



HAWAI‘I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER TESTIMONY

Presented by Jim Shon, Director
Hawai‘i Educational Policy Center
APRIL 9, 2015

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Thursday April 9 2015 1:30 Room 308 AGENDA #1

RE SB 325 SD 1 HD 1 RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

HEPC APPRECIATES LEGISLATIVE INTEREST IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER
(SECTION 20) & THE OMBUDS PROPOSAL (SECTION 12).

SECTION 20, HEPC does not have a sustainable source of funding within the University. However, in the past the excellent work of graduate students has provided an energetic, professional, and highly motivated “staff” for the center. A fully operative HEPC with funds to hold conferences, provide more timely and in-depth research for policy makers, and generate an annual Status of Education report would require approximately \$150-200,000. This bill is a very modest contribution to that goal. Our most recent calculation for the two graduate positions would be approximately \$45,000.

HEPC believes this bill serves two purposes: first, to support graduate students, many of whom struggle with the cost of attendance and future debt. Second, to create a form of sustainable staff for the center. HEPC would have no objections to this approach.

In the last year, our Ph.D. student, Ms. Shannon Hillman, has made significant contributions to HEPC studies on English Language Learners, UH tuition issues, UH student views on tuition, school empowerment, and other issues. In addition, she also manages the HEPC web page.

HEPC focuses on public educational policy that is data driven, research based, and thoughtfully implemented. Generally, we try to avoid advocacy. In order to assist you in addressing the subject of this bill, please see the following summary of HEPC.

In the last year, HEPC has produced policy studies on English Language Learners, A Voters Guide to the Con Am, University of Hawai‘i tuition issues, and school empowerment. A current initiative centers on civic and citizenship education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this brief overview of HEPC, and to support our graduate students.

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SECTION 12. Ombuds Office

An institutional Ombuds Office at UH will require a full-time director and full time staff. It could either be attached to the UH Manoa Chancellor's Office, or, with the possibilities of expansion to serve other campuses, the UH President's Office.

The bill lists several areas of appropriate activities:

"(c) Issues that may be brought to the attention of the office of the ombuds shall include the following:

- (1) Communicating the views and voices of students, faculty, and staff to decision makers;
- (2) Harassment or discrimination;
- (3) Violations of University of Hawai'i at Manoa policy;
- (4) Professional and organizational disputes;
- (5) Ethical dilemmas;
- (6) Cultural misunderstandings;
- (7) Conflicts of interest;
- (8) Student employment issues and disputes;
- (9) Assistance to administrators and regents in analyzing and framing difficult issues;
- (10) Disputes between the university and the community at large;
- (11) Health and safety concerns;
- (12) Availability and transparency of public information regarding university policies, finances, decisions, and programs;
- (13) Academic freedom; and
- (14) Threats or retaliation."

HEPC finds that all of these have been or are areas of concern for various stakeholders. Of particular note are items #1 *Communicating the views and voices of students, faculty, and staff to decision makers*; #8 *Student employment issues and disputes*; and #12 *Availability and transparency of public information regarding university policies, finances, decisions, and programs*. These three particularly address ongoing frustrations and criticisms. HEPC is especially interested in the possibilities of item #1. Current technology now allows us to survey students and faculty through web based methods at little to no cost. Recently HEPC conducted an informal poll of student in this manner. (see <http://web41.its.hawaii.edu/manoa.hawaii.edu/hepc/wp-content/uploads/Analysis-of-HEPC-Student-Survey.pdf>)

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
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SB325

Submitted on: 4/9/2015

Testimony for FIN on Apr 9, 2015 14:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bob Grossmann	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I would like to support Section 20 to fund graduate students at HEPC. In a nutshell, the taxpayer dollars to the University of Hawaii and DOE are sufficient to warrant policy study independent of the Department of Education and the Board of Regents. Sustainable staff allows for the development of institutional expertise and recommendations for legislative/executive consideration. The funds, approximately \$45,000 for two graduate positions, are a good investment.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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