



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance

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by

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SB 2980, SD 2 Relating to Education

Chair Takamine and Members of the Committee:

The University stands in strong support of SB 2980 SD2, "Relating to Education." SB 2980 expands the Honolulu Community College (HCC) initiated Construction Academy program and the Apprenticeship Training programs at the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges.

As the Legislature is aware, the construction industry is faced with a tremendous shortage of qualified workers. The number of workers needed differs depending on the source, but all agree that something must be done to ensure that the industry's workforce needs are met and that Hawai'i's economy can continue its growth on the shoulders of the building industry.

In November 2005, HCC was approached by the industry to assist them with this issue. The result was a workforce development proposal which this measure is based on. The report titled, "Workforce Development Initiative: Proposal to Address Employee Shortages in the Construction Industry", responds to the industry's needs by:

- 1) Widening the pipeline of qualified construction workers by addressing educational issues at the front end (high school/secondary education) and expanding the back end (post-secondary apprenticeship training and construction degree programs).
- 2) Providing individuals who are either in high school or who are out of high school, with viable career opportunities in the construction industry.

The budget for this proposal calls for 46.00 positions and approximately \$5.5M in funding. Of the \$5.5M, over \$2.24M will go toward resources that are directly placed in the high school classroom, \$1.82M will be applied toward teacher training and assistance, and \$1.4M will go into resources for classrooms, shops, and lab equipment to serve adult learners, both in the Apprenticeship and construction technology programs. HCC, and the other community colleges involved, serves merely as a pass through to the Department of Education for nearly 75% of this funding.

HCC, as the State's primary construction training campus, accepts the responsibility of leading this initiative. The college is concerned, however, that the Construction Initiative has been viewed as being a budget request solely for the benefit of HCC. Since HCC developed the proposal that became this initiative, it is understandable how this assumption can be made. Nonetheless, it is important for the Legislature to understand that this measure is a statewide public policy initiative that benefits the state's entire economy.

Accordingly, we ask the Legislature to consider providing appropriations for this statewide initiative in addition to HCC's higher priority operational needs reflected in the BOR supplemental budget. Besides HCC's commitment to the construction industry, the college still has ongoing operational needs. Moreover, as the technology campus in the UH community college system, Honolulu Community College has workforce development responsibilities to other industries, such as the growing technology industry, and its other degree granting programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.