



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology  
Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

By

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### HB 2063 – RELATING TO THE ENRICHMENT OF DIVERSITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) expresses our support for HB 2063 and the proposed appropriation which aims to fund a three-year pilot program to enrich diversity across all University of Hawai'i campuses. The proposed pilot program and accompanying appropriation align with our strategic plan's foundational principle on equity.

UH is proud to serve a diverse student and community population. Currently, 75% of students across the system are classified as residents of the State of Hawai'i, while the other 25% are classified as non-resident. Around 60% of students identify as Asian or a Pacific Islander, while 19% identify as Caucasian, 16% as two or more races, and 2% as African American or Black. Several of the campuses have been recognized in recent years as being among the most ethnically diverse campuses in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report*.

We believe that promoting diversity not only aligns with the values inherent in Hawai'i's culture but also contributes significantly to the overall academic and personal growth of our students. The proposed three-year pilot program is a commendable initiative that will provide open and inclusive activities for students and the general public.

Please note that UH already offers a variety of successful diversity programs across its campuses. A partial list of events can be found at <https://www.hawaii.edu/calendar>. Examples include cultural events celebrating various ethnic traditions, workshops promoting awareness of disabilities and inclusion, educational programs addressing LGBTQ+ issues, and initiatives supporting minority communities. These programs have proven effective in fostering a sense of community and respect among our diverse student body, and funding from this measure will allow expansion of these programs.

In conclusion, we support HB 2063 and express our gratitude for the recognition of the importance of diversity within UH.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.