



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education

March 15, 2007

by

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### **S.B. 1922, S.D. 2 Relating to Creative Media**

Chair Chang, Vice-Chair Bertram, and Members of the Committee:

Honolulu Community College (HCC) stands in strong support of the proposed S.B. 1922, S.D. 2, Relating to Creative Media, which, among other things, establishes and appropriates funds for the Music Education and Learning Experience (MELE) program being proposed at Honolulu Community College.

MELE is a unique and exciting program for Hawai'i. The program will take people interested in a music career and teach them music enterprise management, song writing, and sound production. Keep in mind that this program will not teach musicians music; it will teach you how to make a career in the music industry. We believe that MELE will serve as the catalyst for Hawai'i's music industry growth. Much like Nashville started out, Hawai'i has all of the right elements to fuel the industry's growth – musical talent, a unique and distinct sound, and a culture that supports music.

It is important to note that the bulk of the funding in S.B. 1922, S.D. 2, is designated for the renovation, or construction, of a sound studio, which is currently not available at any of our university campuses. This sound studio facility is essential for the program's technical aspects. The funding is not to lease performance space or a performance venue.

With regard to MELE program operations, S.B. 1922, S.D. 2, does not include the full amount of operating funds necessary for the program. While HCC has received a 5 year Title III grant to meet some of its program needs, this is not the full amount necessary to make MELE successful. The amount originally requested was \$746,000. This amount was included in the original white paper that the Governor, through the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), requested. Unfortunately, it was not included in the bill at introduction. For purposes of information we have attached the original white paper dated November 2006.

Once again, we believe that Hawai'i's music industry can eventually rival Nashville's, Austin's, New York's, and LA's and MELE will be a critical piece of the foundation upon which it is built.

WHITE PAPER  
MUSIC ENTERPRISE LEARNING EXPERIENCE  
**MELE**

**Background:**

Honolulu Community College has been working with national and local members of the entertainment industry to develop a support and training system for the development of Hawaii's music business. It has long been noted that Hawaii has an unusually high concentration of raw musical talent, but has never developed the support infrastructure to aide individuals in the progression of their careers.

We propose to form alliances with local industry members – musicians, producers, sound engineers, business managers, union representatives, legal advisors, venue developers, event planners, and marketers; national industry organizations such as BMI, ASCAP, NARAS, and the Nashville Songwriters Association; and Belmont University of Nashville home of one of the premier music and entertainment educational programs in the nation.

The result of the alliance will be the creation of MELE – the Music Enterprise Learning Experience. MELE will be a combination program of short-term professional training workshops, songwriter seminars, an associate degree program in Music Business and Production, and a transfer program that allows students to matriculate to Belmont University's music and entertainment management programs in Nashville, New York, and Los Angeles.

The development model is based upon forty years of industry experience in Nashville, a music center which has created a \$5 billion per year industry in country music, gospel, blues, bluegrass, and pop music. The key components are access to Nashville's expertise in music production, marketing, sales, online Internet releases and sales, video, and live venues. Why Nashville? Hawaii has some unique connections with the sounds of country music, from the steel guitar to *paniolo* music. The key players in the program Executive Advisory Council have access to national music organizations and businesses, and will serve and program develop advisors and emissaries.

An initial meeting of 25 prominent local members of Hawaii's industry validated the need for a support system to train and develop our local talent base, giving them access to all the national training support and professional development activities. HCC chose Belmont University because of its prominence in the development of the Nashville model. It sits at the end of "Music Row" and has connected itself through the quality of its programs and graduates into the heart of the industry. Its alumni are prominent music industry leaders.

Belmont University is interested in assisting with the development of Hawaii's talent base, and working to make Hawaii an international development center for a new generation of music to be created from East and West. Hawaii could become a prominent production center and be involved in Asia's newly developing music scene. Western industry training is sought after to build expertise and capacity throughout the world.

HCC proposes that MELE be developed around three strands – artist creativity, entertainment business expertise, and technical production skills. Belmont University will help to jump-start the process by collaborating on joint use of their curriculum, technical facility and equipment specifications, training of local faculty, and dual credit for course offerings in Hawaii, and internships and senior year experiences in Nashville, New York, and Los Angeles. Hawaii's

students and future music professional will have an opportunity to join other Belmont students in learning on the job in some of the most varied music environments in the world.

The goal of the program is to produce a generation of music industry talent greatly expand the existing industry capacity, and to create new technological, intercultural, and genre-bending forms of music through creativity and professional business expertise.

The program is seeded through a TITLE III Developing Institutions grant awarded to HCC's Native Hawaiian Center. It provides for some basic program development of course offerings. Belmont University's Mike Curb School of Music Management will accelerate and enhance the development process, while HCC seeks industry, foundation and individual donors to enhance its technologies, breadth of expertise, and provide scholarships to support senior year and internship experiences for Hawaii's students at local and national sites.

Workshops are planned in partnership with national industry organizations and businesses, formal credit course and career training through associate degree offerings at HCC and baccalaureate and master's level degrees through Belmont University.

A major part of the program will be based on the design and implementation of a drop-in and formal environment. A place will be created where present and future music professionals can congregate, "talk story," share knowledge and test new ideas and concepts – all while learning how to listen to and accept recommendations for improvement of their product. The MELE center will also be open up to 16 hours per day to take advantage of creative inspiration in the evenings. With the proper start-up support, MELE could evolve into a true center for the evolution and expansion of all Hawaii's music and entertainment creativity and production.

### **Projected Budget:**

Facilities – HCC proposes to utilize warehouse space near the school. Kamehameha Schools controls the property. We intend to negotiate a collaborative lease relationship. The center should be accessible and comfortable for its students and clients, but not over done. A converted warehouse works well for the development of a production studio and the free-standing acoustical walls and floor required. One main recording studio, five writer project small rooms, three classrooms, a lounge, and auxiliary space of 10,000 sf are needed. Estimated cost of the build-out with all wiring and specialized technology for:

	<b>FY 08</b>	<b>FY 09</b>
<b>Facility Remodeling and Studio Construction:</b>	\$1,828,500	
Studio Electronics:	\$240,000	
Writer's/Project Studio Rooms:	\$56,000	
Classroom Multimedia Equipment:	\$22,800	
Computers and media:	\$38,000	
<u>Total:</u>	<b>\$2,185,300</b>	
<b>Operating Budget:</b>		
Personnel; 3 faculty, two lab/studio techs, one secretary, one support APT:	\$373,000	\$373,000
Space lease 10,000SF@\$2.00sfx12:	\$240,000	\$240,000
Staff travel, training, curriculum support:	\$65,000	\$65,000
Lectureship/Workshop Overhead:	\$44,000	\$44,000
Maintenance, supplies, utilities:	\$24,000	\$24,000
Total:	<b>\$746,000</b>	<b>\$746,000</b>
Grand Total:	<b>\$2,931,300</b>	<b>\$746,000</b>