

MINUTES
BOARD OF REGENTS COMMITTEE ON STUDENT SUCCESS
MEETING

FEBRUARY 6, 2025

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

[Meeting Video](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Laurie Tochiki called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. on Thursday, February 6, 2025, at the University of Hawai'i (UH) at Mānoa, Bachman Hall, 1st Floor Conference Room 106A/B, 2444 Dole Street, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96822, with regents participating from various locations.

Committee members in attendance: Chair Laurie Tochiki; Vice-Chair William Haning; Regent Joshua Faumuina; Regent Laurel Loo; and Regent Ernest Wilson.

Others in attendance: Board Chair Gabriel Lee; Regent Neil Abercrombie; Regent Lauren Akitake; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Mike Miyahira; and Regent Diane Paloma (ex officio committee members); President Wendy Hensel; 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; Interim VP for Community Colleges Della Teraoka; UH-Mānoa (UHM) Provost Michael Bruno; UH-Hilo (UHH) Chancellor Bonnie Irwin; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Yvonne Lau; and others as noted.

Regent Faumuina arrived at 9:03 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Tochiki inquired if there were any corrections to the minutes of the November 7, 2024, committee meeting which had been distributed. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Board Secretary Lau announced the Board Office's receipt of written comments from Jeffree Cheyenne Cary regarding the implementation of a new Student Engagement Fee at UHH and Elena Hill regarding a proposed increase in the Student Life Center (SLC) Fee at UHH. Written comments about the new Student Engagement Fee, the proposed SLC Fee increase, and a new Student Athletic Fee at UHH were also received from Tammy and J-Boy Kaulukukui and the University of Hawai'i Student Caucus (UHSC).

Ronald Sturges, Chair of the UHSC, also provided oral comments on the three UHH fee proposals.

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

[Written Testimony Received](#)

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Recommend Board Approval of a Request to Restore the Master of Laws (LLM) Program Nonresident Tuition Rate at the William S. Richardson School of Law (WSRSL)

VP Halbert gave a brief overview of the general tuition setting process as set forth in Executive Policy (EP) 6.202 highlighting several actions the administration will be taking should board approval of the noted request be obtained, including the conducting of open public meetings regarding the tuition proposal. Once the public forums are completed, the administration will incorporate feedback received into the proposal, as appropriate, and return to the board to seek final approval of the tuition schedule. While the procedures contained within EP 6.202 will be adhered to, VP Halbert pointed out some adjustments being made to the processes given the specificity of the tuition proposal.

Camille Nelson, Dean of WSRSL, provided background information on the LLM Program stating it was initially conceptualized in 2002 as a post-graduate law program offering specialized, legal training for international students who had already obtained a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree, or JD, from foreign law schools but was subsequently expanded to include individuals with a JD from law schools within the United States. She reviewed the rationale behind a request made by WSRSL in 2017 to lower the LLM per credit tuition rate from \$1,860 to \$1,209 and hold constant the reduced rate for a three-year period in an attempt to increase program access and enrollment, noting the effort proved unsuccessful as enrollment has remained relatively static over the course of the last eight years despite the decrease in tuition; gave an explanation for the delay in conversations about the lapsing of the tuition freeze given its initial, three-year timeframe; emphasized the aforementioned per credit tuition rate for the LLM Program is below the rate charged to other graduate students at the university; went over specifics of the proposal to revert the non-resident tuition rate for LLM to \$1,860 per credit, the amount charged during the 2016-2017 Academic Year; offered a comparison between WSRSL's existing and proposed approaches to LLM tuition for resident and non-resident students; highlighted LLM tuition rates at comparable institutions; spoke about the revenue WSRSL estimates will be generated by reinstating the 2016-2017 non-resident tuition rate and the proposed uses for this additional funding; and stressed this action will help to ensure the financial viability of the LLM program and allow for an increase in needed student services and support. She also briefly touched upon a few of WSRSL's outreach efforts to boost enrollment of both domestic and international students in the LLM Program.

Lauding the success of WSRSL's outreach efforts for its online JD program, Regent Akitake inquired as to when similar endeavors were initiated for the LLM Program. She

also asked about the current ratio of domestic-to-foreign students enrolled in the LLM Program. Dean Nelson stated outreach efforts related to the LLM Program were begun in earnest at the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic starting with the appointment of a faculty member and renowned international and comparative jurist, Professor Carol Peterson, as the law school's Director of International Programs. Those duties have since been passed on to another faculty member who is an internationalist, Professor Richard Chen. These Directors, along with other staff, have worked to improve outreach for the LLM Program by, among other things, placing ads on Hawai'i Public Radio, liaising with scholarly publications, such as the American Journal of International Law, and highlighting specialty areas of legal training offered by the Program via organizations associated with legal professionals. With respect to the ratio between domestic and international students enrolled in the LLM Program, Dean Nelson stated the current cohort includes nine students, eight of which are from areas outside of the United States. In addition, Dean Nelson mentioned a palpable demand for online offerings within the LLM Program which could be another means of augmenting enrollment. While WSRSL has not yet advanced the needle on this effort, it is engaged in active conversations with its accreditor, the American Bar Association (ABA), about the possibility of doing so in the future.

