

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



HB 2587 - MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO ESTABLISH
CREATIVITY ACADEMIES

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Tourism & Culture

January 28, 2008 at 9:00 am
by

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Vice President for Community Colleges
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Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Manahan and Members of the Committee:

I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 2587 that makes an appropriation to Establish Creativity Academies within public high schools in partnership with the University of Hawaii Community Colleges.

As described in the bill, the performance of our young people in mathematics and science lags behind the performance of most states. It is critical that we adopt new approaches that get an increasing number of students to engage in educational programs that prepare them with the skills necessary for their future success, as well as enabling them to contribute to the expansion of Hawai'i's innovation economy.

I believe it is our responsibility as educators to provide the enriched environment that allows our people to develop the skills and knowledge that will allow them to fully participate in our economy and society. Over the past decade, the University of Hawaii Community Colleges, in partnership with a growing number of DOE high schools and various industry groups, have developed a number of successful career-focused academies, including the Cisco Networking Academies, the Construction Academies, and the HiEST Academies that focus on the development of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills and knowledge. Using contextual based hands-on curricula, these initiatives have increased the engagement of students who have previously not been involved in a rigorous program of study. This I believe is what we can expect from the implementation of the Creativity Academies Program.

The mission of Creativity Academies is to provide students with the knowledge, attitudes, and workforce skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math and Digital Media/ New Media Arts (NMA); skills necessary to become creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial in the 21st century. The fusion of the creative and problem solving processes essential to both the scientific and artistic endeavors is the cornerstone of the Creativity Academies and a life skill in the 21st century global community. The Creativity Academies expand existing STEM training for students K-12, infusing innovative thinking through contextual learning in creative disciplines such as animation, game design and development, digital media and creative writing/publishing.

This initiative is consistent with the planned University system strategic outcomes that include: to develop the educational capital of the state; to develop our workforce; to diversify the economy; and to increase our efforts on behalf of underserved regions and populations, particularly Native Hawaiians.

The University of Hawai'i Community College system is well situated to provide leadership in promoting education in STEM and Digital Media/ New Media Arts programs. Both Honolulu CC and Kapi'olani CC have been innovative and creative in their approaches to developing programs focused on different aspects of STEM related careers. Most relevant to HB 2587, Kapi'olani CC has developed and implemented a highly successful STEM Program for high school juniors and seniors. The goals of this program are to enhance the quality of science, technology, engineering and mathematics instructional and outreach programs; to prepare students for STEM careers; and to increase the number of STEM students transferring to 4-year degree programs. Also, Kapi'olani CC's Digital Media/ New Media Arts Program has produced students who have won national and international awards for their creative use of an art form that uses technology as its medium. Through programs such as STEM and Digital Media/New Media Arts Program, our Community Colleges are promoting creative thinking, problem solving, and decision making through the sciences and the arts.

If we are to be successful in fixing our leaky educational pipeline, we believe it is important for our colleges to collaborate with the high schools throughout the State. The Creativity Academies Program as well as other similar initiatives, through the efforts of the UHCC system colleges and collaborating high schools, will provide our high school students with new skills to use in the innovation economy, as well as the opportunity to earn dual credit for their academic efforts, making a more efficient use of available resources.

We support HB 2587, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved Executive Supplemental Budget.