



SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

3PM Tuesday February 7, 2023

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 959 RELATING TO  
THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I PAMANTASAN COUNCIL

SUBMITTED BY: Hawaii Friends of Civil Rights

Co-chairs, Amy Agbayani and Patricia McManaman

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the committee;

I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaii Friends of Civil Rights (HFCR) in strong support of HB 968, a bill that addresses access, equity and inclusiveness for Filipinos at UH. I would like to note that I am an Emeritus Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Equity and Diversity and a member of the Pamantasan Council. Pamantasan is a Filipino word for higher education. HB 968 appropriates funds and 3 FTE to the Pamantasan Council. HB968 builds on Act 266 (2019) and SCR 132 (2022)

The SCR 132, report to the 2023 legislature includes “ information regarding the 2019 appropriation; resource and budgetary needs; recommendations on curriculum development; and representation and success of students, faculty, and staff.” The report clearly establishes the urgent need for the state legislature to support the long-term efforts of the UH Pamantasan Council and the University of Hawai'i to increase the number and success of Filipino Americans in the UH system. Filipino Americans continue to be underrepresented as students, staff, faculty administration and curriculum

My testimony in support of HB 968 references the Report to the 2023 Legislature on the Pamantasan Council Systemwide Efforts to Improve the Status of Filipino Americans at the University of Hawaii [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2023/bills/DC246\\_.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2023/bills/DC246_.pdf)

1. Act 266 approved two positions and \$155,000 for the Pamantasan Council in 2019. Due to position freeze during the pandemic, the two positions were not established but the appropriated funds were productively used to increase enrollment and enhance the academic success of Filipino Americans in the UH system. Efforts are underway to develop and offer multi-campus Filipino courses and certificates.

2. Filipino Americans continue to be underrepresented as undergraduate students in the UH system (14.1 percent) in comparison to their proportion of public school students 2 | Executive Summary (23.7 percent) in Hawai'i, among which they are the largest ethnic group. Filipino American undergraduates have their highest percentage representation at Maui College (25.3 percent) and UH West O'ahu (22.3 percent). However, they persist in being considerably represented below parity at UH Manoa (10.8 percent) and UH Hilo (6.2 percent). Among graduate students, Filipino Americans are especially underrepresented at only 5.4 percent of such students at UH Manoa. At the UH community colleges, Filipino Americans (17.8 percent) are significantly underrepresented compared to their percentage of Hawai'i public school students. They have their greatest representation at Leeward (21.7 percent) and Honolulu (17.5 percent) Community Colleges. Filipino Americans who seek higher education in Hawai'i primarily enroll in the UH community colleges; however, sufficient transfer to the UH four-year universities continues to be an issue of concern.  
  
Filipino faculty, particularly tenure track positions are severely underrepresented at all campuses (e.g. at Manoa there are only 22 tenure track Filipino faculty and represent 2.5% of Manoa and only two interim top administrators).  
  
Many campuses do not offer Filipino/Philippine content courses. The Pamantasan Council is working to offer multi-campus Filipino courses and certificates.
3. Three positions requested in SB 959 are recommended in UH SCR 132 report to the 2023 legislature: Manoa Student Equity Excellence and Diversity office, Maui College Leeward Community College to develop and offer curriculum at all campuses.

Since it was established in 1988, the UH Pamantasan Council as a systemwide organization has led and supported efforts to meet the University's goals of equity and inclusion, as well address workforce needs, curriculum, research and community service. I respectfully request you approve this bill to provide 3 FTE and funds for Pamantasan Council multicampus programs.

Amy Agbayani, Emeritus Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Diversity

Co-chair Hawaii Friends of Civil Rights.

# Filipinos for Affirmative Action

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## TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 959

### Senate Committee on Higher Education

February 7, 2022, 3:00 pm

Hawai'i State Legislature

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 229

**To:** Chair Donna Mercado Kim  
Vice-Chair Michelle N. Kidani  
Committee on Higher Education: Sen. Carol Fukunaga, Sen. Gilbert S. C. Keith-Agaran,  
Sen. Keith Fevella

**From:** Agnes Malate, PhD  
armalate@yahoo.com

My name is Agnes Malate and I am in full support of Senate Bill 959 to fund three full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions for the system-wide Pamantasan Council. I am a member of the Filipinos for Affirmative Action and have worked 30 years to increase student diversity in education from high school to college. As a Faculty Specialist who was able to earn a PhD in Educational Foundations at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) with the incredible support of professors, mentors, colleagues, and students, I am a beneficiary of the transformative power that a college degree has for an individual, family, and community. I can also attest to the direct impact that affirmative action and diversity programs have had on improving the lives of the students who participated in these programs.

The Pamantasan Council was established in 1987 to address the academic success and careers of Filipinos and the quality of education for all students at the University. As a young professional who had just joined the staff at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, I was excited to be part of the planning committee for the first system-wide Pamantasan conference that included students, staff and faculty the following year. For the first time there was a unified effort to understand and address the needs of Filipinos in education and the workforce.