Regent Abercrombie sought clarification about the impact this proposal will have on resident tuition rates for the LLM Program. Dean Nelson replied that, under the current proposal, the resident tuition rate for the LLM Program will be kept at \$1,209 per credit, which equates to approximately \$29,016 per year.

A brief discussion took place between Regent Abercrombie and Dean Nelson on the underlying principle for keeping the resident tuition rate for the LLM Program at its present level; the potential to internationalize the program through technology and online offerings particularly in light of Hawai'i having resident scholars with renowned reputations in international and environmental law; and the impacts, if any, this proposal would have on tuition rates for online courses with Dean Nelson reiterating that the LLM Program does not yet offer such courses and must obtain approval from the ABA should it seek to do so in the future.

Regent Miyahira suggested WSRSL evaluate the reasonableness of increasing the resident tuition rate for the LLM Program given students enrolled in the Program tend to be mid-career or even sometimes retired professionals who have already obtained a JD.

Given that Regent Faumuina is currently enrolled in WSRSL, Regent Higaki asked if he had any thoughts on the proposal. Regent Faumuina stated he thought WSRSL's tuition proposal was sensible and fair, especially since it was merely a reinstatement of a 2016 tuition rate which was not even adjusted for inflation. He did, however, express his concerns about the impacts this may have on LLM Program enrollment which he feared could lead to it going the way of the recently terminated Doctor of Juridical Science Program at WSRSL. As such, he urged the law school to be aggressive in promoting the LLM Program so it could be kept alive.

Vice-Chair Haning moved to recommend board approval of the request to restore the LLM Program nonresident tuition rate at WSRSL, seconded by Regent Loo and the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

- B. Recommend Board Approval of a New University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UHH) Student Athletic Fee**
- C. Recommend Board Approval of an Increase in the Student Life Center (SLC) Fee at UHH**
- D. Recommend Board Approval of a Request to Implement a New Student Engagement Fee at UHH**

Chancellor Irwin presented information on requests being made by UHH to establish a new Student Athletic Fee, increase the existing SLC Fee, and implement a new Student Engagement Fee, going over the amounts and effective dates of each. She provided background on, and the rationale behind, the respective fee proposals, noting some of the financial challenges and unique issues they were intended to address, particularly with respect to UHH Athletics; spoke about a few of the benefits expected to be afforded to both students and the institution through these actions, including the development of a more dynamic campus; called attention to plans for conducting annual assessments on each fee going forward so as to determine if more timely increases might be warranted in the future, which may help to mitigate the magnitude of any future fee increase request and thereby reduce the financial impacts to students; and stressed the necessity for the imposition of the new fees and the increase in the existing fee despite the unpopularity of doing so. She also discussed student consultation efforts that took place with respect to the fees; talked about some of the feedback received from students; and provided examples of actions taken by the UHH administration, such as reducing the initial student athletic fee request amount from \$50 to \$37.50 per semester and cutting SLC expenses, to try and address concerns raised by students.

President Hensel reaffirmed statements made by Chancellor Irwin with respect to the creation of, and benefits associated with, a livelier campus environment noting the vibrancy of on-campus student life was a topic of discussion at several recently held legislative hearings and briefings. However, the ability to sustain this type of atmosphere through increased student activities, as well as athletic, social, and other community events, requires resources some of which will be provided to UHH through the noted fee proposals.

Chair Tochiki questioned whether the aforementioned fees were considered mandatory fees thus allowing them to be covered by financial aid packages. Chancellor Irwin replied in the affirmative stating this was one of the reasons behind UHH's decision to seek the mandatory imposition of all three fees.

Regent Faumuina conveyed his apprehension with the size of the requested SLC Fee increase and asked whether it would be possible to phase in this amount over a longer period of time. Chancellor Irwin stated the administration did explore this possibility but determined the SLC would, if current levels of services for students were

maintained, be operating at a shortfall until such time the fees reached the level being requested. In light of this response, Regent Faumuina inquired about the use of UHH's financial reserves to address this matter. Chancellor Irwin remarked that, while it would be possible to utilize the institution's financial reserves for this purpose, the administration would prefer not to use this option. She also noted the potential for the SLC's own reserves to be depleted should the fee increase not be approved, although the administration was unsure as to whether the capacity of these specific reserves was sufficient to cover a slower ramp-up of the fee.

