



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

H.B 1335 HD 3 SD1 RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

April 1, 2004

By

Evan S. Dobelle
President , University of Hawai'i

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

March 22, 2004

by
Evan S. Dobelle, President
University of Hawai'i

HB 1335 HD 3 SD 1

Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Kokubun and Members of the Committee:

The University supports the intent of Part I of HB 1335 HD 3 SD 1 which provides partial and full tuition waivers for all Native Hawaiian students who meet admission standards but requests that this section of the bill not be approved without adequate funding. The University supports Part II of the bill requesting a study be completed by the legislative reference bureau to research and review legal issues.

The Strategic Plan of the University of Hawai'i recognizes the need "to strengthen the crucial role that the University of Hawai'i system performs for the indigenous people and general population of Hawai'i by actively preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian culture, language, and values." In particular, the University acknowledges the severe underrepresentation of Native Hawaiian students and is committed to increase the representation and success of Native Hawaiian students on all campuses.

The University has begun a review of its tuition waiver program as it relates to the new University Strategic enrollment goals for various student groups, including goals to increase Native Hawaiian students. The University will need more information to estimate accurate costs for expected student enrollment increases at two year programs, baccalaureate, graduate and professional levels. In addition, it will be necessary to incorporate eligibility and use of federal financial need assistance and consider student support service needs. The University and the Legislature need to carefully address current legal challenges to Native Hawaiian programs, the Akaka bill in Congress, alternative

sources of funding and the standards set by the US Supreme Court ruling on the University of Michigan's Affirmative Action program. It should be noted that the University is currently addressing a complaint regarding tuition waivers to financially needy Native Hawaiian students at Manoa with the US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights.

HB 1335 HD3 SD1The University shares the legislature's concerns and continuing support of Native Hawaiian students. Thank you for this opportunity to share some of our concerns on part I of HB 1335 HD3 SD1.