

MINUTES
BOARD OF REGENTS COMMITTEE ON STUDENT SUCCESS
MEETING

OCTOBER 2, 2025

The minutes were taken from the audiovisual digital recording of the October 2, 2025, meeting and summarize each agenda topic followed by a timestamp which points to the approximate time in the recording when the discussion occurred. In accordance with Section 92-9, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), a board may choose to use recordings, with the addition of a written summary, as its recorded minutes. The full video recording of this meeting may be viewed at the Board of Regents website as follows:

[Meeting Recording](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER [00:00:00 – 00:01:28]

Chair Laurie Tochiki called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. on Thursday, October 2, 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; Regent Joshua Faumuina; Regent Kuiokalani Gapero; and Regent Laurel Loo.

Committee members excused: Vice-Chair William Haning.

Others in attendance: Board Chair Gabriel Lee; Regent Neil Abercrombie; Regent Lauren Akitake; Regent Wayne Higaki; and Regent Mike Miyahira (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 Information Technology/Chief Information Officer Garret Yoshimi; Interim VP for Community Colleges Della Teraoka; Interim UH-Mānoa (UHM) Provost Vassilis Syrmos; UH-Hilo (UHH) Chancellor Bonnie Irwin; UH-West O'ahu (UHWO) Chancellor Maenette Benham; UH Maui College (UHMC) Chancellor Lui Hokoana; Leeward Community College Chancellor Carlos Peñaloza; Executive; Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Yvonne Lau; and others as noted.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 17, 2025, AND MAY 1, 2025, MEETINGS [00:01:28 – 00:01:44]

Chair Tochiki inquired if there were any corrections to the minutes of the April 17, 2025, or May 1, 2025, committee meetings which had been distributed. Hearing none, the minutes for both meetings were approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD [00:01:44 – 00:05:38]

Board Secretary Lau announced the receipt of written comments from Laura Reichhardt on Agenda Item IV.C, concerning the request to establish a provisional

Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program at the University of Hawai'i Maui College (UHMC). Additionally, she stated one individual signed up to provide oral remarks.

Walter Denson offered verbal commentary on Agenda Item IV.D, regarding the request to change the Bachelor of Arts in Creative Media (BACM) from provisional to established status.

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

Written Testimony Received

IV. AGENDA ITEMS [00:05:38 – 01:09:50]

A. UHH Athletics [00:05:38 – 00:23:30]

- 1. Athletics Academic Progress Report**
- 2. Athletics Health and Safety Report**
- 3. Athletics Facilities Update**

Patrick Guillen, UHH Athletic Director (AD), began his report by speaking about the academic performance of UHH student-athletes for Academic Year (AY) 2024-2025, drawing attention to several record-breaking accomplishments, as well as a number of earned academic honors and awards, and reviewing data on student-athlete academic success rates, retention rates, Grade Point Averages (GPAs), and graduation figures.

He then proceeded to discuss the UHH Athletic Department's (UHH Athletics) commitment to ensuring the physical and mental well-being of its student-athletes, going over information on, among other things, the mental health best practices adhered to by UHH Athletics; several proactive and preventative actions being taken to address mental health issues among student-athletes, including the continued promotion of a culture to reduce the stigma associated with seeking-out and obtaining mental health assistance; mental health services and treatment resources available to student-athletes; healthcare screening via pre-participation physicals through a partnership with the Hilo Benioff Medical Center; and concussions experienced by UHH student-athletes over the last four years, in addition to concussion management plans and protocols.

AD Guillen concluded his presentation by highlighting the recent completion of a project to repair, repaint, and refinish the on-campus gymnasium floor, although it was mentioned that the floor will need to be replaced within the next two-to-three years, and commenting on future capital projects like upgrades to the athletic training room, locker rooms, and the weight room/fitness facility, all of which are priorities for UHH Athletics.

Recalling past conversations about the environmental conditions in Hilo and the impacts this has on UHH's gymnasium, particularly in regards to the problems it causes for the facility's floor, Regent Higaki asked whether the renovated floor addresses this matter. AD Guillen stated UHH Athletics is constantly dealing with the impacts Hilo's environment has on its gymnasium facility and the newly renovated floor will not, in and of itself, solve this problem. The only way to truly address this issue, outside of building

a new gymnasium, would be to fully enclose the current facility and install a climate-control system, both of which are costly endeavors.

