
From: Christine Hong
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 11:20 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [emails redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] [public comment] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear CDE,

Thank you for this opportunity to weigh in the revisions to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). My name is Christine Hong. I'm the director of the program in Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) and the co-founding director of a new Center for Racial Justice at UC Santa Cruz. I am also the co-editor of the journal of *Critical Ethnic Studies*. My training is in Asian American studies at UCLA and UC Berkeley.

This monumental initiative to get ethnic studies in the K-12 public school classrooms is long overdue, and it represents a crucial historical moment in the broader movement for racial justice.

At the same time, I am very disappointed with the revisions made to the ESMC, and I outline my specific concerns below:

- **Arab American studies and Pacific Islander studies:** You have demoted Arab American studies and Pacific Islander studies, which were originally proposed by community stakeholders to be much more complex and fuller course outlines to mere lesson plans. This is a minimization of the integrity of these fields and it is disrespectful to the communities who put forward powerful course outlines in both areas. This minimization represents a negative revision--a step backward, if you will. I heartily encourage you to honor these fields as *course outlines*, not as mere *lesson plans*.
- **Excision of "Guiding Values, Principles, and Outcomes":** The original ESMC included "Guiding Values, Principles, and Outcomes" that honored the intention of those students who, over fifty years ago, fought so hard for Third World colleges at SF State and UC Berkeley. At the heart of ethnic studies as a radical democratizing project is the inextricability of knowledge and action. This praxis is entirely missing from your watered-down revision. The "Guiding Values and Principles" must be restored.
- **Excision of glossary:** Not only does this revision dispense with the glossary but also it offensively states that self-empowerment entails helping "students learn to present their ideas in strong, compelling, jargon-free language." Ethnic studies has a vocabulary that in many cases emerged out of community struggle and political education. To dismiss that vocabulary as "jargon" is a normative recommendation that is, at bottom, racist. The language of ethnic studies has been aimed at unthinking oppression. To argue that only "standard" terms should be used is deeply problematic. The glossary is indispensable. It represents a critical vocabulary that communities and scholars of color

have developed precisely because "standard" language encodes harmful ideology. The glossary must be restored.

The original ESMC--with its full Pacific Islander and Arab American course outlines, its guiding values, principles, and outcomes, and its glossary--needs to be honored in spirit and intention. I am deeply dismayed by the revisions and I urge you to reverse these misguided revisions.

Sincerely,
Christine Hong