The Council convenes every year, rotating among the UH campuses, to share our efforts on increasing the student, staff, and faculty representation throughout the system. We also are concerned with the underrepresentation of Filipino teachers and administrators in the department of education, especially in comparison to the disproportionately higher enrollment of the Filipinos in the public school system. Incremental steps have been made in offering Philippine and Filipino-American courses in the curriculum. However, after over 35 years it is critical that funding is provided to implement the recommendations and strategies set forth in previous Pamantasan reports. Activities proposed by the different campuses, require funds and positions to ensure adequate faculty, student service personnel, lecturers, graduate assistants, and student staff.

According to the UH Institutional and Research Office Fall 2022 enrollment data (<https://www.hawaii.edu/institutionalresearch/home.action>), Filipino students enrolled in the UH Community Colleges is 17.8% but are only 9.3% at UHM (10.6% of all undergraduates and 5.4% of all graduates). These figures continue to be lower than Filipino students' public school enrollment (22.6%) (<http://arch.k12.hi.us/reports/hidoe-data-book>). Examining selected majors, 9.4% of Filipinos are in education, 4.4% in law, and 6.5% in medicine. The only major that Filipinos have consistently been well represented is nursing (24.3%). It is the most popular major that Filipinos are encouraged to pursue. In large part due to the high percentage of Filipino nurses in the workforce and access to them via a network of family and friends, a career in nursing has been a proven career path for Filipinos. For many Filipinos who are first-generation college students they lack role models, support systems, and university services to help them successfully navigate the higher education setting. However, they possess the ingredients to excel in education, contribute as professionals in Hawai'i's workforce, and be outstanding leaders.

As the second largest ethnic group in Hawai'i, it is critical that attention be given to the challenges faced by this population and funding be provided to support the efforts of the University of Hawai'i. I am grateful to the Committee for strengthening the University of Hawai'i's and the Pamantasan Council's ability to respond to the growing needs of the second largest ethnic group in the State and urge you to pass SB 959.

*Although I am an employee of UHM, this testimony reflects my personal position and is not the official position of the University of Hawai'i.*

Testimony S.B. 959, Pamantasan Appropriation

February 7, 2023

- Testimony to the Committee on Higher Education

Re: SB 959

Dear Committee on Higher Education, Chair Senator Kim and Vice-Chair Senator Kidani:

My name is Irma Pena and I submit this testimony in strong support of SB 959, a bill to appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) Pamantasan Council for three full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions. I am urging you to support this measure.

I provide this testimony on behalf of myself as a Lecturer at UH Manoa.

In response to passage of SCR 132, the University of Hawai'i submitted a report to the legislature on December 13, 2022, to report on the status of Filipinos at UH. The report highlights significant issues of Filipino representation in the areas of student enrollment, transfer, degree completion, faculty and administrative leadership, and curriculum representation. Your support for HB 968 will directly support staffing to address these issues.

Although Filipinos are the second largest ethnic group in Hawai'i and make up 25% of the state's population and also the largest ethnic group in the Hawai'i Department of Education system making up 23.7% of the yHIDOE population, we are disproportionately underrepresented in the UH system, and consist of only 14.1% of students in the UH system.

Within the UH system, Filipinos are overrepresented in the community college system and not transferring. According to UHIRO 2019 data, out of the total 6,828 Filipinos in the UH system, the majority (63%) are enrolled in the UH community college (UHCC) system and are highly unlikely to transfer to the 4-year UH campuses.

Data from 2018–2019 obtained from the UH Institutional Research Office have shown disproportionate rates of Filipino degree completion have continued to persist, especially at the graduate degree levels (UHIRO, 2019). According to these data, 12% of all Filipino students attending the 4-year UH campus earned a baccalaureate degree, 4% earned a master's degree, and 1% earned a doctoral degree. In comparison, 31% of Caucasian students and 25% of Japanese students earned a master's degree, while 44% of Caucasian students earned a doctorate degree.

The 4-year UH campuses offer most of the courses related to the Philippines or Filipinos. However, at the UHCC, where the majority of Filipinos are enrolled, students do not have equal access to these courses. Among the UHCCs, Leeward Community College offers the most courses dedicated solely to the Philippine and Filipino experience, with the only academic subject certificate in Philippine Studies. However, resources previously allocated for the sole tenured faculty position assigned to the only Philippine Studies program in the UHCC system at Leeward CC were swept during COVID-19, leaving the program without adequate staffing to sustain and support the program's growth and expansion. It is hoped that by reporting on UH efforts to address Filipino educational equity gaps, direct support for efforts such as the modification and expansion of Leeward Community College's Philippine Studies Certificate program to serve as a "hub" which can offer Filipino courses online to "spoke" campuses across the UHCC system, can be realized to address the UHCC Filipino curriculum gap. Passage of HB 968

will support such efforts through the appropriation of funds to restore the only tenure track faculty position teaching Philippine Studies in the UHCC system at Leeward CC. For the reasons stated above and towards the goal of addressing Filipino educational equity gaps in the UH system, I strongly urge you to support this measure to appropriate funds for three full-time positions to support the important work of the UH Pamantasan Council.

