



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on
Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts
March 23, 2015 at 10:30am
by
Risa Dickson
Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of Hawai'i

HCR 188 – URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO ESTABLISH A VETERANS RESOURCE OFFICE TO SUPPORT VETERANS

Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and members of the committee:

HCR 188 urges the University of Hawai'i to establish a veteran's resource office to support veterans.

The University of Hawai'i appreciates the service military veterans have provided to our country, and the sacrifices many of them have made during the course of their service. The University of Hawai'i understands the value of the life experiences military veterans bring to the college classroom; adding to the diversity and educational richness of our campuses and offers the following comments on HCR 188.

Last fall, in anticipation of the Veteran's Access, Choice & Accountability Act of 2014, the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents adopted an amendment to its policies and extended the waiver of nonresident tuition and fee differential for veterans of the United States armed forces who enroll at a campus of the University within three years of their discharge under honorable conditions beginning this Spring 2015 semester.

The University of Hawai'i has developed Veteran Support services along the lines of the 8 Keys to Veterans' Success as outlined by the U.S. Department of Education, the University of Hawai'i is working towards: The creation of a culture of trust and connectedness across the campus community to promote well-being and success for veterans; Ensuring consistent and sustained support from campus leadership; Implementation of an early alert system to ensure intervention before challenges become overwhelming; coordination and centralization of campus efforts along with a designated space for Veterans; Collaboration with community, state, and federal agencies for resources and support; The collection and tracking of data such as on veteran persistence, progress towards degree and degree completion; Professional development for faculty and staff on challenges and issues unique to veterans; Development of an infrastructure to support these and other veteran support practices.

Along these lines we have designated veterans' advisors on two campuses, specialized advising for veterans on five campuses, Student Veteran of America chapters on four campuses, and dedicated space for veterans on four campuses.

The University of Hawai'i continues to welcome the opportunity to expand on our work with our veteran students in the development of a culture designed to facilitate success in their educational goals. The resolution identifies an extensive range and number of activities (such as conducting needs assessments; developing and implementing student support services; offering coursework for veterans; outreach to military bases) that require staff appropriately skilled in veterans needs and services and resources on each campus that are currently not available.

As the U.S. Veterans Administration continues to interpret the law and develop implementing federal regulations to clarify provisions of Public Law 113-146, the University will propose additional amendments to the Board of Regents as necessary this Spring 2015 to further comply with federal requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.