



# 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 Ways and Means  
Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10:01 a.m.

By

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#### SB 327 SD1 – RELATING TO INTERNSHIPS

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 327 SD1, which aims to expand opportunities for state-funded internships in the private sector to provide Hawai'i's high school and college-aged students with valuable work experience.

We thank the Senate for modifying the language of the bill to include the possibility of twenty hours per week for students enrolled in two or more courses. This amendment helps accommodate students who are enrolled in full-time academic programs recognizing that their ability to work full-time may be limited by their coursework. By limiting work hours to twenty per week for students in two or more courses, we ensure that they are able to gain valuable work experience while maintaining their academic performance.

For those who are not enrolled in school full-time or those who choose to complete a full-time internship over the summer or while not taking other courses, the original language allowing up to forty hours per week would still apply providing maximum flexibility for these individuals to participate in full-time internships. Furthermore, by providing flexibility in hours, we make internships more accessible to a wider range of students—especially those who might otherwise struggle to commit to an internship due to academic or personal obligations.

We continue to support a second amendment to the bill. As currently written, the bill limits internship opportunities to students who are planning to graduate within a year. The University of Hawai'i (UH) suggests language allowing students at any point in their college time to be eligible for such internship opportunities. Please consider striking the language on page 5, lines 14-18, in the bill so that it reads as follows:

~~“Be currently enrolled in an accredited college or university and anticipating the attainment of a degree within one year,~~ or has earned a college or university degree within one year of applying for the internship; and”

The benefits of internships should be available to students earlier in their academic journeys so they have the chance to intern at more than one company or to try more

than one role within a company so that they can develop career readiness skills over time. Furthermore, for students who are uncertain about their future professions, having an internship opportunity early may give them a chance to decide this is *not* what they want to do and choose a different career path.

Thank you for your time and consideration.