



Tara Kia'i provided oral comments about the need to support indigenous peoples as well as greater inclusion of k naka maoli in various aspects of the university.

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

[Late Written Testimony Received](#)

#### **IV. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

##### **A. Maui Fire Update**

President Lassner acknowledged the support received by the university from the federal government, especially the United States Department of Education (USDOE), in its efforts to assist students and other individuals impacted by the Maui wildfires. He noted that, among other things, the university was informed about the availability of little-known opportunities for student and campus support, as well as the substantial flexibility afforded to institutions with regard to the provision of student financial aid during extraordinary situations, such as a natural disaster, that allows for more monetary assistance to be furnished to students than would be permitted under normal circumstances. He also announced the expansion of a scholarship offer made to all Lahainaluna High School seniors last month that would cover their tuition costs, fees, and supplies for the 2024-2025 academic year should they choose to attend, and were accepted for admittance by, any of the 10 campuses of the university system. Due to a generous philanthropic donation, the university will now be able to offer these scholarships for two-to-four years based upon the UH campus at which a student chooses to pursue their post-secondary education.

##### **B. Broadband Project**

The State of Hawai'i is committed to strengthening Hawai'i's broadband infrastructure and programs by leveraging the substantial federal funding available through multiple Act of Congress. President Lassner presented historical information about this initiative; spoke about the importance of developing a reliable broadband infrastructure network throughout the state, an issue that was brought to the fore when Internet service had been lost for several days on some islands due to fiber cuts; and the need to ensure digital equity for all residents. He stated that discussions on how to develop broadband assets in Hawai'i to maximize the impact of what was expected to be a once-in-a-generation monetary investment by the federal government in broadband infrastructure were initiated more than two years ago; and noted that the State has received a commitment of \$115 million in new federal money from the United States Department of the Treasury (Treasury Department) via the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF) to expand broadband access and to increase the capacity and reliability of existing infrastructure.

In August 2021, the university was designated to serve as the lead coordinator for all state broadband infrastructure efforts associated with multiple federal broadband funding opportunities, including the CPF, to ensure that all Hawai i citizens have access to robust and reliable internet. As such, the university received planning funds from the State and, working together with State leadership and congressional delegation staff,

crafted a plan for the use of CPF funds that was submitted to the federal government for review in 2022. The plan was subsequently vetted by the Treasury Department and received final approval in April 2023 with approximately \$100 million being received by the university for various infrastructure projects.

President Lassner talked about some of the components of the approved plan including the construction of a new subsea interisland fiber system to provide long-term resiliency and support continued internet service to all residents across the state and investments in upgrading and delivering broadband service to all residents in low-income, State-owned, public housing facilities. He explained that the approved plan would be carried out through a public-private partnership, which offers the best opportunity to leverage federal funds and secure private investments; limits public investment to a one-time only cash outlay; ensures that there would be no future additional operations, maintenance, or capital liabilities for the State; and provides capacity to government and education. He also emphasized that the university's role in the execution of this plan will be to monitor the progress of the selected private partner and helping to achieve collaboration with state and county agencies in the process of the private partner's execution of the work and that the university will not be involved in constructing or operating the system. It was noted that the goal of completing work on this project is December 2026.

As is standard with all federal grants received by the university, the CPF funds received were service ordered to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH), an entity that is not subject to the State Procurement Code and was created by the Legislature explicitly to help the university execute complex, federally-funded projects that are beyond the scope of what is normally done with State funding. A competitive Request for Proposal was published over the summer with multiple proposals being received by the August 31, 2023, submittal deadline. The proposals have since been analyzed and the university is now working with RCUH to finalize an initial contract with the highest ranked offeror for approximately \$60 million. President Lassner assured regents that the university was not attempting to bypass the board on this matter. Rather, it was treating this project as it would any other extramurally funded project whereby the university executes a competitive procurement process under the auspices and authority of RCUH.

### **C. Other**

UHH has been awarded a \$6.6 million grant from the USDOE to lead a consortium that includes the University of Alaska Southeast, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University in Wisconsin, and UHH's Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke elik Iani College of Hawaiian Language to establish a first-of-its-kind National Native American Language Resource Center over the next five years that will be focused on indigenous language revitalization and will position UHH as the national leader in this subject matter area.

A \$10.9 million grant from the National Institutes of Health was awarded to UHM for the establishment of a new Pacific Center for Genome Research that will focus on the state's diverse population and gain a better understanding of diseases that

disproportionately impact Native Hawaiians, Asian Americans, and other racial and ethnic groups.

Vice-Chair Wilson requested that the administration provide regents with updates on the progress being made with respect to the broadband project as appropriate noting the imp

video describing the apiary program and the work it is conducting. Regent Abercrombie asked if he could be provided with a brief, written report on the plans for, and activities of, KauCC's apiary, along with its resource needs. Interim Chancellor Sanchez replied that such a report would be provided.

Citing figures related to KauCC's home-based student population, Regent Tochiki inquired about the number of students that were taking on-campus, in-person courses as opposed to taking online classes and questioned whether any trends on this issue were being experienced. Interim Chancellor Sanchez responded that approximately 63 percent of students enrolled at KauCC are taking at least one in-person or hybrid course, which conducts a certain percentage of the class via an in-person format. While the majority of students prefer online courses, surveys have shown that a significant number of students still want to take in-person classes and maintain a physical connection with the campus and its available resources.

