief in the

qualities someone wishing to serve as the next University President should possess such as the ability to work with the board and other university constituencies to develop a vision for the entire university system and establish a strategy to accomplish these goals; personal humility and accountability; cultural competency; the aptitude to lead and manage a large organization; the capability to build productive relationships with the board and others; good communication and engagement skills; possession of an understanding of shared governance; and political savviness. Mr. Smith also emphasized that data from the presidential search survey as well as the community forums will play an important role in development of the presidential search profile.

For the edification of regents, Interim Vice-Chair Wilson requested Mr. Smith, as well as his colleagues, Shelley Arakawa and Suzanne Teer, to speak about their past work experience and some of the projects they have worked on. Mr. Smith, Ms. Arakawa, and Ms. Teer briefly spoke about their individual backgrounds and higher education experiences and noted some of the current and previous university presidential and chancellor searches they have been involved with including those for the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Kansas State University, the University of Nevada at Reno, the University of California - Berkeley, the ongoing search at New Mexico State University, and the recently concluded search at the University of Minnesota.

Referencing comments received about the separation of the UHM Chancellor and University President positions, Interim Chair Lee suggested clarifying the board's intentions in this matter. He then summarized previous board discussions on this topic noting his recollection that current regents felt the University President should be primarily focused on the university system and as such, expressed a desire to transition away from the president serving a dual role as University President and UHM Chancellor. Given the complexity of the process to achieve the separation of these roles, regents decided to initiate the search for the position of University President, as the job is presently articulated, with the understanding that separation of the duties of the University President from those of the campus chancellor for UHM would be given due consideration in the future. He also noted previous concerns raised by regents about the impacts this issue could have on size of the applicant pool.

Regents concurred with Interim Chair Lee's remarks.

Regent Tochiki and Interim Vice-Chair Wilson shared their personal experiences with periods in the university's history when the roles of the University President and UHM Chancellor were distinct and when they were united. Interim Vice-Chair Wilson also provided some historical context to the last time this question about having a University President with a singular or dual role was debated as he was serving on the board at that time.

Citing the presidential search survey results which appeared to indicate a strong desire among respondents for the positions of the University President and UHM Chancellor to be split, Regent Akitake asked if data from the survey would be synthesized and how this would be done. She also inquired as to whether the PSAG has been provided with the survey data. Mr. Wilson replied that Wittkeiffer is synthesizing the information garnered from the presidential search survey to develop

themes for the presidential profile, search criteria, and individual qualifications, such as those spoken about earlier, but it is not quantifying the data. He also stated that the PSAG has access to all of the survey results.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Acting Chair Lee adjourned the meeting at 1:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/S/

Yvonne Lau  
Executive Administrator and Secretary  
of the Board of Regents