



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

July 19, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

On July 14, 2021, the Senate Education Committee refused passage of AB 1040 (Muratsuchi) at its final policy committee hearing of the 2021 legislative year. The ethnic studies bill was heard by the Committee, but died due to lack of a motion by committee members. The measure would have required students to complete an ethnic studies course in order to receive an Associate's degree.

Despite the defeat of this bill, I am incredibly proud of the enthusiastic and broad groundswell of support that was garnered for AB 1040 and for ethnic studies. A necessary awakening and heightened awareness occurred during this fight and placed ethnic studies as a legitimate and rigorous academic discipline, with its own academic canon and traditions that have largely been marginalized in the "academy," with a few exceptions. Ethnic studies have inspired an entire generation of students, community leaders, and educator activists with the skills and with the self-determination to return with degrees in hand to lift our communities. I am a proud product of that movement, of dedicated teachers and of intentional programs, and many of you are, as well. The work we're doing today are the echoes of that vision, intelligence, perseverance, and activism that came before us.

California has always led the educational movements that have served as a weathervane for the rest of the country. In the case of ethnic studies, the California State Legislature has already passed a university ethnic studies requirement (AB 1460-Weber) for California State University (CSU) students and will hopefully soon pass an ethnic studies requirement for high school graduation (AB 101-Medina). Noticeably and shamefully, the community colleges, as the most ethnically and racially diverse system of higher education in the country, will be conspicuously absent in law—a missed opportunity to codify this requirement statutorily and to make a profound and lasting statement about California's position on racial equity and social justice.

LACCD's effort, however, in sponsoring both AB 3310 (Muratsuchi) in 2020 and AB 1040 (Muratsuchi) this year, combined with your steadfast advocacy, propelled and accelerated the passage of California Community College Ethnic Studies Title 5 Regulations that requires ethnic studies as a graduation requirement for the community colleges—regulations that we waited for 50 years since the inception of ethnic studies! Without your efforts, the statewide Community College Academic Senate and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges may have never made efforts to quickly adopt an Administrative Title 5 Ethnic Studies Regulation two days before our bill was scheduled for a hearing. While adoption of such a regulation is a huge and positive step in the right direction, it falls short of the statutory protections through legislation needed to ensure stable ongoing funding and commitment to our community colleges. And as I shared in my testimony before the Senate

Education Committee, the community colleges—the most underfunded segment of higher education—are once again strapped with an unfunded mandate.

Looking towards the immediate future, there are opportunities to move forward in making ethnic studies a priority in the community college system. LACCD advocated and was successful in securing \$5.6 million in one-time funds specifically earmarked for ethnic studies to be used for conferences, curriculum development and professional development. We also supported and advocated in this year's budget \$100 million in ongoing funding for full-time faculty and \$15 million in one-time funding for part-time faculty that could be used to expand ethnic studies course offerings. LACCD and other supporters of ethnic studies need to proactively encourage their local governing boards and administrators to direct these funds towards expanding ethnic studies offerings and faculty hiring.

Over the longer term, there is still much unfinished business beyond the important adoption of Title 5 Regulations. This includes ensuring that CSU approves ethnic studies courses offered by community colleges to meet the CSU graduation requirement and adopting statewide portability for ethnic studies. Transfer students make up more than one third of all CSU students, and with the success of programs like the Associate Degree to Transfer (ADT), that number will only increase. With the passage of AB 1460 in 2020, it has become imperative for community colleges to fully develop a process to complete transferable ethnic studies credits to set students up for academic success once they have transferred. Ethnic studies ensure that our transfer students headed to a CSU can meet their ethnic studies course requirement at our colleges, saving students both time-to-degree and financial aid dollars at their CSU campus.

The work continues. *La Lucha Sigue* (the righteous struggle for equity and justice) continues. The lack of a diverse curriculum and a racially diverse faculty are still major issues in our state's educational system. Without honest conversations about power, privilege, what we teach in our classrooms, who teaches our students, and our own leadership, we run the risk of further perpetuating the very inequalities and disparities that we seek to disrupt and improve.

LACCD looks forward to working with all the supporters of ethnic studies and racial equity, and other important endeavors in the future. Thank you once again for your passion and commitment to overcome and end racism in our community colleges and in our society.

With my admiration and respect,



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