



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the House Committee on Higher Education

March 11, 2008 at 2:15 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

by
Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor
Presented by
Peter Crouch
Dean, College of Engineering
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2333, SD2 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Jerry L. Chang, Vice Chair Joe Bertram, and Members of the Committee on Higher Education

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB2333, SD2 relating to the University of Hawai'i. We support the intent of the SB2333, SD2 and agree that robotics is a powerful vehicle for K-12 students to explore and develop exemplary skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. For nearly two decades, the College of Engineering has been involved in multiple aspects of robotics education and outreach and has witnessed its tremendous impact on our students, teachers, and community. The many successful robotics competitions and the dramatic increase in interest and participation are strong testaments to this achievement. It is for this reason that we support the intent of SB2333, SD2.

We appreciate the interest in the UH College of Engineering and acknowledge that the bill is the result of much thought and input from our State policy makers. As a result, if the Legislature feel it in the best interest of the State to establish a working group to discuss the feasibility of establishing an Institute of Robotics or related institute within the UH College of Engineering, we will support the exercise with a level of effort appropriate to the resources we have available. Generally, feasibility and cost studies require major staff, faculty, and consultation investment.

In closing, I would like to add that ACT111 marked a milestone in K-12 outreach for the College of Engineering. Through the Administration's Innovation in Education Initiative - Fostering Innovation and Relevance through Science and Technology – Pre-Academy, Robotics and the Research Experiences for Teachers – Middle School Program, the College will further expand its role in STEM outreach.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to testify and for your continued interest and support in the UH College of Engineering.

Date of Hearing: March 11, 2008

Committee: House Higher Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. 2333, S.D. 2 (SSCR 2731), Relating to the University of Hawaii

Purpose: Establishes a working group to consider the feasibility of creating within the University of Hawaii college of engineering an institute of robotics or a related institute or program with consideration of the appropriate background science and technology fields, and application areas, on which an institute or other program will focus; requires report on its findings and recommendations to the 2010 legislature.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (DOE) supports this Bill for the creation of a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and robotics working group to evaluate opportunities for related careers and educational opportunities in Hawaii. The DOE appreciates the opportunity to participate as a member of the working group.

Statement of Art Kimura, Education Specialist, Hawaii Space Grant Consortium,
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before the

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2008

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Tuesday, March 11, 2008
2:15 P.M.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

in consideration of
Senate Bill 2333 SD 2,
RELATING TO ROBOTICS TASK FORCE (INSTITUTE OF ROBOTICS)

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Bertram and Members of the House Committee on Higher
Education

I support Senate Bill 2333 SD 2 which would establish a task force to study the feasibility
of an Institute of Robotics at the University of Hawaii.

One of the outcomes in support of catalyzing student interest in science, technology,
engineering and math in the 2007 legislative session was Act 111 which in part,
established a pre academy program that provided project based learning using robotics.
Scholastic robotics programs in Hawaii have significantly increased not only in the
availability of a variety of programs from elementary through high school but in ever
expanding participation by students statewide. Hawaii is host to a number of nationally
affiliated scholastic robotics programs including FIRST, FIRST Lego League, Botball,
and underwater remotely operated vehicles through regional tournaments held in Hawaii,
with winners advancing to national tournaments.

In 2007, Hawaii hosted a national robotics tournament (Botball) and the National
Conference on Educational Robotics which drew the largest participation in that
program's history at 65 teams including 45 from out of state. In addition, a program to
be introduced in fall, 2007, VEX, will provide a unique opportunity for Hawaii to host a
world championship including as many as 90 teams from Asia and the mainland United
States as well as Hawaii. As noted in Senate Bill 2333, Waiakea High School became

statewide program that begins at the elementary level and provides opportunities through college study. Students like Kelson would be provided with the opportunity to stretch their creativity into programs that have no ceiling, and contribute to societal and environmental needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

