

From: Christopher Hamilton
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 7:06 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ATTN: Ethnic Studies must be inclusive.

Dear Ethnic Studies Open Comment,

As someone in high school in the early 1960s, I recall how poorly my civics training went. Who'd ever heard of race and ethnic issues? Those are critical matters for students to grapple with in this age, because we need to know U.S. history on these issues, in order to understand how our vaunted principles could better be put into practice.

Ethnic Studies represents a way for students to grasp how diverse our population is. We also need to know our history of condemning each new class of immigrants, though over time they get woven into our grand fabric of citizens and other residents. We now have welcomed lots more Muslims and immigrants from the Arab world. My neighbor is from Egypt.

Some have targeted Asian Americans as “vectors” of COVID-19. I think California students will benefit greatly from Ethnic Studies in their K-12 curriculum, in order to build empathy, unity and solidarity with each other, strengthening our movements for justice.

Long ago we started including Ethnic Studies of various types in higher education, and 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.

Americans have been shown so many negative images of Muslims in news reports and TV or films over the last two decades. Then with Trump's Muslim ban having made that worse, Arab American students need a curriculum that reflects their histories and current realities.

There was a wonderful report this year called "Teaching Understanding and Representing Arabs Throughout History." Young members of the group Arab Youth Organizing researched and written the report. According to the group's findings, some 66% of the students surveyed told them that they had seen most information on Arabs and Muslims from many bad sources on the internet or on television. But a paltry 2.3% learned about those ethnic groups in their schools.

So, finally, I will say that I urge you to support the inclusion of Arab American studies in the Ethnic Studies curriculum.

Sincerely,
Christopher Hamilton