

UH MĀNOA GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION  
2445 Campus Rd., Hemenway Hall 212  
Honolulu HI 96822

A Resolution Urging the Re-establishment of a Manoa Ombuds Office

- WHEREAS*, The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) currently does not have an ombuds office in place to handle conflict and grievance resolution; and,
- WHEREAS*, while UHM currently does have offices on its campus that reflect a commitment to promoting a “safe, nonviolent, non-discriminatory community” these offices focus mostly on discrimination related concerns<sup>1</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS*, UHM has an academic grievance policy to address academic-related disputes between faculty and students<sup>2</sup>; 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 would provide the UHM Chancellor an unbiased, routine feedback mechanism regarding the university community's adherence to published policies; and,
- 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 or the system president; and,
- WHEREAS*, the vast majority of Research I universities have an ombuds office, and all but one of UHM's nine peer institutions have an ombuds office<sup>3</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS*, the public support for SB 325 and HB 96 in last year's state legislative session indicates a growing desire for the establishment of an ombuds office on campus; and,
- WHEREAS*, the UHM Graduate Student Organization (GSO) 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 ; therefore,

<i>BE IT RESOLVED,</i>	that the UHM GSO urges the Interim Chancellor to establish a full ombuds office on campus with readily accessible specialists; and
<i>BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,</i>	that the ombuds office must be independent, impartial, and confidential in order to best serve students, faculty, and staff; and,
<i>BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,</i>	that the staff of the ombuds shall include at least one executive ombudsperson, one junior specialist, and one administrative support staff; and,
<i>BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,</i>	that the ombuds office should report directly to UHM's Chancellor and, when appropriate, to the President of the UH System; and,
<i>BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,</i>	that the Interim Chancellor should use the United States Ombudsman Association's (USOA) published standards as a guide in establishing this office <sup>4</sup> ; and,
<i>BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,</i>	that 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,
<i>BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,</i>	that these ombuds office should be adequately resourced and financed as part of the campus base budget so as to ensure its permanence; and,
<i>BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,</i>	that since the UHM GSO 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,
<i>BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED</i>	that copies of this resolution shall be sent to: UH Board of Regents, UH President David Lassner, UH Mānoa Interim Chancellor Robert-Bley Vroman, UHM Interim Vice Chancellor of Students Lori Ideta, UHM Dean of Graduate Education Krystyna Aune, Anne Smoke of the Matsunaga Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Associated Students of the University of Hawaii (ASUH) President Kelly Zakimi, Ka Leo O Hawai'i, UHM Student Housing Services Director and Interim Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students Mike Kaptik, the UHM Women's Center and LGBT Office, Co-coordinators of Outreach at the UH Counseling and Student Development Center (CSDC) Joel Gaffney and Hannah Im, Director of KOKUA Ann Ito, Judicial Affairs, the Office of Gender Equity, the Department of Public Safety, Office of Student Life and Development, the Native Hawaiian Student Services, VCAA Reed Dasenbrock, and VCAFO Kathy Cutshaw .

Presented to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Graduate Student Organization for approval on October 22, 2015 by Ed Hoogland, GSO GA Representative and GSO Representative to the Student Caucus and by Bret Polopolous-Meredith, Vice-Chair of the UH Student Caucus and GSO Vice-President

Approved by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Graduate Student Organization on October 22, 2015 with \_\_\_ votes in favor of approval and \_\_\_ against.

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/eeo/coordinators.html> for current list of coordinators.

2 As an example see UHM's Academic Grievance Procedures (AGP) at [http://www.studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/downloads/academic\\_grievance/Academic\\_Grievance\\_Procedure.pdf](http://www.studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/downloads/academic_grievance/Academic_Grievance_Procedure.pdf). Also see referenced policies A9.920 and E1.203 for procedures supporting discrimination related grievances. We are aware of Interim EP 1.204 and considered its content in the writing of this resolution.

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.

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