



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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By
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HB 480 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Hashem, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 480. Hawai'i Community College's (Hawai'i CC) Agriculture Program prepares students for employment in government service, agribusiness, horticulture, livestock, flowers and foliage, landscape, macadamia nuts, papaya, and coffee industries. Student interest in the program has grown in recent years and continues to average around 30 majors each year.

The two year Associate in Applied Science degree program requirement of 62 credits, includes a 24 credit Certificate of Achievement, and Certificates of Competence in Landscape Worker (12 credits) and Farm Worker (18 credits). The AAS degree is comprised of 14 Agriculture courses, 12 of which have hands-on lab activities. Some of the activities occur in the campus lab, but the vast majority of time is spent at the Panaewa farm.

Hawai'i CC has a cooperative relationship with UH Hilo to use approximately 1 acre of land at the Panaewa agriculture farm. The agriculture farm serves as a live instructional laboratory for hands on learning.

Hawai'i CC's Agriculture Program is collaborating with the College's Culinary Arts program in a robust farm-to-table effort. Fruits and vegetables grown at the farm are utilized by the Culinary Arts program for service in our popular on-campus dining establishments. In turn, Culinary Arts students spend time on the farm learning where the raw foods come from and what it takes to grow, harvest, process, and deliver them to the campus kitchens.

Currently the agriculture farm production is unable to keep up with demand by the Culinary Arts program. As instructor Lew Nakamura says "They take everything we produce and are asking for more." This measure will greatly assist in meeting that demand, and will enable Hawai'i CC to fully capitalize on the student learning opportunities using state-of-the-art equipment. If appropriated, new equipment will assist with expansion of the growing field, more efficient preparation of soil, more

efficient transport of products from the field to the processing area, and provide shaded areas for improved volume and quality of products.

This measure provides \$165,600 for equipment and \$43,000 for 1.00 FTE Farm Coordinator to manage the farm and assist faculty with instruction at the farm site. The Farm Coordinator has a myriad of duties ranging from procurement of supplies and plant inventory, to maintaining the processing area, maintaining equipment, and assisting the faculty with instruction at the farm site.

The UH Community Colleges is in concurrence with the intent of the bill and strongly supports its passage on the condition that any requested funds do not supplant any portion of the University's Biennium Budget request.