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## Athletics Department Testimony

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**Laura Beeman** <lbeeman@hawaii.edu>  
To: bor.testimony@hawaii.edu

Wed, May 3, 2023 at 4:00 PM

To Whom it May Concern~

Please find attached my submitted testimony in support of the Athletics Department and the services provided to our student athletes.

Mahalo for your time,

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May 1, 2023

I am beginning my 12<sup>th</sup> year as the Head Coach of Rainbow Wahine Basketball. 3 different Athletics Directors, 2 Presidents and 2 Chancellors made my first 3 years at UH challenging. The canoe was definitely not paddling forward.

Since the hiring of David Matlin, Lois Manin and the student-centered leadership of President Lassner the changes campus wide, and more noticeably, the Athletics department is palpable. The canoe is not only moving forward it is taking on wave after wave.

Covid years were/are outliers. They affected every aspect of collegiate sports, most noticeably the mental health of our student athletes. No one could predict the impact isolation, uncertainty and lost experience would have on them. Our department tackled this issue and others with grace, speed and a holistic approach. Within the past 4 years we have implemented the following student athlete services.

- \*COA-It is now being fully funded. This is not the case at other MWC and BWC's.

- \*ALSTON Award has been implemented and is gaining traction in record time and again is not the case at other MWC's and BWC's.

- \*Nagatani Academic Services have been expanded and include break out rooms for small group study sessions, computers, academic advising, priority registration, career guidance, tutoring, individual and team study halls and graduation assistance.

- \*Supplemental Meal program which provides nutrition, cost savings and ease of finding a good healthy meal for our student athletes is growing every year.

- \*NIL programs assisting in meal replacement, mentorship and life skills for all student athletes.

- \*The first in the NATION YIP program for girls which provided community engagement, mentorship and leadership training for student athletes.

- \*Mental Health Services have expanded from upper campus QLC (only) to 3 part and or fulltime counselors within the Athletics Department. These counselors have been a game changer for our student athletes.

The problem at times with a holistic approach is some student athletes feel like they are not receiving the attention they deserve. Athletics are built on the premise of inclusivity for all. Sometimes one, may have to sacrifice for the good of all. I believe in and have witnessed this approach from our leadership from day 1 of D Matlin's appointment as AD and I welcome it. UH's Athletics Department is centered on our student athletes and their experiences. Sometimes the most valuable lessons are not learned on the playing court, field or pool but rather in the hard lessons of life. Yes, sometimes you will not get what you want, not to your detriment, but rather your growth.

I believe that UH's athletics department gives our student athletes the opportunity to speak truth to power whether the voice is right or wrong. I spent 1 year in the WNBA and 2 years at a Power 5. The attention, opportunity and importance placed on our student athlete experience at UH and their wellbeing far surpasses either of my previous experiences. I am proud to be a member of our Athletics Department and the commitment it places on the development and wellbeing of our student athletes.

Aloha,

Laura Beeman

Rainbow Wahine Basketball