

A Bill for an Act Relating to the Hawaii State University.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that a portion of the Big Island community, including organizations and individuals affiliated with the University of Hawaii-Hilo (UH-Hilo), are concerned about the current condition, status, and overall quality of education of the UH-Hilo campus. In the effort to improve the overall condition and standing of UH-Hilo, it is both prudent and wise to take a comprehensive and balanced look at the wide range of possibilities to realize this effort.

While there are many approaches to enhance the quality of education of UH-Hilo, there are two proposals in particular that have been suggested by the students, faculty, and other individuals and organizations affiliated with UH-Hilo and the Big Island community. One proposal is to retain UH-Hilo as part of the University of Hawaii (UH) system. Advocates of this proposal suggest that increased effort be made to improve the status, condition, and quality of education of UH-Hilo within the existing UH system. Another proposal is to establish a separate board of regents and president for a new institution of higher education to be called "Hawaii State University" that incorporates UH-Hilo.

In the best interests of Hawaii's students, the legislature realizes the necessity of weighing the merits as well as the disadvantages of both proposals. The impetus and intent of these proposals is to provide the best education possible to the students of UH-Hilo, as well as to elevate the quality of higher education on the Big Island and within the State.

The purpose of this Act is to request the legislative reference bureau to conduct a study that evaluates and examines:

- (1) The effects of retaining UH-Hilo as part of the UH system and exploring alternatives to improve the current status and condition of the existing UH-Hilo; and
- (2) The feasibility and effects of establishing UH-Hilo as an independent institution that is separate from the UH system.

SECTION 2. The legislative reference bureau shall conduct a comprehensive study that evaluates and examines the following two tracks:

- (1) The effects of retaining UH-Hilo as part of the UH system and exploring alternatives to improve the current status and condition of the existing UH-Hilo; and
- (2) The feasibility and effects of establishing UH-Hilo as an independent institution that is separate from the UH system.

SECTION 3. The legislative reference bureau shall conduct a study that evaluates and examines the effects of retaining UH-Hilo as part of the UH system and exploring alternatives to improve the current status and condition of the existing UH-Hilo. The study shall include, but is not limited to:

- (1) The problems and concerns currently faced by UH-Hilo that impede or hinder efforts to improve the educational quality of its institution under the existing UH system;
- (2) The advantages and disadvantages of UH-Hilo remaining as part of the UH system;

- (3) The perceived obstacles and drawbacks of UH-Hilo existing under the current board of regents of the UH system;
- (4) A progress report of the obstacles faced to facilitate and achieve articulation among UH-Hilo, UH-Manoa, and the other institutions of the UH system;
- (5) Actions and opportunities to improve communications, coordination, and the relationship between UH-Hilo and the existing UH system;
- (6) Strategies to improve the quality of education, status, and condition of UH-Hilo within the existing UH system;
- (7) A comparison of the funds allocated to UH-Hilo versus other campuses of the UH system;
- (8) A review of issues related to whether structural changes within the existing UH system could achieve similar results as compared to creating a separate university; and
- (9) Other matters deemed relevant to this study.

SECTION 4. The legislative reference bureau shall conduct a study that evaluates and examines the feasibility and effects of establishing UH-Hilo as an independent institution that is separate from the UH system. The study shall include, but is not limited to:

- (1) Policy implications on other entities, including the community colleges, Hawaii Community College, UH-West Hawaii, UH-Manoa, and UH-West Oahu, if UH-Hilo were to become a separate university;
- (2) Implications on the development and execution of state higher education policy, including the need for separate governing boards of regents;
- (3) The need for and costs of expanding core programs, academic units, support services, and additional physical facilities to operate a separate institution;
- (4) Impact on collective bargaining for public employees;
- (5) Potential impacts upon retention and recruitment of faculty and staff;
- (6) Potential impacts upon enrollment, transfer, and articulation of course credits within the UH system;
- (7) A cost and impact analysis, and economic assessment of establishing a separate UH-Hilo;
- (8) The advantages and disadvantages of an autonomous UH-Hilo from the UH system;
- (9) A description of coordination and cooperation, if any, between an independent UH-Hilo and the UH system, to continue existing programs, resources, and activities between the two entities;
- (10) The impact on existing programs, resources, and functions under a separate UH-Hilo;
- (11) The effects on student enrollment, student admission, academic standards, and school administration and operation, under a separate UH-Hilo;
- (12) An assessment of the progress and effects on student achievement and learning of other states with dual university systems;
- (13) Recommendations for statutory amendments and other legislative actions necessary to establish a new state university at Hilo;

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- (14) Student, faculty, and the overall campus-community response to establish a separate UH-Hilo campus that is independent from the UH system; and
- (15) Other matters deemed relevant to this study.

SECTION 5. All offices, administrators, faculty, and staff of the UH system shall cooperate and support the legislative reference bureau in the conduct of this study including:

- (1) Designating contact persons authorized to speak for each entity; and
- (2) Providing data, statistics, cost and workload estimates, position statements, and any other data and information in the form requested by the legislative reference bureau in a timely manner.

SECTION 6. The legislative reference bureau shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the legislature twenty days prior to the convening of the 1993 regular session.

SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved June 12, 1992.)