Building upon the previous question, Regent Abercrombie expressed his personal views on the potential impacts an inadequate gymnasium floor could have on the health and safety of student-athletes and sought clarification as to whether UHH Athletics has sought, or received, funding from the Legislature to pursue the replacement of this asset. Prior to UHH Athletics providing a response, Chair Tochiki commented saying her understanding of the situation was the gymnasium floor did not have to be replaced immediately. Although the time is now for UHH Athletics to start thinking about, and planning for, getting to this point, there was a two- to three-year window before it would be necessary to take such an action. AD Guillen concurred with Chair Tochiki's assessment and stated, while informal conversations have taken place regarding funding for this project, there has not been a formal request made as of yet. Kalei Rapoza, UHH Vice Chancellor for Administrative Affairs, added that UHH's six-year Capitol Improvement Project (CIP) plan does take into account concerns about the state of affairs with respect to the on-campus gymnasium and its floor. However, other factors, such as the financing of State and county plans to renovate the Francis Wong Stadium, Hilo Civic Center, and other athletic facilities in the Hilo area, may affect the availability of funding for UHH Athletics' CIP requests.

Regent Abercrombie continued to voice his support for UHH's efforts and urged moving forward with alacrity to address the situation with the gymnasium floor.

B. UHM Athletics [00:23:30 – 00:57:04]

- 1. Athletics Academic Progress Report**
- 2. Athletics Health and Safety Report**
- 3. Athletics Facilities Update**

UHM AD Matt Elliott stated that, at its core, an athletic department's goal is to create the best possible experience for student-athletes, and emphasized attaining academic achievement and caring for the physical and mental health of student-athletes is at the forefront of everything the UHM Athletics Department (UHM Athletics) does. He then introduced members of the UHM Athletics' team who would be making presentations on the respective topics, noting each individual's area of expertise, and called upon Roxanne Levenson to begin the report.

Roxanne Levenson, Associate Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Services, offered insights into several ongoing initiatives being carried out by UHM Athletics to improve upon, and sustain, student-athlete academic performance, highlighting some of their successes; went over data on UHM student-athlete GPAs for the last 11 years; called attention to numerous academic accomplishments, as well as individual and team academic honors and awards, attained in AY 2024-2025; and provided a synopsis of UHM Athletics' graduation success rates, federal graduation rates, and single year, as well as multi-year, academic performance rates, based upon the latest data available for the applicable student cohorts.

Kelly Hee, Director of Mental Health Care Services and Counseling, gave an update on efforts undertaken by UHM Athletics to support the mental health and well-being of its student-athletes emphasizing that this has been a top priority for the department over the past six years. She stated UHM Athletics abides by the same mental health best practice guidelines followed by UHH Athletics and has similarly been working to normalize the utilization of mental health services among student-athletes; elaborated on a few of the proactive, reactive, and preventative initiatives the department has decided to focus on during the current academic year; presented comparative data on year-over-year utilization of mental health services by various student-athlete demographics, expounding upon the valuable information which can be gleaned from these statistics; and briefly touched upon the strategy of using team engagements to promote mental health care awareness among student-athletes.

Jonathan Sladky, M.D., UHM's head team physician, reiterated UHM Athletics' commitment to the physical and mental well-being of its student-athletes stating this is of utmost importance. He then turned his focus towards statistics on concussions experienced by UHM student-athletes by sport over the past five years, noting that these figures have remained relatively consistent, especially over the last two years, and still remain lower in comparison to the number of concussions experienced during the period prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. While there was a slight uptick in the number of concussions experienced by football players in AY 2024-2025, this appears to be an aberration, as the figures for this specific data point for the current academic year have, thus far, been minimal. Nevertheless, work with coaches, staff, and student-athletes to minimize these numbers for all sports is ongoing. Dr. Sladky also stated concussion treatment protocols adhered to by UHM Athletics are in accord with all National Collegiate Athletic Association guidelines and recommendations and went over some of the collaborative efforts undertaken to broaden the scope of concussion treatment training received by athletic trainers and provide increased access to more advanced options to treat specific concussion symptoms.

AD Elliott provided an update on UHM athletic facilities reviewing a number of completed and ongoing capital projects including the installation of new turf at Les Murakami Stadium, an endeavor which was finished earlier this year; the construction of a track and field/soccer complex on the upper practice field, the first phase of which is nearing full completion, although both the track and soccer teams have already been allowed access to the facility; the installation of camera poles at the Clarence T.C. Ching Complex so as to be in compliance with Mountain West Conference requirements; and continuing work to replace roof panels on the Stan Sheriff Center. He also talked about approximately \$10 million in capital projects for which monies have already been allocated and are currently on deck, as well as those for which funding will be sought via Legislative appropriations in the upcoming budget cycle.

Regent Miyahira questioned whether there were any common themes with respect to the mental health issues being faced by student-athletes. Ms. Hee responded by saying the reasons for student-athletes seeking mental health assistance vary widely, although some of the more common themes or trends include academic stress and in-game anxiety.

Citing a conversation he had with UHH AD Guillen about the adjustment difficulties faced by freshman student-athletes, particularly those from out-of-state, Regent Miyahira wondered if anything could be, or was being, done to support these individuals. Ms. Hee replied in the affirmative mentioning several discussions UHM Athletics has with all of its student-athletes regarding the changes and life stressors they will be facing, especially if they are new to Hawai'i or away from home for the first time.

