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March 16, 2008

**Senate Committees on:
Economic Development and Taxation
Education
Monday, 3/17 at 3:00 p.m., Room 225
HB 2587**

I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony in support of the **HB 2587** and the Administration's bills HB3066 and SB2988, which would establish Creativity Academies for middle and high school students statewide. This is an important step in developing the potential of all of our students to compete in the twenty-first century workforce.

I have been an award-winning Professor at HawCC for 30 years and since 2004, Project Manager for an \$800,000 HUD grant in collaboration with community partner Bay Clinic, Inc. which has funded the creation of both the Kea'au Middle College High School (KMCHS) program and the Kea'au Youth Business Center (KYBC), a "learning studio for the 21st century" which officially opened in June 2007. KMCHS is housed at KYBC which as a "high tech." center has a state-of-the-art multimedia digital arts lab; a fully equipped pre- and post-production sound recording studio which is the biggest on the east side of the Big Island, and a certified mobile kitchen on wheels. Both our programs at KYBC, KMCHS which is scheduled from M-F from 8-12 and the entrepreneurial after-school program scheduled M-F from 2-5 p.m. embody the vision, goals, curricular and program design described in the Creative Academies bill. In other words, here on the Big Island, we are already engaged in a successful Creative Academies and Creative Centers model working with at-risk youth in a rural, isolated community.

The KMCHS program which is a collaboration with Kea`au High School and HawCC takes up to 22 at-risk seniors and engages them in a dual credit (high school and college), interdisciplinary curriculum integrating STEM content with digital media arts and culinary arts skill-building. Our high school and college instructors and the skills trainers provide "hands on" project-based learning which has already proven to be a powerful motivator in closing the achievement gap of students who have ability but are disengaged from the traditional high school environment. From 2 1/2 year experience in delivering this curriculum, we have had an 80% graduation rate and about a 90% going rate to either higher education or post-secondary technical training. There is no doubt in my mind that Creativity Academies will provide the opportunity needed for Hawaii's students to succeed and to build an entrepreneurial, innovative spirit in our youth for Hawaii's economy to flourish and develop.

Succeeding in the 21st century will require mind skills beyond the basic 3R's. "Out of the box" thinking is imperative. So what is needed is a bridge program that brings together the disciplines of creativity, arts, science, technology and mathematics to create a pipeline of education in these areas, from K-16.

Inspiring creativity encourages tapping into a force greater than the individual. But most importantly for our students, the application and execution of that creativity requires the essential skills of logic, trial and error and perseverance, which are components of the scientific process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2587,
and please amend to name Hawaii Community College in the Bill.

Trina Nahm-Mijo, Ph.D.
Professor, HawCC
Project Co-Manager, KYBC

March 17, 2008

TO: Senate Committees

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TAXATION

Carol Fukunaga, Chair

EDUCATION

Norman Sakamoto, Chair

PUBLIC HEARING for HB2587

Monday, 3/17, 3 p.m., Rm. 225

FROM: Fekita Feki, KMCHS Student

My name is Fekita Feki, and I'm a senior at Kea`au Middle College High School (KMCHS). Kea`au Middle College has been a chance of a lifetime for me. I came from a very difficult family situation. My father left us when I was five years old, and my mother had to raise four disobedient children on her own. We had many struggles growing up, and we always had to find a new place to live when the rent got too high. Our education was never consistent, because we would always be moving and changing schools. I moved schools approximately seven times. My older brothers and sisters barely made it out of high school and had very few opportunities.

I am grateful to be in Kea`au Middle College, because unlike my siblings, I had the opportunity to better myself and exit high school with 12 college credits. I see how they live, barely scraping by, and I want to make something of myself and make my family proud of me. My goal is to go to Hartnell College on a football scholarship and major in Culinary Arts. At Middle College, we had the opportunity to study environmental science, food science, and to learn by hands on experience things like kitchen safety, food preparation and cooking skills. For example, we got to prepare our dishes for 500 people at the "Taste of Hilo" event and other community events. These experiences inspired me to want to be a chef and learn more about culinary arts.

