



## **Final Update and Report on the UH Promise Bill**

**MAY 1, 2017** > On April 26, 2017, the Conference Committees<sup>1</sup> appointed to tackle the UH Promise Bill deleted from the agenda HB 1594<sup>2</sup> that was previously scheduled for April 27, 2017. This action prompted Leeward CC Faculty Senator Raymund Liongson to call the office of Rep. Angus L.K. McKelvey, chair of the House Higher Education Committee (HED), and inquire about the bill's deletion from the agenda. He also conveyed the students "disappointment with and feeling of betrayal by the Hawaii legislature at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour," the latter having previously signaled consistent alignment with the students' call and testimonies in support of the UH Promise bills.

### **In the budget**

Rep. McKelvey, however, explained that while the UH Promise Bill is not advancing to the Office of the Governor, the proposed UH scholarship program is not dead as "it is in the budget." Not wanting to risk a veto by the governor, the legislature agreed to put in the budget \$1.8M to start the UH Promise Program. This amount is equivalent to the estimated "unmet cost needs of students in the community colleges." HB 1594, which was to cover unmet direct cost of qualified students enrolled at **all** the campuses of the University of Hawaii, would require an estimated \$12M.

The UH Promise Bill will be reintroduced in the next session.

### **BOR Guidelines**

The HED chair explained that upon approval of the budget by the Governor, it will be up to the UH Board of Regents to determine how the \$1.8M will be awarded to the students. He assured that this budget item is restricted to what it is intended for – UH Promise Scholarship Program.

### **Summer Legislative Training**

Wanting to see an education bill "by the students, for the students," Rep. McKelvey offered to provide a legislative training for students at the Hawaii State Capitol this summer. Training would include crafting of a bill, following through an introduced bill, actions to take at certain development periods of a bill, etc., until it is signed into law. Faculty Senator Liongson agreed to recruit interested students and coordinate with the legislature for this workshop. Having shared this idea with some students, a good number have already signified interest in the summer legislative training.

### **Legislative Acknowledgement**

Hawaii legislators have repeatedly acknowledged the students' involvement (particularly the Leeward CC KASAMA students) in pushing for the UH Promise Program. The students launched their campaign with a rally on February 3, 2017, and sustained it with waves of written and oral testimonies at the State Capitol.

The Leeward CC Faculty Senate, through the Legislative Relations Committee, also submitted written testimonies in support of the UH Promise Program.

**PHOTOS**

**Leeward CC Student-led Rally in front of the Hawaii State Capitol (February 3, 2017)**



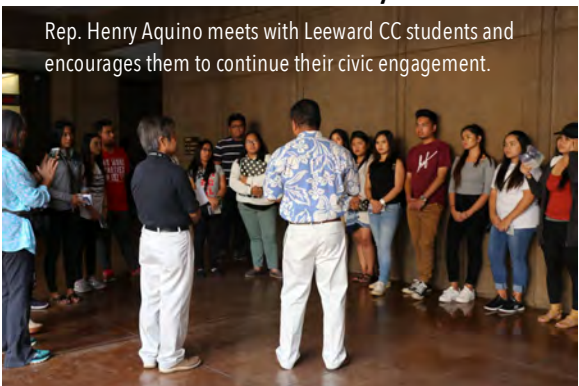
Their message is clear and unmistakable. "Higher education should not be a debt sentence!"



Students made their placards in the classroom.



**Leeward CC Students testify at the Hawaii State Capitol in support of the UH Promise Program**



Rep. Henry Aquino meets with Leeward CC students and encourages them to continue their civic engagement.



Leeward CC and Early College students wait to give their oral testimonies before the Senate Ways & Means Committee.



Leeward CC students pose with the House Finance Committee members and UH President David Lassner.

**End Notes**

- 1 House Conferees: Rep. Angus L.K. McKelvey, Rep. Sylvia Luke Co-Chairs; Rep. Mark Hashem, Rep. Justin Woodson, and Rep. Lauren Matsumoto. Senate Conferees: Sen. Kai'alii Kahele, Chair; Sen. Kalani English, Co-Chair; Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, and Sen. Michelle Kidani.
- 2 HB 1594 is the House version of the UH Promise Bill which was to establish the "University of Hawaii Promise Program to provide scholarships for the unmet direct cost needs of qualified students enrolled at any campus of the University of Hawaii system or any community college campus."