



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 20, 2019 at 10:05 a.m.

By
John Morton
Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

SB 317 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports Senate Bill 317 which provides funding for student mentors and tutors at the UH Community Colleges (UHCC).

The student mentors/tutors program is an integral part of the UHCC recruitment and retention strategy. This program provides mentored/tutored students with a number of direct benefits that lead to higher levels of retention and graduation. This is especially critical for the large numbers of under-prepared students that come to the Community Colleges for postsecondary education. It also provides student hires with sustainable opportunities for employment that helps remove cost as a barrier to attending college.

Peer mentors help students acclimate to college life by helping them navigate the maze of academic expectations, social opportunities and available campus resources. Peers naturally have a higher degree of influence on one another and the shared experience of attending the same college not only strengthens the relationships between them, but also the sense of belonging to the college.

Peer tutoring is a highly effective means of providing supplemental instruction, especially in situations where tutors are embedded or assigned to specific gateway courses like Math and English. Some benefits of peer tutoring include higher academic achievement and improved personal and social development for tutored students, as well as greater economic efficiencies for employing institutions.

We strongly support the passage of SB 317. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 317.