

From: Hogue, Rebecca H.
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 6:45 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ESMC: In support of Pacific Islander Studies

Dear IQC Commissioners:

I am writing to submit comments in response to the current Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I write to express grave concerns regarding the lack of Pacific Islander representation in the latest draft of the ESMC.

I currently teach at Harvard University, where I am a Lecturer on History and Literature; Pacific Islander studies are integral content and methodologies to all of my teaching. I am a recent PhD graduate of the University of California, Davis, where I specialized in Pacific Islands literature. I am also an active participant in various Pacific Islander initiatives in the greater Northern California region. California is home to the largest population of Pacific Islanders outside of the Pacific Islands. Due to the ongoing dispossession of their Pacific Island homelands because of imperialism, militarization, climate change, and rising property costs, Pacific Islanders are moving to the Continent, and specifically to California, in greater and greater numbers. It is imperative that California public schools' curriculum reflect this growing population. As a fourth-generation settler to Hawai'i, I had the great privilege to be surrounded by Pacific Islands history and culture in primary and secondary school. But this education should not only be for the fortunate, but rather, an essential aspect of our curriculum to represent all of our students, as well as all parts of California living history. Our Pacific Islander students in California deserve to have their histories taught as an integral part of the Ethnic Studies curriculum.

Indigenous histories are altogether too often ignored, and furthermore, the legacies of United States imperialism in the Pacific Islands become yet another Indigenous "removal" in our K-12 curricula. Pacific Islander histories are also too often lumped under the census designation "AAPI," and do not honor the specific cultural and linguistic contexts of Pacific peoples. While many Pacific Islanders are indeed also of Asian descent, many, many are not, and the glossing over of Pacific Islands histories dehumanizes and ignores experiences particular to Pacific Islanders. In the courses I taught at the University of California, I cannot tell you the number of times my students would say they had never heard of any Pacific Islands other than Hawai'i, that they had no idea the United States had (for example) detonated scores of nuclear weapons in the Pacific, that their home state of California had the largest population of Pacific Islanders outside of the Pacific, or that California has been home to Pacific Islanders since the mid-19th century. When we teach Pacific Islander studies, we teach global histories of migration, diaspora, and imperialism; we teach interdisciplinary storytelling, music, arts, and critical thinking; we teach environmental studies and current events. When we teach Pacific Islander studies, we better serve all of our students. Minimizing, or ignoring, the Pacific Islands and Pacific Islanders in our curricula mirrors the very same ideology imperial powers have used to justify island exploitation. Our students deserve better.

I urge the CDE Curriculum Team and Instructional Quality Commission to pass an ESMC that includes Pacific Islander studies course outlines moving forward and work with the respective communities to ensure this happens.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. Please do not hesitate to contact me to provide further information.

Sincerely,

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