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Anti-UARC protesters hold hands outside of Bachman Hall during the occupation of Interim President David McClain's office last spring. An unfinalized version of the UARC contract was released to the public Friday, October 7.

File Photo - Tony Blazejack  
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## The UARC case may be closed to UH administrators

By Mimi Sharma  
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The proposed establishment of the Navy University Affiliated Research Center, which would be involved in classified research, has polarized our university and left many people uncertain of the issues.

However, one thing is clear. While the university administration has insisted that it is open to our input and that nothing yet has been signed, the fact remains that negotiations have proceeded in secret since 2002 and "as far as they are concerned" it is a fait

accompli.

Gary Ostrander, vice-chancellor of research, promoted a business management plan during a Faculty Senate meeting on Sept. 21. Interim President McClain still has not seen fit to release the documents he promised to the group that occupied his office last spring. Also, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin revealed the Manoa Innovation Center, designated as the administrative headquarters of the proposed UARC, is "already being renovated for securing classified information with installation of sensors, surveillance cameras and safes."

But the university administration has consistently refused to discuss the costs and implications of a UARC to the educational mission of the University "a mission that is the university's primary, if not sole, purpose and responsibility to the community it serves. Ostrander pointedly said during his one-hour presentation and discussion that he would confine his remarks to the financial. During meetings held last spring, then-Chancellor Peter Englert stated that ethics have no place in the discussion.

The same administration that hides behind the skirts of Mammon, the force that drives people to become rich without regards to others, developed the 2002 Strategic Plan that promised to respect our

university as a Hawaiian Place of Learning, "to uphold the values of malama'aina (living in harmony with the land) and aloha and to reflect compassion for all people." The same plan called for academic freedom and intellectual rigor because "the meaningful pursuit of knowledge is possible only in an atmosphere committed to the unfettered expression, discussion, testing and proof (or disproof) of any idea." To date, not a single administrator has addressed whether weapons development, secret classified research and expanding ties with the military is consistent with our mission and purpose.

Despite this cloak of silence, growing numbers of faculty, students and members of the community have become disenchanted with what is being rammed down our throats and have raised the points concerning our mission and purpose time and time again. The 81 member Kualii of Native Hawaiians, created by the university administration and Native Hawaiian supporters across Manoa, voted unanimously against UARC last spring. ASUH also passed a resolution urging the abandonment of UARC plans. The report of the Faculty Senate committee on UARC has also raised the mission and purpose issue.

These issues should be debated. A forum that will allow students, faculty and community to be able to voice their opinions and be taken seriously is needed. The university needs a brave administrator who is willing to listen with an open mind and not toe the party line.

Voices have been left out of the conversation about a UARC. Missing are the views from a tradition of indigenous resistance to American control over Hawai'i, including a long-standing independence and demilitarization movement. Those protesting UARC have grown in strength, but they have yet to be given the respect they deserve.

Missing also is a vision of the role of a public university and the impact of this increasing militarism on the way that it carries out its mission. Dwight Eisenhower's prophetic warning over 44 years ago, urging the country to avoid the arrogance of power and to guard against the unwarranted influence of the military industrial complex, rings true today. A university, he believed, must remain a fountainhead of free ideas and scientific discovery. He felt that government contracts should not become virtually a substitute for intellectual curiosity. More specifically, Eisenhower warned, "the prospect of domination of the nation's scholars by federal employment, project allocations and the power of money is ever present."

However, from the administration's point of view, the situation is far less complex; it merely represents business as usual. Ignored is the possibility that a UARC could make our university a cog in the

assembly line of weapons production. Perhaps no clearer symbol of the relationship between a fortress America and a fortress UHM exists than the unprecedented action of placing security guards at and closing off Bachman Hall last spring, ordered by the chief administrator of this university.

The "war on terror" is being used to militarize our education system. A chief method in the implementation of the military has been the selective use of government funding. According to the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, UHM military grants have increased more than five-fold between 2000 and 2004. This has created a chilling climate on campus for free and open discussion. There are scares as to what views are permissible with taxpayer funds and an implied lack of patriotism attributed to people expressing non-conforming ideas. This flies in the face of the primary role of public higher education, which is to sustain a citizenry that can actively engage in reasoned and informed decisions, creating options for public action.

An informed public is the key to a democratic society. Institutions of higher education are central to the production of knowledge and open dissemination of information in society. Tyrants and demagogues thrive on ignorance, and universities are crucial arenas for the informed critique of society and its policies and for the critique of conventional wisdom and normative views.

Let those who see utility in the proposed UARC come to the table and openly confront the educational and ethical considerations that a university must bring to bear in its deliberations about the research they engage in and the sources that support it.

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