UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

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by
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HB1609 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai‘i appreciates the intent of HB1609, which requires the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai‘i to promote the utilization of existing University of Hawai‘i system buildings through responsible space management efforts. As further set forth below, however, the University of Hawai‘i currently engages in active space management and utilization efforts as part of its overall operation and administration functions. Additionally, the Board of Regents has had a standing moratorium against new buildings since 2013 to ensure maximum use of existing facilities. As such, we believe the objectives of this bill can be satisfied without legislative mandate.

Campus facilities are managed through a range of procedures governing the use and management of instructional space. Class scheduling, in particular, takes into consideration multiple factors such as: expected class sizes, room attributes, classroom furniture (conference tables, tablet-arm chairs, theater seating, innovative furniture), room layouts, instructional equipment requirements (computers, DVD players, iClickers, interactive displays), and classroom locations. Additionally, many classes are offered at non-standard times, making it even more complex to juggle room assignments. To complicate matters, class size is dictated by accreditation requirements, teaching methodology, and course curriculum, which often limits the selection of available classrooms.

Like all other colleges and universities across the nation, the scheduling of classes is a highly complex and voluminous process that, within the University of Hawai‘i system, involves two major computer systems and manual manipulation. To that end, each campus within the University system manages their own space to ensure facilities are available to support the complicated class schedule that is developed based on multiple requirements. However, the specific data requested in the immediate measure will impose additional requirements and, therefore, additional effort. If willing, however, we look forward to working with this committee to determine if existing data and reports are satisfactory.

Additionally, this measure is primarily driven by the concern over the cost of constructing and maintaining new buildings instead of utilizing existing facilities. The Board of Regents shares this concerns. To that end, in 2013, the Board of Regents adopted a moratorium on new buildings except for those that were previously approved or is necessary to prevent a

program that is in imminent jeopardy of losing accreditation. To date, the Board has not deviated from this moratorium against new buildings.

Finally, the University agrees that new buildings are not the solution to its deferred maintenance problem. Instead, our strategy is to (1) invest in existing facilities by modernizing infrastructure and building layout to support a 21st century learning environment through the use of modern technology and lean space utilization metrics, and (2) demolish non-functional facilities that can be better absorbed into these upgraded facilities. This transforms the current landscape of the campus while staying within its existing footprint (or less).

In closing, the University appreciates the intent of HB1609 because it advances the same principles adopted by the Board of Regents and is consistent with efforts already underway. Therefore, we believe the objectives of this measure can be attained without legislative mandate.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.