



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education

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Presented by
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HCR 218 / HR 185: Requesting the University of Hawaii at Manoa College of Education to convene a working group to conduct a feasibility study of developing a degree granting program and center for peace education.

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

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa does not support HCR 218 / HR 185. There are four primary reasons for our opposition to this resolution. First, there is a clear process by which curricular decisions are made regarding university programs and centers and creating a separate working committee to examine this issue would be outside the normal process. Second, the College of Education has committed to conducting a comprehensive review of priorities over the next year, during which faculty may propose areas of focus for the future. Third, the UH-Mānoa Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace would be home to these initiatives and creating a separate center in the College of Education would appear to duplicate resources. Fourth, nearly all of the topics and approaches that are attributed to peace education are already being addressed appropriately in the teacher education curriculum.

First and foremost, policies and procedures that govern academic processes at UH Mānoa are provided by the Board of Regents, University of Hawai‘i Executive and Administrative Policies, and UH Mānoa internal policies. Executive Policy E5.201 describes the process for proposing new academic programs, beginning with an “Authorization to Plan (ATP)” which is to be made before program planning begins. One purpose of the ATP is to inform administration and the Board of Regents of program planning intentions and another is to provide an opportunity for coordination and appropriate preliminary input. There is also described in university policy guidelines the review process beginning with a review by the appropriate unit’s program and curriculum committee and the dean. Within the College of Education, the Faculty Senate Bylaws discuss the role of that body in reviewing curriculum and program ideas. Consideration of degrees and centers should occur within the already established policies of the university.

Next, discussions have already begun in the College of Education through the College Council and the College of Education Faculty Senate around strategic planning and prioritizing programs for the future. Given the fiscal context of the state and the nation, we have determined that we need to develop an academic plan for the future that will guide our resource decisions. A formalized process will occur over the next year to review programs and to determine where priorities should be for the college as a whole. There will be opportunities for individual faculty members or groups of faculty to propose ideas to the faculty as a whole and to make a case for the importance of particular initiatives. The discussion of peace education can occur in that context.

Third, the Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace has existed at UH since 1985. This well-established center dedicated to peace exists in the College of Social Sciences. They provide education and training opportunities in applied peacemaking and conflict resolution, offer official university approved certificates in peace studies and conflict resolution, and have developed a major in peace and conflict resolution through an interdisciplinary program. Through the Outreach College the Institute offers programs on indigenous peacemaking. The Institute for Peace has a strong working relationship with the East-West Center and has as one of its core values to build on Hawai'i's cultural heritage and island values (including aloha, mutual aid and respect, sense of community, caring for the land, and a reliance on each other), to promote cross-cultural communication and peacemaking leadership. This interdisciplinary center has engaged faculty and students from across the university and from a variety of disciplines and colleges. It would seem that a logical first step in further expanding peace education and perhaps developing a focus on working with schools and teachers should begin with a dialogue with our colleagues in the College of Social Sciences. Duplicating infrastructures by creating a separate center in another college would seem to use state resources in inefficient ways.

Finally, the College of Education continuously seeks to transform its curriculum, pedagogy and policies to meet the needs of society and routinely infuses current topics such as sustainability, social justice, gender equity, globalization, indigenous and multicultural studies, and global technologies in our programs. We have worked with the P-20 initiative and with our colleagues at the Department of Education and the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board on many of these topics to find ways to deal with the needs of our schools and our students. In reviewing our curriculum you will find that issues of tolerance, cultural differences, global citizenship, critical thinking, interdisciplinary approaches to problem-solving, and more are addressed. We believe these to be important aspects of education in general and not restricted to peace education.

We recognize and appreciate that the intent of this resolution is to call attention to important matters in education. However, the University has practices and policies already in place to address these matters.

Thank you.