

September 14, 2020

Dear California Department of Education,

I write to you as the founding director of the Young Oak Kim Center for Korean American Studies at UC Riverside and as a Professor of Ethnic Studies at UCR. While I'm pleased to see that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is moving forward, I'm deeply concerned that Korean American studies is excluded in the model. The purpose of the Ethnic Studies requirement is to teach diversity and inclusion. Korean Americans play a significant and important role in California and the United States and should be included in the curriculum.

The Korean American community's history, identity, and involvement in major moments that defined our country, must be included. We can't discuss the 1992 Los Angeles Civil Unrest without understanding Korean Americans, their role, the racial paradigms that surrounded the community, and the ethnic conflicts that permeated the incident. Korean Americans in California also played a significant and founding role in the origins of the South Korean Air Force. The Willows Korean Aviation School and Corps. was founded in Willows, CA in 1920 and the Korean Air Force considers the school its origin. Two students from the Willows school were appointed Korea's first aviation officers. The school was established by Korean Americans who hoped to gain independence of their homeland at the time. Dosan Ahn Chang Ho, one of Korea's greatest patriots, was integral in the founding of the school and the first Koreatown in the United States.

Dosan Ahn Chang Ho lived and worked in the United States and founded Pachappa Camp in Riverside, CA in 1905. The settlement is the first organized Korean American community and is an example of the history, identity, and culture that must be taught as part of the Ethnic Studies curriculum. Koreatown in Los Angeles and in New York are fixtures of our country that are recognized worldwide. The Korean American community's political, cultural, and social activities have also helped shape our communities.

Korean Americans like Dr. Sammy Lee, Col. Young Oak Kim, and Judge Herbert Y.C. Choy should be taught about in ethnic studies. Dr. Lee was the first Asian American to win Olympic gold for the United States and he fought for the right to buy a home and successfully overcame discriminatory housing practices. Col. Kim was the first Asian American to lead a battalion in combat during the Korean War and was a leader of the 100th/442nd Nisei unit during World War II. He was also a humanitarian whose efforts to help the poor, women, and minorities through nonprofits in Los Angeles, changed lives. Judge Choy was the first Asian American to be appointed to U.S. Federal Court (Court of Appeals Ninth District) in 1974.

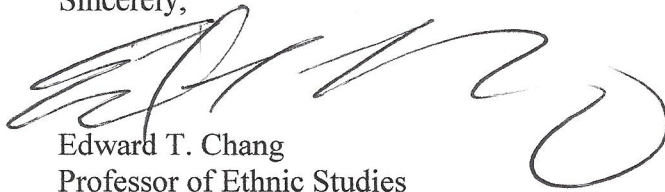
When we teach Ethnic Studies, we must not generalize communities into categories, but rather be inclusive of all of them. I've been in the field of Ethnic Studies for more than 35 years and I was part of the first graduating class of the UC Berkeley PhD program in 1990. I've taught Ethnic Studies courses since 1992 and am a tenured faculty member at UC Riverside. Over the years, my experience has taught me that we must not categorize our communities and minorities. Otherwise, we fall into a trap that once again places us in a precarious situation where we don't understand one another and can't bridge those cultural gaps.

I firmly believe that leaving out Korean Americans and their significant contributions to the United States, their history, and ethnic identity is wrong and marginalizes us. Even our Federal

**YOK Center
UC Riverside
900 University Ave.
#4031 CHASS INTN
Riverside, CA 92521**

government declared January 13 Korean American Day in 2005, after the U.S. House and Senate passed simple resolutions in support. We need to present a diverse curriculum that covers not just the major ethnic groups, but all ethnicities. Please let me know if I can provide further information and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,



Edward T. Chang
Professor of Ethnic Studies
UC Riverside
YOK Center, Director
4025 CHASS INTN
Riverside, CA 92501
951-827-1825
Edward.chang@ucr.edu