Regent Higaki inquired about the ratio of student fees to total tuition costs at UHH relative to UHM. Chancellor Irwin replied that she did not know UHM's numbers so was unable to provide a specific answer to the question at this time. However, she stated the sum total of student fees at UHH was substantially lower than the sum total of those at UHM. Regent Higaki thanked Chancellor Irwin for her response noting the comparison of tuition to student fees charged at UHM and UHH may be unfair given the different levels and types of services and activities available to students at each campus.

Although he voiced his support for both the new Student Engagement Fee and Student Athletic Fee, Regent Miyahira articulated similar concerns to those brought up earlier by Regent Faumuina regarding the magnitude of the rise in the existing SLC Fee and communicated his desire to see the fee amount gradually increased over a longer period of time, particularly since the need for this requested action was due, in part, to the campus's lack of reviewing the fee to determine if periodic increases would be necessary.

Regent Faumuina sought clarification on the applicability of the SLC Fee and Student Engagement Fee to students enrolled in online programs. Chancellor Irwin responded that, similar to the new Student Athletic Fee, the SLC Fee and Student Engagement Fee would be assessed on all full-time and part-time students enrolled at UHH with the exception of students in distance and on-line programs as defined in EP 6.208.

Regent Akitake mentioned her disappointment in the reduction of fitness classes at UHH's SLC and asked if the fee increase was intended to address situations like this. Chancellor Irwin explained that the inability of SLC to meet its expenses through revenues generated by the current fee has resulted in a reduction of student services provided by the facility, such as the noted fitness classes. The requested fee increase is intended to address this matter and allow SLC to offer more programming for students on campus.

Regent Paloma arrived at 9:25 a.m.

Referencing testimony relating to the fee increases and their impacts on the financial insecurities of students which was submitted by UHSC, Regent Abercrombie called upon Mr. Sturges, UHSC Chair, and asked if students thought financial assistance programs available at UHH were effective at addressing student needs. Mr. Sturges stated he would need to elicit more information from students at UHH in order to offer an appropriate response to this question. However, brief conversations held with UHH student representatives does appear to indicate there are ongoing concerns about

impacts the fees could have on the financial security of students despite the availability of financial assistance programs. Regent Abercrombie then offered a commentary on the rationale for the fee requests and the positive impacts they could have on the provision of student services at UHH.

Chair Tochiki invited Chancellor Irwin to briefly speak about efforts undertaken by UHH to address the basic needs of its students. Emphasizing that UHH attempts to support the basic needs of its students with the limited amount of resources available to the institution, Chancellor Irwin touched upon, among other things, UHH's Student Crisis Fund, which is used to help students who face a personal financial emergency; the provision of retention grants to assist students who are unable to register due to things like unpaid academic fees; and the existence of a basic needs committee and food pantry on campus. She also noted ongoing efforts to ensure students are made aware of the availability of these resources. Chair Tochiki thanked Chancellor Irwin for her response and also drew attention to the availability of philanthropic assistance directly related to meeting basic student needs.

Vice-Chair Haning shared his thoughts on the benefits afforded to students via SLC facilities, services, and activities, in terms of both physical and mental health and well-being which, in his opinion, was adequate justification for the requested fee increase.

Referencing the availability of financial resources to meet student needs mentioned by Chancellor Irwin, Regent Faumuina urged UHH to be as proactive and aggressive as possible to ensure students are aware of these avenues of support. Chancellor Irwin concurred with Regent Faumuina stating UHH does regularly apprise students of the availability of these resources through things like classroom announcements and weekly emails. Nevertheless, UHH can continue to really drive this matter from the front end so as to ensure students seek assistance sooner rather than later.

Although all three fee requests were discussed simultaneously, Chair Tochiki suggested taking up each item separately for decision-making purposes.

Regent Wilson moved to recommend board approval of a new UHH Student Athletic Fee, seconded by Regent Loo, and the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

Vice-Chair Haning moved to recommend board approval of an increase in the SLC Fee at UHH and the motion was seconded by Regent Wilson. Regent Faumuina then moved to amend the original motion by inserting a provision requiring the SLC Fee to be increased on a year-over-year basis. Chair Tochiki asked if there was a second to Regent Faumuina's motion. Hearing none, she stated the motion failed and proceeded to ask if there was any discussion on the underlying motion. Hearing none, and there already having been a motion that was moved and seconded, a roll call vote was conducted and, noting the no vote of Regent Faumuina, the motion carried with all other members present voting in the affirmative.