Thank you for your time, consideration and support.

Respectfully submitted,

Irma Pena  
Adjunct Lecturer  
University of Hawai'i Manoa  
[Irma808@hawaii.edu](mailto:Irma808@hawaii.edu)

SB 959

February 5, 2023

## **Testimony to the Committee on Higher Education**

### **Senate Bill (SB) 959**

Aloha Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle Kidoni, and members of the Committee on Higher Education:

My name is Leon Florendo, President of Sariling Gawa Youth Council. We are submitting this testimony in strong support of SB 959 a bill to appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) Pamantasan Council for 3 full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions. We are urging you all to support this bill.

Sariling Gawa Youth Council has been dedicated to Filipino youth leadership development efforts since 1980. Ensuring that Filipino youth are empowered to be community leaders with a deep understanding of their history, languages, culture and values. Over 3,000 high school students across the state have participated in our annual Sariling Gawa's Youth conferences and workshops. Throughout our organization's 40 plus year history, these students expressed a common desire which is to increase their pride, respect and appreciation of their Filipino cultural heritage.

In response to passage of SCR 132, the UH submitted a report to the legislature on December 22, 2022, to report on the status of Filipinos at UH. The report highlights significant issues of Filipino representation in the areas of student enrollment, transfer, degree completion, faculty and administrative leadership, and curriculum representation. Your support for SB 959 will directly support staffing to address these issues.

Although Filipinos are the second largest ethnic group in Hawai'i and make up 25% of the state's population and also the largest ethnic group in the Hawai'i Department of Education system making up 23.7% of the HIDOE population, we are disproportionately underrepresented in the UH system, and consist of only 14.1% of students in the UH system.

Within the UH system, Filipinos are overrepresented in the community college system and not transferring. According to UH Institutional Research Office (IRO) 2019 data, out of the total 6,828 Filipinos in the UH system, the majority (63%) are enrolled in the UH community college (UHCC) system and are highly unlikely to transfer to the 4-year UH campuses.

Data from 2018–2019 obtained from the UHIRO have shown disproportionate rates of Filipino degree completion have continued to persist, especially at the graduate degree levels (UHIRO, 2019). According to these data, 12% of all Filipino students

attending the 4-year UH campus earned a baccalaureate degree, 4% earned a master's degree, and 1% earned a doctoral degree. In comparison, 31% of Caucasian students and 25% of Japanese students earned a master's degree, while 44% of Caucasian students earned a doctorate degree.

The 4-year UH campuses offer most of the courses related to the Philippines or Filipinos. However, at the UHCC, where the majority of Filipinos are enrolled, students do not have equal access to these courses. Among the UHCCs, Leeward Community College offers the most courses dedicated solely to the Philippine and Filipino experience, with the only academic subject certificate in Philippine Studies. However, resources previously allocated for the sole tenured faculty position assigned to the only Philippine Studies program in the UHCC system at Leeward CC were swept during COVID-19, leaving the program without adequate staffing to sustain and support the program's growth and expansion.

It is our hope that by UH reporting on its efforts to address Filipino educational equity gaps, direct support for efforts such as the modification and expansion of Leeward Community College's Philippine Studies Certificate program to serve as a "Hub" which can offer Filipino courses online to "Spoke" campuses across the UHCC system, can be realized to address the UHCC Filipino curriculum gap. The passage of SB 959 will support these efforts through the appropriation of funds to restore the only tenure track faculty position teaching Philippine Studies in the UHCC system at Leeward CC.

For the reasons stated above and towards the goal of addressing Filipino educational equity gaps in the UH system, Sariling Gawa Youth Council strongly urge you all to support this measure to appropriate funds for 3 full-time positions to support the important work of the UH Pamantasan Council. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Leon F. Florendo

President – Sariling Gawa Youth Council



February 6, 2023

Testimony to the Committee on Higher Education

**Re: SB 959**

Dear Chair Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Senator Michelle Kidani, and members of the Committee on Higher Education:

We are Filipinx/a/o students representing the Samahang Filipino Club at Hawai'i Community College in Hilo. **We submit this testimony in strong support of SB 959**, a bill to appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) Pamantasan Council for three full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions. **We urge you to support this measure.**

We support a bill to appropriate funds to the UH to improve the status of Filipinos at the University of Hawai'i because there are many needs that Filipino students have that should be addressed. One of the issues is that although the majority of Filipino students in the UH system are at the community college, and we are the second largest ethnic group in Hawai'i, there are no courses available for us to learn about our history or culture at our campus. To make up for this, we have created a student club, however, it is difficult to maintain the club without the support of courses that can complement the mission of the club.

