



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

HB 3191

RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII'S
LEEWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education

February 7, 2006

By

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Interim Chancellor for Leeward Community College
University of Hawai'i

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Chair Waters and Members of the Committee:

Leeward Community College (LCC) strongly supports HB 3191 which also supports the Board of Regents' supplemental budget request funding priorities.

The LCC service area encompasses a vast region of Oahu. As Kapolei and surrounding areas are further developed, LCC's enrollment is projected to increase to about 6,600 students in Fall 2008. Currently this service area contains over 50% of the Oahu DOE schools and over 30% of all Native Hawaiians in the State attend schools in LCC's region. LCC has more Native Hawaiians in attendance than any other campus in the UH Community College system. The area also has the highest rates of impoverishment on Oahu, a problem LCC as a community college, is in a unique position to address.

With the exciting growth in west Oahu and the identified needs on the leeward coast, LCC is preparing and positioning itself for a new level of service, excellence, and professionalism. LCC has new opportunities in general education, transfer relations with University of Hawaii-West Oahu, and workforce development training.

New baseline planning data being generated by the University of Hawaii system office points to the leeward-serving area as ground zero in the State of Hawaii for job opportunities and for addressing pressing needs relating to service, growth, outreach, and innovation which are the watchwords for renewal at LCC.

A place of learning must be safe and free of break-ins, theft, and other distracting and intimidating behavior; LCC requests security budget items to more thoroughly address this safety issue. In addition, LCC needs a campus that is properly equipped on an annual basis. The equipment requests are meant to provide faculty reliable and up-to-date equipment as part of a renewed commitment to serve our students.

Additional staffing in financial aid is a priority as increased student dependence on financial aid means that LCC will experience increased activity in this area. LCC's current staffing profile fails to meet minimum standards set by the professional oversight agency for financial aid officers.

In order to broaden the exposure of LCC's programs to a greater audience and to assist in recruiting new students, LCC requests funding to support a renewed effort in our marketing strategies. Marketing capabilities are needed in such areas as web design and maintenance. LCC has special strengths in such fields as biotech, math and science, astronomy, engineering, and other academic programs that are not well known and could be better disseminated throughout the community via the Internet. LCC's vocational, industry-focused programs also deserve stronger marketing in the community because LCC is optimally placed to provide a greater number of job opportunities within our growing economy.

To reach these job placement goals, the college seeks general fund support for our job placement office. This office has been federally funded for the past three years and these dollars are due to expire. It is essential that this function be funded in order to maintain the critical role of connecting students with the job placement needs of our community.

As part of the effort to extend the academic program development in job-related areas, LCC has launched two promising programs:

1. Associate of Arts in Teaching
2. Digital Media

The goal is to strengthen both of these programs in light of student interest and job outlook associated with both, along with a continued focus on programs that support the native Hawaiian community.

On behalf of our students, faculty, and staff we thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.