

From: Ahlam Muhtaseb

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 2:46 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Inclusion of Arab American & Pacific Islander Studies in Ethnic Studies

Dear Instructional Quality Commission

This is Dr. Ahlam Muhtaseb, professor of media studies and director of the center for Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies at CSUSB, whose research mostly revolves around Arab Studies, especially Palestinian studies. I am also an Arab Palestinian American mother of a 10-year old who attends Ysabel Barnett Elementary School in Temecula Valley. I was in the quo to speak but twice, I was kicked out of the call. I am back in line, but sending this short note just in case .

It is disappointing that a commission of the CDE, that is supposed to be for racial justice, is reducing the Arab American experience to that of pure immigration; that adds to the injustice faced by Arab Americans on a daily basis, especially in the context of coloniality, the imperial wars in the Arab World and the rise in anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia. Moreover, the comment about removing any anti-Semitic language from the proposal around Arab American Studies just confirms racist and Orientalist assumptions about Arab Americans as inherently anti-Semitic! Coming from a staff with CDE adds layers to such Orientalist racist assumption/stereotype.

In addition, it is disappointing and infuriating that such a group and curriculum depend on the alliance of two racist organizations and those are the ADL and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, two institutions involved in the continuous genocide against Palestinians. Equating any discussion of the genocide of Palestinians with anti-Semitism is anti-Semitic in itself and is just another attempt by the pro-Israel lobby coalition, including ADL, to totally erase any discussion of the genocide of yet another indigenous nation, enabled by US taxpayers' money, and that's the Palestinian one. I hope that you consult with the original committee who put the original proposal and to also consult with Arab and Muslim communities and organizations in California in support of a social justice-centered curriculum.

Thank you!

Ahlam

Ahlam Muhtaseb, Ph.D. (She/her/hers)

Professor

Communication Studies

Director

Center for Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies

California State University, San Bernardino

San Bernardino, CA