During COVID-19, Filipino courses offered at Leeward CC have become accessible to us, since they became offered online. We hope that if this measure passes, efforts to make Leeward CC's Philippine Studies Certificate program available online, across the UHCC system as a hub and spoke can be supported. We feel that every student should be given the opportunity to learn about Filipino history, culture, and social issues and that our General Education and graduation requirements should be inclusive of Filipino curriculum. Passage of SB 959 can support initiatives such as these by allocating funds to replace the full-time, tenure track position teaching Filipino Studies at Leeward CC to support the program's expansion to serve the needs of Filipinx/a/o students like us, across the UHCC system.

Many of our Filipinx/a/o students experience shame in their identity, experience mental health challenges, lack adequate representation in our curriculum, and need greater resources to support and encourage our transfer to the 4-year UH system. **We ask for your support for SB 959—to allocate funds for three full-time positions to address the needs of Filipinx/a/o students in the UH system.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Submitted by:

Ghelie Lei Tamayo, Secretary, Samahang Club of Hawai'i CC

February 6, 2023

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Many of our Filipinx/a/o students experience shame in their identity, experience mental health challenges, lack adequate representation in our curriculum, and need greater resources to support and encourage our transfer to the 4-year UH system. **We ask for your support for SB 959—to allocate funds for three full-time positions to address the needs of Filipinx/a/o students in the UH system.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Submitted by:

Ela Mae Gamilo, President, Samahang Club of Hawai‘i CC

**SB-959**

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 1:45:34 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/7/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aurelio Solver Agcaoili	Testifying for National Alliance for Knowledge, Empowerment, and	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As attached. I strongly support this measure, SB 959.

**SB-959**

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 8:43:02 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/7/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leon Florendo	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

February 5, 2023

Testimony to the Committee on Higher Education

**Re: Senate Bill (SB) 959**

Aloha Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani, and members of the Committee on Higher Education:

My name is Leon Fuimaono Florendo. I am member of the University of Hawai‘i Pamantasan Executive Council and Leeward Community College Pamantasan Committee. I am also Associate Professor Counselor at Leeward CC Wai‘anae Moku Education Center and I am testifying as an individual and do not represent the University of Hawai‘i (UH). I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 959. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to the UH Pamantasan Council for three full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions. *I am strongly urging you all to support SB 959.*

On December 22, 2022, University of Hawai‘i submitted a report to the legislature in response to passage of SCR 132, reporting on the status of Filipinos at the University of Hawai‘i. The report highlights issues of Filipino representation in the areas of student enrollment, transfer, degree completion, faculty and administrative leadership, and curriculum representation.

Filipinos are the second largest ethnic group in Hawai‘i make up 25% of the state's population. Filipinos are the largest ethnic group in the Hawai‘i Department of Education system making up 23.7% of the HIDOE population. In the UH system, Filipino students are disproportionately underrepresented at only 14.1%.

In the UH system, Filipinos are overrepresented in the community college system and not transferring. According to UHIRO 2019 data, out of the total 6,828 Filipinos in the UH system, the majority (63%) are enrolled in the UH community college system and are most likely not to transfer to the 4-year UH campuses.

In closing, your support for SB 959 will directly ensure that the UH Pamantasan Council will be able to address the UH student enrollment, transfer, degree completion, faculty and administrative leadership, and curriculum representation issues. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo, Salamat po

Leon Fuimaono Florendo

**SB-959**

Submitted on: 2/3/2023 10:59:34 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/7/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marnelli Joy Ulep	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee Senators Fukunaga, Keith-Agaran, and Fevella.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 959. As a member of the Hawaii community and the daughter of Filipino immigrants, I submit this testimony in support of SB 959 appropriating funds to the University of Hawaii Pamantasan Council.

The Pamantasan Council works to improve the status of Filipinos throughout the UH system. Through my experience working in community organizations and in education, I see the value of perspectives and representation throughout all aspects of learning, mentoring, and empowerment that occur in higher education. Filipinos have and continue to make an impact on the state of Hawaii which makes the need for further representation of Filipinos as student, faculty, and staff, and in the curriculum, important. An appropriation of funding for these positions would enhance the Pamantasan Council's efforts to address and advocate for representation of Filipinos and to improve Filipino American success throughout the UH system. Thank you for your consideration.

## COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Date: Tuesday, February 7, 2023

Time: 3:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

February 3, 2023

Dear Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee:

I am sending testimony in strong support of SB 959, relating to appropriating funds to the University of Hawai'i Pamantasan Council for three full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions.

