



# **UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

## **Legislative Testimony**

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education and the Arts  
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by  
Risa Dickson  
Vice President for Academic Affairs  
University of Hawai'i

### **HB 547 HD2 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII**

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

House Bill 547 House Draft 2 requires the University of Hawai'i to develop a Graduation Pathway System that includes structured default pathways, meta-majors, academic maps, cornerstone classes, and intrusive advising, and appropriates funds.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) appreciates the intent of HB 547 HD2 to support UH students toward timely graduation and to enhance the University's capacity to track and advise students about their progress toward graduation. The elements, or similar elements, described in the bill have been identified as keys to students navigating through college and progressing successfully to on-time graduation.

The University has been a national leader in developing strategies to help students complete college in a timely manner, using methods such as academic maps to identify courses needed for a specific degree and determine an optimal course taking sequence that leads to graduation in four years. In addition, UH created an online academic planner to continually recalculate and provide students and advisors with an optimal path to college completion. Much like a GPS in a car that recalculates the route if a driver misses an exit, the academic planner recalculates a student's length and path to graduation interactively as a student selects courses. This feature can contribute to an academic program velocity feature that allows new, real-time measurement of academic program efficiency and identifies programmatic constraints and bottlenecks that impact a program's graduation rate, enabling specific recommendations for improvements. These efficiencies benefit students and their families, UH, and the state of Hawai'i.

The University shares the concern regarding HB 547 HD 1 submitted in written testimony by the Department of the Attorney General before the House Committee on Finance on March 3, 2014:

Article X, section 6, of the Hawaii State Constitution provides in part: "The board [of regents] shall have the power to formulate policy, and to exercise control over the university through its executive officer, the president of the university . . . The board shall also have exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university. This section shall not limit the power of the legislature to enact laws of statewide concern. The legislature shall

have the exclusive jurisdiction to identify laws of statewide concern." As presently drafted, this bill appears to direct the University of Hawaii in matters that relate to its management and operation, without finding that developing a graduation pathway system is a matter of statewide concern.

The University concurs that to identify in statute academic structures and actions leading to timely graduation is troublesome. As cited in the Attorney General's testimony, these are areas under the jurisdiction of the UH Board of Regents.

May we also respectfully point out that as a practical matter, inclusion of specific academic structures and actions in statute, as proposed by HB 547 HD 2, is burdensome and may quickly or frequently become outdated. The key to the online tools described above is the ability to provide dynamic data for students to guide their paths to graduation. For UH, ongoing data provides tools for analysis to identify what institutional actions work best to serve students, and then to make adjustments. The goal of HB 547 HD2, to support students toward timely graduation, is admirable, however, the particular steps in developing pathways will change as successful/not so successful actions are identified, thus making inclusion in statute cumbersome.

In 2010 the University of Hawai'i launched the Hawai'i Graduation Initiative, a major drive to strengthen educational outcomes in the state and to close educational disparities. Recently adopted by the UH Board of Regents, the Hawai'i Graduation Initiative (HGI) is one of four priorities outlined in the *University of Hawai'i Strategic Directions, 2015-2021*. UH has identified metrics, actions and tactics, and systematically collects, analyzes, and reports data.

The Graduation Pathway System (GPS) and other innovations collectively contribute to HGI and student success and move Hawai'i toward the goal of more educated citizens. To build on GPS and other innovations and to accelerate their development, UH would need support in further developing the technological backbone of the GPS system that boosts the ability of students and advisors to identify and track course and program activities toward graduation. We look forward to continued discussion with the understanding that sums appropriated would not adversely impact the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents approved budget.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony.