

From: Piper McNulty

Sent: Thursday, October 1, 2020 9:50 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: APISBMA.

Subject: [EXTERNAL] CA Ethnic Studies- A community college instructor's perspective

To the California Department of Education Instructional Quality Commission,
I taught Intercultural Communication (IC) at De Anza College (DAC) in Cupertino from 1997-2018. The majority of my students were APIDA (Asian Pacific Islander Desi Americans) and Latinx.

Each quarter, students told me they thought Intercultural Communication should be taught in high school and asked why it wasn't. They said they wished they'd gained the insights and understanding their college courses provided when they were younger, facing intercultural challenges and questioning their own identities and their participation in the American mosaic.

Now that we have a chance to make this happen, let's do it right!!

As part of the IC course, my students were required to visit each other's homes or neighborhoods, examine their own reactions to this experience, and demonstrate their understanding of the effect of white privilege and the legacy of a colonial mindset, on their lives today. I saw first hand how knowledge of each others' ethnic groups' history, experiences and values helped them understand their own lived experiences and become more open, effective communicators. I am confident that many of them are now more effectively engaged with fellow students, neighbors and co-workers of other ethnic backgrounds. I am also confident the course helped many of the students become more productive, inclusive members of the greater American mosaic.

Intercultural Communication and Ethnic Studies courses, as taught at DAC, both of which articulate with CSU and UC requirements for transferring students, have been largely developed and refined by POC. I am a European American/White. Were it not for my colleagues of color, including two division deans, my course would have been far less effective. Time and again my Asian, Black and Latinx colleagues helped me understand my students' reactions and conflicts and teach my course more effectively. **We need to listen to POC and respect their knowledge and experience.** Their positions as faculty members at our institutions of higher learning have been hard won. Their perspectives have often been ignored and their histories glossed over. This HAS to change, particularly in light of the rise in white supremacist movements nation-wide.

I have also been the Operations Manager for the Asian Pacific American Leadership Institute (APALI) at DAC since 2015. In this capacity, I am a fly on the wall for both APALI's winter course for mid-career professionals and summer course for rising high school seniors and college students. Both courses teach community engagement skills in a workshop / mentoring format and help students explore their own and each others' ethnic identities. Each quarter it has been, frankly, nothing short of breathtaking to see how these students' increased understanding of their own, and other ethnic groups' histories helps them more self-confident, self-accepting, effective, contributing citizens.

Our histories are important. Our engagement skills must be nurtured. Our understanding of our own and each others culturally-based values and communication behaviors is invaluable.

Know history, know self!!

I therefore support the Asian Pacific Islander School Board Members Association (APISBMA)'s position that the following revisions should be made to the third draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) to be presented to the IQC in November 2020:

1. Restore lesson plans on **Cambodian Americans** and **Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders** (as a pan-ethnic group) that were present in the **July 2019 draft**, specifically curricula on:

Myths and Realities Surrounding the Asian Pacific Islander American Community
Cambodian Americans – Deportation Breaking Families Apart

2. At a minimum, include additional lesson plans for **Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Vietnamese Americans, and Asian Indian Americans** as the largest Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) ethnic groups in California, according to 2010 Census data.

The “Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies” unit must offer a foundational overview of the AAPI pan-ethnic identity, include the full spectrum of the AAPI community, and align with the expansive CDE vision imagined in Chapter 3.

I urge you to protect and improve the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum and reach out to AAPI community stakeholders to review lesson content for authenticity, prior to submission to the IQC in November.

Sincerely,

Margaret Piper McNulty-Leung

Operations Manager, APALI (Asian Pacific American Leadership Institute)