My name is Phillippe Fernandez-Brennan and I am a PhD student in Education: Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), member of the UHM College of Education Tinalak Council and council member of the College of Education Doctoral Student Association (COEDSA). I have also taught in the Hawai'i public schools for the past 9 years. I am testifying as an individual and do not represent the University of Hawai'i nor the Hawai'i Department of Education.

I strongly support SB 959 because Filipinos are the largest non-White and Asian ethnic group in Hawai'i, with 25% of the population identifying as Filipino. The majority of Filipinos in Hawai'i are Ilokano, coming from the Northern region of the Philippines. Despite a strong presence in Hawai'i since 1906 and significant contributions to the fabric of Hawai'i, Filipinos as a community, continue to struggle socially, politically and economically.

Filipinos in Hawai'i have undergone what is interpreted by scholars as a "process of cultural and ethnic disidentification," a denial of their heritage and embrace of the dominant ideologies of a local identity while being aware of their marginalization and the lack of social benefits for being Filipino.

At the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), 2021 data showed that Filipinos accounted for only 5.9% of faculty at the UHM. Data from 2016 indicates the same trend of Filipinos accounting for only 2.6% of the entire UHM faculty. At the College of Education (COE), Filipinos are disproportionately underrepresented among the COE faculty with only 5 of 174 faculty members (2.8%) of Filipino heritage. Fall 2021 data indicates that Filipinos are underrepresented at the College of Education as teacher candidates and graduate students. Filipinos represented only 11% of teacher candidates and 7.6% of graduate students at the COE. As the highest producing licensure Education Preparation Program (EPP) in Hawai'i, this low

number of Filipino teacher candidates consequently leads to under-representation of Filipino teachers and administrators employed in the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE). The most recent data in 2021 shows that Filipinos have one of the lowest representations of teachers (7.4%) and administrators (5.1%) employed by the HIDOE. This is problematic because Filipino youth represent the majority of the students in Hawai'i public schools. I argue that there is a link between the underrepresentation of Filipino teachers and administrators and lack of Filipino curriculum to persistent low performance, low achievement and lack of success among Filipino students at Hawai'i K-12 public schools.

The Pamantasan Council provides the need for oversight and accountability at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for access to higher education, support of Filipino students, and to ensure equitable representation of Filipino students, the largest K-12 public school student population. Thus, I fully support SB 959 to appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i Pamantasan Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phillippe R. Fernandez-Brennan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phillippe R. Fernandez-Brennan



Paula T. Morelli, PhD, LLC  
1511 Ehupua Place, Honolulu, HI 96821  
morelli@hawaii.edu

February 4, 2023

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair & Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

**RE: SB595**

Dear Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair & Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair,

My name is Paula T. Morelli, a retired, independent consultant. I am testifying in support of **SB959 the Pamantasan Council's systemwide efforts to improve the status of Filipinos at the University of Hawaii.**

I support and strongly endorse Pamantasan's critical work in developing and educating Hawaii's Filipinos in their educational quest. The Pamantasan network prepares Filipino students across the state with a strong foundation to be contributing citizens. Investing in Pamantasan's personnel infrastructure is vital to maintaining and strengthening their long-term positive outcomes.

Mahalo for your consideration,


*Paula T. Morelli, PhD, LLC*

# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Pamantasan Executive Committee

DATE: February 3, 2023

TO: Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

FROM: Christine Quemuel   
UH Pamantasan Executive Committee

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 959

HEARING: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 3:00 pm  
Conference Room 229

## SB 959 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

My name is Christine Quemuel, and I am a member of the University of Hawai'i Pamantasan Executive Committee. I submit this testimony in strong SUPPORT of SB 959, which would appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i systemwide Pamantasan Council for three full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions. I am urging you to support this measure.

The Pamantasan Executive Council is the University of Hawai'i systemwide organization concerned with the status of Filipinx participation on all UH campuses throughout the state. The Pamantasan Council was established in 1987 to address Filipinx representation and success on campus and to ensure that Filipinx American and Philippine courses are represented in the curriculum. The Executive Council is also charged with issues concerning Filipinx representation in the Department of Education, Filipinx workforce participation, and international relations between colleges in Hawai'i and the Philippines. The Pamantasan Council currently has no budget and is a volunteer organization comprised of University of Hawai'i students, staff, faculty, and administrators who are committed to access and diversity issues.

Funding for Pamantasan positions and projects will ensure that the state champions educational equity and diversity in higher education. We thank the Legislature for introducing this important bill and for your continued commitment to access and diversity to ensure that underrepresented communities in Hawai'i are supported.

This testimony does not represent the official testimony of the University of Hawai'i, but reflects the support of the Pamantasan Council. We strongly SUPPORT the passage of SB 959, relating to the University of Hawai'i and Pamantasan.

