

From: Kathykahn
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2020 1:20 PM
To: Stephanie Gregson
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Save ethnic studies – don't shut out Arab-American experience

Dear Deputy Superintendent Stephanie Gregson,

I'm a constituent of yours and deeply concerned with reports that Arab American Studies may be cut from California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), under the false premise of it not being within the four racialized groups of Ethnic Studies.

The field's leaders of color, including the Association of Asian American Studies, Asian American Studies Department Chairs, and the Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition – are insisting Arab American Studies belongs in the curriculum, and that it remain.

As is evident in the spirit of AB2016 legislation, the California Department of Education must respect communities of color, and have deference to Ethnic Studies professors and practitioners of color for this project.

Efforts to undermine or water-down any critical components of the draft, and of Ethnic Studies as a field must be rejected.

I know you are well-aware of the targeted attacks on Arabs and Muslims by the Trump administration, and the demonization of the struggle of migrants and people of color throughout the United States. As a sanctuary state, California should continue to be a counterweight against that trend – not serve as a stamp of approval.

[The above is a form letter, as I'm sure you'll recognize. Here's the added note: I'm aware of the pressure to silence the Palestinian narrative at San Francisco State, where I am a scholarship donor and a friend of faculty members and students. I urge you to recognize that all voices must be heard in the contentious Middle East discussion. And students must be able to evaluate what they hear in an informed manner. The only solid basis for this is to give students a background in Arab and Muslim history and culture. The need for this background is more urgent than ever under the current administration and its Middle East policy.]

Sincerely,
Kathleen Kahn
Berkeley, CA