



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony presented before the
House Committee on Higher Education
January 31, 2013 at 2:00 p.m.

By Linda K. Johnsrud

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost, University of Hawai'i System

HB 1200: RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

The University of Hawai'i supports HB 1200 that establishes the post-secondary education commission within the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) to authorize private post-secondary educational institutions to operate in the state, to maintain a listing of such private institutions, and to act on complaints concerning these institutions. HB 1200 addresses the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education regulations under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. The University appreciates the thoroughness of HB 1200 in specifying the criteria for authorization of private institutions, for example, through accreditation status from a recognized national or regional body and demonstration of financial integrity. These provisions serve to protect authorized private institutions as well as the public by delineating the basis for authorization. Furthermore, it is the University's position that placing the authorization function outside the University of Hawai'i (UH) avoids the potential or the appearance of a conflict of interest were the state's sole public university to authorize private providers to operate within the state.

The University would also like to provide these additional comments on HB 1200:

The state's post-secondary education commission was established in 1972 to qualify the state to receive federal funds for student financial aid, and was placed within the University of Hawai'i. Currently it has three functions: certification of higher education programs for veterans; distribution of federal financial aid to private and public institutions of higher education; and support for the state's membership in the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE).

The University respectfully requests that the certification function for veterans' higher education programs be moved to the post-secondary education commission in DCCA because its function is similar to private institution authorization. The University proposes to transfer a position from its veterans' affairs office to DCCA which will provide continuity, expertise, and experience in this area.

The University recommends that the federal financial aid and WICHE functions remain at UH. In the case of federal financial aid distribution, current UH personnel are able to absorb the work within their position responsibilities related to financial aid. Continuing to perform

this task at UH would provide, with existing resources, the needed expertise in financial aid and would benefit students by enabling the state to seamlessly deliver federal scholarships.

Similarly, WICHE support functions are absorbed by current UH staffing on a part-time basis. WICHE is a membership organization, and the University supports the state's membership and the WICHE commissioners. WICHE, a fifteen-state commission of western states, helps Hawai'i's students through student exchange programs and supports institutions by student access and success, workforce development, data, and policy initiatives and technical support. Two examples of student exchange programs that assist the state are the Professional Student Exchange Program and the Western Regional Graduate Program. They allow Hawai'i students the opportunity to study in select WICHE states or institutions that offer critical professional programs or high-quality distinctive graduate programs that are not available in our state.

Again, we appreciate the thoughtfulness in HB 1200 in addressing the U.S. Department of Education regulations, and thank you for the opportunity to testify.