



V. AGENDA ITEM

A. Personnel Action on the Selection and Compensation of the President of the University of Hawai'i (UH President)

Chair Lee provided historical context to the search for a new UH President saying the process began in October of 2023 after President Lassner announced he would be retiring at the end of 2024. He stated the university has not had to conduct a search for a new leader in over 10 years and this board understood that performing such a search would be difficult and there would be a number of opinions and concerns raised about the individual whom the regents would choose to lead the 10-campus university system. A permitted interaction group consisting of Regents Akitake, Higaki, Loo, Paloma, and himself was subsequently formed to develop a process for the selection of the next UH President. In December of 2023, the board accepted and implemented nearly all of the recommendations made by the permitted interaction group including respecting the principles of shared governance through the appointment of a Presidential Search Advisory Group (PSAG) consisting of representatives from the four, recognized shared governance groups at the university, namely the All- & DPSXV & RXQFLO RI ) DFXOW V Chairs, the University of Hawai'i Student Caucus, the University of Hawai'i Staff Council, DQG WKH 3`NR D & RXQFLO DV ZHOO DV PHPEHUV IURP WKH survey seeking public input on the desired qualities of the next UH President was also launched in December of 2023. The survey received 2,093 responses, all of which were shared with regents and members of the PSAG. Additional opportunities for individuals to provide feedback on the selection of the next UH President were also provided through the hosting of six public forums at various locations statewide in the spring of 2024. Approximately 565 individuals attended these forums either virtually or in-person. All of the input and feedback gathered and received via the survey and public forums were then used to create the position description and presidential leadership profile adopted by the board. With the assistance of WittKieffer, a national s9(a)10 (uc)4 .15 (on a)10 (nd )1





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end, of whatever capacity I have to give back to Hawai'i. That is everything to me. This university is in my heart and in my thoughts as to what I might be able to do to contribute at this point in my life to its fulfillment and to its capacity to continue that legacy. I started here with President Snyder who, at one point, contacted the Sociology Department saying he wanted to

coming and will be coming soon and in circumstances appropriate to his incredible talents and ambition and vision. So, I know I've gone on at such great length, because I don't know how much longer I have to be able to exercise whatever passions and capacity I have. But I want to say, it's been a privilege for me, and it is an ongoing privilege to be working with the 10 other regents. It is also an opportunity for me to say publicly to David Lassner, how much I respect him, how much I appreciate his decades of

done, except to actually more formally acknowledge my preference for Wendy Hetzel as the next president of the University of Hawaii System.

Vice-Chair Tochiki – I feel compelled to follow because I only have 47 years of connection with the University of Hawaii. But I do want to speak a little bit about, you know, the process. Throughout this process, I think one thing, we tried to set the course for what we heard and know and believed to be most important for the university, and at this point we were looking for what we heard from our constituents. The proven leadership. Proven record of support and understanding of scholarship. Proven record of understanding shared governance. And I think, also, we're looking for courage to navigate through what are sometimes very churning waters, and I know that courage doesn't mean without fear. In fact, courage is in the face of fear. And I know, in my own journey in this process, I have been concerned, and heard very loudly, the fears that our community have expressed about how important this decision is, and if we take it lightly, the fear that we may have made mistakes. And again that 47 years includes being a student, a graduate of the William S. Richardson School of Law, and much later a PhD in education policy. Being a parent, my son graduated from the University of Hawaii at *M noa*, but also as an administrator, as a professor here at the university, and as a staff member. And so, I know how important that proven leadership and courage in the face of difficulties is, and that's what we were looking for. And I think one of the things I want to share about Dr. Heilig Vasquez is a promise to acknowledge how much we appreciate his journey and the leadership that he is already starting to show. And I agree, he's an up-and-comer in so many ways. But I also want to really acknowledge and appreciate Wendy Hensel's not only speaking about courage, but demonstrating courage, demonstrating grace under fire, and speaking about how she stands upon the integrity of her knowledge of herself and her values. And so, I just want to appreciate both of them, and also commit to working with our new president in every way to make this successful, not only for the candidate, but for our university.

