SCR 181 REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I TO CREATE A TASK FORCE TO ASSESS THE NEED FOR DISABILITY ACCESS FOR EACH CAMPUS

Testimony Presented Before the Senate Committee on Higher Education and Senate Committee on Human Services

March 29, 2005

By

Dr. Doris Ching
Vice President for Student Affairs
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Chairs Hee, Chun-Oakland, Vice Chairs Inouye and Ihara and Members of the Committees:

The University of Hawai`i supports SCR 181 Requesting the University of Hawai`i to create a task force to assess the need for disability access for each campus. The University shares the legislature's commitment to the success of students with disabilities, efforts to promote diversity and to enforce anti-discrimination laws. The University's strategic goals for diversity and social justice as well as university, state and federal policies require us to address the needs and aspirations of students with disabilities.

We appreciate the legislature's recognition of the excellent work of our student service disability offices at the various campuses and the recognition of the need to increase the capacity of these programs. The University must respond to the increasing number of students disclosing disabilities and the increasing number of students with multiple disabilities; disabilities of greater severity and complexity; and learning and psychiatric disabilities. The University must also address the technology issues to accommodate these students.

The University is pleased to support SCR 181 requesting the appointment of a task force that includes members of the systemwide UH Commission on Disability Access and student affairs disability services. The proposed task force will be given the charge to assess the needs of each campus support services for students with disabilities, and to make recommendations for budgetary considerations and a systemwide comprehensive plan to support this important population of our student body.

The University would like to take this opportunity to thank the legislature for your strong and continuing support for students with disabilities and their contributions to our campus, our state workforce and the future of our community.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SCR 181.