



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education

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by

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SB 1265 RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawaii supports the intent of SB1265, which changes the performance standards commission membership and reporting schedule; clarifies the intended purpose of the Hawaii educator loan program and amends the loan forgiveness incentive provisions; appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii for the office of school redesign, teacher education and professional development, the master of education in teaching degree program, additional staff for the Hawaii Educational Policy Center, and the Hawaii educator loan program. This is indeed an eclectic bill, which addresses a number of education programs and priorities of the University.

The bill includes items specific to the College of Education that are in the University's biennium budget request, although with modifications. The bill also includes items that were not included in the University's budget approved by the Board of Regents. Our support for these items is contingent upon appropriated funding, which does not supplant our priority biennium budget requests. We note that SB1265 is essentially the same as Part III of SB1933, and our testimony is consistent with testimony supporting SB1933.

Many of the items in this bill emphasize the partnership of the Department of Education and the College of Education. We appreciate the Legislature's recognition of the importance of that partnership. I will attempt to address the multiple facets of this bill in the order in which they appear in the bill as best I can. We offer two amendments for your consideration. I will identify them as I go through our testimony.

Because SECTION 1 provides a detailed narrative of the items, I will address SECTION 1.

In Section 1, items 1) teacher education capacity, 2) Center on Disability Studies, 3) funding for mentor teachers, and 5) permanent special education faculty are included in the UH biennium budget request as approved by the Board of Regents. However, there are some slight differences.

Section 1 (1) The UH biennium budget request for increasing teacher capacity calls for one new position in FY'08 and another in FY'09 (for a total of 2 positions) to enable the College to increase capacity to produce teachers in high need areas of mathematics and science, and in anticipation of the need in early childhood education. These positions will enable the College to recruit and train more teachers statewide in these critical need areas.

Section 1 (2) The UH biennium budget request was for two new positions to support the Center on Disability Studies (CDS) in FY'09. CDS is our most successful unit in the College in generating external contracts and grants, averaging \$8 to \$10 million per year. CDS provides research, training, and service to those with disabilities of all ages statewide. Their work is vital to the health and quality of life of our citizens. CDS can increase its productivity significantly with these new positions that we are unable to provide out of existing resources. Funding agencies are now increasingly scrutinizing the host institution's capacity and support for grant-funded projects. Allocating and filling these positions will address this need.

Section 1 (3) The UH biennium budget request was for \$125,000 to increase stipends paid to mentor teachers in FY'09. SB1265 shifts these funds to FY'08. We support this shift to earlier funding with the contingency stipulated above. It will enable us to better compensate mentor teachers more quickly. This is an example of the partnership between the DOE and the College. We cannot produce teachers without the collaboration with the DOE in teacher preparation. Mentor teachers are highly qualified and carefully selected to supervise our teacher candidates while they learn how to teach and then do their student teaching. At present, we are paying the mentor teachers \$25 per semester for their critical contribution. At this low payment for a semester's work, it is increasingly difficult to secure mentor teachers. Increasing the stipend to \$100 per semester, an amount more competitive with other teacher preparation institutions operating in the state, will better support the teacher preparation partnership.

Section 1 (5) I will address this item out of sequence since it is the last of the four items included in the UH biennium budget request. Recruiting and preparing special education teachers for Hawaii's schools remains a challenge. For the past several years, the DOE has funded these temporary faculty positions through a Memorandum of Agreement with the College. With the imminent changes in funding allocations within the DOE to weighted student formula, and the subsequent shift of funds to schools, this arrangement is potentially in jeopardy. There are increasingly diminishing funds at the State DOE level to fund such agreements. If the MOA is no longer executed, the College will not have the funds for these special education faculty and the program for producing teachers will have to be reduced. Allocating the \$500,000 directly to the College rather than through an MOA provides stability for our special education teacher preparation program.

Section 1 (4) Funding for professional development schools was not included in the UH biennium budget request. We support this addition with the contingency stipulated above. Professional development schools are partnerships between institutions of higher education and P-12 schools that a) prepare new teachers, b) provide faculty development within the partner school, c) engage school and university faculty along with teacher preparation students in researching, developing, and implementing improved teaching and assessment practices, and d) improve student achievement. The Legislature supported the concept of professional development schools in the past, most recently in SB1642 SD2. Also, previously funds were appropriated for professional development schools, but not released by the Governor. Research

evidence shows that the professional development schools model is an effective tool in improving faculty effectiveness in both partner institutions (university and school) and in retaining quality teachers, and therefore, we support this part of the bill.

