

The California Department of Education received 8 submissions that contained the language below. Other identical comments may have been posted separately.

From: Jeff Leong

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:05 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] UCB TWLF Recommendations for ESMC September 2020

Dear California Instructional Quality Commission,

The State Board of Education Guidelines for Ethnic Studies specify: “Include information on the Ethnic Studies movement, specifically the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), and its significance in the establishment of Ethnic Studies as a discipline and work in promoting diversity and inclusion within higher education”.

As UC Berkeley TWLF founders of Ethnic Studies over 50 years ago, and the generations which continue our legacy, we write to ask you to:

1. Update the ESMC’s Third World Liberation Front section to better and more accurately reflect UC Berkeley TWLF’s role in the movement and founding of Ethnic Studies, our specific UCB TWLF recommendations, beginning on Chapter 1, line 262, are included at the end of this text.
2. In your official summary of public comments, it is imperative to recognize the 25,000+ individuals signed on in support of the original ESMC draft, along with over 150 community based organizations and associations in support, with combined memberships of over 600,000 people. University Ethnic Studies departments, Education departments, and K-12 school districts across the state are also in support. Significant parts of the original draft need to be reinstated in the November 2020 iteration. <https://www.change.org/p/defend-ethnic-studies-for-our-students-save-our-curriculum-at-the-ca-dept-of-ed-now>
3. Ensure all included lessons align with the Guiding Values and Principles of Ethnic Studies Teaching, which are present in the original and September 2020 draft.

Specific Recommendations for Chapter 1 TWLF section, edits integrated in text:

Beginning Line 262:

By 1968, this call was crystallized as Black Student Union members at San Francisco State College (now San Francisco State University) began organizing around the issue. Soon after, they were joined by other students, culminating with a student strike. Inspired by youth activism and organizing in the Civil Rights, Black Liberation, American Indian, Chicano, Asian American, labor, and anti-Vietnam war movements, students at San Francisco State College embarked on a strike (November 6, 1968–March 20, 1969) demanding: (1) equal access to public education, (2) an increase in faculty of color, and (3) “a new curriculum that would embrace the history of all people, including ethnic

minorities.” Led by the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF)—a coalition of students from the campus’ Black Student Union, Latin American Student Organization (LASO), the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA), the Mexican American Student Confederation, the Philippine American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE), La Raza, the Native American Students Organization, and Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA)—students refused to attend classes for five months until administrators met their demands.

At University of California (UC) Berkeley in the spring of 1968, the Afro-American Students Union (AASU) proposed a Black Studies program. The administration consistently stalled negotiations and kept deleting elements of AASU’s proposal--particularly the crucial community component. AASU was joined by the Mexican-American Student Confederation (MASC), the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) and the Native American Student Union (NASU) to form the Third World Liberation Front at Berkeley. They expanded the Black Studies program to an autonomous Third World College to be comprised of Departments of Asian Studies, Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, and “any other Third World studies programs as they are developed and presented.” Demands also included widespread recruitment of Third World students and hiring of Third World people in positions of power in every department and discipline, from Admissions to Finances. Third World control--self-determination involving students and communities--was to oversee all aspects of the Third World College and programs.

When UC rejected the TWLF demands, the Third World Strike began the longest and bloodiest strike in UC history--from January-March 1969. The Administration and State of California violently opposed the TWLF to the point where Governor Ronald Reagan declared “a state of extreme emergency” at Berkeley, with unprecedented constant sweeps and teargassing by combined forces of not only the campus police but 6 East Bay police forces, the Alameda County Sheriff’s deputies, the Highway Patrol, and even the National Guard. Despite being forbidden from having any sound system or holding mass rallies and the threat of “immediate suspension” for protesting, TWLF strikers showed up in force everyday and organized growing multinational support both within the campus and around the country.

The first Ethnic Studies entity in the US was won at Berkeley on March 7, 1969, when UC approved an Ethnic Studies Department that would evolve into a College. Thus it was also the first African American Studies (originally Black Studies), Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies (originally called Chicano Studies), Native American Studies, and Asian American Studies (originally called Asian Studies) in the country. After AAPA had formed in May 1968--originating the term and concept of Asian American--SFSU’s TWLF later broadened their original demand for separate Filipino Studies and Chinese American Studies to Asian American Studies.

On March 20, 1969 the first college of Ethnic Studies was established at San Francisco State University. Students were now able to take courses devoted to foregrounding the perspectives, histories, and cultures of African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Chicana/o/x/, Latina/o/x, and Native Americans. In early 1969, students at the University of California, Berkeley successfully launched a strike that resulted in the

creation of the first Ethnic Studies department in the country. Meanwhile, at the other end of the state, as early as 1968 students at California State University, Los Angeles and California State University, Northridge were establishing Chicano studies and Black studies departments. Soon, college students across the nation began calling for the establishment of Ethnic Studies courses, departments, and degree programs. Over 50 years after the strikes at San Francisco State College and UC Berkeley, Ethnic Studies is now a vibrant discipline with multiple academic journals, associations, national and international conferences, undergraduate and graduate degree programs, and thousands of scholars and educators contributing to the field's complexity and vitality.

Since the student movements of the 1960s, Ethnic Studies proponents have fought for the inclusion of Ethnic Studies across public schools at the K–12 level and higher education. Over the last 10 years this movement has gained substantial traction at the local level as numerous California public school districts have either passed their own Ethnic Studies graduation requirements or are implementing Ethnic Studies courses.¹⁸

At the state level, the California State Legislature has drafted and voted on several bills to help bolster support for Ethnic Studies implementation at the K–12 level, including Assembly Bill 2016, which authorized the development of this document.

Thank you for your consideration of the above.

All the best,

Jeffrey Thomas Leong

BA, 1970 (Asian American Studies Individual Major)
University of California, Berkeley