



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented to the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
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by

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GM 635 - Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Gubernatorial Nominee, FRANCISCO HERNANDEZ, for a Term to expire June 30, 2017

Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Kahele and members of the committee:

I am pleased to provide testimony in support of the nomination of Francisco Hernandez as Commissioner on the WICHE commission. Dr. Hernandez has served as Vice Chancellor for Students at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa since 2006, and in that capacity, has earned the respect of the entire community for his tireless advocacy on behalf of students. Hawai'i will be well presented on the WICHE Commission if the Senate confirms his nomination.

Dr. Hernandez has broad responsibilities for UHM students in his current assignment, including student life and wellness, retention and graduation, student development, student special services, and enrollment management. My personal interaction with him has been as a result of the many system wide committees on which he serves, including the Council of Chief Student Affairs Officers, BANNER Advisory Committee, Distance Learning Advisory Committee, and the P-20 College Access Steering Committee. In all of these capacities, Dr. Hernandez has shown himself to be thoughtful, articulate, and passionate about the access and success of students in higher education. Moreover, he brings considerable expertise in working with K-12 to ensure that students are prepared to enter college. His work in developing on-line academic support services to high school students, in both California and Hawai'i, is particularly noteworthy.

WICHE provides significant benefits to Hawai'i residents seeking higher education in the western region as well as those seeking professional degrees that are unavailable in Hawai'i. These opportunities simply would not be available without the commitment of the Commissioners representing the fifteen states. Dr. Hernandez brings the right mix of skills and dedication to this appointment; that is, he is committed to collaboration, enthusiastic about the transformative power of education, and capable of working effectively with diverse points of view.

The fact that Dr. Hernandez has prior experience in serving as a WICHE Commissioner representing California is fortuitous—he clearly understands the time commitment and the nature of the work, and Hawai'i will capitalize on the expertise he brings to the position.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Dr. Hernandez's nomination. As representative of the University of Hawai'i, let me say that we heartily support his confirmation.