Section 1 (6) Funding to support the Masters of Education in Teaching (MET) program was not included in the UH biennium budget request. We support this addition with the contingency stipulated above. The MET, begun in 1991, is one of the most successful models for teacher preparation in the College and its graduates are the most sought after by principals in the DOE. The program accepts teacher candidates who hold an undergraduate degree in their subject field and provides a two-year masters degree that prepares them for Hawaii licensure. In partnership with the DOE MET students work in K–12 schools from the beginning of their program. In the student teaching semester, MET students fill a vacant position in a DOE school. From the inception of the program, the DOE, through a Memorandum of Agreement with the College of Education, has provided stipend payments for the MET teachers during this on-the-job semester. Similar to the MOA supporting special education teacher preparation, with the imminent changes in funding allocations within the DOE to weighted student formula, this arrangement is potentially in jeopardy. If the MOA is no longer executed, the College will not have the funds for these MET student stipends and the program will have to be reduced or discontinued. Allocating the funds directly to the College rather than through an MOA provides stability. SB1265 also increases the annual amount of funding to cover stipends to be paid to MET teachers in the Native Hawaiian teacher preparation program Ho'okulaiwi. We welcome this addition for which the College does not have existing resources to expand the program.

Section 1 (7) Funding for the Office of School Redesign (OSR) was not included in the UH biennium budget request. We support this addition with the contingency stipulated above. SB1256 describes the intended functions of the OSR, which is currently housed in the College of Education. Initiated in 2003 as a joint effort of the College of Education and the DOE, OSR has been funded through 2007 by the DOE through a Memorandum of Agreement with the UH. With the imminent changes in funding allocations within the DOE to weighted student formula, this arrangement is potentially in jeopardy, as the DOE will no longer have discretionary funds at the state level to maintain such efforts. If the MOA is no longer executed, the College does not have the funds support OSR. Allocating the \$300,000 directly to the College will provide stability for OSR, further the partnership with the DOE, and provide external resources and support at a time when our public schools are struggling to reinvent themselves.

Section 1 (8) Funding for the Teach for America (TFA) program was not included in the UH biennium budget request. We support this addition of 4 positions that will enable the College to operate and expand the joint project, with the contingency stipulated above. The 2006 Legislature allocated two positions and appropriated funds to the College of Education to enable the College to partner with the DOE and Teach for America to recruit teachers to work in hard-to-fill areas. TFA successfully recruited 50 teachers in time to start the 2006–2007 school year, something that all the institutions of higher education operating in Hawaii together were unable to do. The College in response modified its Masters of Education in Teaching (MET), Masters of Education in Special Education, and Postbaccalaureate Certificate in Special Education to provide the required teacher preparation program for TFA recruits to meet Hawaii teaching license requirements. TFA is currently recruiting another 50 teachers for the 2007–2008 school year. The College of Education cannot provide the additional classes needed to support 100 new

teacher candidates without the additional positions and funding called for in SB1265. We appreciate your support in this area.

Section 1 (9) The partnership between Leeward Community College (LCC) and the College of Education at UH Manoa (COE) creates a new pathway for recruiting potential teachers from high need communities and preparing them to become fully qualified teachers who will remain in those communities. The program focuses on the Leeward Coast and Ewa plain. This partnership was not included in the UH biennium budget request, and if the Legislature does fund this request, we request that it do so only after our full biennium budget requests have been funded. LCC has developed a successful Associates of Arts in Teaching (AAT) degree to provide education associates and others interested in working in P-12 schools with appropriate qualifications. LCC estimates it can generate up to 30 graduates per year. These AAT graduates are a new target group to recruit into the COE to prepare them to be fully qualified teachers, thus addressing the teacher shortage by “growing our own” teachers from our own communities. COE proposes to modify its Bachelor of Education two-year program to accept the AAT graduates into a cohort specially designed to build on their AAT degree and experience working in P-12 schools. LCC and COE intend to deliver the program within the communities from which potential teachers will be recruited and will produce up to 30 new teachers per year. However, this effort cannot be accomplished without additional funds. With financial support, this program can be implemented by fall 2007.

