



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
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By

Debora Halbert, Vice President for Academic Strategy
University of Hawai'i System

HCR 205 – URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO ADOPT AND PUBLICIZE A STATEWIDE EQUITY STATEMENT

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HCR 205 calling for the University of Hawai'i (UH) to adopt and publicize a statewide equity statement.

During a time when many states have passed or are considering legislation to eliminate their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts (<https://edtrust.org/resource/a-map-of-anti-dei-efforts-on-college-campuses-across-the-u-s/>), the UH welcomes the legislature's support in encouraging such efforts and setting a different example for how states might respond to help protect their most vulnerable populations.

UH serves a diverse student and community population, with several campuses recognized in recent years by *U.S. News and World Report* as among the most ethnically diverse campuses in the nation. In addition to ethnic diversity, UH is home to many first-generation students, veterans, and other populations that may need additional support as they navigate their higher education experiences. UH seeks to address such equity gaps and ensure all students feel welcome within the institution and can achieve their educational goals.

UH is currently participating in a national equity action initiative focused on utilizing a framework to assist with implementing a variety of equity priorities. One such priority is the development of an official UH Equity Statement, which is currently in consultation.

In light of the national conversation, the support of the state legislature through the adoption of HCR 205 would strengthen our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts across the UH System.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this critical issue.