



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

HB 3160 HD1
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Testimony Presented Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 27, 2006

by

Denise Eby Konan
Interim Chancellor
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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Chair Takamine, Vice Chair Kawakami and members of the House Finance Committee, my name is Denise Konan, I am serving as the Interim Chancellor for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I wish to thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the appropriations outlined in House Bill 3160 that are also included as a part of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Supplemental Budget request.

Manoa faces some real fiscal challenges for which we will need the support of the legislature. As part of my "Year of the Student" initiative this year, we decided to survey students ourselves to determine what students felt were Manoa's priority needs. Over 4,000 students completed the survey in November and we are learning a great deal about what our students think we are doing well and where we need to work harder to support their success. Some of our students major concerns are addressed in House Bill 3160 as well as in our supplemental budget request. Students are concerned about the condition of our classrooms; they cite the need for more access to academic advisors and financial aid information and support, and they want better places on campus to study.

Among our most urgent needs is to cover the growing utility expenses, and we appreciate that House Bill 3160 acknowledges our very real need to cover these additional utility expenses without cutting from our academic and service units. Like the rest of Hawai'i, we have been severely impacted by our state's increased cost of operations. Most notably, our utility expenditures have nearly doubled from FY 1999 and now total over \$18 million annually. We hope you will assist us with these costs as we also look for other ways to reduce them. I have made the promotion of sustainability one of my top priorities for this year, and hope we will continue to find innovative solutions to reduce these utility costs.

We are very proud that Mānoa has been the choice for more and more students. Mānoa's enrollment is up 21% since 2000; though during this same time there have been significant cuts in the academic and student support budgets. We need to shore up services to students and several critical programs to provide an excellent undergraduate experience and serve the state's workforce needs. House Bill 3160 will allow us to do that.

To address the problems that our increased enrollment has caused on our campus's academic infrastructure, and to better serve the students of the state, we are asking for additional security coverage, financial aid officers, information technology specialists, academic advisors, academic support services for Native Hawaiian students, and support for students with disabilities. We also wish to restore cuts to the base budgets of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, which includes the College of Social Sciences, College of Arts and Humanities, College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature, and the College of Natural Sciences. These Colleges teach the vast majority of classes, and make up the heart of our University. We need them to be strong and robust.

House Bill 3160 also expands our services to our students by recognizing that they are work long hours and are in need of conducive study spaces at all times of the day and night. Our students have many obligations outside of school that do not permit them to complete all their studies while the sun is up. We want to institute 24 hour library access to give them a safe quiet place to study, as the Chancellor's Office piloted very successfully in 2004, but was terminated due to lack of funds.

As you all know very well, Nursing workforce training is one of the most important issues facing the state. We are committed to meeting the state need in Nursing, and House Bill 3160 provides the necessary resources for us to be able to do so. The investment contained in this bill is aligned with future needs of the state. By funding expansion of faculty prepared to teach, creating state of the art simulation and teaching facilities, and most critical, increasing the number of graduate nurses committed to working in Hawai'i, you are providing opportunities for the best and brightest of Hawai'i youth to receive a professional education. Subsequently, they can expect to obtain employment and earn a wage that will allow them to remain in the state.

House Bill 3160 also includes an allocation to support Native Hawaiian programs on our campus. This funding is utilized both to bolster our Hawaiian academic programs, such as Hawaiian Studies and Hawaiian Language, as well as to support Native Hawaiians in disciplines across our campus. In the past five years Hawaiian Studies at UHM has developed, proposed and begun to teach a dizzying array of courses in history, in la'au lapa'au (herbal medicine), fishpond, lo'i and resource management, voyaging, visual arts, music, politics and Hawaiian law, all with a faculty that is still small in comparison to other departments in this university. Our Hawaiian language department has also grown in very similar ways, with an outstanding undergraduate degree program and a new and popular MA degree. And this isn't all that the Native Hawaiian programs have done with this very strategic financing. From Nursing and Medicine to Engineering and Student Services, Hawaiian educators on our campus have produced amazing growth with the additional funding that we have been given these past three years. College of Engineering went from one Native Hawaiian student three years ago to a dynamic recruitment program that has brought eighty Hawaiians into that school and is currently riding a nearly 100% retention rate for Native Hawaiian students. The College of Education's Ho'okulaiwi program now has a cohort of 20 Hawaiians preparing to enter the ranks of immersion teachers, and there is tremendous interest among kanaka maoli to enter this program and become the next wave of teachers in the DOE. Indigenous Politics has the largest number of Hawaiians preparing for Ph.D.s in the next few years and will certainly

have an impact on new research and publications. We hope you will help us to continue to support these programs and provide the programming that will help us achieve our goal of being a Hawaiian Place of Learning.

Finally, I wish to state that while there may come a day that it is appropriate for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to request funds for a student-run television station, as is included in HB3160, this is not that time. This part of the bill is not a part of our supplemental budget request, nor would such a proposal rank in priority above any other part of our supplemental budget request. I ask that you fully fund our supplemental budget request before considering such an add-on.

You are also considering action this evening on HB3158, for Capitol improvement projects. I want to take this opportunity to encourage your support for the many important projects on the Mānoa Campus contained in that bill as well.

Again, I wish to thank you for this opportunity, and thank you for your support of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and your insights into our needs as expressed in House Bill 3160.

Mahalo.