



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 23, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

by
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and
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SB 3355 SD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) respectfully and strongly opposes SB 3355 SD1, which requires the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii to establish a Standing Committee on Community Colleges that would directly supervise the UH Vice President of Community Colleges.

As a system of campuses with distinct missions -- research, regional comprehensive and community colleges -- UH provides a rich array of opportunities to the students of Hawai'i. This distinctive and effective structure as a fully integrated system of public higher education is defined in our Constitution, which provides for a single executive officer for UH: "The board shall have the power to formulate policy, and to exercise control over the university through its executive officer, the president of the university, who shall be appointed by the board. The board shall also have exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university." (Article 10, Section 6).

UH policies, practices and systems enable students to benefit from the synergies presented by this highly integrated system. UH provides multiple entrance and exit points for students to complete their degrees. Students may choose to start their education at a UH community college where they may benefit from open admissions and lower tuition or they can begin at a UH university to pursue a four-year degree. UH has multiple curricular pathways for students who start at a community college to move to a university to complete a bachelor's degree. As a result, more than half of UH four-year students begin their college education at a community college. Changing the reporting structure of the community colleges would disrupt the synergy and management structure of the integrated system which provides UH students with access and support to opportunities across the ten campuses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong opposition to this disruption in the highly effective and fully integrated governance structure of Hawai'i's public higher education system that is enshrined in our Constitution.