UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 1:15 p.m.
By
Risa E. Dickson, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy, and
Garret Yoshimi, Vice President for Information Technology & CIO
University of Hawaiʻi System

SCR 175 / SR 89 – URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO EXAMINE THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE UNIVERSITY'S ONLINE PROGRAMS WITH A VIEW TOWARD INCREASING ITS ONLINE ACCREDITED COURSES AND DEGREE PROGRAMS.

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

The University of Hawaiʻi (UH) submits testimony on SCR 175/SR 9 that requests the University of Hawaiʻi to examine the current status of our online programs with a view toward increasing its online accredited courses and degree programs in cooperation amongst the ten campuses and to provide a report of its plan prior to the convening of the 2018 session of the Legislature.

The UH appreciates the intent of the legislature to broaden access to higher education that is affordable and of high quality through means such as online courses and programs. This testimony provides comments and information about courses and degree programs currently available to Hawaiʻi and out of state students through online or other distance learning options and the cooperative effort of UH system campuses.

First, UH delivers a large number of courses through distance technologies in a range of disciplines. In spring 2017 alone, distance learning courses at UH campuses include 1,222 (875 in Spring 2016) online courses, in addition to 67 (63 in Spring 2016) courses delivered through interactive television, and 26 (20 in Spring 2016) cable TV courses. Select examples from the spring schedule offered by the ten campuses include courses in disciplines such as accounting, administration of justice, anthropology, art, biology, business, chemistry, communication, economics, education, English, geography, Hawaiian Studies, history, hospitality, information and computer science, math, marketing, music, nursing, political science, psychology, public administration, and sociology.

Second, the UH not only delivers courses, but certificates and degrees since for some, distance delivered programs are their only access to higher education. All certificates and degrees are accredited and have been approved by our accrediting agencies. A number of certificate and degree programs are offered through online delivery. The University's website, http://www.hawaii.edu/dl/programs, illustrates this. Fourteen certificate programs and three associate degrees are offered online, including the Associate of Arts (liberal arts, AA degree). Seventeen bachelor's degrees offered online include degrees in public administration (disaster preparedness and general emergency management; general public administration; health care administration; and justice administration), political science, and

psychology. In addition, bachelor's degrees such as business, early childhood education, special education, nursing, and others are offered through hybrid delivery (i.e., online plus interactive television, or online plus onsite on the neighbor island campus).

Four graduate certificates are offered online or through hybrid modes. Fourteen Master's degrees are offered through distance learning in various delivery methods. These include online degrees in computer science, music education, and rehabilitation counseling.

UH students may also pursue an online doctoral degree in nursing or a doctoral degree in nursing practices.

Third, the University's strong commitment to educational access is demonstrated by the long-standing existence of three University Centers (West Hawaiʻi; Maui; Kauaʻi) where students can earn four year or Master's degrees in island locations that do not have a four-year campus. The recently opened Palamanui facility in West Hawaiʻi offers onsite and distance education classes and programs through Hawaiʻi Community College, as well as the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa, the University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo, and the University of Hawaiʻi at West Oʻahu.

In addition to the three University Centers, six campus-sponsored education centers (Hāna, Lānaʻi, Molokaʻi, North Hawaiʻi, Waiʻanae, Lahaina) provide access to higher education to students within their own communities.

Distance learning within the University of Hawaiʻi system is a cooperative enterprise requiring partnerships between and among campuses and units to not only insure quality but the best use of resources among the campuses. A fundamental requirement is that academic quality and standards must be comparable to on-campus instructional programs and that offsite learners have comparable access to services such as admissions, orientation, financial aid, registration, advisement, tutoring, and library services.

At the UH System, the Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy and the Vice President for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer convene the systemwide Distance Learning Advisory Committee (DLAC) to identify issues and work toward the UH mission of providing access to quality higher education while collaborating with campuses to ensure required academic quality through campus faculty and accredited programs. DLAC advises administrators and policy makers, and works through academic and student matters with groups such as the chief academic affairs officers and chief student affairs officers, librarians, and chancellors.

The responsibility for meeting accreditation standards for distance learning programs rests with the campus bestowing the degree or certificate/credential, while responsibility for student services is shared by the originating and receiving campuses. Both campuses work together to ensure that regional accreditation standards are met (Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Senior Commission and Junior/Community College Commission).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.