TESTIMONY ON HOUSE RESOLUTION #64

Request the President and Board of Regent of the University of Hawaii to Maintain its Policy of not Engaging in Classified Research

Presented Before the House Committee on Higher Education and the Arts

13th Legislature

April 3, 1986

By

Vincent Z. Peterson
Professor of Physics
and Vice-Chairman of the
Manoa Faculty Senate's Executive Committee

The State House committee is already aware that the Manoa faculty is overwhelmingly opposed to any change in policy which would permit classified research on the campus. The 1970 policy statement adopted by the Board of Regents prohibits classified research on campuses; this statement also provides for a mechanism for faculty review of borderline cases through the then existing Academic Freedom Committee of the Faculty Senate. Over the years this policy has worked well, although the advent of the faculty union (UHPA) brought about the demise of the Academic Freedom Committee.

The recent campus discussions on classified research came about because of the administration's desire to re-examine the old policy in view of the recent shift in "research" funding: namely, an increasing fraction of R&D money now goes into classified defense projects. Dr. Matsuda's memorandum to President Simone did not suggest on-campus classified research be allowed, but rather that an off-campus facility be provided where UHM faculty members could consult. However, this proposal "to re-examine policy" reopened the vigorous debate as to the pros and cons of classified research, on- or off-campus.

The response of the Manoa Faculty Senate was (a) to refer the matter to the appropriate standing committee, and (b) to ensure full and fair debate on the issues involved. The Committee on Academic Policy and Planning, chaired by Professor Alfred Levy, did an exceptionally thorough job of studying available materials and soliciting faculty opinion. (A copy of their report is attached.) Input included reports of the experience of other universities faced with this issue and the various solutions reached. The recommendation of the Committee, endorsed by the Senate Executive Committee, and approved overwhelmingly (36 to 1) by the Manoa Faculty Senate at its January 29, 1986, meeting, was to continue the existing policy of prohibiting classified research on campus. In addition, the Committee specifically recommended that
the Academic Freedom committee of the Manoa Faculty Senate be reconstituted and charged with the responsibility of providing faculty recommendations to the University President on borderline cases. Lack of such a committee in the past is alleged to have led to failures to adhere strictly to the Regents' 1970 policy.

A strong argument in favor of prohibiting classified research on campus, besides the fundamental contradiction between secrecy and the traditional university "open pursuit of knowledge," is the fact that leading research universities (such as Stanford, Harvard, Berkeley, Cornell, Wisconsin, etc.) have kept classified research off campus and yet have provided the community—private enterprise and government-sponsored projects—with access to university talent. In participating in off-campus consulting, at the same time these same universities ensured top priority to their fundamental mission of providing quality education and concentrating on basic research.

A clean-cut example is that of Stanford University, which has succeeded in providing both outstanding education and research while stimulating high-tech industry in Silicon Valley. The Stanford policy on classified research is simple: (1) Stanford will not accept any contract which involves a commitment to do classified research, either on or off campus; (2) faculty members may consult up to four days/months, with any outside organization but may not use any Stanford facilities in the consulting operation. This policy is strictly enforced, and closely monitored by a faculty committee which has more than mere advisory powers. In developing the policy Stanford found it necessary to completely divorce itself from Stanford Research Institute; "SRI" has no link to Stanford, but many faculty members consult at SRI.

We members of the Manoa Faculty Senate feel that our recommendations are sound, and we hope that President Simone will implement them. As far as "high tech" in Manoa Valley is concerned, there is plenty of leeway for that if the economic climate and managerial talent is available in Hawaii.

The subject resolution is very much appreciated by majority of those in the Manoa Faculty Senate who strongly supported the findings of our Committee on Academic Policy. We urge its passage with the understanding that implementation is a university matter.