Referencing past challenges with respect to practice facilities for field events, Regent Abercrombie inquired about the new track and field/soccer complex's ability to resolve these issues. AD Elliott stated the new complex will accommodate the practice needs of UHM's track and field team and stressed UHM Athletics is working diligently with contractors to have the facility ready for full practices by October 20, 2025.

Regent Abercrombie shared his opinions on the importance of utilizing the entirety of UHM's lower-campus property solely for athletics and the need to relocate non-athletic related entities from the area. He then asked about the status of the facilities master plan for lower campus and whether a report on this matter was forthcoming. AD Elliott responded by saying while he has seen a draft of the long-term plan for lower campus, he was still trying to grasp an understanding of the overall needs for UHM Athletics in terms of facilities. Thus, his immediate focus has been primarily on the projects already underway or in the hopper. As such, he did not feel he was currently in a position to make any recommendations at this point in time concerning long-term plans for the lower campus parcel.

A brief conversation ensued between Regent Abercrombie and AD Elliott on uses for the lower-campus property for the betterment of UHM Athletics and whether seats from Aloha Stadium could be utilized at the Clarence T.C. Ching Complex.

Noting the statistics provided for mental health case-loads, Regent Higaki asked if the large variation between the number of male student-athletes and female student-athletes seeking mental health assistance was typical. Ms. Hee stated, while definitive data to confirm this supposition is unavailable due to the inability for institutions to share this type of tracking information because of privacy laws, anecdotal evidence suggests, in general, men tend to seek out mental health assistance at a lesser rate than women. Hence, UHM Athletics continues to focus on normalizing the seeking of help for mental health needs among its student-athletes.

C. Recommend Board Approval of a New Provisional Degree, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) at UHMC [00:57:04 – 01:03:32]

Laura Lees Nagel, Interim Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs at UHMC, gave an overview of the request to grant provisional status for the BSN degree program at UHMC, explaining that the critical need for nursing professionals statewide, particularly on Maui, was one of the driving factors behind the college pursuing establishment of this program. She also noted the program is designed for traditional, full-time students pursuing a four-year nursing degree; drew attention to the exceptionally strong demand among UHMC students for the program, as well as the broad support received for its establishment; talked about projected expenses for the program's initial set-up, as well as ongoing

operational costs, and the means by which these expenses will be covered; and touched upon a few of the positive impacts the degree program is expected to have for Maui and the State.

Given the critical shortage of registered nurses in Hawai'i, Regent Higaki asked if provisionally establishing a program was required by policy since it would appear to be in everyone's best interest for UHMC to seek approval for the immediate creation of this program. President Hensel responded by saying, as dictated by current policy, the process for creating a program at the university first requires it to be awarded provisional status. However, the administration is presently looking into changing these policies in order to address situations such as this.

Regent Akitake thanked everyone involved in bringing this program to fruition stating it will serve to meet a tremendous community need.

Regent Loo moved to recommend board approval of a new, provisional BSN degree at UHMC, seconded by Regent Faumuina, and noting the excused absence of Vice-Chair Haning, the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

D. Recommend Board Approval of a Request to Change the Bachelor of Arts in Creative Media (BACM) from Provisional to Established [01:03:32 – 01:09:50]

Chancellor Benham provided a synopsis of the request to grant established status to the BACM degree program. She spoke about the exponential growth in program enrollment since its launch at UHWO in 2019, noting demand among students for this degree remains high; reviewed the program's academic concentrations and a few of its partnerships; called attention to some of the program's successes; and highlighted a number of positive impacts the program has had for students, the community, the State, and UHWO.

Regent Miyahira asked if costs associated with the rapid evolution of technological advancements in the creative media field were accounted for in the BACM degree program's budget. Sharla Hanaoka, Associate Director of the UHWO Creative Media Program, stated UHWO and students enrolled in the BACM program share the burden of covering expenses for equipment, software, and other technology, with the institution picking up about half of these costs. Additionally, UHWO offers scholarships to students enrolled in the program to meet these needs.

Regent Loo moved to recommend board approval of the request to change the BACM degree program at UHWO from provisional to established, seconded by Regent Gaperio, and noting the excused absence of Vice-Chair Haning, the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

E. Discussion of Committee Goals and Objectives for the 2025-2026 Academic Year [01:09:50 – 01:10:00]

Due to time constraints, Chair Tochiki announced the deferral of this agenda item stating it would be taken up during the Committee meeting in November.

V. ADJOURNMENT [01:10:04 – 01:10:08]

There being no further business, Chair Tochiki adjourned the meeting at 9:43 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/S/

Yvonne Lau
Executive Administrator and Secretary
of the Board of Regents