I also enjoy learning about the canoe culture in Middle College as it teaches science from the Hawaiian perspective and cultural values which are important to me as a Native Hawaiian. I learned the importance of the environment through Kupuna like Aunty Ulu Garmon who taught us about the significance of the *Kumulipo* to keep the balance between nature and man even as we become more technologically oriented.

Thanks again for this opportunity to strongly speak in behalf of programs like KMCHS which are models for Creativity Academies and please amend HB2587 to name Hawai`i Community College as the neighbor island campus in this initiative.

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Monday, 3/17, 3 p.m., Rm. 225

FROM: Annie Abadilla, KMCHS Student

My name is Annie Abadilla. I am a senior currently attending Kea`au Middle College. Kea`au Middle College is a great opportunity for me, because I was given up for adoption at two months of old. My biological mother gave me up to her oldest brother and his wife. For them, I was a blessing, because they had no daughter, just three sons. We lived a hard life in Mountainview, living in a tent without electricity for many years. When I was nine years old, my older brother Joshua passed away due to leukemia. I was very close to him, and I always looked up to him because he was the only one that graduated from high school in our whole family. After my brother passed, my mother had a breakdown and became paralyzed. She was confined to a wheelchair, and I became responsible for her caretaking to this day.

Because of my hard life from an early age, Middle College has become a great opportunity for me, opening many doors and helping me to focus on going to college and pursuing a career in Business Management. At KMC, we have just opened Lehua Café as part of our food science and culinary arts curriculum one day a week. We offer breakfast and lunch, and my responsibility is to cashier and make an expense and revenue sheet for each day of business. As part of our entrepreneurial activities with MAPS International, our catering group, we have developed "Tutu's Noni Dressing" which we are hoping to sell and market as one of the products of Kea`au Youth Business Center.

Also, today we learned that our Middle College team which entered the Hawai`i Civil Rights Commission and PBS video contest: "What Makes a Pono School" has just won the state-wide high school award. Our PSA will appear this Thursday at 8:30 p.m. on PBS. All of these achievements which have come about through the opportunities at Middle College will help me achieve my dreams and goals and provide a better life for all of my family. Please amend HB2587 to name Hawai`i Community College as the neighbor island campus for Creativity Academies,

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FROM: Lance Garner

My involvement with the Kea'au Middle College Started in 2005 which was my senior year in high school, I was planning to drop out but my counselor convinced me to try out Kea'au Middle College. Within the first week of starting I realized this program was the place for me which is why I have been involved with them ever since. Over these past years, I have always noticed that technology seems to grab the attention of students and keep it too.

When I started as a student with the Kea'au Middle College Program, I was already using certain areas of the S.T.E.M. disciplines in my life. The knowledge I had already acquired was that of a novice, but through working with the Kea'au Middle College High School Program I found out that I excelled in a somewhat difficult animation and web design program called Flash. By using Flash I was inadvertently bolstering my skills and knowledge in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

While using Flash I was also applying basic Geometry skills to keep my animation symmetrical. I used more advanced mathematics by doing four dimensional graphing, I would draw my three dimensional objects, but the fourth dimension (time) would come into play during the actual animation process. I used engineering to keep my animation visually appealing and realistic. Through the use of Flash in Kea'au Middle College's Digital Media Arts Program I have become an efficient user of technology. By gaining these skills I have learned that even though I may have mediocre skills in one area of life it doesn't take much to heighten them.

The skills I have learned have also pushed me toward a career in science; I was previously thinking about physics as a possible career choice but recently changed my mind and decided that neurology was the right choice for me. This decision came from the fact that I have seizures and would like to strengthen my knowledge about my seizure disorder and use this knowledge to help others.

I would like to amend HB2587 to specifically include Hawai'i Community College as the neighbor island campus for Creative Academies.