



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology  
Friday, April 12, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

By

Debora Halbert, Vice President for Academic Strategy  
University of Hawai'i System

### SCR 202 SD1 – URGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAM IN EDUCATION WITH AN ONLINE OPTION AT LEEWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO ADDRESS THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF WORKING ADULTS IN ALL COUNTIES

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of SCR 202 SD1 which urges the development of a baccalaureate degree program in education with an online option at Leeward Community College to address the educational needs of working adults in all counties, but recommend the UH exercise its autonomy in exploring a plan to expand access to the Bachelor of Education programs by including Leeward Community College, other UH Community Colleges, and online delivery modality as considerations in future plans.

The University of Hawai'i recognizes the importance of increasing the number of teachers in the state of Hawai'i and has included the need to prepare professionals in education in our strategic plan. The UH is also cognizant of the importance of using our budget resources wisely and being careful not to duplicate existing programs.

The baccalaureate degree proposed in the resolution would be designed to target "individuals who are employed outside of the education system and seeking to enter the teaching profession, currently teaching as emergency hires, and substitute teaching at Department of Education public school classroom." It is possible this target population already have a bachelor's degree and might be better served by the existing statewide hybrid programs offered by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) that include: a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Early Education, or the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Secondary Education.

If a bachelor's is needed, UHM also offers a Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education, a Bachelor of Education in Special Education, a Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education and Hawaiian Immersion in a statewide hybrid format. Furthermore, UH West O'ahu offers an online Bachelor of Education also available statewide. UH Hilo recently gained Board of Regents approval to offer a Bachelor of

Arts in Education Studies this academic year, though that degree is not currently planned to be online.

Given the existing programs that support teacher education, the UH can assess the demand for another online program to ensure that there is no duplication of programs and there is an effective use of resources. With this resolution, the UH will research how best to proceed to ensure students are able to complete a baccalaureate degree program in education and consider whether adding an online option at Leeward Community College to address the educational needs of working adults in all counties is the best use of resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SCR 202 SD1.