

Activist Davis warns students of racism

SEATTLE (AP) — A new racism is infecting American college campuses, reflecting society's ills and promoting them, black activist Angela Davis has told students at the University of Washington.

"The new racism doesn't wear a sheet or carry a club. It's more likely to be dressed quite stylishly. It wears pins (pin-stripes) and sits at a computer," Davis told students at Saturday's Race Relations in Academia conference.

"We've come a long way in the last 30 years," she said. "Or have we really?"

The conference was sponsored by the UW African-American Graduate Student Association, re-established this year to attract more black graduate students.

About 750 students gathered for discussions on how to recruit and retain minority students, how racism is expressed in an academic setting and other related issues.

Davis, a professor of ethics studies and women's studies at San Francisco State University, is a longtime activist for blacks' and women's rights.

"We've cited this racism on campus, and administrators argue it's simply a deviation from the normal state of affairs," she said.

"The academic establishment refuses to accept that it mirrors larger society, including (biases) such as homophobia and classism," Davis said.

"It refuses to acknowledge that it plays a pivotal role in the reproduction of all these ideologies."

Campus racism is displayed in smaller paychecks for administrators of minority programs and a disparaging attitude toward black studies, Davis said.

At San Francisco State, she said, faculty members have advised students to drop out of black studies on grounds that it would look bad on resumes or would be considered an easy academic program.

Black studies were also trivialized at that school when faculty started a new political science course on black politics although such a class already was offered in the black-studies division, Davis said.

And racism occurs on campus in more subtle forms, Davis said.

The use of the term "underclass" in sociology courses, for example, encourages the notion that some people "don't deserve to be assimilated into social classes," she said.

Davis achieved notoriety in 1970 when she was accused of aiding radicals in a sensational 1970 courthouse shooting in Marin County, Calif. She was acquitted of the charge and ran for vice president on the Communist Party ticket in 1980.

She has written an autobiography and two books on race and women, and is working on a book about African women's contributions to music.



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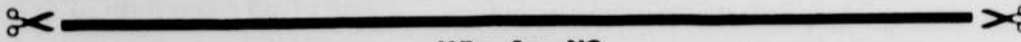
John Moseley, University vice president for research, explains progress being made on the Riverfront Research development project to Gov. Neil Goldschmidt, who was in Eugene on Friday.

Photo by Sean Poston

Details magazine

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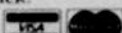
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