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To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Curriculum Problems/Ethnic Studies

As an educator and historian that teaches freshman and sophomore U.S. survey history courses, and race and ethnicity courses, I read the proposed curriculum and examples of modules on the state website. I find that this curriculum is truly lacking in ethnic diversity and appropriate historical context that would provide students with necessary information.

This curriculum, as it is currently written, is setting up our students for failure; students might be able to regurgitate “social justice,” or outdated ideological talking points but will not be able to provide historical context to back up their argument. This is a glaring problem, and we owe our students better curriculum and standards in an effort to dismantle white supremacy.

In my courses, a few students will come in using the phrase “heteronormative capitalistic patriarchy,” or other specific phrases, but when asked, they are unable to provide examples from history to strengthen their argument. This is not okay.

The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee is lazy in their approach to ethnic studies and demonstrates a lack of critical thinking and inclusion of all ethnicities within the landscape of American history. This curriculum reads like an elementary “diversity trope,” that only covers Blacks, Latinos, the indigenous and Asians, while excluding Jews, Armenians, Koreans, and Greeks. This is not acceptable on the part of the so-called educators, and is an embarrassment to the educational standards and curriculum of this state.

To be clear, an argument can’t be taken back 500 years with historical context, then an argument is not sound. We need to strengthen our historical arguments against white supremacists and white nationalists, and it is our responsibility to teach our students to

use history in their contemporary analysis. A list of definitions without historical context and a close reading of history is just not acceptable.

How many historians were consulted about this ethnic studies curriculum?

I expect better for our students in California.

Regards,
Dr. Dennis