

February 22, 2021

To: All 4CD Faculty

Re: 4CD Ethnic Studies Council

To our colleagues in the Contra Costa Community College District, we would like to introduce the 4CD Ethnic Studies Council, a group of faculty from our three colleges who have Ethnic Studies expertise and who will build, support and expand the development of Ethnic Studies across our district.

As you might be aware, the state legislature recently passed [AB 1460](#) making Ethnic Studies a graduation requirement for California State University students. AB 1460 requires CSU students to take a class in one of the following four Ethnic Studies disciplines: Native American Studies, African American Studies, Asian American Studies or Latina and Latino Studies (a.k.a. La Raza Studies or Chicana/o/x Studies). There is also a strong push to pass a similar bill for the community college system ([AB3310](#), ASCCC Resolution [9.03](#) and [9.04](#)), and so it is likely that we will soon see a similar requirement for our community college students. The same is true for our public high schools. We want to be ready for these changes and be leaders for our district and the state.

As the 4CD Ethnic Studies Council, we will promote and defend Ethnic Studies, an interdisciplinary field of study with more than 50 years of scholarship. We would like to invite our colleagues, including Academic Senates, to assist in supporting and strengthening the expansion of Ethnic Studies at our three colleges to be ready to meet current and future student demand. We understand this work as an intricate part of our college's district's overall commitment towards racial and social justice. It is in this spirit of racial justice and the call to [dismantle systemic institutionalized racism](#), all three colleges should make a commitment to establish, promote, and protect Ethnic Studies. AB 1460 should not be used to dilute or weaken Ethnic Studies. Emphasized by AB3310, the ASCCC resolves that the discipline must be led by faculty with expertise or credentials in the field: "Whereas, Ethnic studies disciplines are listed in the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office's Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges handbook under "Disciplines Requiring a Master's Degree," ensuring that the professors who teach courses within these disciplines meet the required minimum qualifications."

We will support and encourage the creation of Ethnic Studies classes, including African American Studies, Chicana/o/x-Latina/o/x Studies, Native American Studies, and Asian American Studies/Pacific Island Studies classes. The 4CD Ethnic Studies Council will ensure

that existing qualified faculty can teach those courses, and will promote the hiring of Ethnic Studies specialists to teach at our colleges.

The 4CD Ethnic Studies Council will work with our respective Academic Senate Council, managers and district to develop clear guidelines on creating courses, cross-listing of courses, departmental oversight of courses, staffing, scheduling, equivalencies, and other relevant issues dealing with the implementation of Ethnic Studies and AB 1460.

What is Ethnic Studies?

According to AB 1460, “Ethnic studies are an interdisciplinary and comparative study of race and ethnicity with special focus on four historically defined racialized core groups: Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latina and Latino Americans.”

Ethnic Studies emerged out of the long struggle for racial and social justice during the 1960s. Part of the goal of creating Ethnic Studies was to move away from the deficit model of education, one which sees our students and communities as “problem populations.” Instead, Ethnic Studies (Black Studies, Chicano Studies, etc.) highlights the important intellectual, economic, social, and cultural contributions that Black, Indigenous, People of Color have made to the development of this country, while recognizing that these communities have rich intellectual traditions. There are now over 50 years of Ethnic Studies scholarship. Ethnic Studies is not only a discipline, but an epistemic and pedagogical approach that is equity driven and culturally relevant. In some respects, Ethnic Studies pedagogy is a pedagogy centered in a community of love.

It is the view of the 4CD Ethnic Studies Council that to effectively teach Ethnic Studies requires years of training and preparation along with lived experience. This means engaging existing, and when needed hiring, Ethnic Studies instructors who are not just content experts but recognize and work with the powerful linkage between psychological, cultural, political, and academic purposes of Ethnic Studies. Regardless of their race, the effectiveness of Ethnic Studies educators is hinged on their continuous reflection about their own cultural identities, their relationships with the focal ethnic communities, and the impact of a Eurocentric system on their perspectives and sense of self. Research acknowledges that being a person of color is not enough when considering effective teaching of race, racism, and racialized realities (Tintiangco-Cubales et al, 2014). While people of color are connected through a commonality of racial oppression, to access the tools needed for an Ethnic Studies pedagogy, it is important for all educators to examine the impacts of racism and colonization on their own identities, relationships with others, and understandings of education.

Ethnic Studies insists on an epistemological reordering emergent from the subjectivities of these populations. It demands a decolonial approach to curriculum and pedagogy with the potential to drive the success of our students. The ontology of the marginalized must be centered in Ethnic

Studies curriculum. It should also be emphasized that in order to qualify as an Ethnic Studies course, it is not enough to add a unit on culture or race to the existing curriculum. The point of Ethnic Studies is to go beyond this simplistic supplemental approach. Again, Ethnic Studies is not about adding “exotic” colors or flavors to the subject matter, but about centering the experiences, cultures, histories, and complex social reality of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Only faculty with advanced training in Ethnic Studies may be qualified to teach courses in Ethnic Studies. The task is then, to develop curriculum, degree programming, and establish minimum equivalencies for current and future faculty to serve the goals of Ethnic Studies at 4CD in centering inclusive excellence for all our students.

Sincerely:

4CD Ethnic Studies Council

Adrianna Simone Ph.D., Los Medanos College
Albert Ponce Ph.D., Diablo Valley College
Agustin Palacios Ph.D., Contra Costa College
Anthony Gonzales MFA, Diablo Valley College
Carolyn Hodge, Contra Costa College
Frank Ortega Ph.D., Diablo Valley College
Lisa Smiley Ratchford Ph.D., Diablo Valley College
Lorena Gonzalez MA, Contra Costa College
Sangha Niyogi Ph.D., Diablo Valley College

Appendix

CSU GE Area “F” Ethnic Studies Requirements

Listed below are the required Core Competencies of courses eligible for inclusion in CSU GE Area “F” Ethnic Studies. To be approved for Area “F” a course must have a “preponderance” of content covering these competencies:

1. Analyze and articulate concepts of ethnic studies, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, racialization, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization and anti-racism.
2. Apply theory to describe critical events in the histories, cultures and intellectual traditions, with special focus on the lived-experiences and social struggles of one or more of the following four historically defined racialized core groups: Native Americans, African Americans, Latina/o Americans and/or Asian Americans, and emphasizing agency and group-affirmation.
3. Critically discuss the intersection of race and ethnicity with other forms of

difference affected by hierarchy and oppression, such as class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability and/or age.

4. Describe how struggle, resistance, social justice, solidarity and liberation as experienced by communities of color are relevant to current issues.

5. Demonstrate active engagement with anti-racist issues, practices and movements to build a diverse, just and equitable society beyond the classroom.

Courses approved for Area “F” must have either an Ethnic Studies prefix or a prefix directly related to one of the 4 targeted ethnic groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino/a Americans or Native Americans