

**ACADEMIC SENATE  
OF  
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

AS-3164-14/AA/FA (Rev)  
January 23-24, 2014

**IN SUPPORT OF ETHNIC STUDIES IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

- RESOLVED: The Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) commend Chancellor White for convening a task force to study Ethnic Studies in the California State University (CSU), and for instituting a moratorium on changes to Ethnic Studies programs; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the ASCSU endorse the efforts of the CSU Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the ASCSU urge CSU campuses and the Office of the Chancellor to vigorously support the growth and development of Ethnic Studies by providing adequate funding and support; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the ASCSU urge that changes in status made to Ethnic Studies departments or programs only occur in consultation with campus Ethnic Studies faculty and through established campus curricular review processes; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That ASCSU encourage campuses to evaluate **Ethnic Studies programs, as we evaluate all academic programs, by recognizing their academic merit and educational and societal value rather than purely financial considerations;** and be it further
- RESOLVED: The ASCSU commend the California State Legislature for adopting Assembly Concurrent Resolution 71 – Relative to Africana Studies (2013) which expressed support for the continuation of Africana studies departments, programs, and related projects in California’s institutions of higher education, and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the ASCSU distribute this resolution to the CSU Board of Trustees, CSU Chancellor, Timothy P. White, CSU campus Presidents, CSU campus Senate Chairs, CSU Provosts/Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, California Faculty Association, CSU Ethnic Studies Council, California State Student Association and Members of the California State Assembly and Senate.

***RATIONALE:*** *This resolution expresses support for the scholarly discipline of Ethnic Studies in the CSU. Ethnic Studies is important to the mission of the CSU to “prepare students for an international, multicultural society” and “promote an understanding and appreciation of the peoples, natural environment, cultures, economies, and diversity of the world”. Ethnic Studies offers students the opportunity to study the historical development and social significance of race and ethnicity in the United States, and to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for success in an increasingly diverse environment. This is*

*particularly important in California, where the population is already more far more ethnically diverse than the rest of the U.S. (California Budget Project, 2013) And the CSU student body is the most diverse in the country (<http://www.calstate.edu>). It is important that the CSU be committed and responsive to, and reflective of, the communities we serve.*

*The development and maintenance of ethnic studies is also an ethical responsibility of universities. In the United States we have a history of maintaining our silence about the history and oppression of minority voices. Indeed, numerous content analyses of textbooks (Sleeter, 2011) have found an ongoing marginalization of scholarship by and about African Americans, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. Ethnic studies provides alternative narratives through scholarship and teaching, and scholarly resources and expertise to traditional academic departments who may lack the resources or faculty to provide it for themselves. In addition, recent incidents of discrimination and racism on CSU and other university campuses in California illuminate the continued need for pedagogies on campuses that address equity and social justice and the relevance of Ethnic Studies in the 21st Century.<sup>1</sup>*

*There is also substantial evidence that Ethnic Studies is beneficial for students. A 2011 review of research on the value of ethnic studies published by the National Education Association found that, “there is considerable research evidence that well-designed and well-taught ethnic studies curricula have positive academic and social outcomes for students...both students of color and White students have been found to benefit from ethnic studies” (Sleeter, 2011, p. 20). For underrepresented minority students, ethnic studies courses are associated with positive changes in student achievement and attitudes towards learning (Sleeter, 2011). And there is evidence that minority students in such programs have improved academic skills and graduation rates when compared to their Anglo counterparts, at least in high school (Cammarota and Romero, 2009). This is of signal importance, given the CSU’s emphasis on closing the achievement gap between underrepresented minority students and white middle class students, and increasing retention, graduation, and overall academic success for underrepresented minorities.*

*Further, Ethnic Studies is an important part of the CSU’s academic history and legacy. The very first ethnic studies program in a U.S. university was in the California State University system at San Francisco State University in 1969. Ethnic studies emerged following a student-led strike in 1968 by students, faculty and community members who expressed the need for a “relevant education”: courses and pedagogy that would enable members of traditionally marginalized groups to learn about the active contemporary and historical roles they have played in U.S. society. Since that time, the scholarly discipline of ethnic studies has developed and expanded such that almost every university in the United States has one or more academic departments that focus on the study of historically underrepresented ethnic groups. The concerns that ethnic*

*studies programs addressed have also contributed to the vibrant fields of women's studies, LGBT Studies, working class studies, disability studies and other academic disciplines that address and support social justice.*

*The ASCSU is particularly concerned by administrative decisions without faculty input that could threaten the status of Ethnic Studies programs throughout the CSU. In keeping with prior ASCSU resolutions about programmatic changes (See AS-2596-03/FA; AS-2918-09/AA; AS-2997-10/FGA) this resolution emphasizes the need for adherence to campus curricular policies and procedures and reasserts the need for faculty consultation in the particular instance of Ethnic Studies programs or departments. Any decrease in the CSU institutional commitment to Ethnic Studies is a decrease in the CSU institutional commitment to diversity and the marginalization of these disciplines.*

*Given the vital role that Ethnic Studies Departments have in fulfilling the mission of the CSU and preparing students to confront the complex challenges created by social and economic diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the CSU as a whole and individual campuses should reaffirm and expand their commitment to maintaining the status and resource base of Ethnic Studies departments and programs. The convening of a system-wide taskforce to study Ethnic Studies in the CSU is a good first step in this direction.*

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<sup>i</sup> The following news stories tell of recent incidents on California campuses:

USC, UCLA Student Leaders Team Up to Combat Racism on Campus  
Both schools received derogatory fliers riddled with profanities and racist and sexist slurs  
<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/USC-UCLA-team-up-to-combat-racism-on-campus-and-in-the-community-246217381.html>

UC Berkeley Student Senate Condemns Culturally Appropriated Events Following Frat's Quinceañera-Themed Party  
<http://www.universityherald.com/articles/4750/20131002/uc-berkeley-student-senate-condemns-culturally-appropriated-events-following-frats.htm>

Report released on San Jose State hate crime allegation  
[http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=news/local/south\\_bay&id=9418345](http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=news/local/south_bay&id=9418345)

References:

California Budget Project ([www.cbp.org/pdfs/2008/0808\\_bb\\_demographics.pdf](http://www.cbp.org/pdfs/2008/0808_bb_demographics.pdf)) 2008  
Cammarota, J., and A. Romero. (2009). *The Social Justice Education Project: A critically compassionate intellectualism for Chicana/o students.* In W. Ayers, T. Quinn, and D. Stovall, eds., *Handbook for Social Justice Education*. New York: Routledge.

Sleeter, C.E. (2011). *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association.

AS-2596-03/FA: Program Suspension/Discontinuation/Dissolution  
<http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/Records/Resolutions/2002-2003/documents/2596.pdf>  
AS-2918-09/AA (Rev): Reaffirming the Need for Consultation in Campus-based Program Reduction, Suspension, and Elimination <http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/Records/Resolutions/2009-2010/documents/2918.pdf>

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*AS-2997-10/FGA (Rev): Call for Consultation on Institutional Restructuring or Redesign Initiatives*  
<http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/Records/Resolutions/2010-2011/documents/2997.pdf>

**Approved Unanimously – March 21, 2014**