

Committee meets today

Dissension wracks Ethnic Studies program

By MARIAN GREEN
Of the Emerald

Lack of support for the Folklore and Ethnic Studies (FES) program could kill it, says program director Barre Toelken.

Toelken says a Nov. 24 public meeting on the program "provided us with an overwhelming vote of no confidence."

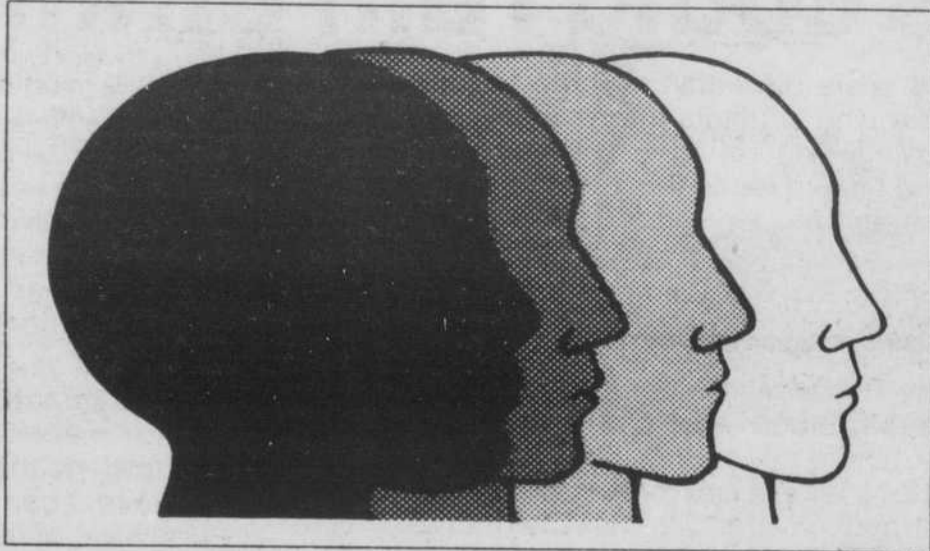
And if support for the program is not shown during the Ethnic Studies Committee meeting today at 3:45 p.m. in Room 180 PLC, Toelken says he and other folklore professors volunteering time and energy to the program will consider undoing the merger that created it.

The move would leave the program with no director, no full-time faculty members and only enough funds to support two graduate teaching fellows and one half-time secretary.

"It's not sour grapes, but if we get nothing but complaints, we'll let someone else do it," Toelken says.

Toelken, who was named FES director when the program was created earlier this fall, says two incidents at the public meeting may have damaged student and faculty support for ethnic studies.

At the meeting, GTF Colleen Fong criticized Ethnic Studies Prof. Sharon Sherman's teaching methods, texts and ethnicity definition.



Emerald graphic

Some of the criticisms were "unjustified," Toelken says. While he respects Fong for airing her dissatisfaction, Toelken says he wonders why she didn't first take her remarks to FES professors so the courses could be changed.

Fong criticized one book Sherman uses — "Custer Died For Your Sins" — as being "storylike" and in some way "diluting or trivializing" ethnic studies, Toelken says.

Toelken defends use of the book. The course is introductory, and the book's anecdotal style may help professors "to take a kid from Fossil, Oregon and get him to start thinking seriously about the problems of ethnic minorities."

Sherman isn't using texts that

previous Ethnic Studies professors haven't used, he adds.

"That's the way it's always been taught over the past several years. To blame the books on the instructor is unjustified."

But Hispanic Student Union member Daniel Alvarado disagrees with Toelken.

"Just because that's the way it's been done, doesn't mean it shouldn't be changed," Alvarado says. "If I do something wrong, are you going to turn around and do it too?"

Alvarado says he's not against merging the two disciplines, but he opposes teaching ethnic studies from a folklore perspective, which he says differs from ethnic studies.

"Folklore is the study of cul-

ture. You can study Mexican culture, but you won't understand the Chicano experience."

Toelken says a broader definition of ethnicity, like the one used in Sherman's ethnic studies course, is important for comparison and evaluation.

Toelken says he was disturbed by an announcement at the meeting that the Asian-Pacific American Studies Association, a national organization that promotes ethnic studies, passed a resolution criticizing the University's merger of ethnic studies and folklore.

He says the executive secretary of the association told him

the ballots weren't counted — though the secretary said the resolution looked like it would pass — and that no one but the A-PASA has authority to announce passage of a resolution.

"I don't think they meant to do any damage, but by students passing out the resolution they threatened the existence of ethnic studies," Toelken says.

Acting Provost Richard Hill says the program should be given a chance.

"I believe it's wise to give the current arrangement a fair trial," Hill says. "I'm not sure the various interested parties involved have come up with alternatives."



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House caucuses pick leaders

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats, having selected their leaders for the coming Congress, are turning their attention to proposed rules that could pose problems for the incoming administration of President-elect Ronald Reagan.

But as the vote nears on several of the proposals, Democratic leaders are showing signs of a willingness to compromise.

House Republicans, meanwhile, were continuing their own caucus after deciding a series of close races for their leadership jobs Monday.

The organizational caucuses,

composed of each party's members in the new Congress, spent most of Monday picking leaders.

Democrats re-elected as their candidate for House Speaker Thomas O'Neill of Massachusetts and for majority leader Jim Wright of Texas. Rep. Thomas Foley of Washington was appointed to the whip position.

Republicans selected Rep. Robert Michel of Illinois to be minority leader and Rep. Trent Lott of Mississippi as whip.

The Democrats are considering a rule to limit a favorite tool of conservatives — attaching controversial legislation to

must-pass appropriations bills. Wright said there "may be some reasonable accommodation we can make" to curb the practice.

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