



# 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  
Friday, January 31, 2025, at 2:15 p.m.

By

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#### HB 1320 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1320, which mandates the University of Hawai'i (UH) System to collect, analyze, and publicly report graduate outcome data, and establishes a centralized graduate outcomes dashboard.

UH is engaged in producing graduate outcomes data through several existing efforts. First, Hawai'i P-20 manages the DXP dashboard where [UH Graduate Median Wages](#) can be found. Second, the [Postsecondary Outcomes Explorer](#) utilizes national census data to identify post-graduate outcomes for students. Additionally, the UH Community College's [Career Explorer](#) offers insights into existing jobs throughout the state.

While UH has made significant strides in making graduate outcomes available, this proposed legislation is an important step towards providing UH with the capacity to create a clear and visible location for this information. Thus, we support the objectives of this legislation, particularly in relation to the development of the dashboard and the necessary staffing support for this work. A public-facing graduate outcomes dashboard is an important tool for providing students, families, policymakers, and the public with valuable insights into the post-graduate success of UH students.

We do offer comments on the current text of the bill:

- a. The language on page 3, lines 9-10 state that “when possible,” the data will be disaggregated. While we welcome the opportunity to provide data disaggregated in as much detail as possible, disaggregation by “racial demographic” when also selecting by “field of study” presents challenges. Specifically:
  - Small population sizes may render the data statistically unreliable and could require suppression to protect individual privacy.
  - The Unemployment Insurance Index, the primary source to track and report post-graduate employment and earnings, does not include racial

- demographic data. As such, disaggregation by race may not be possible based on available data sources.
- If racial demographic disaggregation is pursued, we suggest that it be conducted at the campus level rather than the individual program level to ensure sample sizes are meaningful and results are interpretable.
- b. Staffing Support for Implementation: For successful implementation, we strongly support the inclusion of two full-time equivalent (FTE) positions within the UH Office of the Vice President for Academic Strategy, as provided in the current iteration of the bill. One position could be dedicated to marketing and outreach to ensure that the graduate outcomes dashboard is effectively communicated to students, families, policymakers, and other stakeholders. This role would involve developing targeted data campaigns and conducting training sessions for key audiences to maximize the impact and accessibility of the dashboard. A dedicated position within the UH Institutional Research, Analysis, and Planning Office (IRAPO) could support the technical development and ongoing maintenance of the dashboard. Given the complexity of integrating multiple data sources, ensuring compliance with privacy regulations, and designing an accessible and user-friendly public interface, a role dedicated to analysis and visualization is critical to the success and sustainability of this initiative.
- c. Contextualizing Graduate Outcomes – Majors and Career Pathways: We also note that many academic majors are broad and are not designed to lead to a single, specific career path. For example:
- Information Technology (IT) graduates may be employed across diverse industries, including healthcare, finance, government, and education, rather than a single defined career outcome.
  - Political science graduates pursue careers in law, public administration, international affairs, journalism, business, and numerous other fields.
  - Liberal arts and interdisciplinary studies graduates develop transferable skills that can be applied to a wide range of professions.

While the dashboard can provide important insights into post-graduate employment trends, it is important to communicate that outcomes vary widely based on individual career choices, job market conditions, and further educational pursuits. A clear and thoughtful presentation of the data will help ensure that users understand both the opportunities and the flexibility associated with different fields of study.

Overall, we support this bill because the transparency created by this dashboard will not only help students and families make informed decisions, but will also assist UH in adjusting and refining its programs to better serve the community and contribute to Hawai'i's economic development.