



California Faculty Association
1110 K Street
Sacramento, Ca 95814-2716

Phone: (916) 441-4848
Fax: (916) 441-3513
www.calfac.org

November 21, 2019

The Honorable Tony Thurmond
California State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 5602
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

RE: Ethnic Studies Focus Groups

Dear Superintendent Thurmond:

On behalf of the California Faculty Association (CFA), we write to express our concern with regard to the exclusion of higher education faculty from ethnic study focus groups. CFA represents over 29,000 faculty, including tenure-track professors, lecturers, librarians, counselors, and coaches from all 23 campuses of the California State University (CSU) system, which serves more than 470,000 students in the State of California.

On September 16, 2019, the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California State Board of Education (CSBE) announced that they would do a series of focus groups on ethnic studies curriculum with a various groups, including "experts in the field of Ethnic Studies." Two weeks ago, we learned that CDE hired a third party to organize the focus groups and a nomination form was disseminated. The form specifically stated that members of the Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee would be part of the focus groups. There are four higher education members that are part of the Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee.

We are concerned that the latest iteration of the nomination form indicates that only middle school and secondary teachers and administrators would be in the focus groups. This leaves out higher education ethnic study experts that work in teacher preparation. We are concerned about the exclusion of higher education faculty and the inclusion of administrators who do not teach nor engage in the process of teacher preparation or curriculum development.

We urge you to work with the CSBE to ensure higher education faculty, specifically the four higher education members of the Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee, are included in the focus groups. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Mario Guerrero, CFA's Legislative Director at 916-441-4848, or mguerrero@calfac.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles Toombs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charles" and last name "Toombs" clearly distinguishable.

Charles Toombs, PhD
President, California Faculty Association
Professor, Africana Studies, California State University of San Diego

State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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