UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education

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by

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SB 243 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am Neal Smatresk, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I oversee all academic degrees and programs at our campus.

Procedures for the planning and approval of new academic courses and programs are governed by Board of Regents, University of Hawai'i, and University of Hawai'i at Mānoa policies, and is driven by our faculty.

The process for instituting new programs is designed to ensure that there is justification to hire tenureable faculty, commit state resources, and serve the biggest state demands.

The first step to create a program would be for our faculty to receive authorization to plan a program. This authorization is considered looking at:

- Student demand
- The relation of the proposed program to our mission
- The justification of the program
- A 5 year description of the necessary resources, including Faculty, Library Resources, Physical Resources, Staff, and Graduate Assistantships.
- A 5 year Business Plan
- Whether the department currently has the resources, and what impact a "flat budget" scenario would have on the proposed program,
- The impact on current programs offered by the University
- Evidence of support for the program by colleges, departments, programs, and/or individuals expected to participate.

Currently the University of Hawai‘i offers degrees in Information and Computer Sciences but not Information Technology. The Computer Sciences student has a deep understanding and skills in computer programming and organizational skills. The degree is quite theoretical and tied to mathematics. The IT degree is more applied. Last year we had 623 students majoring in Information and Computer Sciences. That makes it the 2nd largest major on campus.

Our faculty is considering developing our BA degree where students would have ICS skills but also take courses more in line with information technology.

We appreciate the interest by the Legislature in this area, and we could utilize support from the Legislature to launch an investigation into whether an “Information Technology” degree is desirable on our campus. With your support we could conduct a feasibility study which may or may not result in an "Authorization to Plan" a new degree.

I’d also like to note that there are higher needs than this in the Budget proposed by the University which would help us contribute to the technological readiness of the state workforce, which we presume is the intent of the bill. Some examples are:

- ***Natural Sciences: Mathematics Education (FY’08: $120,000; FY’09: $120,000).*** The Hawai‘i State Department of Education has recognized a critical need for the improvement of math test scores statewide. Two new faculty positions would allow the department to address these concerns by offering courses newly required for elementary education majors, evaluating curricula and course content, and working on articulation in conjunction with the Community Colleges.
- ***Natural Sciences: Restoration of Faculty Positions (FY’08: $400,000; FY’09: $400,000).*** This item aims to increase the educational capital of the State by providing the Department of Chemistry with three full-time faculty positions and essential chemical and laboratory supplies.
- ***Engineering: Hawai‘i Center for Advanced Communications Administration (FY’09: $42,000).*** The Hawai‘i Center for Advanced Communication seeks to help diversify the State’s economic base by supporting the development of wireless communications technology. In order to move toward this goal, one full-time staff person is needed to fully manage the program’s administrative functions.
- ***Engineering: Faculty (FY’08: $300,000; FY’09: $300,000).*** The development of engineering programs such as computer and communications engineering will support the growth of technology in Hawai‘i, as these companies can greatly benefit from engineers with training in these areas. Additional faculty are needed to develop these new programs, and to ensure the continued strength and success of existing programs.