



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Water and Land
February 5, 2016 at 8:30 a.m.

by
Doris Ching, Ed.D.
Interim Chancellor
University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu

HB 2591 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Cullen and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on HB 2591 – Relating to Education. The University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu (UHWO) supports the overall concept of this bill, as it includes initiatives that are aligned with University goals and objectives.

In 2014, the Board of Regents reallocated about 150 acres to the campus in support of an increased student enrollment projection. As a result, plans are to re-engage with a consultant to amend our Long Range Development Plan to incorporate further development of the campus lands in alignment with our program, curriculum and strategic plans. This increased campus allocation could include 50 acres of land area to accommodate the concept of a Creative Media Technology campus, with facilities such as a proposed motion picture, television, digital media, and post production studio complex for creative media development and post production. The University notes that current plans already anticipate approximately 7.2 acres in the original Long Range Development Plan to accommodate student housing.

Creative Media education is a theme of the UHWO campus. We have been designated by the University of Hawai'i (UH) to be the hub of Creative Media education for the entire 10-campus system through the Academy for Creative Media System program.

The Legislature and Governor have supported this effort through Act 134, SLH 2013, which provides positions and programmatic funding to enhance existing centers of excellence in creative and digital media at multiple UH campuses, creates a hub for Creative Media education at UHWO, and supports new articulation agreements between all of the community colleges, UH Maui College, and UH Hilo for students to pursue a baccalaureate degree at UHWO in Creative Media.

The new Creative Media program at UHWO has grown 95% in one year, with 67 new majors of which 40 are transfers from other campuses in the UH System; evidence that the articulation pipelines are working and students are responding. Our overall goal for UHWO's Creative Media hub – contingent on the proposed Creative Media building – is 500 majors.

With a complex as envisioned by this bill, UHWO has the opportunity to drive Hawai'i's 21st century knowledge based industry through public/private partnerships that integrate town and gown.

Creative Media will bring UHWO its own identity, distinct from the research mission of the Mānoa flagship campus, and help to build a campus modeled on collaboration among our undergraduates interested in the media field.

Media production in all its forms, films, television, software, video games, massive multi-players, animation, visual effects, smart phone applications, social media platforms - hallmarks of the creative economy - offer Hawai'i our best chance of lessening our dependence on the service industry.

Intellectual property, which comes from the minds of our students, makes economic sense. Broadband connects us to the global economy in ways that ships and planes cannot. Creative intellectual property only requires that we harness the natural talent of our students; it doesn't need endless access to greater capital, the importation of raw materials and the physical shipping of the finished product, vast tracks of land or resources that threaten our environment, or the relocation to the mainland for success.

If approved, and as we move forward with the development of both the campus lands and the commercial development, current plans are to ensure that we reach out to key stakeholders which may include the Department of Education, Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, State of Hawai'i Film Office, High Technology Development Corporation, as well as the community as the University deems them to be appropriate. We respectfully do not support legislatively prescribing of specific entities to be required to sign memorandums of agreement and involved in the design, planning, and development of the creative media program at UHWO at this time, as it is inconsistent with the standards of accreditation related to the university. The objective should be to ensure that UHWO programs are strategic, sustainable, and create the greatest synergy among students, education and industry into the future. The University will develop strong partnerships with organizations we determine will ensure the success of our educational programs as we see fit.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.