



SAVE UH/STOP UARC

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Save UH / Stop UARC Coalition

Opposition to UARC increases as final decision looms

Concerned students, faculty, staff, and community members continue to expose the harms of a University Affiliated Research Center (UARC) at the University of Hawai'i

MANOA, HAWAI'I – As reports of a new contract between UH and the U.S. Navy begin to surface, opposition to the proposed Navy-UARC at UH continues to grow. Students, faculty, staff, and community members are concerned about the threats this new institution for weapons research poses to the public's health and safety. As part of their continued effort to inform the public about the risks of a Navy-UARC, the Save UH/Stop UARC Coalition will host a rally today, September 7, 2005 at the Campus Center on the UH-Manoa campus from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm. Concerned students, faculty, staff, and community members are encouraged to attend, ask questions, and learn more about what it means to have a Navy-UARC at UH.

“The decision whether to bring a Navy-UARC to Hawai'i is one that should be resolved by everyone in the community, not just those who stand to profit from it,” said Coalition member Kamaka'aina Seipp, a Hawaiian Studies student at UH-Manoa. “Unfortunately, Interim-President David McClain has not made a good faith effort to keep his promise that the UARC decision would be an open and public process.”

The Save UH/Stop UARC Coalition brought concerns about a clandestine proposal for a new UH weapons research program to the community's attention on April 28, 2005, when they entered Interim-President David McClain's office and conducted nonviolent civil disobedience by refusing to leave for seven days. The occupation was prompted by the administration's persistent failure to adequately consult with the public about the proposed Navy-UARC and the egregious lack of transparency in the decision-making process.

The Interim-President admitted during the occupation that the Navy-UARC decision was “prematurely” brought to the Board of Regents in November last year. At that Board meeting, UH officials attempted to gain Board approval of the Navy-UARC proposal without any significant public input, oversight, or consultation.

The administration continues this trend of backroom dealings, by negotiating a draft Navy-UARC contract without public input, as recently revealed to the press by UH Vice-Chancellor for Research Gary Ostrander.

In negotiating the end of the occupation, on May 3, 2005, the Interim-President promised to do several things to address the administration's 'old boy' tactics. The Interim-President promised to provide the public with all documents concerning the development of a Navy-UARC at UH. Although a few documents were released last week, not all documents were provided, most notably, the improperly-negotiated draft contract with the U.S. Navy.

The Interim-President also promised in May that both opponents and proponents of the UARC would have an opportunity to testify at a Board of Regents meeting before a decision is made and that the Board would not decide the UARC issue before October 1st. In a surprising move, all Board meetings from now until January 2006 will be held on the neighbor islands. Undeterred, Save UH/Stop UARC Coalition members from throughout the state are organizing to attend these meetings, beginning with the upcoming September 15-16 session on Kaua'i. Kaua'i is the location of UH and Department of Defense Agent Orange development, as well as the Pacific Missile Range Facility, a site of proposed Navy-UARC related projects.

The Interim-President shifted the responsibility of deciding the Navy-UARC issue to the newly appointed Manoa Chancellor Denise Konan. Chancellor Konan replaced Peter Englert, who abruptly left office in June after the occupation ended. Englert is widely criticized for his handling of the UARC issue.

Chancellor Konan said that she will base her decision on the Navy-UARC at UH on the Manoa Faculty Senate's position. The Manoa Faculty Senate will hold their vote on September 21, 2005. In preparation for this vote, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee convened an Ad-Hoc Committee to collect information about the proposed Navy-UARC. This faculty committee agreed that more information, including a copy of the contract long-sought by Coalition members, must be released to the public before any informed decision can be made.

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