



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Lower and Higher Education
Friday, March 15, 2019 at 2:40 p.m.

By
Krystyna S. Aune, Dean of Graduate Division
And
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University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 315 SD1 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Perruso, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 315 SD1 which appropriates funds to increase the minimum Graduate Assistant (GA) stipend to Step 10 (\$20,472 for 9-Month GAs, \$23,028 for 11-Month GAs). For GAs at step 10 or above, we propose a 2% increase for the first year of the biennium and 2% across the board for the second year of the biennium. The costs for these proposed increases would be \$2,193,360 for the first year and \$2,242,327 for the second year of the biennium.

The University of Hawai'i supports SB 315 SD1.

Graduate assistants (GAs) are graduate students who provide academic and program support to academic, administrative or service units of the university. GA responsibilities may involve teaching, research, or administrative duties. Graduate assistantships are the mechanism by which research universities recruit top graduate students into their programs. Their contributions to the mission of a research university are far reaching, particularly in the teaching and research arenas. Furthermore, the ability to work with graduate students are critical factors in recruiting and retaining excellent faculty to the university. In other words, graduate education is the defining essence of a research university.

Governor Ige's education mission is to "Empower our public schools and university, focus on 21st century skills and learning, and ensure schools provide a healthy and safe learning environment." This Graduate Student initiative helps to support graduate education; providing proper support for graduate assistants will enhance the attainment of 21st century skills and learning. Graduate educational attainment is increasingly imperative within the knowledge economy.

The Graduate Student initiative also supports the University of Hawai'i System Directions, 2015-2021, the Hawai'i Graduation Initiative (HGI). The goal is to increase the educational capital of the state. To increase participation and completion of

students, graduate assistantships (and more competitive funding packages) are essential to recruit and retain students. In addition, the Hawai'i Innovation Initiative is designed to create more high-quality jobs and diversity Hawai'i's economy. Strategies to achieve innovation include sustaining and advancing the UH research enterprise. The UH research enterprise is supported by graduate faculty, graduate programs, and, centrally, the graduate assistants who greatly support the research mission of the research university.

The request for Graduate Assistant support also advances the Board of Regents directive on Enrollment Management. Support for graduate assistant stipend levels will facilitate graduate recruitment and retention. A pervasive concern expressed by graduate chairs is that many programs are finding it difficult to recruit top candidates because the prospective graduate students receive better offers at other institutions. Finally, the Graduate Student initiative is also directly linked to the UHM Strategic Plan Matrix. Two Mānoa Initiatives map on to the Hawai'i Graduation Initiative: Enhancing student success and recruiting a vibrant, prepared student body. As mentioned above, recruitment and retention of highly qualified graduate students is directly related to the level of funding offered. Increasing the minimum stipend levels for graduate students will positively impact recruitment and retention. In addition, the UHM strategic Plan Matrix includes two initiatives that map on to the Hawai'i Innovation Initiative: Advancing the Research Enterprise and Fostering Excellent Faculty and Shared-use Facilities. Graduate student support is directly related to accomplishing those metrics such as graduate degrees conferred and faculty scholarly productivity.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Thirtieth Legislature
Regular Session of 2019



THE HOUSE
Committee on Lower & Higher Education
Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair
State Capitol, Conference Room 309
Friday, March 15, 2019; 2:40 p.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE ILWU LOCAL 142 ON S.B. 315, S.D.1
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII**

The ILWU Local 142 **supports** S.B. 315, S.D.1, which appropriates funds to increase the graduate assistant stipend.

Graduate assistants are often overworked – they teach classes, grade assignments, generate curriculum and perform other related duties assigned by the professor and/or University. Many graduate assistants work over 40 hour per week and attend classes of their own while being paid relatively low wages. While S.B. 315, S.D.1 does not provide the right to collectively bargain – a right the ILWU Local 142 strongly believes all graduate assistants deserve, we however, strongly support a wage increase to help with Hawaii’s high cost of living.

The ILWU Local 142 urges the passage of S.B. 315, S.D.1 to help ensure graduate assistants employed by the University of Hawaii get a raise. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this measure.



Academic Labor United

www.academiclaborunited.org

Testimony from Academic Labor United

Friday, March 15th, 2019

Attention: Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair for Higher Education
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair for Lower Education

Re: Support for SB315 Relating to the University of Hawai'i

Academic Labor United (ALU) writes in support of SB315. ALU is dedicated to advancing the voice and wellbeing of academic labor, particularly those on the margins, like many graduate assistants. SB315 would appropriate funds for increases to graduate assistant wages for fiscal year 2019-2020 and fiscal year 2020-2021.

We contend that all matters relating to employment including wages are better addressed through the collective bargaining process. We also recognize that immediate relief is needed. Two years of scheduled and budgeted movement in pay will provide immediate relief to 1,262 members of Hawai'i's educational workforce on multiple islands. This will get us through the process of setting up a bargaining unit, holding elections for exclusive representative, and negotiating a Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Many graduate assistants work second, third, or fourth jobs or pick up an additional teaching load to cover basic costs of living. Additionally, students have their graduate studies, which professors and advisors suggest devoting the same time and effort one would a full-time job. Student success and the quality of education often depends on how much time a teacher invests into their students. Teachers working two or three jobs on top of an already demanding research agenda are limited in the amount of time they can spend with their students. We want a university where syllabi, pedagogy, and other teaching decisions are based on providing the best education rather than being based on what the teacher can realistically withstand.

Lastly, nobody goes into education to get rich. These jobs always pay less than what you put into them. Nobody in the education sector thinks they should be rich, we just want to be able to do our jobs to fullest extent, shaping a more pono future into existence, and be able to make rent at the end of the month.

Respectfully,
Benton Rodden
Chairperson, Academic Labor United

SB-315-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2019 5:47:05 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/15/2019 2:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
William Caron	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

SB-315-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2019 5:08:58 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/15/2019 2:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Janet Graham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer support for SB 315 SD1. I am a graduate student worker and can attest to the fact that the stipend doesn't go far in this economy. Any increase in remuneration for graduate student workers at the UH Manoa system is welcome. The stipend is neither competitive with other schools with similar costs of living nor livable for graduate student workers. As the new version doesn't stipulate the amount of the increase, please consider making a larger appropriation.

Best, Janet