**SB-959**

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 8:16:10 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/7/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ellen-Rae Cachola	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee on Higher Education,

Please support SB 959. Filipino students in Hawai'i need support in enrolling in 4 year university programs, and pursuing higher levels of education. This can help to uplift our community in terms of educational representation, professional leadership, and civic advocacy. Supporting SB 959 will help Pamantasan, a Filipino advocacy organization in the UH System, hire the needed staff to create infrastructure to outreach and inspire our Filipino community to invest and believe in higher education as an avenue to uplift their families and broader communities.

Thank you for listening,

Ellen-Rae Cachola

**SB-959**

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 11:16:08 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/7/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patricia Halagao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a Professor at the University of Hawaii, Manoa College of Education. I am testifying as an individual and do not represent the University of Hawaii.

I strongly support SB959, **a bill to appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) Pamantasan Council for three full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions.** The Bill will provide the necessary funds to create systemic conditions that will lead to the equitable representation and success of Filipino faculty and staff at the University of Hawaii, ultimately benefitting Filipino students in the State of Hawaii. Thank you for your support.

**SB-959**

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 5:19:38 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/7/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayland Quintero	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**To the Senate Committee on Higher Education- Chair Senator Kim, Vice-Chair Senator Kidani, and committee members:**

**SB959 is a longterm, consequential bill that should be passed. Moving SB959 forward would more substantively instill and strengthen faculty and staff equity in the UH system, particularly at the campuses for which the three positions are proposed. Approving the teaching position at Leeward Community College would restore the former FT position that was held by a longtime faculty member before he had to retire due to medical reasons in February 2020. When the pandemic hit, this vacant position was somehow taken away and ought to be restored to run the Filipino Studies program at LCC.**

**The two Pamantasan positions were approved by the Legislature in 2019, but again the pandemic affected follow-through on the approval. We in the Filipino community strongly support and would look forward to the restoration of all three positions.**

**Salamat and Mahalo,**

***Wayland Quintero***

**SB-959**

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 6:21:05 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/7/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Winona K Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the Committee on Higher Education

Re: **SB 959**

Dear Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani, and members of the Committee on Higher Education:

My name is Winona Lee and I submit this testimony **in strong support of SB 959**, a bill to appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) Pamantasan Council for three FTE academic and support services specialist positions. I am urging you to support this measure.

Your support for SB 959 will directly support staffing to advocate and address issues related to the underrepresentation of Filipino students within the overall UH system and challenges with having Filipino students successfully transfer from community colleges to 4 year University campuses. These positions will ensure a collective effort will be sustained to address these critical educational and equity gaps.

Respectfully submitted,

Winona K. Lee

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the Committee on Higher Education

**Re: Senate Bill 959**

Dear Chair Senator Kim, Vice Chair Senator Kidani, and members of the Committee on Higher Education:

My name is Mildred M. Asuncion and **I submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 959**, a bill to appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) Pamantasan Council for three full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions. **I am urging you to support this measure.**

I am a retired public school teacher and counselor, and a co-founder and board secretary of Sariling Gawa Youth Council, a non-profit community organization. I provide this testimony on behalf of myself as an individual.

In response to passage of SCR 132, the University of Hawai'i submitted a report to the legislature on December 13, 2022, to report on the status of Filipinos at UH. The report highlights significant issues of Filipino representation in the areas of student enrollment, transfer, degree completion, faculty and administrative leadership, and curriculum representation. Your support for Senate Bill 959 will directly support staffing to address these issues.

Although Filipinos are the second largest ethnic group in Hawai'i and make up 25% of the state's population and also the largest ethnic group in the Hawai'i Department of Education system making up 23.7% of the HIDOE population, we are disproportionately underrepresented in the UH system, and consist of only 14.1% of students in the UH system.

Within the UH system, Filipinos are overrepresented in the community college system and not transferring. According to UHIRO 2019 data, out of the total 6,828 Filipinos in the UH system, the majority (63%) are enrolled in the UH community college (UHCC) system and are highly unlikely to transfer to the 4-year UH campuses.

Data from 2018–2019 obtained from the UH Institutional Research Office have shown disproportionate rates of Filipino degree completion have continued to persist, especially at the graduate degree levels (UHIRO, 2019). According to these data, 12% of all Filipino students attending the 4-year UH campus earned a baccalaureate degree, 4% earned a master's degree, and 1% earned a doctoral degree. In comparison, 31% of Caucasian students and 25% of Japanese students earned a master's degree, while 44% of Caucasian students earned a doctorate degree.

The 4-year UH campuses offer most of the courses related to the Philippines or Filipinos. However, at the UHCC, where the majority of Filipinos are enrolled, students do not have equal access to these courses. Among the UHCCs, Leeward Community College offers the most courses dedicated solely to the Philippine and Filipino experience, with the only academic

subject certificate in Philippine Studies. However, resources previously allocated for the sole tenured faculty position assigned to the only Philippine Studies program in the UHCC system at Leeward CC were swept during COVID-19, leaving the program without adequate staffing to sustain and support the program's growth and expansion.

