



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

HB 3176 RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI`I AT HILO
NATIVE HAWAIIAN INITIATIVES

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education

February 4, 2006

by

Rose Y. Tseng
Chancellor
University of Hawai`i at Hilo

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Chair Waters and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawaii at Hilo strongly supports this bill, which has three main objectives:

1. Increase the number of Native Hawaiians enrolling at UH Hilo;
2. Increase the retention and graduation rates of Native Hawaiians; and
3. Fully fund the College of Hawaiian Language.

Native Hawaiians are under-represented in the percent of our State's population who have earned a college degree. Only about one in five residents of Hawaii has earned a bachelor's degree; for Native Hawaiians, the rate is even lower. Possessing a college degree enables an individual to contribute to the local economy, as well as to contribute to the well-being of the community. It is the University's responsibility and mission to provide educational opportunities to the residents of the State, and most especially to the indigenous people of Hawai`i.

The percentage of Native Hawaiians at UH Hilo has declined, from 20% in 1999 to 15% in 2004. With targeted and culturally appropriate efforts to recruit Native Hawaiians within the State of Hawai`i and on the mainland, the goal of increasing the Native Hawaiian student population to 22% by 2008 to be in parity with the Native Hawaiian population in the State can be accomplished.

Once these students enroll at UH Hilo, there is a need to provide support services that will facilitate the retention and graduation of Native Hawaiians. Since 2000, UH Hilo has developed and operated a Native Hawaiian Student Center. But the Center has been funded primarily through a federal grant. The Center has demonstrated that its services and activities have significantly impacted the success of Native Hawaiian students by:

- Increasing NH retention rate from 64% to 80%
- Increasing NH graduation rate from 19% to 27%

The Center, funded primarily through a federal grant, has demonstrated that its services and activities can significantly impact the success of Native Hawaiian students, as retention and graduation rates have increased. UH Hilo received a new 5-year Title III Federal Grant on October 1, 2005. However, the activities of the new grant must be new activities. Therefore, funds are needed to replace Federal Funds previously used for staffing and activities to continue to operate the Center so that retention and graduation rates of Native Hawaiian students can continue to flourish.

Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani, the state's College of Hawaiian language, offers the most developed programs in any Native American language of the U.S. Reflective of the popularity of these programs, since the 1980s, the College's Hawaiian Studies undergraduate program has consistently shown a larger major count than its Mānoa counterpart. The budget before you reflects the Hawaiian Language Task Force Report to the 1997 legislature that created the College. In 2003, the BOR called for full funding of the report in accordance with an initiative of then President Evan Doherty in 2001.

The College has two divisions. One division offers academic qualifications, the other focuses upon research and public service.

The academic division offers seven qualifications: two undergraduate certificates, a minor, a B.A. with two tracks, a fifth year teaching certificate, a graduate certificate, and an M.A. A recently approved second M.A. and a Ph.D. will serve other indigenous peoples along with Native Hawaiians. Faculty work with national and foreign universities, including Waseda University in Japan and the University of Waikato in New Zealand, to address indigenous and cross-cultural issues.

The other division of the College -- the Hale Kuamo'o -- provides services to the state and worldwide. It runs three pre-kindergarten through grade 12 Hawaiian immersion schools on three islands and 9 other preschools in consortium with the DOE and 'Aha Pūnana Leo serving over 500 children with additional services to some 1,500 children in other immersion programs. It provides in-service training for teachers in these programs, provides most of their curriculum, and is a partner with the DOE in a P-20 Hawaiian medium education planning project. It is the primary developer of the *Nā Honua Mauli Ola: Hawai'i Guidelines for Culturally Healthy and Responsive Learning Environments* for the Native Hawaiian Education Council. The Hale Kuamo'o serves as the Hawaiian content support entity to UH Hilo's 'Imiloa Astronomy Education Center and has spearheaded efforts to bring Hawaiian identity and science together for Hawai'i's children.

The Hale Kuamo'o Division runs the Leokī Hawaiian language email server and the Ulukau Hawaiian Electronic Library serving all Hawaiian language schools and offices as well as the general public. An extremely popular and valuable resource, Ulukau received 400,000 hits in January 2006 from web users around the world. It prints a Hawaiian language newspaper for all Hawaiian medium schools and programs. It houses the Mamaka Kaiāo Hawaiian Lexicon Development Project which has created and disseminated over 3,000 new and undocumented older terms to Hawaiian language programs and the general public. It also houses a collection of over fifteen years of kupuna interviews in Hawaiian by College faculty member Larry Kimura, now being prepared for use in classrooms.

In addition the Hale Kuamo'o serves important outreach functions to other indigenous peoples. It is home to the secretariat of the 13 member nations Polynesian Languages Forum that meets biennially to provide government support for Polynesian languages. In partnership with the 'Aha Pūnana Leo, its Hawai'i Island laboratory school is the Native American language immersion demonstration site for the Kellogg Foundation, Ford Foundation and Lannan Foundation. This lab school serves as the lead site in a national study being conducted by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, the RAND Corporation in Washington, D.C., the University of California at

Berkeley and the Northwest Educational Laboratory on the academic effects of Native American language immersion.

I mention these many activities in order that you understand how terribly underfunded the College of Hawaiian Language is.

It is the only college anywhere in the system without a dean or a secretary. It has been approved for a doctorate and a new M.A. without any faculty assigned to those degree programs. Its present M.A. has operated without any graduate assistants as typically found in graduate programs at UHM. It lacks academic support staff needed to facilitate use of Hawai'i Island for hands-on learning, to advise its own students through Hawaiian, and to coordinate visiting students and faculty from other indigenous programs.

Its undergraduate and graduate programs have double the student to faculty ratio of parallel programs at UH-Mānoa in Japanese and Korean and triple the student to faculty ratio of parallel Mānoa programs in Chinese and Hawaiian. Its teacher education certificate program has only two faculty with only two more faculty assigned to the laboratory school system. This faculty count must be augmented if the positive impact of the College on education for some of Hawai'i's most at-risk students is to be fully realized.

The Hale Kuamo'o Division, with its many activities and services, operates with one educational specialist and a single clerk typist -- the only support staff position in the whole college. It totally lacks the type of research support staff found at major centers of its type at the Mānoa campus, in spite of the Hale Kuamo'o being the largest Native American language center in the U.S. The Ulukau / Leokī computer system, the most developed site for research and communication in any indigenous language of the U.S., has no staff to run it.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Executive Supplemental Budget.