SB1265 Section 2 relates to the statewide performance standards review commission. If called upon, the University stands ready to fully participate in the work of the commission. We support the concept of periodic review and evaluation to determine if our educational standards are effective in achieving intended goals. Since the University prepares the majority of teachers in the State, it is in our interest, as well as the interest of the DOE and State that the University be fully engaged in such a review. The last review and report was completed in 2006; therefore the next scheduled review is in 2010. We note that reconvening the commission following proposed work by the Hawaii Educational Policy Center would be an important option. Thus, we request you amend this section of the law to permit reconvening “as needed”.

Suggested Amendment #1

(b) The board shall appoint a performance standards review commission, to be convened at the beginning of the 1997-1998 school year, and every four years thereafter, or as needed to respond to new research and information, to assess the effectiveness of the performance standards.

SB 1265 Sections 3 and 4 relate to the Hawaii Educator Loan Program as a way to address the teacher shortage in Hawaii by providing financial assistance for tuition and other costs. First established in 2001, the Hawaii Educator Loan Program (HELP) was previously funded by the 2002 Legislature at \$100,000 in general funds. Of that amount, approximately \$9,000 went to UH-Hilo; the rest to UHM College of Education. No additional general funds have yet been appropriated by the Legislature.

HELP had a life of two years. UHM, through the College of Education and the Financial Aid Office, expended the money that was appropriated. By Spring 2004 all funds had been awarded. Approximately 23 students were given tuition assistance from the program. There is currently an available balance of \$15,264 from students who were not able to meet the terms of the loan and

had to repay their outstanding balance. UH Hilo's funds do not appear to have been given out. It is unclear whether the program has had the impact on recruitment and retention that was intended in 2001. The amount of funds appropriated was insufficient to initiate a large-scale recruitment effort.

(Suggested Amendment #2) As a possible amendment, we note that **HB1530**, which also relates to the Hawaii Educator Loan Program, sets the loan forgiveness rate at 10% per year for five years with the remaining balance forgiven for a teacher who completes six years in a hard-to-fill position. We also note that an interest rate of 10% on the remaining loan balance is too high and inconsistent with similar federal loan programs to serve as an incentive. We recommend these changes in SB1265 and SB1933.

(Suggested Amendment 3) Section 5 (1) summarizes the amounts to be appropriated to various priorities identified in the bill. We suggest that this section be amended to be consistent with amounts shown in Section 1.

SB1265 Section 6. As with other items in this bill, funding for the Hawaii Educational Policy Center was not included in the UH biennium budget request. However, we support the proposed funding inasmuch as it does not supplant UH budget requests. The HEPC was founded in 1999 to conduct research and provide policy makers with objective, data-based information on which to make more informed decisions. Since that time, the HEPC has established itself as a valuable center conducting studies and preparing reports in support of improved education at all levels. The University supports HEPC, and we agree that a well-funded, independent education policy research center located at UH is desirable. SB1265 appropriates \$400,000 to the Hawaii Educational Policy Center to provide staff for the performance standards commission, work with the department of education and other educational research organizations, such as Kamehameha Schools, develop alternative assessment tools, including a comprehensive "growth model" for use in measuring student achievement over time at a school, and to provide independent comment and analysis on issues before the legislature, the board of education, and the department of education. The proposed tasks are within the HEPC mission and, if funded, can be accommodated, and are much needed.

SB1265 Section 7. In Section 7 there is an appropriation for the Teacher Cadet Program. We suggest including the following narrative text in Section 1 of the bill to further explain the purpose and intent of this appropriation.

Section 7 provides support for the teacher cadet program. The University fully supports the intent of this section which will further efforts to recruit the best students into education and to "grow our own" teachers. The preliminary work done by the Hawaii Alliance for Future Teachers has been successful in working with a number of high schools in Hawaii. HAFT has developed enthusiasm for teaching among high school students and provided a new way for the College of Education to reach out to recruit potential new teachers. The teacher cadet program is established and is supported by nearly all of the institutions of higher education involved in teacher preparation

Thank you for the opportunity to testify