UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education and the Arts
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SCR 26/SR 9 – REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO DEVELOP A PLAN THAT OUTLINES COORDINATION AMONG UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CAMPUSES IN INCREASING ONLINE COURSES.

Chair Taniguchi and members of the committee:

The University of Hawaiʻi (UH) submits testimony on SCR 26/SR 9 that requests the University of Hawaiʻi to develop a plan that outlines cooperation amongst the campuses to increase online courses and degree programs and to provide a report of its plan prior to the convening of the 2017 session of the Legislature.

The UH appreciates the intent of the legislature to broaden access to higher education that is affordable and of high quality through means such as online courses and programs. This testimony provides comments and information about courses and degree programs currently available to Hawaiʻi and out of state students through online or other distance learning options and the cooperative effort of UH system campuses.

First, UH delivers a large number of courses through distance technologies in a range of disciplines. In spring 2016 alone, distance learning courses at UH campuses include 875 online courses, in addition to 63 courses delivered through interactive television, and 20 cable TV courses. Select examples from the spring schedule offered by the ten campuses include courses in disciplines such as accounting, administration of justice, anthropology, art, biology, business, chemistry, communication, economics, education, English, geography, Hawaiian Studies, history, hospitality, information and computer science, math, marketing, music, nursing, political science, psychology, public administration, and sociology.

Second, the UH not only delivers courses, but certificates and degrees since for some, distance delivered programs are their only access to higher education. A number of certificate and degree programs are offered through online delivery. The University's website, http://www.hawaii.edu/dl/programs, illustrates this. Fourteen certificate programs and three associate degrees are offered online, including the Associate of Arts (liberal arts, AA degree). Seventeen bachelor's degrees offered online include degrees in public administration (disaster preparedness and general emergency management; general public administration; health care administration; and justice administration), political science, and

psychology. In addition, bachelor's degrees such as business, early childhood education, special education, nursing, and others are offered through hybrid delivery (i.e., online plus interactive television, or online plus onsite on the neighbor island campus).

Four graduate certificates are offered online or through hybrid modes. Fourteen Master's degrees are offered through distance learning in various delivery methods. These include online degrees in computer science, music education, and rehabilitation counseling.

UH students may also pursue an online doctoral degree in nursing or a doctoral degree in nursing practices.

Third, the University's strong commitment to educational access is demonstrated by the long-standing existence of three University Centers (West Hawai‘i; Maui; Kaua‘i) where students can earn four year or Master's degrees in island locations that do not have a four-year campus. The recently opened Palamanui facility in West Hawai‘i offers onsite and distance education classes and programs through Hawai‘i Community College, as well as the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, and the University of Hawai‘i at West O‘ahu.

In addition to the three University Centers, six campus-sponsored education centers (Hāna, Lāna‘i, Moloka‘i, North Hawai‘i, Wai‘anae, Lahaina) provide access to higher education to students within their own communities.

Distance learning within the University of Hawai‘i system is a cooperative enterprise requiring partnerships between and among campuses and units to not only insure quality but the best use of resources among the campuses. A fundamental requirement is that academic quality and standards must be comparable to on-campus instructional programs and that offsite learners have comparable access to services such as admissions, orientation, financial aid, registration, advisement, tutoring, and library services.

At the UH System, the Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy and the Vice President for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer convene the systemwide Distance Learning Advisory Committee (DLAC) to identify issues and work toward the UH mission of providing access to quality higher education while collaborating with campuses to ensure required academic quality through campus faculty and accredited programs. DLAC advises administrators and policy makers, and works through academic and student matters with groups such as the chief academic affairs officers and chief student affairs officers, librarians, and chancellors.

The responsibility for meeting accreditation standards for distance learning programs rests with the campus bestowing the degree or certificate/credential, while responsibility for student services is shared by the originating and receiving campuses. Both campuses work together to ensure that regional accreditation standards are met (Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Senior Commission and Junior/Community College Commission).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.