

From: Huibin Amee Chew

Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 8:14 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Superintendent; [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Include Arab American Studies in the CA Ethnic Studies Curriculum!

Dear IQC,

I am an educator living in Southern California. I urge you to support the inclusion of Arab American studies in the Asian American studies curriculum of ESMC.

As a Southeast Asian American, understanding the history of US intervention in the Middle East and of Arab Americans is critical to understanding my own community's history and struggles. In this time of Islamophobia and continued warfare and military aggression, Arab Studies is critical for all residents of the US to learn about. We all need to learn about and understand the history of Palestine and the current struggles of Palestinians. It is not anti-semitic to include these topics in ethnic studies, it is simply a matter of understanding the human rights consequences of US military aid around the world.

It's never been clearer how important Ethnic Studies is. The racial disparities in the impact of Covid-19, the xenophobic targeting of Asian Americans as "vectors" of disease, and the national uprising in response to the murder of George Floyd point to the need for anti-racist education: All students need comprehensive Ethnic Studies in their K-12 curriculum to build empathy, unity and solidarity with each other, strengthening our movements for justice. In the post-9/11 era, exacerbated by Trump's Muslim ban, Arab American students are desperately in need of curriculum that reflects their histories and current realities.

The ESMC is structured around the core pillars developed by the founders of Ethnic Studies in 1969: American Indian studies, Africana/Black studies, Chicanx/Latinx studies, and Asian American studies. Following a decades-long tradition in higher education, the ESMC includes Arab American studies within Asian American studies.

Leading Asian American scholars, including the National Association of Asian American studies, have issued statements defending the inclusion of Arab American studies in the CA ESMC. Ethnic Studies has been linked to increases in positive personal, academic, and social outcomes for students.

I look forward to hearing your response so that I can inform my colleagues, friends, and community.

Thank you,

Dr. Huibin Chew, Ph.D.

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