WRITTEN TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
March 14, 2008
by
Jenny S. Samaan
Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor for International Education
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

HB 2045 - Relating to Establishing a Global Youth Center

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee on
Education, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the Global Youth
Center in Hawai‘i.

One of the University of Hawai‘i’s strategic goals is to “Become a Model Local, Regional, and
Global University”. In order to achieve this goal, it is critical that we provide opportunities for
our students to engage in educational exchange by bringing to our campuses international
students and scholars, infusing global perspectives into curriculum, and providing inter-cultural
curricular activities. Additionally, UH establishes international university partnerships and
education abroad programs for UH students so that they are able to experience other cultures,
languages, and peoples firsthand. We firmly believe that developing global awareness and
competencies to function effectively in a global environment must be a critical component of
today’s educational landscape.

The University therefore strongly supports the Hawai‘i Global Youth Center’s broad goal of
generating an effective international framework in which youth from Hawai‘i and from around
the world can become actively engaged in discussing and influencing many of the global, trans-
boundary challenges facing the world. It is critical to expand world views and grow global
citizens who value diversity and are trained to effectively communicate across boundaries.

While the University endorses the overall concept of establishing a global youth center in
Hawaii, it is unclear at this time exactly how the Center will be situated “within” or “under” the
University of Hawai‘i. We are concerned about the cost implications to the University that may
be generated by this bill. We look forward however to exploring further, with the relevant
parties, a workable administrative structure and obtaining appropriate funding, administrative,
and support mechanisms that may be necessary to carry this concept forward.

If this bill passes in its present form, it is essential that it not replace or adversely impact UH’s
priorities as indicated in our BOR approved Supplementary Budget.

Mahalo.