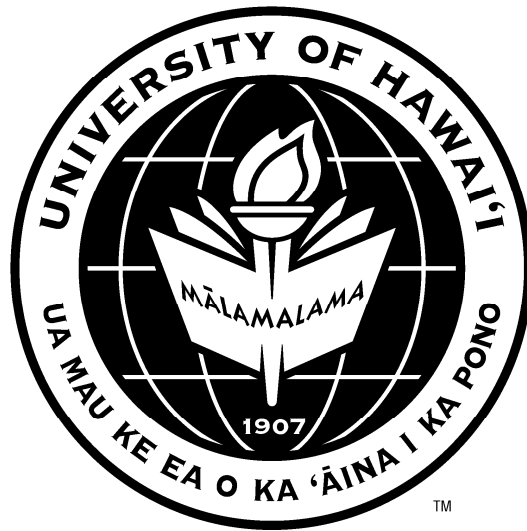


UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



HB 2817 – RELATING TO MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT LEARNING
EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education

January 29, 2008 at 2:40 pm
by

John Morton
Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

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HB 2817- Relating to Music Entertainment Learning Experience Program

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Bertram, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i stands in support of this measure.

HB 2817 makes an appropriation of approximately \$1.265 M for the operation of the Music and Entertainment Learning Experience (MELE) program at Honolulu Community College (HCC), authorizes \$3.53 M in General Obligation bonds for the for plans, design, construction, and equipment for a music studio and auxiliary facilities to support the MELE program, and proposes several amendments to Act 11 (SLH 2007).

The MELE program is a partnership between HCC and Belmont University, one of the preeminent music and entertainment business schools in the nation located along music row in Nashville, Tennessee. The program is designed to foster and promote the business of music and entertainment in Hawai'i and will focus on three strands: 1) artist creativity, 2) entertainment business, and 3) technical production skills.

The partnership was conceived and developed in 2006 when well known Nashville music executive Jim Ed Norman realized that Hawai'i has an abundance of untapped raw musical talent and is ripe for a program that focuses on teaching the business and technical sides of entertainment. The semi-retired executive brought the idea to former UH professor Dr. Gavan Daws and together they have helped HCC immensely in making MELE a reality, and so far a large success.

The program started this past fall on an experimental basis with 2 classes and 25 students. Now in its second semester the program is comprised of 6 classes and approximately 60 students. MELE is already experiencing student demand, but to expand and sustain the program additional resources are necessary. The operating and CIP funds proposed through this bill will allow HCC to complete the MELE program offerings and bring the program to its full educational capacity. With construction of a music training center, including a music studio, the program will result in a degree granting program with two tracks: 1) music business or 2) audio engineering technology. The base of knowledge that students gain from this program will be critical to their development as professionals and, thus, have large impact on the music and entertainment industries.

We do request one change to the measure. In its current form the bill's amendments strike the word "and" from the MELE name; the "and" should be left in the name. In Part III on page 6, lines 6-7 and lines 15-16, the name of the program should read, "music and entertainment learning experience" (underscore added for emphasis).

We support HB 2817, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved Supplemental Budget Request.