Wendy F. Hensel
President

DEPT. COMM. NO. 28

University of Hawaiʻi
Ke Kulanui o Hawaiʻi

November 19, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,
  President and Members of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura, Speaker
  and Members of the House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

For your information and consideration, the University of Hawaiʻi is transmitting one copy of the Annual Report on Goals, Objectives/Policies, Action Plan, and Performance Measures (Act 100, Session Laws of Hawaiʻi 1999) as requested by the Legislature.

In accordance with Section 93-16, Hawaiʻi Revised Statutes, this report may be viewed electronically at: https://www.hawaii.edu/govrel/docs/reports/2026/act100-slh1999_2026_goals-performance-measures_annual-report_508.pdf.

Should you have any questions about this report, please do not hesitate to contact Stephanie Kim at (808) 956-4250, or via e-mail at scskim@hawaii.edu.

Sincerely,

Wendy F. Hensel
President

Enclosure

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM
ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT TO THE 2026 LEGISLATURE

Annual Report on Goals, Objective/Policies, Action Plan, and Performance Measures

Act 100, SLH 1999

November 2025

Annual Report on Goals, Objective/Policies, Action Plan, and Performance Measures as Required by Act 100, SLH 1999

Act 100, Session Laws of Hawai'i 1999, requires every state department and agency to develop and submit, twenty days prior to the start of each regular session, an annual report that addresses their goals, objectives/policies, action plan, and process to measure performance of programs and services in meeting stated goals, objectives, and policies.

System Mission and Vision

As articulated in Regent's Policy 4.201, the primary mission of the university is to provide an environment in which faculty, staff and students can discover, examine critically, preserve and transmit the knowledge, wisdom, and values that will help ensure the survival of present and future generations with improvement in the quality of life. In carrying out that mission, it is the basic purpose of the university system to afford all qualified people of Hawai'i an equal opportunity for quality college and university education at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The University of Hawai'i (UH) is dedicated to building a healthy, thriving future for everyone.

Goals

As the Pacific's leading higher education destination and the only provider of public higher education in Hawai'i, UH offers a range of opportunities that support personal success, develop leadership, and provide pathways to living wages and high-quality jobs for all Hawai'i residents. Through world-class research, scholarship, and service, UH contributes to global knowledge while advancing the well-being and sustainability of Hawai'i's people and environment. The university embraces its unique responsibilities to the indigenous people of Hawai'i and to Hawai'i's indigenous language and culture. To fulfill this responsibility, the university supports the participation of Native Hawaiians at the university with programs of study in Hawaiian language, history, and culture.

The University of Hawai'i Strategic Plan, 2023-2029, guides the university's priorities. UH has identified the following specific imperatives and goals in its strategic plan:

- Fulfill kuleana to Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i by modeling what it means to be an indigenous-serving and indigenous-centered institution.
- Develop successful students for a better future by educating more students, empowering them to achieve their goals and contribute to a civil society.
- Diversifying Hawai'i's economy through UH innovation and research by building and sustaining a thriving UH research and innovation enterprise.
- Meeting Hawai'i's workforce needs of today and tomorrow by eliminating workforce shortages while preparing students for a future different from the present.

Action Plan

With the onboarding of a new President, the key strategy plan imperatives have been aligned with an 18-month action plan. Each action plan has been assigned an executive lead and team to help develop the specific steps. The strategic plan implementation is aligned with these strategic initiatives to help support a system approach to student success and institutional support.

Expand Online Programs
The purpose of expanding online programs is to increase access to a UH education across Hawai'i and beyond. The goal is to ensure a robust portfolio of online programs (credit/noncredit, certificates, associate, bachelors, and graduate degrees; 5-week, 8-week, and 16-week format) in high-demand fields that align with industry needs, as well as to establish an infrastructure that enables effective facilitation of a system approach to online education. Market research conducted in summer 2025 identified numerous opportunities for UH campuses to develop online programs. Conversations with campuses are underway to select phase one programs for development.

Facilitate Automatic Admissions/Financial Aid Calculation for K-12
As of Fall 2025, nine of the ten UH campuses (all but Mānoa) have implemented a direct admission process using existing applications with the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) that includes data sharing and a communication strategy/outreach to high school students. By Summer 2026, UH will have completed work on a single application. By Fall 2026, UH will have all campuses on a single application that will include direct admissions with HIDOE.

Develop a Systemwide Enrollment Management Approach
UH will develop a systemwide enrollment management strategy designed to establish stronger recruitment pipelines for recent Hawai'i high school graduates, transfers, adult/online, and military learners. Several other initiatives, such as expanding online programs, automatic admissions, communications and marketing, and a common standard of care will contribute to a holistic approach to enrollment management.

Develop Systemwide Communications and Marketing Plan
The goal of this strategic initiative is to create a cohesive and modernized UH system marketing campaign, branding, social media, and digital infrastructure that unites and promotes all ten campuses, increases local and national recognition, and enhances public understanding and perception, ultimately driving enrollment growth and greater public and private support.

Evaluate a Unified System of Community and 4-Year Colleges
A robust conversation is underway regarding how best to align the UH system's administrative structure to enhance organizational consistency and efficiency. The exploration will focus on functional areas where shared services or improved collaboration are desirable and achievable. Additional desired outcomes include increased transferability of credit across the system and a unified approach to procurement and implementation of academic technologies.

