

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

In the Senate
Nov 27, 2024

Senate Resolution 02-25
For Special Order

ASUH IN OPPOSITION OF THE SEIZURE OF CSO FUNDS

BE IT ENACTED BY THE UNDERGRADUATE SENATE:

WHEREAS, the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Senate is the elected body representing approximately 14,000 full-time classified undergraduate students; and,

WHEREAS, per Statute [§304A-2257], “University of Hawaii student activities revolving fund” (a) There is established the University of Hawaii student activities revolving fund into which shall be deposited all funds assessed as compulsory student activity fees and collected by the University of Hawaii on behalf of chartered student organizations and student activity programs of the several campuses of the University of Hawaii system. All revenues received by chartered student organizations and student activity programs from student activities and programs, except those revenues to which other special funds have prior claim, shall also be deposited into the revolving fund. (b) Separate accounts shall be maintained for each chartered student organization (CSO) and student activity program. Funds from the accounts may be withdrawn and expended by each respective chartered student organization or student activity program for any purpose that it deems necessary and proper to carry out and achieve its educational responsibilities, programs, and related activities...; and

WHEREAS, in compliance with the statute, revenue from the University of Hawaii student activities revolving fund has historically been deposited into separate accounts for each UH Mānoa chartered student organization for the purpose and function the fund was created; and

WHEREAS, on June 4, 2024, a memo from Vice President Kalbert Young outlined the initiative to redistribute interest income earned on investments of all Tuition and Fees Special Funds (TFSF) to be assigned to a UH system and/or Campus level account under the President's Control starting July 1, 2024; and

WHEREAS, on September 30, 2024, a memo from Mānoa Business Officer Sandy French identifies funds that are to be impacted and exempt at the Campus level; and

WHEREAS, all CSO accounts that are not attached to a bond or debt service are targeted to be impacted; and

WHEREAS, using FY24 interest income records across CSO accounts as a guide, the aforementioned System and/or Campus level account will receive an estimated total of \$193,996.34 from student activity fees; and

WHEREAS, annually, during UHM CSO budget processes, interest income from cash in CSO revolving fund accounts is used to cover annual expenses incurred by CSOs; and

WHEREAS, the CSOs affected by this seizure of funds, starting July 1, 2024, have not been approached nor consulted with about the change in the legislature's purpose and function of these funds nor the impact of this seizure on CSO operations; and

WHEREAS, as of November 27, 2024, there is no record of interest income deposited into the impacted CSO accounts from July 1, 2024 through October 31, 2024; and

WHEREAS, as indicated in the current University organization chart, two Mānoa CSOs have dotted line consultative relationships with the UH President but still no consultation occurred; and

WHEREAS, student activity funds in CSO revolving accounts accrue interest that is invested into funding student activities through its internal processes and based on student needs and interests; and

WHEREAS, the CSO's affected by the seizure of funds actively use its funds including interest accrued in their accounts to provide student support and perpetuate student growth, student activity and student wellbeing on the UH Mānoa campus and to an extent, Hawaii as a whole; and

WHEREAS, CSOs and CSO-initiated programs encompasses a multitude of learning opportunities, empowering environments, and overall student success; and

WHEREAS, this initiative is unacceptable and perpetuates the disruption of CSO planned events and programs that ultimately benefit and empower students at the UH Mānoa campus; and

WHEREAS, seizing any funds from CSO accounts interrupts each CSOs ability to function and support student initiatives; and

WHEREAS, Food Vault Hawaii, a pantry initiated by ASUH to assist UHM students experiencing food insecurity is funded by the partnership of three Mānoa CSOs and the Student Involvement and Leadership Development unit in the Office of Student Life and Development; and

WHEREAS, the FVH account is one being identified for interest income seizure; and

WHEREAS, student scholarships are provided annually by ASUH to recognize and assist students with the rising costs of their education; and

WHEREAS, any seizure of ASUH funds would impact the amount of scholarships ASUH is able to provide and positive impact ASUH is able to make on students; and

WHEREAS, in line with Section 7-3 a(2) of BOR policy, ASUH and another CSO at UHM offers funding opportunities to Registered Independent Organizations, that host events to enrich, educate and empower students; and

WHEREAS, any seizure of ASUH funds would impact the extent to which RIOs can be supported in their creation of student life for fellow students; and

WHEREAS, through our collective efforts, experiences, and respective understandings as CSOs and full-time undergraduate students in attendance at UH Mānoa, students benefit from out-of-classroom learning environments, opportunities, and programs such as those provided by the CSO experiences that cannot be replicated in for credit academic classes; and

WHEREAS, in the September 30th memo from the Mānoa Chief Business Officer, the Energy Systems Development Fund is identified for exemption, however like with the student activities fund, it does not explicitly state it should retain its interest income; and

WHEREAS, seizure of any funds from CSO account endanger each CSO from maintaining the level of support offered to UHM students and interrupts each CSOs ability to increase support; and

WHEREAS, it appears that the UH administration considered seizure of funds during fiscal year 2025, back at the end of fiscal year 2024 (June), and the Mānoa Campus administration took three months to decide how to implement the UH system's decision (September), neither levels opting to consult before making decisions and implementing said decisions; and

WHEREAS, CSO's were informed about the seizure and shortly thereafter offered approximately two weeks in November, in the middle of mid-term projects and examinations, to deliberate and respond about the implementation of the seizure of funds; and

WHEREAS, according to UH Mānoa Chief Business Officer Sandy French, the purpose of the seizure of funds is to create a uniform treatment of interest income across the UH Mānoa campus; and

WHEREAS, however, no information has been provided as to the specific initiatives that justify the seizure of student activity funds from revolving accounts created for a legislatively approved purpose; and

WHEREAS, it is the norm that University Presidents and Campus Chancellors (or CEOs) engage in external fundraising, from the state legislature as well as public and private donors to support the University system, campuses, and to fund their special initiatives, and this seizure of funds portrays a potential inability of the UH President, Mānoa Chancellor (or CEO) to effectively fundraise on behalf of the University and/or the Campus for special projects; and,

BE IT RESOLVED, ASUH Mānoa expresses its deep concern with this initiative set by the Vice President of Budget and Finance/CFO on June 4, 2024, and implemented by the Mānoa Chief Business Officer on September 30, 2024; and

BE IT RESOLVED, ASUH Mānoa expresses its deep concern with the lack of consultation from the UH administration, specifically from the UH President/Mānoa CEO, VP of Budget and Finance/CFO, Mānoa Chief Business Officer with the impacted entities, such as the Chartered Student Organizations that receive its funds by statutory law prior to implementation; and

BE IT RESOLVED, ASUH Mānoa expresses its deep concern that the UH administration failed to do its due diligence to understand the potential impact to the CSOs and its initiatives for and on behalf of students before seizing funds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ASUH Mānoa requests that the decision to seize interest income from the CSOs be reversed, that a letter of acknowledgement be issued from the UH President/Mānoa Chancellor-CEO for seizing these funds and undermining CSO authority of funds under our purview without consultation, and a follow-up meeting in order to reach a collective consensus on this matter.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be sent to:
the University of Hawai'i President/University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Chancellor/CEO,
University of Hawai'i Board of Regents, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Provost,
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Vice Provost for Student Success, University of Hawai'i
Vice President for Budget and Finance/CFO, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Chief
Business Officer, UH Mānoa CSOs, Ka Leo O Hawai'i, and the Mānoa Mirror

Introduced by:

D Sasaki, Senator at Large

Maurice Crabbe, Vice President