

**LATE**

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator David Y. Ige, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF DECISION MAKING

DATE: Thursday, February 21,  
2013  
TIME: 9:00 a.m.  
PLACE: Conference Room 211

Testimony IN SUPPORT

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, Members of the Committee:

I write today in strong support for SB 1273 as a private citizen.

The Academy for Creative Media was formally approved by the University of Hawaii Board of Regents in December 2003 as a progressive, 21<sup>st</sup> century program that recognized both the talent of our students in developing creative media intellectual property and the promise of a new and vibrant industry for Hawaii. The Legislature and the Governor concurred with the establishment of the program by providing 14 FTE positions, almost all of which were utilized at the Manoa campus. Initial programmatic funds came from the Chancellor's office at UH Manoa as well as numerous private donors, among them several UH alumni. Today the ACM Manoa program ranks among the fastest growing majors in the history of the UH System and has more candidates for classes than can be accommodated.

Looking to the future, ACM was designed a decade ago to be more than just a "film school" at one particular campus. Taking advantage of technological shifts that made it economically feasible to embrace the fields of cinema, animation, video game design, special effects, social media, and smart phone applications meant the opportunity for a new model of education that was inclusive and collaborative. Though telling our own stories to the broadest possible audience is an essential part of ACM's purpose, the program was founded on the belief that Hawaii's unique geographic isolation and post-plantation, tourism-based economy could finally be countered and augmented by a manufacturing industry based in ideas, created through computers and digital cameras, and exported through broadband for global distribution. It was intended as a catalyst of industry and in fact many of ACM's graduates have remained in the islands working full

time with established film and television productions or starting their own digital media companies.

Most importantly, ACM was based on the idea that all students throughout the UH System should have available to them the opportunity to pursue the skill sets taught in creative media classes that are essential in the knowledge-based workforce that drives America's innovation economy. Indeed, in developing ACM ten years ago, it was already clear that many of our most promising students in the field were coming from some of our most at risk communities, driven by programs like Waianae High School's Searider Productions. Today, there are over 80 such programs throughout the DOE from elementary through high school levels and more at our private schools. Only a fraction of them will be able to attend ACM if it continues to be limited to a single campus.

Thus, when the BOR approved the founding language of ACM, the minutes from the December, 2003 meeting (posted January 15, 2004) noted:

*The ACM will engage all of the campuses within the University of Hawai'i system and will work collaboratively across the system, drawing upon programs, faculty, and students system-wide.*

*ACM seeks to establish a globally competitive media studies program in Hawai'i, with instructional programs that span the entire academic spectrum, from certificates to associate, baccalaureate, masters, and eventually doctoral degrees. Because of the challenges associated with building a media school from the ground up in the 21st century, ACM's initial strategy is to leverage existing resources and faculty assets across the ten-campus University of Hawai'i system. By identifying and coordinating the media studies efforts of all ten campuses, ACM has the opportunity to open interdisciplinary channels of cooperation and information exchange between colleges and programs, thereby reinforcing existing strengths and creating new pathways and infrastructure for future endeavors.*

*The academic programs of ACM will be production-oriented programs, wherein students are systematically involved in creating original intellectual property for portfolio, research and exhibition purposes. Visualization increasingly cuts across all disciplines including society's vested interest in techno-scientific issues, storytelling and concept development. ACM seeks to foment successive generations of cultural creators and innovators who produce compelling narratives for a global audience. This request is restricted to the entity itself and not the content. All academic programs shall be subject to normal faculty and administrative reviews prior to obtaining the Board's approval of their establishment, as prescribed in policy.*

*ACM will be a system-wide endeavor for fostering a progressive and collaborative environment for students, faculty, campuses and departments, while effectively interfacing with global academic, technology and commercial economies. Initially, students will receive credit and degrees, where appropriate, through existing programs. New programs will be developed and approved via established Board of Regents' procedures and processes.*

Educational achievement is largely aspirational. Students need to believe in themselves and that what they are learning will make a difference in their lives. Technology – both

the hardware and software that are the tools for generating creative IP and the broadband connections that move both unfinished and finished product from developer to the market – have allowed our students to work in the global entertainment economy.

Broadband connects us to the new economy in ways that ships and planes cannot. Creative intellectual property only requires that we harness the natural talent of our students; it doesn't need endless access to greater capitol, the importation of raw materials and the physical shipping of finished goods, vast tracks of land or resources, physical dislocation that threatens our environment, or the relocation to the mainland in success.

If you've heard of the TED movement, which stands for Technology, Entertainment, and Design, you can think of the goals of ACM as being very similar.

ACM was designed as a collaborative effort made possible by the generous vision of this Legislature, the University of Hawaii, alumni including Roy and Hilda Takeyama and Jay Shidler, and local companies like Servco, ABC Stores, the Ko Olina Foundation, the Campbell family and even some friends in Hollywood.

But it really works because the students understood what ACM is all about – telling our own stories and creating jobs, right here in Hawaii as part of the global economy. Now that ACM has been successfully incubated at the Manoa campus where it is over-subscribed, it's time to realize the original intent of this legislature and the BOR and develop the program at other campuses throughout the UH System where it is desired by faculty and students. SB 1273 is an important tool in the intended and necessary expansion of ACM to best serve our community and our future.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify today and urge your support for SB 1273.

Chris Lee  
Founder and Director  
Academy for Creative Media  
University of Hawaii System

Manoa Innovation Center  
2800 Woodlawn Drive, Suite 165  
Honolulu, HI 96822 USA

Phone: (808) 956-4578  
Fax: (808) 956-8061