Create a Common Standard of Care for Each Student
In order to increase retention, persistence, and graduation rates, UH is committed to providing a common standard of care for all students. The goal is to ensure that students stay on track from the time they apply through graduation, with built-in support to help them get back on track when needed. The common standard of care is designed to eliminate student achievement gaps across demographics.

Examples of initial activities include an engagement with the National Institute for Student Success (NISS) in academic year (AY) 2026 with four campuses to identify and address institutional barriers to student success, and contracts with three key academic technology platforms to address critical gaps in the technology stack:

- EAB Navigate: A student success management system that helps advisors track and support students through proactive interventions.
- EAB Edify: A robust reporting tool that helps decision-makers use data more seamlessly.
- EdSights: An AI Chatbot to support students in a customized experience.

Develop a Modern Budget Model that Maximizes Efficiency and Accountability

UH will design and implement a modern, transparent, and performance-informed budget model for a university system, aimed at enhancing resource allocation and promoting fiscal responsibility. Work will include creating guiding principles, assessing data needs, and building model prototypes. A pilot implementation will be deployed with the chosen model, followed by full implementation to train staff and roll out the new model systemwide. The plan addresses key risks such as resistance to change and data gaps through continuous stakeholder engagement and investment in infrastructure.

Expand Systemwide Standing as a Place of Native Hawaiian Learning

With the strategic plan imperative as the foundation and feedback from systemwide stakeholders over the past three years, there are now five consolidated metrics for the overarching goal of modeling what it means to be an indigenous-serving and indigenous-centered institution.

Implement a Simple, Fully Articulable General Education Model/Systemwide Articulation

UH will establish a robust, seamless, systemwide process for students to transfer courses and programs between UH campuses through three specific initiatives to be completed by the end of Spring 2026:

- **General Education**: All remaining decisions regarding a systemwide General Education framework will be finalized and approved by the Board of Regents.
- **Systemwide Articulation**: Pending the successful transition to Banner baseline, a cleanup of the backend articulation database will commence to ensure a smoother transfer process for students.
- **Transfer Policies**: UH transfer policies and program definitions will be revised and implemented.

Accelerate AI Training and Adoption Across System in All Aspects of University

A Chief Academic Technology Innovation Officer (CATIO) has been hired to spearhead efforts to design an artificial intelligence (AI) operating system – a holistic framework that unites mission, governance, and innovation, and that is ground in Hawaiian values. The vision is to position the University of Hawaiʻi as a Pacific leader in ethical, culturally rooted AI — transforming learning, research, and workforce readiness across all ten campuses. The mission is to equip every student and educator with AI skills, build secure systemwide infrastructure, and drive innovation aligned with Hawaiʻi's values, economy, and future workforce needs. The CATIO is supported in this work by an AI Planning Group and several task forces (e.g., Curriculum & Pedagogy, Hawaiian Culture & Values, Ethics & Governance, Operations). Communities of practice are being formed to connect faculty and staff who are using AI in their classes, research, and other areas of work.

Workforce Development: A System Approach

UH has long served as an engine of workforce development. However, the educational needs of the state's residents, demographic makeup of our student body, and workforce needs in the state are rapidly shifting. To serve as a more nimble and effective agent of workforce

development and educational provider, UH will engage in a bold reimagining of the university and its offerings. This strategy will focus on providing the same standard of care for career development to all UH students. Additionally, external partners in the K-12, industry, and public sectors can collaborate with UH to develop workforce pathways that fill shortages in entry-level positions and upskill or reskill workers as needed. Over the next nine months, this action plan will lay the foundation for the UH paradigm shift in workforce development and career readiness.

Research
The Research Action Plan is designed to operationalize the University of Hawai'i's strategic goal of diversifying the state's economy through innovation and research, focusing on areas like AI, advanced manufacturing, and commercialization. Activities include strengthening institutional capacity and partnerships by establishing the Research Development Council (RDC) to improve systemwide coordination, launching the Office of Strategic Philanthropic Partnerships (OSPP) to diversify funding sources, and conducting a systemwide research landscape assessment with a focus on AI and Advanced Manufacturing, to inform future investment and action.

Measuring Performance of Programs and Services

Board of Regents policy requires regular and systematic assessment of programs, services, campuses, and the UH system as a whole. Numerous assessments are required annually and reported to the Board of Regents, including annual reports on faculty workload, enrollment management strategies, academic program actions, and updates on key system initiatives undertaken as part of the strategic plan. Campus assessments include annual or periodic program reviews, evaluations of small courses, and assessments of programs with a small number of graduates. Additionally, UH has received performance funding from the legislature since fiscal year 2016. Performance funding metrics initiatives on graduation and transfers have been established to motivate campuses and evaluate student success activities.

UH is continuing to improve its systematic data collection and analysis processes that monitor student progression, retention rates, completion patterns, and post-graduation outcomes across all campuses. These metrics inform strategic decision-making and resource allocation while supporting the university's commitment to improving completion rates for all students. The university has partnered with Complete College America (CCA) to enhance its data-informed approach to student success through comprehensive performance measurement and continuous improvement initiatives. This partnership focuses on developing and implementing key performance indicators (KPIs) that track student outcomes across critical milestones, leading indicators that provide early warning systems for student intervention, and real-time metrics that enable immediate course corrections in support services and academic programming.