



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Labor  
Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

By

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#### SB 327 SD2 – RELATING TO INTERNSHIPS

Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 327 SD2, which aims to expand opportunities for state-funded internships in the private sector to provide Hawai'i's high school and college-aged students with valuable work experience.

Internships are one of several nationally recognized "high-impact practices" within higher education that tend to correlate with student success beyond graduation. Paid internships are even more important to the future financial success of students. When done well, internships help students build their self-confidence while acclimating to workplace culture and developing essential industry-based skills that will enhance their employability.

We respectfully ask the committee to consider an additional amendment. As currently written, the bill limits internship opportunities to students who are planning to graduate within a year. We suggest language allowing students at any point in their college path to be eligible for such internship opportunities. Please consider striking the language on page 5, lines 14-18, in the bill so that it reads as follows:

~~"Be currently enrolled in an accredited college or university and anticipating the attainment of a degree within one year, or has earned a college or university degree within one year of applying for the internship; and"~~

The benefits of internships should also be available to students earlier in their academic journeys so they have the chance to intern at more than one company or try different roles within a company so they can develop career readiness skills. The University of Hawai'i also serves many non-traditional students who returned to higher education after spending time in the workforce and would be prepared for the demands of an internship at an earlier stage of their college journey. Finally, for students uncertain about their future professions, having an internship opportunity early may give them a chance to decide this is *not* what they want to do and choose a different career path.

Thank you for your time and consideration.