

**From:** Alborz Ghandehari

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 11, 2020 9:25 AM

**To:** Ethnic Studies; Superintendent; [emails redacted]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Include West Asian/Arab American Studies in ESMC!

Dear IQC

I am an assistant professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of Utah and I received my PhD in Ethnic Studies from the University of California San Diego. I am extremely concerned that the revisions to the CA Ethnic Studies model curriculum have erased West Asian American studies, including Arab American studies, as well Pacific Islander studies. I grew up in an Iranian American immigrant family and my experiences with both racism in the US as well as my relationships with family and friends in Iran and their struggles for social justice has shaped my teaching and research as an Ethnic Studies scholar. The current curriculum draft is inaccurate with regards to our experiences and it waters down the Ethnic Studies focus on fundamental social transformation to sanitized multicultural studies. I urge you to:

1. Reconvene the original committee of writers and experts to revise the original ESMC. Ethnic Studies scholars and teachers are the experts on ES curriculum and pedagogy. West Asian, including Arab American, scholars, are the experts in curriculum that reflects our communities. West Asian and Pacific Islander studies must be included and the content written by scholars who focus on those communities and are from them.
2. Maintain the Ethnic Studies framework, a framework that is a fundamental critique of the interlocking forces of capitalism, colonialism, and racism. Do not make the curriculum about a watered down idea of diversity, this has never been what Ethnic Studies is. I urge you to include Palestine under Arab American studies. The curriculum must have a dual domestic and international frame, especially when it comes to West Asian American communities as many of us are still connected to relatives in our family's countries of origin. The ESMC must include both the racialization of West Asian Americans in the US as well as international solidarity/joint struggle with the struggles in the region to which we are connected (Palestinian freedom struggle, Iranian freedom struggles, etc). Racism, colonialism, and capitalism are transnational phenomena, and Ethnic Studies educators know how to cover all these topics in a concise and effective way for a one year curriculum.

Thank you,

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