



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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HB 1608 HD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Taniguchi and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1608 House Draft 1 that makes an appropriation for the University of Hawai'i Graduation Pathway System.

The University of Hawai'i System is most grateful that this measure proposes to continue funding in 2016-2017 for the Graduation Pathway System (GPS). We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved budget.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the legislature for passing HB 547 which became Act 104 in 2015. Act 104 provides support to the University of Hawai'i (UH) to enhance the STAR advising system that guides students toward timely graduation and expands the University's capacity to track and advise students in their progress toward graduation. The appropriations provided by Act 104 allowed the UH to develop technological enhancements necessary to integrate the STAR GPS program with the University's student information systems in order to link STAR and course registration.

STAR, an online advising tool developed at UH Mānoa, has been recognized nationally as an innovative tool that allows students to track their progress toward a degree. Students who register through STAR will be provided direction and feedback on how the course choices they make move them through to completion of their educational objectives. When a student registers for courses through STAR, they are directed to course selections that meet the major and degree plan requirements of the major. If a choice is made that is not part of their degree plan, the system requires the student acknowledge that they are making an informed choice that is off their degree pathway.

UH has made significant progress during the 2015-2016 academic year in moving forward on the development and implementation of the GPS registration system. A successful initial pilot with a small number of students at one campus was completed in fall 2015. The students found the GPS registration process intuitively easy to use. All ten campuses are working on an expanded pilot for spring 2016, in which a select group of students from each campus will register using the GPS registration system.

UH has benefitted from the initial pilot by the positive interaction between students and advisors, and learning about issues and processes that must be worked through before a large scale implementation. Required technical work is ongoing. For example, it was necessary to program the logic of pathways registration and to prepare a user friendly interface connecting STAR (online student registration and degree progress guidance) and Banner (a comprehensive computer information system that contains information on students and courses).

Campus level coordinators are being identified to work with campus staff in areas (such as academic affairs and student services) necessary for successful GPS registration. For example, academic maps that provide semester by semester plans must be created as they are the basis for a student's ability to plan their course taking on a path and sequence leading toward timely graduation. These maps must be built into the STAR system, and sufficient sections of courses that follow the academic map must be offered. This requires a rethinking of some of the basic assumptions of how academic planning has historically been done, such as how many seats and what courses are offered each semester.

Additional funding is necessary to meet the next milestones. In order to have all students register through the use of the STAR GPS system for the spring 2017 semester, students must be able to register through the program in fall 2016. To accomplish this, all degrees will need accurate academic maps prepared by campus academic affairs personnel. These maps must then be programmed into STAR. An intensive analysis of course offerings must be conducted, with changes to course scheduling as needed. Advisors will need to be trained to use the new system and campus faculty educated on the use and impacts of GPS registration.

In the 2016-2017 academic year, STAR and system academic affairs staff will be required to travel to neighbor island campuses to work with campus administrators, advisors, faculty, and students to clarify the use of GPS-STAR and its critical importance in student success and on time graduation. Designated campus pathway coordinators will be required to travel to O'ahu for training to ensure quality in applying GPS-STAR and consistency throughout the UH system as they work with campus staff to support full implementation by spring 2017.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and thank you for your support of student success at UH.