It is hoped that by reporting on UH efforts to address Filipino educational equity gaps, direct support for efforts such as the modification and expansion of Leeward Community College's Philippine Studies Certificate program to serve as a "hub" which can offer Filipino courses online to "spoke" campuses across the UHCC system, can be realized to address the UHCC Filipino curriculum gap. Passage of Senate Bill 959 will support such efforts through the appropriation of funds to restore the only tenure track faculty position teaching Philippine Studies in the UHCC system at Leeward CC.

For the reasons stated above and towards the goal of addressing Filipino educational equity gaps in the UH system, I strongly urge you to support this measure to appropriate funds for three full-time positions to support the important work of the UH Pamantasan Council.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Mildred M. Asuncion  
Co-Founder and Board Secretary  
Sariling Gawa Youth Council



February 6, 2023

Testimony to the Committee on Higher Education

**Re: SB 959**

Dear Chair Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Senator Michelle Kidani, and members of the Committee on Higher Education:

My name is Jeanne Batallones and **I submit this testimony in strong support of SB 959**, a bill to appropriate funds to the University of Hawai‘i (UH) Pamantasan Council for three full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions. **I am urging you to support this measure.**

I am a Counselor at a UH Community College and a member of the UH Pamantasan Council. I have worked as a counselor within the UH system for the last eight years, and in the community college system for the last 19 years. I provide this testimony on behalf of myself as an Filipina educator and community advocate.

In response to passage of SCR 132, the University of Hawai‘i submitted a report to the legislature on December 13, 2022, to report on the status of Filipinos at UH. The report highlights significant issues of Filipino representation in the areas of student enrollment, transfer, degree completion, faculty and administrative leadership, and curriculum representation. Your support for HB 968 will directly support staffing to address these issues.

Although Filipinos are the second largest ethnic group in Hawai‘i and make up 25% of the state's population and also the largest ethnic group in the Hawai‘i Department of Education system making up 23.7% of the HIDOE population, we are disproportionately underrepresented in the UH system, and consist of only 14.1% of students in the UH system.

Within the UH system, Filipinos are overrepresented in the community college system and not transferring. According to UHIRO 2019 data, out of the total 6,828 Filipinos in the UH system, the majority (63%) are enrolled in the UH community college (UHCC) system and are highly unlikely to transfer to the 4-year UH campuses.

Data from 2018–2019 obtained from the UH Institutional Research Office have shown disproportionate rates of Filipino degree completion have continued to persist, especially at the graduate degree levels (UHIRO, 2019). According to these data, 12% of all Filipino students attending the 4-year UH campus earned a baccalaureate degree, 4% earned a master’s degree, and 1% earned a doctoral degree. In comparison, 31% of Caucasian students and 25% of

Japanese students earned a master's degree, while 44% of Caucasian students earned a doctorate degree.

The 4-year UH campuses offer most of the courses related to the Philippines or Filipinos. However, at the UHCC, where the majority of Filipinos are enrolled, students do not have access to these courses. Among the UHCCs, Leeward Community College offers the most courses dedicated solely to the Philippine and Filipino experience, with the only academic subject certificate in Philippine Studies. However, resources previously allocated for the sole tenured faculty position assigned to the only Philippine Studies program in the UHCC system at Leeward CC were swept during COVID-19, leaving the program without adequate staffing to sustain and support the program's growth and expansion.

It is hoped that by reporting on UH efforts to address Filipino educational equity gaps, direct support for efforts such as the modification and expansion of Leeward Community College's Philippine Studies Certificate program to serve as a "hub" which can offer Filipino courses online to "spoke" campuses across the UHCC system, can be realized to address the UHCC Filipino curriculum gap. **Passage of SB 959 will support such efforts through the appropriation of funds to restore the only tenure track faculty position teaching Philippine Studies in the UHCC system at Leeward CC.**

For the reasons stated above and towards the goal of addressing Filipino educational equity gaps in the UH system, **I strongly urge you to support this measure to appropriate funds for three full-time positions to support the important work of the UH Pamantasan Council.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanne Batallones, Ed.D

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 959  
Relating to the University of Hawaii

To: Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani

From: Pua Auyong-White, Academic Support, Office of Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity, UH Manoa

Subject: TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT of SB 959  
Appropriates general funds for 3.0 FTE positions for the UH Pamantasan Council for 3 FTE equivalent academic and support services specialist positions.

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

The UH Pamantasan Council provides an infrastructure that has a broad and deep statewide reach that will produce competent leaders and innovative stewards on every island for the benefit of all of Hawai'i. Hawaii has a large percent of high school graduates in the state (92%) and by improving the access to higher education for Filipinos we can provide a solid and professional workforce for the entire state.

