UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education

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by

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SCR 73 Requesting that the University of Hawaii Submit a Report with Information Regarding the Salaries of UH-Manoa Faculty and Administrators

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today. I am delighted that the issue of faculty salaries and the need for the State to support the tremendous faculty at the University is getting attention from the Legislature; however I am opposed to this resolution in its current form.

While I am greatly supportive of the intent of the resolution, I am concerned about unintended consequences to our accreditation standing, and also that the information requested is not the most beneficial to the resolution of the issue.

The sentiments described in the whereas clauses of the resolution are more true than not. The national market for outstanding faculty has outpaced our internal raises and methods to reward our existing faculty. The result is that in order to attract excellence in new faculty, we often have to offer salaries that are equal to, or in some instances more than, our existing faculty. This is not fair, and is not a good strategy for retaining the excellent faculty that have built Mānoa over decades.

First and foremost, this is a resource issue. With more resources we would be able to address faculty equity, the needs of our students, and Mānoa's crumbling infrastructure. We are constantly balancing these issues with the precious resources that the Legislature trusts us with.

I am encouraged by the introduction of this resolution that the Legislature might be willing to entertain a request for funds to address Faculty Equity in the future.

We are greatly aware of the inequities among our faculty ranks, and while resources are at the core of this issue, many efforts are underway to determine the exact nature of the issue and determine what resources are necessary to remedy it. We have:

- Convened a group of Deans from diverse disciplines to discuss what tools they need to best reward excellence.
- Conducted a Gender Equity study to determine if we have discrepancies between our male and female faculty.
- Begun a process to ensure that we take the opportunity of the next bargaining session with UHPA to give us the mechanisms to allow Deans to take a systematic approach to reward excellence.

Finally, my biggest concern with the resolution is that the information requested is not the information that would allow the legislature to address the issue from a macro perspective. I would prefer to provide you with composite data that would allow you to assess the issue from an appropriate level. I am concerned that the level of data requested by this resolution will send the message to our accreditors that the Legislature is interested in managing individual salary applications at the University. That message could harm our accreditation status.

Instead, I would recommend that the resolution ask that the University evaluate our salary and compression issues on a department by department basis and report back to the Legislature on the composite nature of the problem, rather than on individual cases.

Mahalo for your support of the University, and your kokua of our Faculty.