



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committees on Higher Education and Tourism, Culture and International Affairs
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by
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HCR 217/HR 187 Requesting the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents to Develop Plans for a
Scholarship Program for Hawai'i Residents to Study Abroad

Chair Chang, Chair Manahan and Members of the Committees:

The University understands and values the importance of our students, in particular those who are Hawai'i residents, studying abroad as both ambassadors of the United States and the State of Hawai'i as well as recipients of a broader worldview in an increasingly globalized society. While the University supports the idea of encouraging resident students to study abroad, we instead would like to suggest that the resolution request the UH campuses with study abroad programs to study the feasibility of creating such a scholarship, augmenting an existing scholarship for study abroad students, or exploring alternative avenues for funding.

The reasons for the request are:

1. Students who study abroad have access to some funds. They can retain their financial aid if they have financial need or augment their aid due to increased study abroad costs. They also have access to apply for several sources of funding, such as the national Gilman funds or national Freeman funds to study in Asia, Freeman or Honda funds (if UH community college students), and federal Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLASS) funds. UH Manoa students currently have access to some study abroad scholarships at UHM as well.
2. The resolution as written only reflects UH Manoa students, and those Manoa students who study through the UH Manoa Study Abroad Center. In fact, UH Manoa students can also study abroad through various other mechanisms, such as through international exchanges, where students pay the UH tuition and then attend tuition-free at the international partner university. UH Manoa actually has 61 such options for students and is very cost-effective. Furthermore, the UH system offers study abroad options through Kapiolani Community College and Leeward Community College, both of which have very active study abroad communities.
3. The UH Board of Regents has a comprehensive financial assistance program, created in 2006, which provides for an increase of financial aid and scholarships for students. The program in particular increases aid for Hawai'i resident students, in keeping with the University's mission and strategic goals. It also allows for campuses to develop their own scholarships based on financial need or merit/service, and certainly could allow for the creation or increase of study abroad scholarships, should it be a strategic priority for the campus.
4. Since the creation of a study abroad scholarship is not currently one of the UH Board of Regents approved priorities, we remain concerned about the cost implications generated by this proposal, in light of budget challenges and varying priorities.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the University of Hawai'i.