

**ACADEMIC SENATE
OF
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

AS-3380-19/FA/FGA/EX
May 16-17, 2019

IN SUPPORT OF ETHNIC STUDIES PROGRAMS IN THE CSU

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) affirms our commitment to Ethnic Studies as curricula that deepen the educational experiences of all CSU students and benefit our society; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU shares the concerns of Assemblymembers Weber, Gloria, and Medina regarding the importance of Ethnic Studies curriculum in the CSU while expressing our opposition to legislative intrusion in the CSU curriculum; and be it further

RESOLVED: ¹That in order to find ways to strengthen inclusive excellence in the CSU, the 2018-2019 ASCSU recommend to the 2019-20 Senate that they work in collaboration with campus senates to revisit the Ethnic Studies Task Force Report to establish recommendations for Ethnic Studies curricula through faculty-driven processes of shared governance; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU distribute this resolution to the CSU Board of Trustees, CSU Chancellor, CSU campus Presidents, CSU campus Senate Chairs, CSU Provosts/Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, CSU campus articulation officers, the California Faculty Association (CFA), California State Student Association (CSSA), Emeritus and Retired Faculty and Staff Association (ERFSA), Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges, Academic Senate of the University of California, Assemblymember Weber, Assemblymember Medina, and Assemblymember Gloria.

***RATIONALE:** How is it that in 2019 American Society remains drowning in a sea of racist, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, bigoted, and xenophobic culture? One important reason is a lack of understanding about the/each Other. As we are all aware the best way to understand and contextualize our lives is through education. As faculty at institutions of higher education – the CSU system – we*

¹ See recommendation 1.4 (and it's corresponding footnote) in the CSU Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies <https://www2.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/diversity/advancement-of-ethnic-studies/Documents/ethnicstudiesreport.pdf>

are all well aware of the value an education provides individuals and society. Biologists know we can't progress intellectually in the field if we don't understand the threshold concept of evolution. Sociologists know we won't progress in that field if we don't understand the threshold concept of the Sociological Imagination. Ethnic Studies is the field that allows us to understand society because it educates us in the threshold concept of racism. Through exposing CSU students to Ethnic Studies curriculum, and helping them over the threshold of understanding racism, we serve to empower our students to ensure they are capable and competent at standing up against racism and other forms of social injustice. This also empowers students to live fully in a global, multicultural society – to live, work and play with people who are different from themselves – the importance of this is made explicit in one portion of the CSU System mission: "To prepare students for international, multi-cultural society."² In 2018 almost 70% of the California State University student body identified as people of color and/or mixed race³. Providing CSU students with an Ethnic Studies curriculum, the CSU also provides more students with the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. This matters because students who engage materials where they see themselves reflected have improved academic performance, not just in the classes where they encounter culturally relevant curriculum, but throughout the entirety of their scholarly endeavors for the academic year in which they had engaged the material⁴.

Most students in the CSU System come from marginalized and/or underserved backgrounds. Patricia Hill Collins (2000) notes the "controlling images" of lower-class students -- particularly students of color, religious minorities, and women -- as lazy, intellectually inferior, promiscuous, socially distasteful, violent, etc. are perpetuated through continuous cultural representations.⁵ These representations are subsequently internalized by all and are perpetuated in social relations within the educational system. Ethnic Studies classes provide students with the tools to disrupt and deconstruct these internalized messages of unworthiness. Ethnic Studies courses provide the tools necessary for students to become empowered. In Sleeter's meta-analysis of Ethnic Studies impact on

² <https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/about-the-csu/Pages/mission.aspx>

³ https://www.calstate.edu/as/stat_reports/2018-2019/feth01.htm

⁴ Dee, Thomas and Emily Penner. 2016. "The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum." NBER Working Paper 21865. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

⁵ Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. "Controlling Images and Black Women's Oppression." NY: Routledge, 266-273.

students⁶, she noted that Ethnic Studies curricula decolonized the mind. It not only empowered students of color to develop a consciousness and stand up against racism, but it also empowered them to work within their communities to benefit others. It's not just students of color whose minds are decolonized. White students learn about people different from themselves and, in turn, become allies to the historically marginalized "Other" because they are exposed to different ways of understanding the world.

In his book, Theses on Feuerbach, Karl Marx wrote, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it" (65). If we wish to stop the cycle of hegemonic Othering, if we wish to stop the cycles of violence and hatred, if we wish to empower our students to think differently about the world they inherit from us, then we must support the inclusion of Ethnic Studies in the CSU Curriculum. The inclusion of Ethnic Studies curriculum will go a long way to ensure the Ivory Tower is responsive to the needs and values of our diverse student body and the communities from which we all come and provides all of us an opportunity to participate as equal partners and allies in what has always been a diverse and multicultural world. .

Approved Unanimously – May 16-17, 2019

⁶ Sleeter, Christine E. 2011. "The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review." Washington, DC: National Education Association. See also, "Report of the CSU Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies - 2016," California State University Chancellor. <https://www2.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/diversity/advancement-of-ethnic-studies/Documents/ethnicstudiesreport.pdf>