



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Lower & Higher Education
February 8, 2019 at 2:30 p.m.

By
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HB 1568 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Perruso, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of HB 1568 to advance education and career opportunities for Pacific Islanders. The UH Community Colleges (UHCC) have identified Pacific Islanders as priority group for enrollment because Pacific Islanders are underrepresented in participation and completion of degrees and certificates at UHCC, compared with their representation in the state.

UH campuses have provided programs to support Pacific Island students including “summer bridge” programs for transition into college, student mentoring and targeting early college programs to high schools with higher proportions of Pacific Islanders. However, more is needed as Pacific Islanders continue to be underrepresented in college enrollment and completion. Discussion, partnerships and resources to support education of our Pacific Island students are welcome. We suggest that the pilot created by HB 1568 address Pacific Islander enrollment at one or two campuses to identify effective practices.

Our partners at DOE’s Community Schools for Adults provides GED (General Education Division) test preparation and administration. Support for more Pacific Islanders passing the GED or HISET high school equivalency tests is appreciated. Students who pass these tests are eligible for federal financial aid, whereas other students who do not a high school diploma are typically not eligible for aid.

We support HB 1568 on the condition that any requested positions or funds do not supplant any portion of the University’s Biennium Budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1568. Aloha.