

Consensus Statements About the Impending Tuition Increases

The College of Education Faculty Senate Committee on Diversity at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa hereby submits the following statements for your consideration. These statements were collected and synthesized via a multi-step, methodical process initiated and facilitated by the Committee. First, Committee members engaged in structured academic controversy (SAC) debates to become familiar with various aspects around the matter of a tuition increase. Second, the Committee presented a campus-wide public event that featured various perspectives on the issue. This event, held on February 24, 2006 at UH Manoa's Campus Center, was a panel presentation titled "Equal Opportunity? Effects of Tuition Hikes on Access to Higher Education." The third step involved the presentation of a second set of SAC debates by the Committee. At this third event, conducted on March 3, 2006 at the College of Education, UH faculty and students participated in the SAC debate process around the same issue. The consensus statements and discussion that resulted through the SAC debates provide the basis for the following statements:

We disapprove of the tuition increase.

We strongly disapprove of the UH tuition schedule for 2006-07 to 2010-11, which will dramatically increase the share of higher education costs borne by students and their families. In effect, access to higher education may become a function of financial resources, making this an issue of social justice and equity. In the inexorable event that these proposed tuition increases actually commence, we ardently insist that the University implement the following:

Increase financial aid.

Tuition increases must be accompanied with substantial increases in financial assistance in the form of scholarships. These scholarships should be funded, in large part, by the increases in tuition. While many of these scholarships will be earmarked for minority, culturally and linguistically diverse students, and low-income students, they should also benefit "borderline" and part-time students. Borderline students are those who may not readily qualify for existing aid programs, yet they cannot afford the cost of higher education without incurring extreme financial hardship.

Track the effects of the tuition increase.

The University must engage in consistent and ongoing efforts to monitor data and conduct analyses of the effects of the tuition and financial aid increases on student educational experiences and the access to higher education. The office of the University of Hawai'i's vice president for academic planning and policy should be responsible for periodically and systematically eliciting the opinions of students and for revisiting the fiscal need to follow through with each incremental increase in tuition.

Provide a plan that cuts costs.

The University must introduce a plan that details how the additional revenue, generated by the tuition increase, will be used. This plan should include actions that the University will take to make the University more cost-effective, thus reducing the need for further increases in tuition.

Assertively recruit prospective working-class students.

The University must dramatically increase its student recruitment efforts to include an aggressive outreach campaign that disseminates University financial aid information to prospective working-class students. The University should concentrate on promoting multiple options for financing the education of working-class students as an alternative to the oft-prescribed military route.

Establish a committee to assist in the implementation of these ideas.

An oversight committee made up of members equitably representing all University stakeholders should be established to ensure the transparent and equitable distribution of resources. The charge of this committee would also include facilitating efforts to make the University more cost-efficient, aiming for increased sustainability.

Our Committee recommends that these statements be transmitted via the following:

- Published in the student newspaper Ka Leo.
- Be presented to the COE Faculty Senate.
- In turn, be presented to the Manoa Faculty Senate.
- Be posted on the College of Education website.

Respectfully submitted by the undersigned members of the College of Education Faculty Senate Committee on Diversity of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.