Regent Tochiki asked about the status of repairs to KauCC's Performing Arts Center. Interim Chancellor Sanchez stated that repairs to the Performing Arts Center were scheduled to be completed by the end of October.

Regent Abercrombie queried whether KauCC had fulfilled its goals for the use of solar energy to offset campus energy costs. Interim Chancellor Sanchez responded that KauCC had not yet fulfilled its goals for the use of solar energy to offset campus energy costs. Interim Chancellor Sanchez stated that KauCC had installed solar panels on the roof of the Performing Arts Center and that the solar panels were expected to be operational by the end of October. Interim Chancellor Sanchez stated that KauCC was currently in the process of installing solar panels on the roof of the Student Center and that the solar panels were expected to be operational by the end of October. Interim Chancellor Sanchez stated that KauCC was currently in the process of installing solar panels on the roof of the Student Center and that the solar panels were expected to be operational by the end of October.

classification system to the board in November. He also stated that, for the record, he opposed the position taken by the Minoa Faculty Senate as noted in the resolution. President Lassner replied that the administration continues to anticipate returning to the board in November with its suggested policy amendments.

**V.**

## **A. Consent Agenda**

### **1. Approval of the University of Hawai'i Kapi'olani Community College (KapCC) and Leeward Community College (LeeCC) Mission Statements**

Regent Haning moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson, and the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

## **B. Appointment of a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) to Investigate and Make Recommendations Regarding the Presidential Selection Process pursuant to Section 92-2.5(b), Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS)**

Chair Nahale-a explained that, in order to properly establish a PIG under Section 92-2.5(b), HRS, the board must determine the scope of the work to be done by the PIG as well as its membership, and referenced enlightening deliberations related to the establishment of a presidential selection process PIG that took place among regents at the October 5, 2023, meeting of the Committee on Governance (Governance Committee). Taking into consideration the dialogue that occurred at the Governance Committee meeting, he stated that consensus appeared to have been reached on the scope of the PIG which, as laid out in his September 29, 2023, memorandum to Governance Committee Chair Laurel Loo, was to investigate and recommend a well-articulated presidential selection process to the full board. He also spoke about the need to develop an open, clear, and transparent process for the selection of a new university president.

Regent Akitake asked whether consideration was given to charging the PIG with the task of selecting the next university president rather than simply making a recommendation to the board about the presidential selection process. Chair Nahale-a replied that the scope of the PIG delineated in the previously noted memorandum does not encompass the task of selecting the next president of the university and emphasized that the objective of the PIG, as proposed, would be to recommend a process for the selection of a new leader for the university to the full board. The full board would then be tasked with deciding whether or not to approve the PIG's recommendation.

Since there appeared to be questions about the scope of the PIG in addition to concerns with the membership of the PIG that were verbalized at the Governance Committee meeting, Chair Nahale-a put forth a process that he believed was the most democratic means for the board to determine the scope and membership of the PIG.

Vice-Chair Lee questioned whether the PIG would determine, among other things, membership of any established presidential selection committee and the use of a third-party consultant to assist in the search for a president. Chair Nahale-a reiterated that the PIG would be making a recommendation on the process for the selection of the new president stating that the issues mentioned by Vice-Chair Lee were things that the PIG could consider, discuss, and ultimately include in its proposed recommendation to the board.

Conversations took place on the task presently before the board with Chair Nahale-a remarking that the first order of business would be to define the scope of the PIG which

would then be followed by a determination of the PIG's membership. He also spoke about past practices used by the board to establish a PIG.

Regent Higaki remarked that the decisions on PIG membership and the scope of the PIG should be bifurcated and moved that the choosing of PIG members be taken up first. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson.

Regent Tochiki stated that she disagreed with the motion and provided her rationale for taking this position. Given the currently proposed intent of the PIG, she expressed her belief that it would be more sensible to determine the entity's scope prior to deciding its membership.

Regent Higaki agreed with Regent Tochiki and withdrew his previous motion. Vice-Chair Wilson withdrew his second of the motion.

Robust deliberations ensued on the proposed and potential scope of the presidential selection process PIG; the purposes for creating this PIG; the roles of the PIG and the board with respect to the actual selection of the next university leader; the limitations placed upon the board and the PIG by Hawai'i's open meetings law, more commonly referred to as the Sunshine Law; the work that would be performed by the PIG; the compressed timeline for completion of the PIG's task; the timeframe for the selection of a

presidential process selection PIG, as well as a presidential selection committee or commission should one be formed.

Chair Nahale-a reminded regents that, regardless of what path is chosen with respect to the PIG, all 11 members of the board will have a say in, and ultimately be responsible for, choosing the next university president.

Regent Loo called for the question which was seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson.

Vice-Chair Lee questioned whether the scope of the selection process PIG could be amended at this point. Chair Nahale-a explained that there was a call for the question on Regent Tochiki's motion. As such, a vote would be taken on that motion. However, he also stated that regents were free to vote against the recommendation. If the motion failed, regents would then be able to suggest changes to the scope of the PIG's work.

There having been a motion that was moved and seconded, and with a call for the question being made and seconded, a ro2(i)6(o)1a-1.5 -1.15 Td [7(e)110(ed w)iso paed, and the m



