

From: Sine Hwang Jensen
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 5:09 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment re: IQC Meeting Agenda Item 8

Dear Instructional Quality Commission,

I am writing to submit a public comment regarding agenda item 8 of the upcoming IQC Meeting re: the CA Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum (ESMC). My name is Sine Hwang Jensen and I am the Asian American Studies and Comparative Ethnic Studies Librarian at the UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies Library.

I have been heartened and hopeful to follow the progress in creating an Ethnic Studies curriculum during this time of immense social unrest. However, I was disappointed to learn about the CA Department of Education recent recommendations of Nov. 6 that Arab American Studies be removed from the Asian American Studies section of the Ethnic Studies curriculum and moved to the Appendix. This decision will marginalize an important field of study from its rightful place as part of the Asian American Studies section and as a part of Ethnic Studies as a whole with negative consequences to the education of Arab American students and all students. It does not reflect the core values of Ethnic Studies to provide a relevant and liberatory education centering the histories and experiences of communities of color. I write in support of the inclusion of Arab American Studies within the Asian American Studies section.

As a librarian, I work every day with educators and students in Ethnic Studies and know the important impact of Arab American Studies. As the Association for Asian American Studies has stated, "Arab American studies has been part of the broader field of Asian American studies for nearly two decades and ethnic studies since its inception 50 years ago." It is a critical part of Ethnic Studies and a key part of understanding the world we all live in today. To move this entire area of study to the Appendix not only does a disservice to students who need the critical insights and lessons from Arab American history, especially Arab American students who experience the burden of racism in their classrooms and receive little to no public education around Arab American history beyond stereotypes, but it unjustly erases the importance of Arab American Studies in American history for all students. As Luis Alejo, author of Assembly Bill 16, wrote in a recent article on CalMatters, students "needed and deserved an education that more truthfully and completely reflected the experiences and contributions of people of color. In a state as diverse as ours, our students must see themselves in their classrooms and instructional materials." I hope that the commission reconsiders the impact that this decision would have on Arab American students in particular.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments and for your work in designing an Ethnic Studies curriculum that will help us move towards a more liberatory and free world for all.

Sincerely,

Sine Hwang Jensen

Asian American Studies and Comparative Ethnic Studies Librarian

UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies Library