



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
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SB 676 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i System supports the intent of SB 676, which would provide resources for the system wide Pamantasan Council to promote access and diversity. The word "Pamantasan" is a Filipino word meaning "higher education". The Pamantasan Council, established in 1987, is open to all students, administrators, faculty and staff from the various UH campuses.

The Pamantasan Council addresses issues of representation, curriculum and research, partnerships with public schools, universities in the Philippines and other states, workforce development and community services. The Council holds annual and periodic workshops to identify priority issues and needs consistent with the University's commitment to access and diversity. On April 1, 2016, UH Maui College hosted the annual conference on its campus. Even with limited resources, the Pamantasan Council has successfully supported University initiatives including the Maui College exchange agreement with Philippine Universities, the Leeward Community College Sulong Aral federal transfer project, and the recent hiring of a UH Hilo Philippine Studies faculty member.

The Pamantasan Council needs resources to implement (a) recommendations of the 2008 SCR 120 report to the Legislature regarding Philippine language courses, teacher training and certification; and (b) Pamantasan conference recommendations such as developing courses for articulation between community colleges and 4-year campuses. With additional funding and positions, UH and the Pamantasan Council can provide necessary expertise and energy to increase the University's national leadership in Philippine Studies (UH Mānoa and Leeward CC are leaders in offering academic programs). In addition the appropriated funds will be used to support on-going recruitment and retention efforts (federal programs such as GEAR UP at Waipahu high school) to increase the number and success of Filipinos at each campus, including undergraduate and graduate degree programs, faculty, staff and administrators. Also, the funds will expand the curricular content on Philippine language, Philippine Studies and Filipino American Hawai'i ethnic studies, which at this time are very limited or not available at the various campuses. SB 676 includes information on recent census, UH

and DOE data on Filipinos (second largest group in the state and the department of education) and their underrepresentation among college graduates, and current UH students, staff and faculty.

The University supports the intent of SB 676, and would like to note that the UH Board of Regents approved biennium budget does include a request for \$584,000 to drive student success for Filipino students, a key population.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for the legislature's continuing support of educational access and diversity.