

Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies Requirements

Session Description: In August 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 1460 requiring all students enrolled in California State University campuses to take a 3-unit class in Native American Studies, African American Studies, Asian American Studies or Latina and Latino Studies. The new law made California the first state to require Ethnic Studies as a university graduation requirement. The passage and implementation of California AB 1460 led to curricular changes in the Community Colleges and reinvigorated historical and contemporary debates on diversity requirements in the University of California system. AB 1460 also serves as the catalyst for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion discussions in both K-12 and higher education curriculum across the nation. In October 2021, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 101 into law, making Ethnic Studies a high school graduation requirement in order to give students the opportunity to learn about the histories, stories, and contributions of historically marginalized peoples to American society. Over the past year, Illinois, New Jersey, and Illinois have passed legislation requiring public schools teach the cultural, political and social contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. This session will focus on the challenges and opportunities in implementing Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies requirements in California and nationwide. In particular, how do we ensure that the curriculum on the history and lived experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities is not watered down or overlooked in fulfilling these requirements.

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Policy Reactor: Asm. Mike Fong

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Please visit <https://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aapipolicy/default.aspx> to view the researchers' policy briefs.

Researchers:

- **What communities does this research and policy address?**
 - K-12, CSU wide, UC wide student/teacher population and parents
 - Local, state, and federal policymakers
 - Ethnic Studies and AAPI Studies
- **Elizabeth Kerr:**
 - **Problems/questions posed:**
 - What does it mean for a state to have AAPI requirements?
 - What should our legislation look like? Who can we work with to assess? What does it look like when we implement these programs?
 - **Findings and proposed solution:**
 - 19 states and the District of Columbia currently require AAPI studies.
 - Of the 10 states that have codified requirements in state statutes, 6 embedded AAPI studies requirements in broader ethnic studies legislation.

- The other 9 states and the District of Columbia require AAPI studies curriculum through academic standards.
 - 36 states and the District of Columbia currently require ethnic studies. 20 of these states have codified requirements in state statutes.
 - 31 states do not currently require AAPIs in required curriculum
 - Legislators and advocates have reached their goals through various methods that the media often overlooks. This range of approaches offers alternatives that may be more feasible than standalone legislation to achieve our collective goals.
- **Eric Estuar:**
 - CSUF: Area F Ethnic Studies requirement, in year 2 of implementing Area F requirement
 - CSU campuses are majority minority campuses
 - Problem:
 - Area F is a fairly new requirement, so educators must decide together what courses student can take to fulfill Area F requirement
 - Findings:
 - Enrollments are up in Area F
 - Departments and faculty are teaching more Ethnic Studies
 - