

UH Ethnic Studies tiff

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In a move that will likely lead to a turbulent spring semester at the University of Hawaii, the Manoa chancellor has recommended that the Ethnic Studies Program be abolished and its 12 courses assigned to other academic departments.

The program, established in 1970, has been on a provisional status since 1972 when a pair of three-day sit-ins on campus by students, along with support from community groups and faculty, blocked a move to abolish it.

A decision on the future of the program must be approved by the Board of Regents by next June. Anticipating that the chancellor's recommendation would go against the program, its proponents last month held a rally and a public meeting at which 45 speakers including students, faculty and ethnic, religious and community association leaders talked for four hours in favor of keeping the program.

Manoa Chancellor Douglas S. Yamamura is vacationing on the Mainland, but in announcing the recommendation yesterday, Geoffrey Ashton, vice chancellor for academic affairs, said:

"Our study finds that there is a lack of sufficiently rigorous academic supervision in the program — in grading policies, selection of faculty and integration with other academic programs, among others.

"We find evidence of interest in the courses, however and in order to continue to provide them under more desirable academic conditions, we are recommend-

ing that the program's courses be transferred into appropriate academic departments and that the major continue to be offered through the University's liberal studies program."

The recommendation will go to the ethnic studies program, the College of Arts and Sciences faculty and dean and the Manoa Faculty Senate for comments before being forwarded to University President Fujio Matsuda who will make a final recommendation to the regents.

Ashton noted that the chancellor's recommendation "differs from that of previous reviewing bodies." The Arts and Sciences faculty said the program "fulfills a meaningful and important function," and the Faculty Senate Program and Curriculum Planning Committee already has recommended the program be continued as a "permanent, established department."

At a public meeting last month, speakers suggested that the University administration is opposed to Ethnic Studies mostly because the students as part of their courses have been involved in political and social controversies on and off campus, such as Waiahole-Waikane, the Chinatown evictions, H-3, Ota Camp and the naming of "Porteus" Hall.

On the matter of community involvement, the chancellor's report says, "The University administration is concerned that the students and faculty of Ethnic Studies who tend to speak with one voice and espouse one stance on any issue have not given due distinction to the program as an academic subject requiring objectivity in contrast to their individual interests as citizens of the community."

"In summary," the report says, "we welcome student and faculty involvement, but as citizens and certainly not for academic credit."

Also in the academic area the report states that composition of the Ethnic Studies faculty changed over six years from one full professor, one assistant professor, two instructors and one lecturer to six instructors and two lecturers this year, plus 15 volunteers and 28 student lab leaders.

None of the present faculty has formal ties to other established academic departments, the report noted. Also, decisions for the program are made "democratically" by single votes of everyone on the program's payroll so student lab leaders outvoted the faculty four to one.

"This particular structure of rule by the inexperienced is not usual in Manoa departments," the report says.

The report notes that Ethnic Studies gave 76.1 per cent 'A' grades as opposed to 33.8 per cent in departments such as anthropology and sociology. In all, 96.5 per cent of Ethnic Studies grades were either 'A' or 'B' and the grade 'F' was not given.

Also, according to the report, most students are in courses about their own ethnic group.

The chancellor's report found that student interest in the courses, while still strong, has declined from a high of 1,317 registrations in 1972-73 to 800 plus this year. However, since only 26 students in six years have said they wish to major in Ethnic Studies, the report concludes the program as a separate academic entity is not needed.