



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
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by

Rockne Freitas

Vice President for Student Affairs and University/Community Relations, University of Hawai‘i

HR206/HCR243 URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM TO PROVIDE HIGHER EDUCATION TUITION WAIVERS FOR ALL ENROLLED NATIVE HAWAIIAN STUDENTS

Chair Hanohano, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

The purpose of HR205/HCR243 is to urge the University of Hawai‘i to grant full tuition waivers to all native Hawaiian or Hawaiian students in the University of Hawai‘i system.

The University appreciates the Legislature’s concern for improving the academic success of native Hawaiians and Hawaiians in higher education. However, we are opposed to this measure, as written.

The University strives to improve the access to state higher education and the success of our native Hawaiian and Hawaiian students. In its Mission Statement, the University states its unique commitment as an indigenous-serving institution, and “ensures active support for the participation of Native Hawaiians at the University and supports vigorous programs of study and support for the Hawaiian language, history, and culture.”

In 2008, we placed Native Hawaiian Educational Attainment as our very first strategic outcome for the years 2008 to 2015. It is our goal to increase degree attainment of native Hawaiians or Hawaiians by 6 to 9 percent per year.

The data show that our efforts are working. Contrary to the data cited by HR206/HCR243, I would like to update the committee to the following corrections in the PDF version of HR206:

1. **Page 1, Line 30:** Represent [only 14] 22.4 percent of the total University of Hawaii student population, a figure that includes all native Hawaiians attending the System's three four-year and seven [two-year campuses] community colleges;

2. **Page 2, Lines 4 – 10:** Return for a second year of college at a slightly lower percentage compared to non-native-Hawaiian students. Approximately [More than] 76.7 percent of the University of Hawaii System's non-native-Hawaiian students return for a second year of college, whereas [but] the percentage of native Hawaiian students returning is 76.1 percent [nearly ten percent lower];

3. **Page 2, Lines 22 – 25:** Represent [only 3.6] 9.5 percent of the current doctoral candidates at the University of Hawaii, and nearly [70] 38 percent of native-Hawaiian candidates do not receive any type of financial aid or tuition waivers; and,

4. **Page 2, Lines 27 – 30:** Represent just [four] five percent of all faculty positions at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and [less than one] 3.1 percent of permanently tenured positions are held by native Hawaiians.

Furthermore, to help us succeed in our goal, we are encouraging students who have financial need to apply for financial aid so that we can maximize federal aid, such as the Federal Pell Grant, to students. In academic year 2009-10, we gave over \$26 million in UH institutional aid to students with financial need, meritorious achievement, and service. We also already award the equivalent of 250 Native Hawaiian tuition exemptions to native Hawaiian or Hawaiian students with financial need, per UH Board of Regents policy. These are given in whole or partial amounts, depending on a student's financial need. Furthermore, we exempt non-resident native Hawaiian and Hawaiian students from paying the non-resident tuition differential; they are only charged the in-state rates for tuition. Finally, we currently award a scholarship called the Second Century Scholarship, in the amount of \$1,650,000 to Hawaiian students with financial need.

We are pleased to report that our enrollment of Hawaiians has nearly doubled across our ten UH campuses, growing from 6,631 students in Fall 2006 to 12,630 in Fall 2010. We believe this is due, in large part, to our commitment to financial aid for students who need funds to gain access to the University.

Awarding more tuition waivers for native Hawaiian and Hawaiian students would be very costly to the University without the opportunity to recoup federal, state, and private aid that is freely awarded to students with financial need. We respectfully request that the resolution be amended to create a state financial grant program with funding that would apply to all native Hawaiian and Hawaiian students *with financial need*, as determined by the federal financial aid guidelines. We also invite the State of Hawai'i to become a partner in funding the Second Century Scholarship (mentioned above). This way, the University can continue to apply a variety of federal, state, private, and institutional grants and scholarships that can target our Hawaiian students who experience financial hardship.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this resolution.