

October 30, 2020

CSUCES
Position on Implementation of the
Ethnic Studies Graduation Requirement

The California State University Council on Ethnic Studies has put forth its position in communications and collaborative meetings with the Chancellor's Office and the Academic Senate, CSU pursuant to the Weber Bill AB 1460's Ethnic Studies graduation requirement. It is a position evolved from extensive consideration and deliberation within the Council and with colleagues across CSU campuses. Our position is reflective of these exchanges and in alignment with most CSU campuses as represented in the various campus Senate resolutions supporting their positions. It is our position that the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement be a free-standing graduation requirement and that the Chancellor's Office proposed area of "F" in GE be withdrawn. For it is unnecessary, problematic, and counterproductive on several levels.

First, the Chancellor's proposal is unnecessary legally and structurally. It is neither stipulated nor implied in AB 1460 and thus it is neither compelling nor advisable. Structurally, it is not needed as a GE requirement, only as a graduation requirement for which the law already provides. Moreover, it is proposed without any compelling rationale. And it problematizes and complicates a simpler more effective implementation as a free-standing graduation requirement.

Secondly, the CO's proposal is problematic in its proposing to limit the Ethnic Studies requirement to lower division instead of leaving it open to both lower and upper division fulfillment possibilities. Again, there is no compelling rationale of any benefit in this. Instead, it tends to limit student flexibility in choice and denies the opportunity for a more depthful and extensive engagement with Ethnic Studies at a higher level.

Also, problematic is the use of the proposed category "F" to limit or remove category "D". This is, not only clearly detrimental to allied disciplines and colleagues, a result which we opposed, but also and again, there is no compelling rationale with it, only zero-sum assumptions. Moreover, it is the proposal of the category "F" that creates the artificial problem and thus should be withdrawn.

In addition, the proposal to make the Ethnic Studies requirement a GE requirement instead of a free-standing requirement encumbers the requirement into one of the curriculum's most complex policies, requiring an unnecessary workload on an already

overburdened faculty. Furthermore, because of these complexities, it again unnecessarily opens the Ethnic Studies requirement to possible unknown, unanticipated, and unintended consequences.

As we have noted in prior communication, we believe the best way forward is to sustain and increase the collaboration with the Council, not only as required by law, but also in rightful recognition and respect of the disciplinary expertise of Ethnic Studies faculty in disciplinary curriculum matters. Also, we likewise believe in the importance and necessity of shared governance, respect for varied conditions on campuses and flexibility in determination of implementation of the requirement. And all of the campus senates that have responded to date have opposed the changes to GE and reaffirmed these above positions.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our support for a **free-standing graduation requirement** as supported by Ethnic Studies faculty and units and several campus senates across the university system, allowing campuses to maximize its positive impact, best deploy their limited financial and faculty labor resources, and coordinate this requirement with their other campus curricula, while respecting reasonable campus autonomy, authority and responsiveness to student need.

The Steering Committee of the CSU Council on Ethnic Studies

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