

From: John-Gabriel James

Date: August 11, 2020 at 8:33:55 AM HST

To: ethnicstudies

Subject: Enlisting Support for Pacific Islander & Arab American Studies in California Curricula

Dear California Educators & Legislators:

I am sending this message in support of the movement to include Pacific Islander and Arab American Studies in California school curricula.

My name is Gabe James, and I am a resident of the Big Island of Hawai'i and an alumnus of the University of Hawai'i. I taught World, Hawai'i and Pacific Islands history at Hawai'i Community College for about six years, and also taught English as a Second Language at the same institution.

As a former teacher in the University of Hawai'i system, my students greatly and deeply benefited from learning about and becoming more aware of, the tremendous richness which modern and previous generations of Pacific Islanders have contributed to local, national and international societies across time. Such educational endeavors have prepared my students to become more in touch with how they, and their ancestors, represent an integral part of the mosaic from which local and global societies are composed, and has helped them to become knowledgeable, reflective citizens in their communities.

As the most populous state in the country, California students and the communities in which they live would be more dynamic, inclusive and enriched by encouraging educators to share knowledge of Pacific Islander and Arab American history and cultures, especially at this critical, and often divisive, transitional period of history at the state, national and global levels.

It's very important for younger students to have a school curriculum which reflects and speaks to their personal and family experience, in order to make their educational efforts meaningful and relevant to them. I sincerely hope that California curriculum developers can create a more inclusive course of study that mirrors the rich diversity of the state, for the benefit of an increasingly interconnected planet, where all of humanities' experiences need to be acknowledged, understood, celebrated, and respected.

Sincerely,

Gabe James
Pāhoa, Hawai'i