



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

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SCR 31  
URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII  
TO PREPARE A PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE BACCALAUREATE DEGREES  
IN MARINE SCIENCES

Statement for  
Senate Committee on  
Education  
Public Hearing - April 10, 1991

By  
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SCR 31 requests the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii to initiate, in a timely manner, a baccalaureate degree in the marine sciences at both the Hilo and Manoa campuses.

Our statement on this resolution does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The development of undergraduate programs in marine science has been a topic of controversial discussion at universities, nationwide as well as in Hawaii, for many years. Our own reviewers are divergent in their opinions on the merits of this resolution.

Those who oppose the establishment of such a program believe that the only jobs available to potential marine science majors would be technician type jobs with minimal opportunity for either employment or advancement. They also express reservations that an undergraduate major in marine science would not provide adequate academic training for graduate work in a related field. Opponents also cite the existing program in marine sciences presently available as a major equivalent under the auspices of the Liberal Studies program.

Proponents argue that 70 percent of the earth's surface is covered by the sea and more than 60 percent of the world's population lives within a few miles of the coast, hence it would seem reasonable to expand the educational opportunities in marine sciences to strengthen the understanding of a region that is so pervasive to so many. As for the lack of possible career opportunities in the marine sciences they counter that most of the established baccalaureate degrees such as those in philosophy, history,

political science, or English do not automatically lead to specific "careers." Furthermore, depending on the courses required for the BA degree in Marine Science, a student might be well suited to graduate school in any one of several natural or physical science fields.

As presently drafted the first resolve directs the University of Hawaii to initiate a baccalaureate degree program in marine sciences. It is our opinion that the responsibility for the initiation and direction of academic programs within the University should be guided by the University education process, namely the University. The legislature may quite rightly request consideration and evaluation of certain programs but should not dictate their adoption. We suggest that this resolve be amended to request the University to undertake an objective review of the merits of an undergraduate degree in marine science and to report back to the 1992 legislature.