



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

H.B. 1800
Relating to the State Budget

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance

March 5, 2004

By

Chris Lee
Chairman, Academy for Creative Media
University of Hawai'i

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance

March 5, 2004

By

Chris Lee
Chairman, Academy for Creative Media
University of Hawai'i

H.B. 1800, Relating to the State Budget

Chair Takamine, Vice Chair Kawakami and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports H.B. 1800.

H.B. 1800 provides funding for the new Academy for Creative Media (ACM). The ACM was approved in January, 2004 by the Board of Regents as the University's first comprehensive school of media education. Though currently located at the Mānoa campus, the ACM is a system-wide initiative which will be available on all ten campuses throughout the islands.

Previously dubbed "the film school," the ACM is designed to create a self-sustaining entertainment and intellectual property industry by anchoring Hawai'i's expanding digital media cluster, increasing traditional film and television production, and educating generations of cultural producers by providing a platform for indigenous filmmakers to bring their stories to the global audience.

While there are already 200 film schools in this country, Hawai'i is the only state without one. The ACM moves beyond the traditional film school model in creating a program unique to our state that's marketable on a global scale and dedicated to diversifying our local economy. In an age of information and

entertainment, the world's economy is driven by knowledge-based industries and Hawai'i's students have a logical and rightful place in the creation of this content. As entertainment diversifies through computer animation, video games, and the internet, technology makes it possible for the digital media industries to flourish here in Hawai'i with the support of the ACM.

I'm sure all of you have watched your keiki in wonder as they virtually live on the computer, use their digital cameras and cell phones, and multi-task their way through the day. Their comfort and ease with technology, their ability to create new and universal languages through e-mail and text messaging, and the empowerment that visualization has brought to a creative process that was previously locked inside by society's dependence on verbal and written skills all point to the need, desire and value of the ACM.

The mission of the University of Hawai'i to educate our students and transform our economy will be judged not just by our ability to attract new businesses to the state, but also by our ability to inspire the confidence of our own people. If financial support is any indication of community confidence, I'm proud to report that even before the ACM was formally approved, we raised \$450,000 in alumni cash gifts and federal grants.

I believe that the Academy for Creative Media at the University of Hawai'i has the opportunity to play a vital role in the future of our state and I thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony in support of H.B. 1800.