

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA
2465 Campus Road, Campus Center 211A
Honolulu HI 96822

Senate Resolution 09-16

IN SUPPORT OF THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OMBUDS OFFICE AT THE MĀNOA CAMPUS

BE IT ENACTED BY THE UNDERGRADUATE SENATE:

- WHEREAS, the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (ASUH) Senate is the elected body representing approximately 14,000 full-time classified undergraduate students; and,
- WHEREAS, the University of Hawaii at Mānoa (UHM) currently does not have an ombuds office; and,
- WHEREAS, the UHM currently has offices that reflect a commitment to promoting a “safe, nonviolent, non-discriminatory community” and these offices focus solely on discrimination related concerns¹; and,
- WHEREAS, the UHM has an academic grievance policy to address academic- related disputes between faculty and students²; and,
- WHEREAS, this institutional exclusion of workplace concerns not relating to discrimination in policy and organizationally fosters an environment where problems potentially go unheard, untracked, and unresolved; and,
- WHEREAS, an ombuds office would provide an easy first point of contact for anyone (students, faculty, staff, community members, etc.) with concerns to receive help and support with informal mediation and referrals to appropriate office(s); and,
- WHEREAS, an ombuds office will provide the chancellor an unbiased, routine feedback mechanism regarding the university communities' adherence to published policies; and,

¹ See President Lassner's email to the UH system dated September 1, 2015 (Announcement ID number 1441164719-17715); also see <http://www.hawaii.edu/offices/eo/coordinators.html> for current list of coordinators.

² http://www.studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/downloads/academic_grievance/Academic_Grievance_Procedures.pdf

WHEREAS, to be independent, an ombuds office should not fall under the control of any other Executive level administrator so as not to undermine the relationship of the ombudsperson with the campus chancellor; and,

WHEREAS, the vast majority of Research I universities have an ombuds office, and all but one of UHM's peer institutions have an ombuds office³; and,

WHEREAS, in the 2015 State Legislative Session, House Bill (HB) 96 and Senate Bill (SB) 325 called for the appropriation of funds to establish and operate an ombuds office at the Mānoa campus; and,

WHEREAS, the public support for HB 96 and SB in last year's state legislative session indicates a growing desire for the establishment of an ombuds office on campus; and,

WHEREAS, the ASUH recognizes that an ombuds office must not duplicate or undermine preexisting conflict resolution procedures, but serve to help people understand the functions of these different offices and services, and to provide informal mediation; and therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the ASUH urges the Interim Chancellor to establish an ombuds office on campus with readily accessible specialists; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the ombuds office must be independent, impartial, and confidential in order to best serve students, faculty, and staff; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the staff of the ombuds office shall include one executive ombudsman, one junior specialist, and one administrative supportive staff; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the ombuds office should report directly to UHM's Chancellor and, when appropriate, to the President of the UH System; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the ombuds office should draft annual reports regarding, but not limited to, the number and nature of issues brought to the office, demographics on users of the office services, and feedback on systematic issues and recommendations to address them; and,

³ See Matsunaga Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution for supporting documentation. Of UHM's nine peer institutions only the University of Utah at Salt Lake City lacks an Ombuds office, though the processes may be covered under some other office.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Interim Chancellor should use the published standards of the United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) as a guide in establishing this office⁴; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, all applicable policies and procedures should be updated to include workplace related concerns not pertaining to discrimination as a valid reason for seeking redress; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, these ombuds office should be adequately resourced and financed as part of the campus base budget so as to ensure its permanence; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that since the ASUH recognizes that changes affecting the campus budget take time, that the Interim Chancellor, may as he sees fit, appoint interim officials to act in the capacity of ombudspersons but interim appointments should be no longer than one calendar year; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be sent to: the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents Chair Randy Moore and Members, President David Lassner, UHM Interim Chancellor Robert-Bley Vroman, UHM Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Reed Dasenbrock, UHM Interim Vice Chancellor for Students Lori Ideta, UHM Interim Dean of Studies and Student Housing Services Director Michael Kaptik, UHM Graduate Student Organization, and Ka Leo O Hawai'i.

ROLL CALL VOTE TO ACCEPT SENATE RESOLUTION 08-16

Aye(s): Vice President Kamoshida, Treasurer Takara, Secretary Tagaban, Senator-at-Larges Callihan, Dela Cruz, Mitsui, Nishihara, Senators Aki, Barrow, Baxa, Bui, Chen, Enriquez, Hinshaw, Ikeda, Iwasaki, Kim, Lao, Lawi-an, Lopez, McLaury, Omokawa, Ryan, Sevilla, Simeroth, Tacey, Willis **[27]**

Naye(s): [0]

Abstention(s):[0]

Introducer: Roxie-Anne Kamoshida, Vice-President

⁴ <http://www.usombudsman.org/site-usoa/wp-content/uploads/USOA-STANDARDS1.pdf>