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To: bor@hawaii.edu  
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HI: I would like to provide a copy of my 2-page testimony for the Regents. I was the first one to speak at the mic. This is related to the tuition increase and the budget crisis.

Thank you.
Professor Ann Auman  
Chairman  
School of Communications  
University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa

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Imagine: Testimony to BOR by Ann Auman 5.21.2015

Good morning President Lassner and Regents.

I’m Ann Auman, chairman of the School of Communications, College of Social Sciences.

Students are clamoring to get into classes in the School of Communications, but we cannot meet the demand with our current funding.

Invest in us, and we will increase income for this university. We are frugal; we invest wisely. We innovate. But we could do much, much more with a little bit more.

We have about 360 majors and an enrollment of over 2,000.

We have two Bachelor’s degrees: one in Communications and one in Journalism. We also have a master's and joint Ph.D. program.

The School of Communications has 9 faculty members, including me.

The reason we cannot offer enough classes to satisfy demand is that we’ve lost nearly half our faculty positions in the past dozen years while enrollment has remained steady.

We may be on a starvation diet, but we are resilient; we are doing a lot with a little. And we are productive.

One of our professors has a $325,000 National Parks grant to develop mobile apps; our faculty have published dozens of articles, and are bringing their innovative ideas into the classroom. We also have a robust internship program and lots of alumni scholarship support.

I believe in the strength of our programs and faculty; and clearly students do too.

In my two years as chair, I’ve pursued a growth strategy despite budget cuts in order to respond to student demand.
A budget proposal that reallocates some tuition is a tiny step in the right direction, but we need to go further along that path. And we need the stability of g-funded positions.

At the School of Communications, I know that “if we offer it, they will come.” And the students have come.

In the past two years enrollment and student semester hours have risen 25%.

The number of majors is up 21%.

How do we do it with so few faculty? By relying on part-time lecturers and graduate students to teach about half our courses. We’ve also moved courses into Outreach College to earn money to pay all lecturers and save courses from being canceled.

We have even brought in private funding to support courses instead of canceling them.

We’ve also increased class size. But quality has been eroding. This is not sustainable. We need g-funded positions.

I urge this university to invest aggressively in the units that have demand and can demonstrate growth. When we grow, the whole pie grows.

The School of Communications has done so much with so little. Imagine what we could do with a little more.

Finally, I want to thank our Dean, Denise Konan, for her support in a difficult time.

<THANK YOU>