

From: Savannah Landau

Sent: Saturday, August 1, 2020 1:43 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Superintendent; [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment Regarding ESMC and Arab American Studies

Hello,

I am a university alum making a public comment in support of the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) and Arab American Studies.

As a Jewish and Central American student, I was never exposed to Ethnic Studies until I had reached college. I did not understand the importance of the curriculum since I was not familiar with what was being taught. Little did I know, the CA ESMC and Arab American Studies helped me understand my own history and place in this world.

Since I was a student of San Francisco State University, I had the privilege to meet the students who fought to implement the curriculum and department back in 1968. Meeting them and listening to their harrowing experiences only emphasized the importance of the ESMC for all students.

Being a Central American student, I was never exposed to Latin American history that did not involve Mexico and/or Cuba. This curriculum taught me about my own history of Nicaragua and Central America, helping me understand my origins and how I ended up here. As a Jewish student, I had heard of the anti-semitism on campus, but never understood how it had anything to do with Arab American Studies. Specifically, learning about Palestine and the history of the Palestinian people helped me understand my own identity as an Ashkenazi Jew, historically and spiritually. It also helped me understand how my Central American identity is connected to the Arab American identity.

The ESMC and Arab American Studies are crucial for the minds and well-being of students to better understand their environment and themselves. Especially, in 2020 when we see the rise of alarming behaviors (i.e. racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, sinophobia, anti-semitism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.). We must build an educational system that brings more understanding and empathy in order to protect and cultivate our communities.

Thank you for your time,
Savannah Landau