

MINUTES
BOARD OF REGENTS COMMITTEE ON STUDENT SUCCESS
MEETING

NOVEMBER 6, 2025

The minutes were taken from the audiovisual digital recording of the November 6, 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 – 00:00:50]

Chair Laurie Tochiki called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. on Thursday, November 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 Kuiokalani Gapero; and Regent Laurel Loo.

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 Research and Innovation Chad Walton; Interim UH-Mānoa (UHM) Provost Vassilis Syrmos; 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 THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 2, 2025, MEETING
[00:00:50 – 00:01:04]

Chair Tochiki inquired if there were any corrections to the minutes of the October 2, 2025, committee meeting which had been distributed. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD [00:01:04 – 00:03:14]

Board Secretary Lau announced the receipt of written comments from Marguerite Butler on Agenda Item IV.A, concerning the discussion on committee goals and objectives. She also stated Ms. Butler signed up to provide oral remarks on this same subject.

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

[Written Testimony Received](#)

IV. AGENDA ITEMS [00:03:14 – 01:09:50]

A. Discussion of Committee Goals and Objectives for the 2025-2026 Academic Year (AY) [00:03:14 – 00:04:08]

Chair Tochiki referenced the table of Committee Goals and Objectives for the 2024-2025 Academic Year, noting that it is meant to serve as an outline of the work to be performed by the committee during the year. She stated it was a living document which may be modified as needed and asked committee members if they had any questions. None were raised by committee members or other regents.

B. University Academic Program Actions for AY 2024 – 2025 [00:04:08 – 00:11:44]

Alan Rosenfeld, Associate VP (AVP) for Academic Programs and Policy, spoke about information contained within the Academic Program Actions Report, which he explained was an annual report that provided details on various programmatic actions that have taken place at both the campus and system level over the prior academic year, and briefly discussed the current program proposal process. He also presented data on some of the major academic program actions that occurred during AY 2024-2025 including, among other things, the number of programs granted established or provisional status by the board and program terminations and stop outs, and pointed out some of the forward-looking changes the administration is considering with respect to academic program actions such as expanding the university's online program portfolio, creating pathways of stackable credentials, and streamlining the program approval process.

Regent Miyahira sought clarification about the meaning of "stackable credentials". AVP Rosenfeld stated "stackable credentials" are designed to provide flexibility and modularity in learning and revolves around the concept of breaking down traditional degrees into smaller, more manageable components. In essence, each component represents a set of competencies in a specific area of a larger program which can be completed independently. Once an individual completes one credential, they can move on to another credential, and 'stack' them to ultimately obtain a degree in a particular field of study. In the meantime, individuals can utilize the learned skills to further their careers. Allowing individuals to build their qualifications step-by-step provides a way to tailor learning pathways to meet both personal and industry specific needs.

Given the above response, Regent Miyahira asked if the credentials would be transferable from campus to campus. AVP Rosenfeld stated they are meant to be and the administration is actively working on developing ideas to achieve this goal.

C. Request Board Approval of New Provisional Masters in Science (MS) and Doctorate (PhD) Degrees in Sustainable Fisheries in the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) at UHM [00:11:44 – 00:16:58]

Laura Lyons, UHM Interim Vice Provost for Academic Excellence, provided an overview of the administration's request to grant provisional status for the MS and PhD

degrees in sustainable fisheries in SOEST at UHM. She went over the rationale for the constitution of these degree programs noting their alignment with the institutional mission and strategic priorities of the university; stressed their importance and relevance in terms of the anticipated economic and workforce development impacts for the state; drew attention to the regional enthusiasm for the creation of these programs as evidenced by the strong letters of support received from across the Pacific basin; highlighted the tremendous amount of interest expressed in pursuing these degrees; and briefly talked about the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of both programs.

Regent Higaki stated he wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate and commend Dr. Charles “Chip” Fletcher, Dean of SOEST, for his work on climate change and sea-level rise noting he is recognized globally as the leading expert on these topics.

Regent Loo moved to recommend board approval of provisional status for the MS and PhD degree programs in sustainable fisheries in SOEST at UHM, seconded by Regent Faumuina, and the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

D. Request Board Approval of a New Provisional Degree – Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Linguistics in the College of Arts, Languages, and Letters (CALL) at UHM [00:16:58 – 00:27:34]

Interim Vice Provost Lyons went over the administration’s request for approval of a new provisional BA degree in linguistics in CALL at UHM stating this proposal strategically transitions an existing major concentration within the Interdisciplinary Studies Program in CALL to a standalone degree and aligns the university’s offerings with those at benchmark institutions such as Stanford University and the University of California, Davis. She touted the high-performing achievements of the Department of Linguistics in CALL, saying it is consistently ranked as one of the best in this program area both nationally and internationally; talked about the workforce development impacts the BA degree program will have in Hawai’i, particularly with respect to the specialized concentration of American Sign Language; touched upon expanded career opportunities the program is expected to afford students in the high-demand fields of data science, artificial intelligence, digital communications, and language technology, to name a few; drew attention to the broad support received for the program’s establishment and the tremendous amount of interest expressed in pursuing such a degree; and pointed out it is a fiscally responsible program which will leverage existing resources, anticipates only seeking coverage for minimal costs in its fifth year, contingent upon enrollment, and will have no immediate impact on the UHM campus budget.

Regent Abercrombie expressed his strong support for the establishment of this degree program, engaged with Interim Vice Provost Lyons on the importance of the liberal arts and humanities, especially during a time when, in his opinion, these academic endeavors are under assault, and commended the dean and faculty of CALL for putting this program together. Interim Vice Provost Lyons also lauded the Department of Linguistics’ ability to be at the forefront of synergistically pairing new advancements in academics and learning technology with what they have been traditionally good at.

Vice-Chair Haning inquired if there was any rationale for creating a linguistics program which offers a BA as opposed to a Bachelor of Science degree. Interim Vice Provost Lyons responded by saying, while linguistics has evolved as a field and has arguably become more science-based, the program has traditionally been offered as a liberal arts type of program which is the most likely reason why it was given the BA classification.

Regent Faumuina moved to recommend board approval of a new provisional BA degree in linguistics in CALL at UHM, seconded by Regent Loo, and the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

E. Request Board Approval to Change the Bachelor of Science in Construction Engineering (BSCE) at UHM from Provisional to Established [00:27:34 – 00:31:24]

Interim Vice Provost Lyons gave a synopsis of the administration's request to grant established status to the BSCE degree program at UHM. She spoke about the program's growth since its establishment in 2019 to address a critical need for skilled construction engineers in the state; pointed out the BSCE degree directly supports the university's mission to provide workforce-responsive education; highlighted a number of the program's achievements and accreditations, including its strong retention rate; called attention to the projected employment growth for this field; highlighted the program's industry partnerships; and went over a few of the positive impacts the program has had, and is expected to have, for students, the community, and the state.

Regent Faumuina moved to recommend board approval of the request to change the BSCE degree program at UHM from provisional to established, seconded by Regent Loo, and the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

V. ADJOURNMENT [00:31:24 – 00:31:30]

There being no further business, Chair Tochiki adjourned the meeting at 9:46 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/S/

Yvonne Lau
Executive Administrator and Secretary
of the Board of Regents