



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony presented before the
Senate Committee on Education
January 31, 2011 at 1:15 p.m.
By MRC Greenwood
President, University of Hawai'i

SB 810: RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 810 that requires the Department of Education to establish high school diploma requirements that aim to ensure college and career readiness.

The University of Hawai'i strongly supports this measure. The University has been an active partner with the Department of Education (DOE) in the American Diploma Project network as well as the early learning community in the P-3 Initiative to prepare students for college and career success. We were a strong supporter in 2008 when the Board of Education approved the Recognition Diploma, and in 2009 when the state submitted its successful Race to the Top application. These are continuing efforts to provide students with a sound foundation for success in citizenship and in careers or college.

The University's goals are well-aligned with the DOE's goals for K-12 education as represented in the DOE's Strategic Plan and the Race to the Top plan. Our coordinated efforts include the University's alignment of State of Hawai'i B Plus Scholarships with the requirements of the BOE Recognition Diploma. Additionally, University of Hawai'i (UH) and DOE faculty have been working to align curriculum between high schools and the college entry-level courses in two and four year colleges. English and teacher education faculty have contributed to the development of expository writing curriculum, and our math faculties have also collaborated. One outcome in math was that 1,500 of DOE's 2010 graduates received letters inviting them into UH's college level math courses on the basis of their high school Algebra 2 performance.

In February 2010 I announced the Hawai'i Graduation Initiative before the state legislature - our goal is to increase completion of college degrees by 25% by 2015. In March we joined 23 other states in the Complete College America Alliance that aims to increase the number of students who graduate from college with certificates and 2- and 4-year degrees.

Like the rest of the nation, Hawai'i urgently needs to produce an educated population to meet workforce needs and to keep competitive in an innovative and globally interconnected world. A Board of Education college and career ready diploma is a critical step toward that process, and it will give Hawai'i's students a firm basis as they prepare for gainful employment or college entry. We urge you to approve Senate Bill 810. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.