



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE  
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
ON  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2007**

**By  
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### **HB1547 HD2 Relating to International Affairs**

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The University of Hawai'i supports the expansion of the role of the Office of International Affairs within DBEDT to include the facilitation, coordination, and promotion of educational relationships and exchanges with other countries through collaboration with and funding of existing international programs and organizations.

By serving a coordinating role, the Office of International Affairs can help ensure that the State of Hawai'i takes full advantage of our unique position and understanding of the Asia-Pacific region with a goal of competing in the global economy. Designating a single state agency charged as the point of contact and accountability and serving as the state's advocate for a global orientation would contribute to making our State a role model in the nation. At present there are numerous public and private organizations and agencies in our State that are engaged in global outreach, youth and leadership development, international education and training, but rarely are these entities fully aware of each other and therefore loose opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

Often in Asian cultures the endorsement of State government is essential to having access to government officials in ministries of education and training or key public educational institutions. It would therefore be most beneficial for a Hawai'i State Office of International Affairs to serve as a focal point for our state's global engagement. The entrée provided by DBEDT has served as a starting point for furthering friendships and professional linkages.

When DBEDT has organized trade missions to Vietnam, China, Taiwan, Japan and Korea, various UH departments and campuses have participated. It is through these trade missions that UH faculty and administrators have established creative partnerships with the private sector both in Hawai'i and abroad, contributing to our local economy. Two specific examples of UH programs that developed as a direct result of DBEDT's active international engagement are programs in the Shidler College of Business. One was a five-year Senior Leadership Program for Guangdong officials. These trainees, now in senior positions throughout the province, continue to engage with Hawai'i government officials and private citizens for their business and training needs. In fall 2007 UHM will launch executive MBA programs with Sun Yat-sen University.

By engaging in Sister State and Sister State conferences, organized by DBEDT, the University has been able to reconnect with our alumni, encouraging them to regard Hawai'i as their US point of reference for business, further education, and life-long professional training. In 2005 the UH system trained over 6,500 short-term students, generating approximately \$2.5 million. This is in addition to the nearly 2200 degree-seeking international students we enrolled across the UH system who pay considerably higher tuition rates than resident students. By raising our State's global profile we can expect to attract greater numbers of degree-seeking international students, obtain more short term training contracts, host international visiting scholars and secure non-US sourced investments in our research and training enterprise.

Therefore, we believe that expanding the mandate of the Office of International Affairs and fully funding it would allow for greater synergy between and among the public, private, K-12, postsecondary, non-profit, and business sectors of our State in order to fully engage in the global economy.