

# Ethnic studies' proponents hit

# back

By PETER ROSEGG

Advertiser University Writer

Charging a "gross distortion of fact" and "subtle racism," proponents of the University of Hawaii's ethnic studies program yesterday "vigorously condemned" a recommendation that the program be disbanded.

Davianna McGregor-Alegado, acting director of the program, was responding to the recommendation made last week by Geoffrey Ashton, Manoa vice chancellor for academic affairs.

The People's Committee to Defend Ethnic Studies will hold a rally on campus for Friday at 12:30 p.m. to support the program. After last Wednesday's announcement by Ashton, the committee also drew up a list of demands to be presented to University President Fujio Matsuda after the forthcoming rally and march to Bachman Hall, the administration building.

The demands, which the committee hopes will be answered by Dec. 1, are that the administration:

- Accept the statements of some 40 students, faculty and representatives of labor, religious, ethnic and community organizations who spoke in favor of ethnic studies at an Oct. 20 meeting.

- Recognize the People's Committee to Defend Ethnic Studies as the legitimate body representing the proponents of the program.

- The committee is composed of faculty members Stephen Boggs and Marilyn Harman; students Clifford Hayashi and Herbert Lee; community representatives Maxine Kahaulilio and Emile Makuakane; and Marion Kelly and McGregor-Alegado from the program.)

- Set a definite date for administrators to discuss the future of the program with supporters.

- Agree not to make a final decision on ethnic studies during the Christmas break while students are not on campus.

But the more basic demand of the program's supporters is that Matsu-

da and the Board of Regents reject Ashton's recommendations and instead make ethnic studies a permanent part of the University's academic program.

Ashton recommended that the program's 12 courses be divided up among such departments as American studies, history and anthropology but that ethnic studies cease to exist as an entity because of "a lack of sufficiently rigorous academic supervision in the program."

Cost was not a factor in making the decision, Ashton said last week, but only academic considerations such as easy-grading, low-ranking faculty, a lack of ties to other academic departments, undue control by "inexperienced" student lab leaders and academic credit for student involvement in political and social controversies on and off campus.

If ethnic studies are divided up, McGregor-Alegado said yesterday, the courses will have very low priority in the new departments. The courses will suffer, she said, because of inadequate funding and lack of teachers committed to the ethnic studies motto, "Our History, Our Way."

In a statement, she said Ashton's report "smacks of subtle and hidden racism — if not institutionalized racism."

"Ethnic studies is an expression of the nationwide movement of oppressed minorities in this country in the great civil rights movement of the 1960s for equality and freedom," she said.

"Here in Hawaii the University existed for almost 70 years before an academic program was created that taught the history and contributions of the people of Hawaii — the native Hawaiians and various immigrants of many nationalities — who built Hawaii."

Backers of ethnic studies see any attempt to disband the program — which was kept alive in 1972 only after two sit-ins and other supporting activities on campus — as a racist-oriented attack, according to

McGregor-Alegado.

She also accused the Ashton report of distorting the facts to destroy the program under guise of "academic criticism." For example, she said, the Ashton report compared the present program to a 1970 proposal even though that proposal was abandoned and a new one adopted in 1972.

The real reason the administrator is opposing the program, she said, is "we have been challenging their authority and their decisions on campus and in the community. They are especially unhappy about our community orientation."

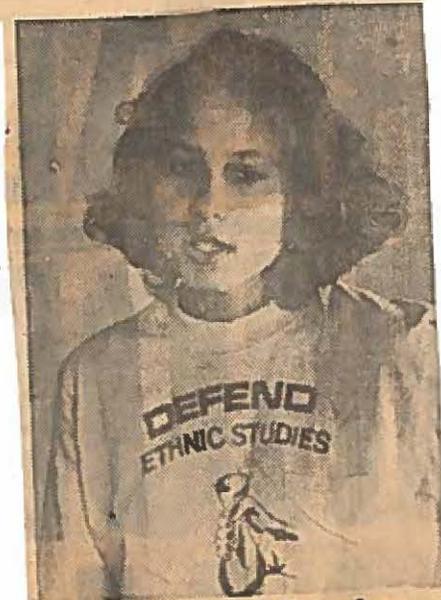
McGregor-Alegado also replied to a number of other matters brought up in the Ashton report.

- Easy-grading. "We don't believe grades should be a punishment. There is no competition in our classes. If all the students complete the work according to our standards of evaluation they can get A's."

- No connections to other departments. She says the program has ties to the women's studies program, the Philippine studies program, the Hawaiian studies program and the College of Education, which uses ethnic studies research to prepare school curriculums. "We are the only place where high school teachers can come for help preparing their own ethnic studies materials."

- Low-ranking faculty. "There is a policy that as a provisional program none of our faculty may be consider-

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