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Statement of
THEODORE E. LIU
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Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

2:40 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 309

in consideration of

HB 2817

**RELATING TO MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE
PROGRAM.**

Chair Chang, Vice-Chair Bertram, and Members of the Committee.

The Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT) supports HB 2817, and it is part of the Administration's package (HB 3065 and SB 2987).

As a result of the passage of Act 11, First Special Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, the University of Hawaii, Honolulu Community College (HCC), in partnership with Belmont University (BU), began to lay the foundation for the Music Entertainment Learning Experience Program (MELE) in Hawaii. On July 27, 2007, The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) for the benefit of HCC, entered into an agreement with BU. Subsequently, HCC has made steady progress on coordinating the start-up and development of the MELE program. Some of the highlights included, but were not limited to: (1) purchasing equipment to furnish appropriate classrooms, both on the BU and the HCC campus, for synchronous delivery and receipt of the "Survey of the

Music Business,” and “History of the Recording Business” classes from BU to the HCC campus partner classroom via Internet conferencing; (2) offered two classes with an enrollment of 25 students during the Fall 2007 semester, “Survey of the Music Business,” and “History of the Recording Business,” which were delivered from BU to the HCC campus partner classroom via Internet conferencing; and (3) plans to offer four classes including the addition of two new courses: “Survey of Recording Technology” and “Intellectual Properties.” In addition HCC has been awarded two major grants totaling \$1,258,000 from the U.S. Department of Education to support the long term sustainability of the MELE program. Last but not least, HCC is in the process of establishing a new academic program (MELE) that requires the approval of the University of Hawaii Board of Regents.

In order to grow the program, an appropriation of \$1,264,814 from the general fund will be used to continue and expand the MELE program, resulting in a degree program that consists of a comprehensive music business, production, and audio engineering technology curriculum that meets the entry-level training into the music industry which is paramount to building an educational foundation for this important sector of Hawaii’s creative industries growth. The curriculum will focus on combining academic experience with real-world applications to prepare students to work in the rapidly evolving global music industry. The program outcome will provide a trained workforce in the interconnected fields of production technology, music industry business, and artistic creativity development.

Critical to the achievement of these goals is the creation of a music training center capable of serving students on both Oahu and the neighbor islands. Consequently, the

issuance of \$3,530,000 in general obligation bonds is necessary for site development, renovation, facilities remodeling, and studio construction at HCC, with linkages to the UHCC system.

The long-term vision for MELE is to produce a generation of music industry talent and greatly expand the existing industry capacity, creating new technological, intercultural forms of music. If Hawaii can be successful in this area through a partnership between State and Federal governments, Belmont University, and private sector parties, the economic reward for the State can be lasting.

We encourage you to pass this important bill and thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony in strong support of HB 2817.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



HB 2817 – RELATING TO MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT LEARNING
EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education

January 29, 2008 at 2:40 pm
by

John Morton
Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

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HB 2817- Relating to Music Entertainment Learning Experience Program

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Bertram, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i stands in support of this measure.

HB 2817 makes an appropriation of approximately \$1.265 M for the operation of the Music and Entertainment Learning Experience (MELE) program at Honolulu Community College (HCC), authorizes \$3.53 M in General Obligation bonds for the for plans, design, construction, and equipment for a music studio and auxiliary facilities to support the MELE program, and proposes several amendments to Act 11 (SLH 2007).

The MELE program is a partnership between HCC and Belmont University, one of the preeminent music and entertainment business schools in the nation located along music row in Nashville, Tennessee. The program is designed to foster and promote the business of music and entertainment in Hawai'i and will focus on three strands: 1) artist creativity, 2) entertainment business, and 3) technical production skills.

The partnership was conceived and developed in 2006 when well known Nashville music executive Jim Ed Norman realized that Hawai'i has an abundance of untapped raw musical talent and is ripe for a program that focuses on teaching the business and technical sides of entertainment. The semi-retired executive brought the idea to former UH professor Dr. Gavan Daws and together they have helped HCC immensely in making MELE a reality, and so far a large success.

The program started this past fall on an experimental basis with 2 classes and 25 students. Now in its second semester the program is comprised of 6 classes and approximately 60 students. MELE is already experiencing student demand, but to expand and sustain the program additional resources are necessary. The operating and CIP funds proposed through this bill will allow HCC to complete the MELE program offerings and bring the program to its full educational capacity. With construction of a music training center, including a music studio, the program will result in a degree granting program with two tracks: 1) music business or 2) audio engineering technology. The base of knowledge that students gain from this program will be critical to their development as professionals and, thus, have large impact on the music and entertainment industries.

We do request one change to the measure. In its current form the bill's amendments strike the word "and" from the MELE name; the "and" should be left in the name. In Part III on page 6, lines 6-7 and lines 15-16, the name of the program should read, "music and entertainment learning experience" (underscore added for emphasis).

We support HB 2817, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved Supplemental Budget Request.