

May 11, 2022

To: All 4CD Faculty

Re: Ethnic Studies in 4CD

To our colleagues in the Contra Costa Community College District, the 4CD Ethnic Studies Council, a group of faculty from our three colleges who have Ethnic Studies expertise and who are building, supporting, and expanding the development of Ethnic Studies across our district, would like to share an update about the important work being done and our continued call to action for the self-determination of Ethnic Studies as a discipline. The 4CD Ethnic Studies Council has been endorsed and supported by all three of our academic senates. We thank the 4CD faculty for their continued support.

Previously, [AB 1460](#) made Ethnic Studies a graduation requirement for California State University students. Since that law, an additional bill was passed, AB 101, which requires high school students to take an Ethnic Studies class as part of their graduation requirements. IGETC Area 7 – Ethnic Studies and Title 5 changes for General Education are all forthcoming and will support Ethnic Studies. The statewide Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) continues to support Ethnic Studies as a discipline with their resolutions. Previous resolutions included [9.03](#) and [9.04](#), which includes adding a fifth area to Title 5 §55063 (b) (1) entitled (E) Ethnic Studies and adding Ethnic Studies 3-unit courses for CSU transfer students created and designed by experts in the field. Since these resolutions, additional work was completed by ASCCC Resolutions [9.07](#) (defining Ethnic Studies and its four core disciplines), [9.02](#) and [9.06](#) (Ethnic Studies faculty designing rubrics and professional development materials related to the field), [9.01](#) (developing a strong Ethnic Studies program and supporting these programs at local community colleges), [3.01](#) (support Racial Justice through Critical Race Theory as a pedagogical framework), and, most recently, [10.01](#) and [10.02](#) (adding the discipline lists of Native American/American Indian Studies and Asian American Studies to the statewide disciplines list). The continued support for Ethnic Studies is prevalent at all levels, and we must maintain these labors in our local district.

Ethnic Studies faculty, as trained in a general comparative Ethnic Studies discipline or one of the four core disciplines: Indigenous/Native American Studies, Black/African American Studies, Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies or Latina and Latino Studies (a.k.a. La Raza Studies or Chicana/o/x Studies), have continued to labor and follow the processes at the local colleges to ensure strong successful Ethnic Studies programs and departments. The creation of these programs and departments will support students of color in the various regions, many of which are having reduced success rates since the Covid 19 pandemic. The new programs and departments will lead to increased enrollments because students will want to attend the 4CD colleges to experience the rigorous, transformative, and student empowered spaces afforded by Ethnic Studies.

There is much documented research which shows that students of all levels of education, regardless of their racial identities, benefit from strong Ethnic Studies programs. For example, research demonstrates that college students who take Ethnic Studies courses graduate at higher

rates than their peers regardless of their major (Monteiro, Cesar Chavez Institute, 2018). This aligns with the district's learning, major, and career pathways and will encourage higher transfer and graduation rates across disciplines and local degree programs. Of course, Ethnic Studies programs will also positively impact our Ethnic Studies majors across the district, and students who major in Ethnic Studies are known to graduate at a higher rate than many others. For example, at San Francisco State University, there is a graduation rate of 77% at SFSU compared to an institutional average of 52% for a six-year term (Monteiro 2018). Lastly, Ethnic Studies courses have been shown to counter-act stereotype threat and improve academic performance for African American students in other disciplines (Oliver, Andemeskal, King, et. al 2017). Declines across the district are quantified in the data at all colleges, and it disproportionately impacts the students of color in relation to their enrolled populations. These declines can be counteracted by investing in Ethnic Studies programs and departments across the 4CD. The colleges are ready to implement programs and departments that align with the local equity plans and the statewide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Integration Plan (DEI).

The 4CD Ethnic Studies Council is pleased to report on the continued labors in our local district that align with the local and statewide equity plans. In fall 2021, the council hosted a district-wide teach-in at the start of our flex trainings: "Ethnic Studies Teach-In: Voices of the People; Past, Present & Future." There were hundreds of colleagues in attendance. At Contra Costa College, the respective Ethnic Studies degrees, La Raza Studies and Africana Studies, will now be housed in a newly designated Ethnic Studies Department with the prefix of ETHN. At Diablo Valley College, a hiring call was put forward, and the district will shortly be informed of a new hire in Ethnic Studies who is poised to design their program and run the DVC Ethnic Studies Department. At Los Medanos College, they led the district with the first approved Area F class: ETHN 045: Introduction to Black Studies. LMC faculty senate has endorsed an independent department of Ethnic Studies and Social Justice Studies, and they have cleared all process hurdles such that the new department should be established very shortly. These are amazing strides being made in our district, and it does not include the amount of labor that Ethnic Studies faculty have put in this past year to ensure that more Area F courses get approved in our district, news which will be updated soon by articulation officers.

The strides being made in our district emphasizes Ethnic Studies and its commitment to anti-racism in our institutions. There is an incredible body of support with calls to action at all levels: the [Chancellor's Call to Action](#) (Contra Costa Community College District's commitment to improving campus climate and creating inclusive classrooms that use anti-racist curriculum), the [4CD Anti-Racism Statement](#), joint academic senate resolution, which supplements the local senate anti-racist resolutions, as well as both faculty and student body statements. It is time now to move beyond statements and calls to action.

Given the incredible support that has been built among faculty and students, the 4CD Ethnic Studies Council now calls on management to fulfill their responsibilities to 10+1 and to fully support Ethnic Studies, an interdisciplinary field of study with more than 50 years of scholarship. This support is critical to our institution's overall commitment toward racial and social justice through the dismantling of systemic institutionalized racism. This support cannot be performative. Management must commit continued action and resources by respecting trained

Ethnic Studies discipline faculty, by building strong and independent Ethnic Studies departments, and by the hiring staff that will allow them to succeed. Management must ensure that Ethnic Studies programs will not be held up by red-tape or hindered by systemic racist practices under the guise of “process.” Our communities have waited too long, and this work is too important to fail. The 4CD Ethnic Studies Council stands in solidarity with resolve and with optimism in the future of Ethnic Studies at Contra Costa Community College District.

Sincerely:

4CD Ethnic Studies Council

Aдриanna Simone Ph.D., Los Medanos College
Albert Ponce Ph.D., Diablo Valley College
Agustín Palacios Ph.D., Contra Costa College
Anthony Gonzales MFA, Diablo Valley College
Carolyn Hodge, Contra Costa College
Frank Ortega Ph.D., Diablo Valley College
Lisa Smiley Ratchford Ph.D., Diablo Valley College
Lorena Gonzalez MA, Contra Costa College
Manu Ampim, MA, Contra Costa College
Sangha Niyogi Ph.D., Diablo Valley College