UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Testimony presented before the
House Committee on Finance
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SB 374 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO DUAL CREDIT PROGRAMS

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee:

SB 374 SD2 HD1 expands the current running start legislation to include all dual credit programs, broadens the definition of an eligible student to include all high school students, and replaces the standardized test to determine college readiness with assessments for college placement. It also appropriates moneys to these programs.

The University strongly supports this bill. Hawai'i has had a history of promoting dual credit opportunities, mainly through the Running Start program, which allows high school students to take college level courses for college and high school credit at a UH campus, for over 10 years. The outcomes of these students show that they have higher college-going rates, higher likelihood to enroll in college, higher likelihood to remain in college, and higher likelihood to graduate with a degree or certificate. The University, in partnership with the Hawai'i Department of Education, is expanding the dual credit program to include the Early College High School program, which allows high school students to take college level courses at their high school campus and which targets students who would not traditionally go to college, as well as the Jump Start program, which gives high school seniors on a career/technical education track to spend their last year of high school as a full-time community college student. This bill will consolidate these successful dual credit programs to maximize our existing resources and leverage the current grant funding that has been sustaining these initiatives on a small scale thus far.

Because early indications from Hawai'i high schools show better college-going rates and success rates of these students than regular incoming college students, we support this bill's efforts to give more of Hawaii's keiki a chance at college and career success. Some of these students, particularly at high schools such as Waipahu, Waiakea, and Kaimuki, are on track to graduate with a college associate's degree upon high school graduation. Nationally, a recent report from the American Institutes for Research shows early college students have higher rates of high school graduation, college enrollment and college completion.

Currently, high schools are able to run these dual credit programs in partnership with UH campuses through private foundation grants, federal grant dollars, and payment of tuition by families who can afford to pay. However, because the early college high

school program is expanding rapidly and because it targets underrepresented, low-income, first-generation college students, the ability to sustain this popular program is in jeopardy. We ask that the state fund these programs to broaden participation for students through both the Hawai‘i Department of Education and the University of Hawai‘i.

In the 2014-15 school year, Hawai‘i has over 1,400 students enrolled in dual credit courses. The $1.84 million request to the Hawai‘i DOE would fund 30 students at every DOE high school to earn 6 college credits in one year through the Early College program. Research shows that earning at least 6 credits aids college-going and success. It would also fund 2 full time positions – one to act as the fiscal and operations administrator of the funds and distribute the funds equitably to schools; the other to provide programmatic and technical support to the schools and colleges in setting up the programs, determining courses, and acting as liaison between K-12 and higher education. These two positions do not exist currently; the functions are performed by temporary personnel at Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education which is funded by private and federal grants.

The $800,000 request to UH would award scholarships to approximately 1200 students to take Running Start courses (those taken at the college campus) and to be in the Jump Start program (program for 12th graders to spend their senior year at the college, taking a full year of career and technical education courses). Some of these students take more than 1 course each year. The funding request would also fund one position to coordinate the scholarship application process, distribute funds to students equitably, and coordinate the early college taskforce. The position currently exists as a temporary position at Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education, funded by private and federal funds.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.