



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
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by  
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### SB 626 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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

The University of Hawai'i respectfully opposes SB 626 which would require the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents' to follow the public notice, public hearing, and gubernatorial approval requirements of Chapter 91, Hawai'i Revised Statutes. The University supports the intent of full public participation in the tuition setting process, but we believe this need is met by the extensive public process the University follows to set tuition rates.

Currently, HRS 92-28 and 304A-403 require the Board of Regents to establish tuition at an open public meeting (Chapter 92) that is "held during or prior to the semester preceding the semester" to which tuition applies. Tuition-setting procedures consistent with statute were approved by the Board in September 1996 and promulgated via Executive Policy E6.202 Tuition-Setting Procedures ([www.hawaii.edu/apis/ep/e6/e6202.pdf](http://www.hawaii.edu/apis/ep/e6/e6202.pdf)). These procedures provide students and others with timely notice, distribution, and explanation of tuition proposals, ensure that individuals have the opportunity to present testimony on University of Hawai'i tuition proposals, and provide time for revisions and Board of Regents action at an open public meeting.

Because the University gives serious consideration to feedback received, UH Executive Policy E6.202 requires at least one public meeting on Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and O'ahu for tuition proposals affecting undergraduate students. For the current 2012–13 to 2016–17 tuition schedule, the University elected to hold meetings at every UH campus. An additional HITS broadcast on six islands, including East and West Hawai'i, Maui, Lāna'i, Moloka'i, Kaua'i, and O'ahu, were held to provide students and others another opportunity to be briefed and provide feedback. Separately, the UH system administration held briefings for student and administrative groups briefings upon request.

At every meeting, the audience was briefed on the proposed tuition schedule. For the campus meetings, the chancellor or his/her designee and at least one or more Board of Regents members attended. For the current five-year schedule, an estimated 392 individuals attended the meetings held during the fall 2011 semester. 45 oral testimonies and 18 written testimonies were received and shared with the full Board of Regents.

Flyers listing 11 campus meeting dates, times, and locations were distributed and posted on every UH campus. Additionally, chancellors were encouraged to share the information with their students on the upcoming proposal. Social media (Twitter and Facebook), UH system

calendar postings, and an UH press release were also employed to reach the University community.

With regard to timely notice, Board of Regents policy, Section 6-3, states that “every effort will be made to provide advance notice of tuition increases.” Over the past years, the University of Hawai‘i has placed priority on giving students early notice of tuition increases.

Prior to the retention of tuition revenues by the University in 1996, the University often set tuition for five-year periods. Beginning in 1996, the University set tuition for two-year time blocks but always before the end of the semester preceding the semester to which the rates apply. From 2001, the University reverted back to a multi-year (five and six year) tuition schedule cycle, recognizing that multi-year schedules are ideal in terms of advanced notice to students, and making it possible for them to plan for a complete degree program.

As such, the tuition setting process begins about a year and a half to two years before an existing tuition schedule expires. The University’s goal has been to establish a new tuition schedule a year in advance. The UH system administration works closely with the campuses to come up with a proposed tuition schedule. The process involves an initial policy review, research on the factors that go into determining the proposed rates as specified by Board of Regents policy, and an assessment of the state and national higher education and economic landscapes at that point in time. Concurrently, the Board of Regents are briefed by the UH system administration on its tuition policies.

Following a presentation of the proposal to the Board of Regents, if the Board concurs, the proposal is presented at open public meetings. Based on the feedback received, revisions to the proposal are incorporated and a final proposal is presented for Board consideration and action. Both the current five-year schedule and previous six-year schedule were modified based on feedback received. Following Board action, the approved tuition schedule is filed with the Lieutenant Governor’s Office.

The tuition-setting process that the University now implements provides broad participation, thoughtful consideration of all testimony, and balanced input to the Board of Regents. We hope that it is evident that the University has taken seriously its responsibility to consult widely on tuition setting, and that the oversight of Chapter 92 is sufficient.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.