

Ka Leo O Hawaii

hearing solicits support for Ethnic Studies

by DENNIS CALLAN
staff reporter

Forty-five speakers testified for nearly four hours in support of the UH Ethnic Studies Program during a public hearing Wednesday in the Campus Center Ballroom.

The hearing was held to show University Administration and students reasons for keeping the ES program alive, Davianna McGregor-Alegado, ES director, said.

ADMINISTRATION officials have been considering cancelling the program.

Many speakers at the hearing strongly praised the ES program for its concern with a wide variety of social issues, including racism, oppression of working people, Waiahole-Waikane, TH-3, Chinatown, Ota camp and tourism.

It was argued that the Administration is trying to eliminate ES because of its involvement in these issues.

SPEAKERS included students, faculty and community members who applauded the ES program for combining academic learning with direct student participation in community struggles around the Island.

Following are some excerpts from the hearing.

The Faculty Senate Committee Report, presented by Oliver Lee, political science professor, read in part, "We strongly support the Ethnic Studies Program and urge its adoption as a permanent, established department.

"**ACTIVISM** and protest will create political enemies, but it may be among the most educational processes known to the human race."

The ASUH resolution, presented by Senator Jeff Cadovana, read in part, "Be it resolved that the ASUH Senate fully supports a continuing ES program for the UH system. . . The senate strongly recommends that the program retain the curricular and instructional autonomy, with active participation of students, faculty and community."

Lana Kaopua, from the Revolutionary Student Brigade, said, "The real thing the Administration hates is that ES is very often responsible for moving people into struggle. The Administration is scared of students moving into action and challenging their authority."

DAN BURHANS, political science professor, said, "There are not better resources generated for the countless social issues of Hawaii than the ES program. This information is of immediate value now, and many of us will appreciate it later as historical."

Rep. Neil Abercrombie, a member of the State House Higher Education Committee, said, "In this odd circumstance of feudal capitalism we have here in Hawaii, it is absolutely vital that people understand not only their ethnic heritage, but understand it in a context which makes clear the class struggle which is presently underway.

"ES has done what people thought was impossible to do; combine a profound political commitment with the kind of scholarly foundation that gives us the opportunity to be full human beings.

"**THE** Administration claims the ES program does not have a 'sufficiently scholarly' approach. What they're really talking about is politics. That's what they're afraid of."

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Bishop Yoshimaki Fujitani, from the Hawaii Buddhist Council, emphasizes the community participation of ethnic studies at a recent meeting in support of the program.

Walter Ritte, a leading advocate of Protect Kahoolawe, said, "There is a paper curtain around this University and your head gets buried in it.

"ES is dangerous to this curtain because it provides a puka and then truth can come in."

REPRESENTATIVE Carl Takamura, a member of the State House Higher Education Committee, said, "In light of Hawaii's unique social and political history and its relationship to many of the problems facing us today, we feel it is essential that there be a program devoted to the research and instruction of our multi-ethnic Island community.

"The story must be told from the perspective of the grass roots people themselves and this is what has distinguished the ES program."

Bishop Fujitani, from the Hawaii Buddhist Council, said, "For several years, students and instructors from ES have participated in temple-related cultural and educational projects, oral histories, panel discussions, photo displays and research, sharing their information with our community."

THE STATEMENT of the Filipino-American Student Association read in part, "The concept of learning by doing, by going out into the community, has made peo-

ple aware that students are concerned with problems of the community.

"By doing so, students nullify the myth of the University as an ivory tower institution. In the process, relations between the University and the community improve."

Mel Hiroka, from the Oahu Filipino Council, said, "Should the program be terminated by the Administration, it will be a contributing factor in the failure of UH to perform its responsibility and moral obligation to provide the educational needs of the community it purports to serve.

ITS TERMINATION would also run counter to the recent announcements of top government officials that the traditions of the various ethnic groups which make Hawaii a unique state should be preserved and nurtured."

Nadine Gilbert, from the People's Coalition for Welfare and Employment, said, "The Administration is down on ES because the program is teaching 'dangerous' ideas and taking them into the community.

"ES has been showing that the root cause of poverty, racism and sexism is an economic system controlled by a ruling class that tries to keep us divided so we won't have power to fight back."