



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

---

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education  
February 5, 2015 at 2:00pm

by  
Risa Dickson  
Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Hawai'i

### HB 555 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the committee:

House Bill 555 requires that any undergraduate degree-granting program at the UH Mānoa, UH Hilo, or UH West O'ahu that graduates less than ten graduates per year for three consecutive years be abolished, with an exception for programs that are self-sustaining.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) strongly opposes HB 555 that sets an arbitrary number in statute for elimination of programs with small numbers of graduates. Academic programs in higher education do not stand alone but are designed to interlock and build upon each other to provide what college graduates should know and be able to do. A program in English, for example, not only offers a range of courses for students who major in English, it also provides required English courses for students in all majors. A mathematics program may produce few mathematics degrees but has a critical role in serving students in all undergraduate programs and majors who must meet a mathematics requirement to complete their own degrees. In fields such as engineering a full complement of courses in math is essential although students receive degrees not in math, but in another program. Thus, a single indicator, number of graduates in a degree-granting program, is insufficient to justify program existence or measure program productivity.

The *University of Hawai'i Strategic Directions, 2015-21* outlines four strategic directions including a commitment to a High Performance Mission-Driven System. The UH Board of Regents is currently reviewing all degree programs from associates to doctoral degrees with a low number of graduates. Annual reporting has been instituted. Actions and analysis are focused on increasing enrollment and examining the reasons for low average degrees awarded. UH administration is currently working on a policy that will include reviewing low degree programs annually, setting benchmarks, time frames and conditions under which termination would be initiated. In addition, in February 2014 the Mānoa campus has already developed a policy of identifying and reviewing programs with small number of graduates as a regular part of the external program review process.

The University respectfully recommends that its review process continue to be developed with annual reporting, and that this measure be held.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.