



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony presented before the
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
March 30, 2011 at 2:45 p.m.

By

Rockne Freitas, Vice President for Student Affairs and University/Community Relations

And

Linda K. Johnsrud, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost
University of Hawai'i

SCR 52: REQUESTING THE CONVENING OF AN ACADEMIC SYMPOSIUM TO
CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE UNIVERSITY WITHIN
THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Chair Galuteria, Vice Chair Ryan, and members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian
Affairs:

SCR 52 requests the University of Hawai'i President, in consultation with the Puko'a Council and other campus representatives, to convene an academic symposium to consider the establishment of a Hawaiian Language University within the UH System, and report to the Legislature and the Governor prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2012.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) appreciates the intent of SCR 052 but respectfully requests the members of the committee to defer this resolution and allow the University to address this important matter. One of the primary strategic outcomes approved by the UH Board of Regents (BOR) in 2009 is for the University of Hawai'i to become a model indigenous-serving University. The BOR further expanded the mission of the University to affirm "its unique responsibilities to the indigenous people of Hawai'i and Hawaii's indigenous language and culture." More specifically, the administration is charged to provide "a level support for the study of Hawaiian language, culture, and history within the University of Hawai'i system that honors, perpetuates, and strengthens those disciplines into the future."

In keeping with this commitment, at the March 2011 Board of Regents meeting President Greenwood announced a system-wide academic planning initiative that will set forth the direction, priorities, and plans for the realization of the goal for UH to become a model indigenous-serving University. Building upon the strong programs in Hawaiian language, culture, and history developing across the ten campuses, this planning initiative will identify best practice in promoting and perpetuating an indigenous language and culture, will determine the gaps, strengths, and challenges of the University's current programs, and will outline a plan with a timeline and needed resources for UH to achieve the distinction of a model indigenous serving University.

A steering committee will be appointed by the President, with representation from each of the ten campuses within the University community. Multiple forums will be sponsored

across the state to gather the insights of faculty, staff, students within the University community as well as from interested individuals and entities outside of the University committed to the advancement of Hawaiian language and culture.

The steering committee will be chaired by Vice President for Student Affairs and University and Community Relations, Rockne Freitas, and the committee will be staffed by the office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. The planning initiative has been launched with a set of recommendations to be completed no later than December 2011. A copy of the final report will be made available to the legislature before the start of the 2012 session. We therefore respectfully request that this committee defer SCR 52.

Thank you very much for your continued support of UH and for the opportunity to testify on this matter. Me 'Oe Ku'u Mahalo.