



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
Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

By

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SB 2970 – RELATING TO ACCESS TO EDUCATION

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

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 2970, which provides support and resources to assist the University of Hawai'i – Leeward Community College (LCC), Wai'anae Moku Education Center (WM) students, that are under twenty-four years old and that are unable to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid application due to their inability to retrieve parents' tax information.

This assistance program would provide qualified students with funding to cover direct education costs. Currently, tuition for full-time (12 credits) Hawai'i residents is \$3,144 for tuition and \$70 in student fees per year. Cost of attendance typically includes costs related to books, supplies, housing, and food among other expenses to provide a basis for financial planning. For students living with parents or relatives, the estimated cost of attendance is \$15,184 per year; whereas, for those living independently, the estimated cost of attendance is \$25,180. For reference, the Pell Grant, Federal Financial Aid for 2023-24 is capped at \$7,395.

At present, 69% of WM students are recipients of the Pell Grant, while 70% of the student body is aged 24 years and under. Given the WM enrollment, about 50 students would be potentially eligible under this program. It is important to note, that for eligibility, LCC students enroll at the College and not at WM, and therefore defining a WM student will be based on residence zip code OR course section enrollment at WM.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 2970, as long as its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2970.