Regent Faumuina moved to recommend board approval of a new Student Engagement Fee at UHH, seconded by Vice-Chair Haning, and the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

E. Scaling Student Success Initiatives Through Technology

VP Halbert called attention to data on overall retention rates, as well as graduation success rates for various subpopulations, at each of the university's major academic units contained within the materials packet stating that, while it is difficult to substantiate causality between student success initiatives put into place at the university and graduation and retention rates, there have been noticeable improvements in these statistics since their implementation. She then reviewed a number of student success initiatives already effectuated by the university including the STAR Guided Pathway System (STAR GPS) a system designed to, among other things, show students the courses needed to graduate in a timely manner and assist individuals with registering for classes that count directly towards their degree or credential; the *15 to Finish* campaign, which originated at the University of Hawai'i and has since become a national best practice promoted across the country; and use of Ocelot, a 24-7, multi-channel virtual assistant chatbot service capable of generating responses to common student inquiries. She also discussed ongoing work to build out the university's Cross-Campus Course Sharing Project, or C3S, the primary objective of which is to increase educational opportunities available to all students, by leveraging the university's full academic portfolio and develop Drop, Fail, Withdrawal Dashboards to help faculty members better understand the academic struggles of their students.

President Hensel communicated her excitement and optimism about the tremendous amount of work the university has already done to support and enhance student success. However, she noted her early observations of the situation hint at these efforts occurring in pockets without being fully integrated across the system in a way so as to really use leverage of scale and afford every student access to these services regardless of the campus they are located on. She then touched upon approaches to student success utilized at two of the five university systems recognized as innovators in this arena, the City University of New York (CUNY) and Georgia State University (GSU), stating she was fortunate to have worked at both; provided details on two programs at CUNY which have become national standards for student success, the Accelerated Study in Associates Program, or ASAP, for its community colleges, and the Accelerate, Complete, and Engage Program, or ACE, for its four-year institutions, going over their various components and highlighting a number of their proven successes; offered insights on challenges with ASAP and ACE faced by students which impacted each program's ability to reach scale; spoke about technology as the great equalizer for student success imperatives, detailing various ways it was used by GSU to bring its programs to scale, provide greater opportunities for an individual's academic success, and foster more equitable outcomes across a larger, more diverse cadre of students; pointed out the possibilities AI offers with respect to providing student support services; and talked about systemic innovations in advisement which can be, or are being, implemented to effectuate increased student success. Additionally, President Hensel reviewed a case study on GSU's summer melt, a term used to describe the loss of

students during the period of time between their decision to attend a particular institution and their actual enrollment in the fall, providing demographic data and other statistics related to the institution's loss experience along with information on actions undertaken to address this matter and the extraordinary success of these efforts. She also discussed the applicability of what was done at GSU to the university, reiterating the need for the integration of technology across the system and noting work being embarked upon to address this issue; expounded upon an opportunity to establish a partnership with the National Institute for Student Success (NISS) at GSU to help identify both campus-specific and systemic barriers to student success, and develop a roadmap for their elimination, which is something that was done at CUNY; shared information on the effectiveness of deploying NISS evidence-based approaches to student success experienced by several institutions across the country who have established partnerships with the organization for this purpose; and went over some of the proposals put forth to develop a more holistic and integrated student support system at the university as a result of ongoing conversations occurring across the system on this subject.

Regent Akitake inquired about the timeframe for, and potential challenges to, the establishment of programs such as ASAP and ACE at the university. President Hensel replied that the biggest challenges the university would face with respect to establishing these types of programs would be procurement and the upgrading of technology. However, she stated some things could be done fairly quickly, given pieces are already in place across the system and just need to be comprehensively and systemically connected, and expressed her belief that the university could, at a minimum, begin to implement some actions within the next year or so. She also mentioned that she has already contacted NISS about its availability and has been informed it could potentially provide the university with assistance as early as this summer and is working with VP Yoshimi to confer on the university's technological needs to scale up any proposals quickly and effectively.

A brief conversation took place between Regent Abercrombie and President Hensel on the leasing of technological equipment to reduce capital expenditures for establishing student success initiatives at the university and the challenges placed on this kind of proposal by procurement rules and regulations.

Regent Abercrombie shared his thoughts on, and stressed the importance of, the humanities as the foundation of basic knowledge and the need to center the university's attention on this subject matter, particularly in light of the current geopolitical climate.

Regent Faumuina asked if the technological systems related to student success mentioned earlier were intended to supplant STAR GPS. President Hensel responded in the affirmative stating part of the problem with developing an internal system like STAR GPS is the inability to keep pace with frequent changes and advances in the industry with the same speed and effectiveness of, and in the same manner as, external systems. Although it remains to be seen, some concepts of STAR GPS could probably be incorporated into a new system, if any, adopted by the university.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Tochiki adjourned the meeting at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/S/

Yvonne Lau
Executive Administrator and Secretary
of the Board of Regents