

From: Tovo, Finausina
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 3:14 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Levalasi Ane Loi-On; Aliu, Melissa; Wesley hingano
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to the Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Ethnic Studies Curriculum Committee:

On behalf of College of San Mateo Mana Learning Community, I am submitting comments in response to the current Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I write to express grave concerns regarding the lack of Pacific Islander AND Arab American Studies representation in the latest draft of the ESMC.

My name is Finausina Tovo. I teach, and coordinate for the Mana Learning Community at the College of San Mateo (CSM). For the last six years, the CSM Mana leadership team and I have committed ourselves to provide a Pacific studies retention program to increase the retention rates of the Pacific Islander students. Weaving together curriculum, coordination and counseling as a pathway to college success, the power that lies within our learning community is stems from our curriculum. This is why the lack of Pacific Islander AND Arab American Studies representation in the current Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is particularly urgent to me.

I have been teaching Pacific Studies through a first year college success course and I am writing this e-mail to tell you Ethnic Studies works. Because of the curriculum representation their ancestors, not only did Pacific Islanders connect to their history, they were able to connect to the history of the California and the United States. These connections fostered a sense of belonging in which they felt like they mattered, even though they seemed far from home. These connections created a sense of solidarity between Pacific Islanders and their peers who too, live on the margins of our current American society. I have seen Pacific Islander students more interested in learning other history because they understand how they may connect to it. Because of this, I have to voice my concern about the lack of Pacific Islander representation through the curriculum. Although I am not an instructor in the Arab American Studies, I do believe we connect in the commitment of wanting to seen, heard and valued in our curriculum. The way we see the world, is the way we connect to the land, water and the people around us.

I urge the CDE Curriculum Team and Instructional Quality Commission to pass an ESMC that includes Pacific Islander and Arab American studies course outlines moving forward and work with the respective communities to ensure this happens. We also demand **that the original Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) committee of writers and experts be reconvened.** This committee of Ethnic Studies scholars and teachers are the experts on Ethnic Studies curriculum and pedagogy.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. Please do not hesitate to contact me at tovof@smccd.edu to discuss this e-mail further. I am happy to make myself available.

Sincerely,

Finausina T. Tovo, M.A., Ed.D.
College of San Mateo Mana Learning Community
Program Coordinator/Instructor