The current model of volunteers serving on the Pamantasan Council cannot effectively address the systemic and persistent disparities where Filipinos comprise over 20 percent of public school students, but only 12 percent of students at UH Mānoa; where Filipinos make up a large segment of community college students, but their transfer rates to 4-year degrees and advanced professional degrees at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa are disproportionately low. Subsequently, it is unacceptable that Filipinos, compared to other groups, are over-represented in entry level service jobs and underrepresented in executive positions.

I strongly encourage the committee to support this bill which intends to advance student excellence and equity in Hawai'i's institutions of higher learning and building a workforce by funding 3 FTE coordinator positions for the Pamantasan Council.

Pua Auyong-White  
3432 B2 Kalihi Street  
Honolulu, HI 96819  
[paw@hawaii.edu/pua888@yahoo.com](mailto:paw@hawaii.edu/pua888@yahoo.com)  
808 222-5591

February 6, 2023

Senate Committee on Higher Education  
**In strong support of SB 959**

Dear Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education:

Kumustakayo amin (greetings)! My name is Rouel Velasco and **I submit this testimony in strong support of SB 959**, a bill to appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) Pamantasan Council for three full-time equivalent academic and support services specialist positions. **I am urging you to support this measure.**

I provide this testimony on behalf of myself as a Hawai'i-Born Filipino private citizen from Kapolei, O'ahu. I am a proud graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, twice (with a bachelor and master's degrees). I am honored to share my thoughts and story with you.

Since 1987, UH Pamantasan Council strives to enhance the Filipino experience in higher education by bringing together faculty, staff and students to advance issues on access to higher education, representation among university faculty and staff, as well as Filipino-related curriculum. Through its grassroots and voluntary efforts, the Pamantasan Council made advances to increase Filipino student enrollment, retention and degree completions. Yet, much more can be accomplished. While we celebrate that Filipinos are the second largest ethnic group in Hawai'i and largest ethnic group in the Hawai'i Department of Education system, Filipinos are disproportionately underrepresented in the UH system. In the midst of underrepresentation, there is hope and promise.

My story of college success moves from shame to pride and empowerment. While having been born and raised along the Wai'anae Coast, I was not always proud to call myself Filipino, specifically Ilokano. I grew up during a time when racist local jokes attacked Filipinos and Filipino culture. It was not until enrolling in college and attending a Pamantasan Conference that I met positive role models that look like me. I have personally benefited from the connections and opportunities Pamantasan has provided to me as a student (undergrad and grad) and as a professional staff member. The Filipino community within the University of Hawai'i voluntarily with little to no resources provides programs and experiences to empower and affirm the identities of Filipino college students. These connections and experiences allowed me to further my participation in the Filipino community beyond the university. I carry this pride with me in my involvement with community-based organizations focusing on Filipino empowerment. This affirmation in my identity and being valued at the university allowed me to find home, meaningful connection and belonging to the university. For this, I am eternally grateful.

As a student affairs professional at one of the University of Hawai'i campuses, I see the potential and opportunities to better support Filipino student success. While existing resources exist at UH Mānoa and Leeward, I see the growing need for programs and resources to be

available across the 10 campus UH system. This measure, SB 959, will provide opportunities across the UH system to further explore and affirm Filipino students' identities, culture, language and ancestral knowledge, meanwhile, making connections with other students and professional staff culminating in achieving student success and advancing community empowerment.

I thank the Senate for introducing SB 959 and hope that through its passage, current and future Filipino students continue to thrive and reach new levels of success. Through my storytelling, I strongly urge you to support this measure to appropriate funds for three full-time positions to support the important work of the UH Pamantasan Council.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Agyamanak! (I am grateful!)

Respectfully submitted,  
Rouel Velasco

Testimony to Senate Committee on Higher Education  
in Support of SB 959

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

February 7, 2023

My name is Jonathan Y. Okamura, and I am professor emeritus in ethnic studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I have done research and published on Filipino Americans in Hawai'i for thirty-five years and have taught the Ethnic Studies course on Filipinos in Hawai'i. I also contributed to organizing the University of Hawai'i Pamantasan Council when it began in 1988.

Fully aware of some of the difficulties that Filipinos have experienced in attaining a college education in Hawai'i, I express my full support of SB 959. The bill provides for three full-time equivalent positions for the UH Pamantasan Council because it has never had any designated full-time staff since it was established. Despite the lack of such staff, through the voluntary efforts of Filipino staff, faculty and students, the council has accomplished much in advancing their academic success and status in the UH system, including increasing graduation rates at the four-year campuses.

However, underrepresentation of undergraduate students at UH Manoa, UH Hilo, and most of the community colleges remains a continuing problem. As Filipinos have recently emerged as the largest group of students in the public schools at almost one-fourth, the critical need for administrative staff to direct and coordinate the Pamantasan Council's activities, including recruitment to and retention in the UH campuses, has gained in importance.

I kindly request that you support SB 959 because it will provide for equal educational opportunity for Filipinos in Hawai'i. Thank you for your attention to this request.