



SAVE UH/STOP UARC
above all nations is humanity

Wednesday May 18, 2005
COMMUNIQUÉ

Three weeks ago, the Save UH/Stop UARC Coalition took the extraordinary step of non-violent civil disobedience to expose a fast-track, backdoor campaign to establish a center for secret weapons-related Naval research at UH. The administration has been working to these ends since September of 2002. We have exposed ethical flaws and social costs of the proposed UARC, which would have been concealed by an administration in too much of a hurry to get hooked on a new fix of military funding.

We share another vision of UH – the one laid out in the 2002 Strategic Plan. We dare to imagine a Hawaiian place of learning that honors indigenous culture and values and chooses research that puts humanity above nation and war machine. We are determined that our university builds on Hawai'i's unique history and global position to deepen democracy and social justice and to develop new models of respectful, sustainable community – just as the UH Strategic Plan calls for. No amount of lies and bureaucratic doubletalk can alter the fact that a UARC enveloped in weapons-related research directly contradicts the letter and spirit of that Plan. The battle over the UARC is a struggle for the soul of our university.

Interim President David McClain was given the chance to demonstrate his respect and good faith by honoring his pledge to make the UARC decision process fair and transparent. It was on this basis that we agreed on May 4th to end our week-long occupation of Bachman Hall. However, Dr. McClain has let us down by throwing that chance away. He has done this in two ways.

- (1) He pledged to support our request for the release of all relevant documentation concerning the UARC, but now hides behind lawyers to deny us the very

transparency he promised. We know, and he knows, that the administration is stonewalling our request for documents, in violation of deadlines specified by Freedom of Information rules and regulations. Dr. McClain could have used the power of his position to acknowledge this bad faith and make it right. Instead, he has chosen to endorse it and has compromised his office by failing to cut through the legalistic runaround. By his failure to end the obstructionism, the university is in violation of the spirit of the law. We are certain, however, that UH administrators will eventually be compelled to comply with state and federal laws and rules. We hoped for better from him, but we are exposing his maneuver for what it is.

The documents trickling out due to our freedom of information requests have already yielded shocking revelations. The public has been told repeatedly that UARC will be used to fund innocent research. The following is from the Manoa Chancellor's Frequently Asked Questions webpage:

“The technical program at UH-Manoa will emphasize fundamental and applied research, engineering design and development, and technical support to the Navy in four areas.”

This is sanitized language, whitewashed and de-boned for public consumption. But one of the few documents released shows the stark reality behind these words. In a just-obtained April 16, 2003 letter from Manoa Chancellor Peter Englert to Chief of Naval Research Admiral Jay Cohen, Mr Englert says that the UARC will “facilitate testing, rapid prototyping, and eventual production of sensors, weapons, and command and control systems.” Weapons has a clear meaning, and the legacy of Agent Orange at UH is a warning for all people of conscience; also dangerous is the phrase ‘command and control,’ which means that our University under UARC will become a center for the prosecution and planning of war, increasing the dangers of again becoming a military target.

(2) We requested the Interim President to acknowledge truthfully that a full, fair, and open consultation process cannot take place as long as the Administration continues to push forward with the UARC. They have never stopped spending money from our university budget and utilizing valuable staff time to lobby intensely, from the halls of the state capital to the editorial rooms of newspapers. Nor has the administration stopped its discussions and negotiations with the Navy. The administration fears a truly open process to debate the UARC because it knows that process would reveal everything that is wrong with this proposal. Instead, they are banking on this time and money to build up momentum so that the Board of Regents will find it difficult to turn down the contract that comes out of it. This is business as usual for the University. Deals are done in secret and in advance, and the illusion of open consultation is thrown over later to dress it with legitimacy. There can be no legitimacy for a UARC that will make our university part of the assembly line for weapons production.

We expected the Interim President to show good faith and stop this relentless forward momentum. Negotiations and conversations must stop in order for a legitimate and fair consultation process to take place. And negotiations should not begin until after a fair consultation process has been completed. But, Dr. McClain's failure now makes it clear that he is pushing forward just the same, and is counting on momentum and mounting spending for the promotion of UARC to secure Board of Regents approval in October. Hundreds of thousands of public dollars have been spent on pro-UARC consultants, and thousands of staff-hours have been diverted to sell the proposal. Meanwhile, no effort has been made to inform the public and the university about the negative impacts of UARC. Our goal has been to open up this process to public view and will continue to expose these actions for what they are: old school, obstructionist, and anti-democratic. We will also expose the UARC for what it is — a research unit engaged in weapons development.

The Save UH/Stop UARC Coalition will continue to organize over the summer and monitor the UH administration. Our message is being heard. In just twenty days, we have

gathered more than 1500 petition signatures and received hundreds letters of support and solidarity from throughout the world. The undergraduate student government, representing 12,000 students, recently passed a resolution opposing UARC. This is the beginning of a movement willing and ready to defend our school, communities and ‘aina from the UARC and other forms of militarization. This movement does not accept business as usual at UH.

When we left Bachman Hall, we made it clear we would return if needed. Should we decide more civil disobedience is our best remedy, we will perform it, as before, with care and respect, in the highest interests of our university, our island home, and our global family. Humanity is above all nations.

Mahalo & Aloha ‘Aina,

Save UH / Stop UARC Coalition