

# Ethnic Studies faces grim reaper

It would be easy to sit in the stands and cheer for Ethnic Studies, blaming its proposed dispersal on an unsympathetic Administration. Neither the problem nor its solution, however, lies entirely in decisions made at Bachman Hall. The future of Ethnic Studies at the University, like many other programs, depends on money--and priorities.

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When Manoa Vice-Chancellor Geoffrey Ashton announced a recommendation last semester to disperse Ethnic Studies courses among various departments, UH administrators already faced a budget problem--even before the Governor's cut.

With the 1977-1978 budget cut from \$114 million to \$102 million, and legislators eyeing an additional three per cent reduction, the threat to Ethnic Studies grows even more severe. Although a new review is now being conducted, even the most glowing recommendation could hardly save the program when women's athletics, nursing, law, social work and business administration also face cut-backs.

Ethnic Studies students, faculty and supporters forged an unusual vehement protest to the Chancellor's recommendation last semester, complete with rallies and a Bachman Hall sit-in. One would expect more of the same next year--that is, if the present scrawny budget passes the legislators.

Therein lies the root of the problem and a potential solution. The University community will have to convince State officials and legislators to change the priorities which have allowed budget cuts in higher education to progress this far.

Legislators claim that money saved from higher education and other areas of the State budget will be used to generate more jobs to remedy Hawaii's unemployment crisis. However, their plans would result in the termination of faculty positions in Ethnic Studies and other programs. Rep. Charles Ushijima already stated that the proposed three per cent cut would come from an across the board personnel cut. This hardly seems like a solution to the unemployment problem--particularly in the already flooded area of jobs in education.

Hawaii has historically been a state with an exceptional emphasis on higher education. The University of Hawaii has grown from a rather provincial college with a Mainland reputation of "Surf University" to a school with a varied curriculum to match Hawaii's ethnic diversity. Quality in higher education has brought the UH increases in federal grants and subsidies.

Resorting to a skin-and-bones budget would cause more problems than it would solve. Legislators should think twice lest the University be forced to take a giant step backwards. The abolition of programs as popular as Ethnic Studies is hardly a mark of progress.