Regent Wilson – As the senior member of the board, and with less than half a year left on my term before my 10 years on the board ends, you know I've seen many things happen. One of the things that I thought was very, very important when President Lassner made the announcement last year, the end of last year, that he was going to retire was that we really needed to assure, and not many regents have had this opportunity placed in their lap, we find a leader to lead the University of Hawai'i System to carry out its mission. So, one of the things that I always thought about was, what is the vision that we need to have. After discussions with several people, my thoughts focus on a vision for our institution whereby the University of Hawaii System becomes known as the premier institution for the purpose of discovery and creation of knowledge which speaks to our research effort. And then the distribution and transfer of this knowledge to the people, not only of Hawai'i, not only of the entire Pacific region, but of the globe. And that this knowledge would be utilized to better the lives of people throughout the entire world. Because, I've always felt, over the almost 10 years that I've been on the board, that, within the institution, we have the people and the wherewithal that requires leadership and President Lassner has provided much of that leadership. But then, moving forward, we needed to assure that we would find the person that could carry on the work that President Lassner has accomplished over his 40 years at the

institution, starting as really, a graduate student when he first came here, to becoming President of the university and serving as president during the entire time I have been on the board. So, the challenge to me was to assure that we would find this person. We came up with a process to assist us in making the decision that we have come to over the last two days to end up with a person that would be able to carry on and move us forward to help mitigate the problems that we, as mankind, face through the discovery and transfer of knowledge to not only the students who come through the doors of this great institution, but also beyond that, to the people of Hawaii, to the people of the entire Pacific region, and ultimately throughout the world. That is the tremendous challenge, I think, we started out with. In my instance, I looked at that being the most important decision that, in almost 10 years serving on the board, we had to make. I think, starting out, we said this process to arrive at finding a leader that would lead us, lead the institution forward, needed to be inclusive, and not only inclusive, but transparent. My hats off to the rest of the board for the work that they've done and the PSAG, under the leadership of Erin Centeio, who represented the faculty ranks, and Jaret Leong, who represented the staff ranks, as well as the two student representatives, for the support they provided to regents and the work that that group has done. Having been given the assignment, when we started this process of being the liaison, along with Regent Lee, and then, when Regent Lee became chair, Regent Tochiki, to help guide, and provide whatever guidance the PSAG needed to assure that they maintain that openness, that inclusivity, I can't say enough good about the PSAG and the work that they've done, which provided us with information and has really helped facilitate us in making the decision. I think that gave us the opportunity to arrive at the best selection with the two finalists we have. After much discussion and review, we finally made the recommendation that Wendy Hensel would be that person. And this goes back to something Senator Dan Inouye had shared with another good friend of mine, Kamaki Kanahale, that it is time that we, and the rest of the world, particularly those in the United States, but also throughout the Pacific, look West instead of East and that our focus needed to be on looking and paying attention to what was going on in the Far East. So, again, my hats off to the other regents, as well as the members of the PSAG, for the work they have done. I am proud to say that they have made the recommendation to select Wendy Hensel as the next President of the University of Hawai'i System.

Chair Lee – I'd like to thank the community, the PSAG, fellow regents and WittKieffer. I'm also disappointed that we did not have a local finalist. For Dr. Heilig, I loved his energy, and he is definitely a strong educator. But I didn't feel that he had much system experience. Also, I didn't feel his leadership skill was as broad as we need for our 10-campus system. In executive session, we were able to fully vet the candidates and speak candidly about confidential information, including questions about any controversies. I feel Wendy provides leadership, vision, and strategy across the system, and she will be able to establish and develop productive internal and external relationships. Because of my job, I have a have a lot of experience in forming compensation packages, especially for publicly traded companies. Although the compensation package is meaningfully higher than President Lassner's. I want to thank WittKieffer on providing us the surveys and the information, and coming up with a compensation package, a competitive compensation package for a state university of our size, although it might be in the lower part of the range. Wendy will not be able to do the

president's job alone, and I ask every member of the ohana and our community to do what they need to do to support Wendy.

Chair Lee asked if there was any further discussion on this matter. With there being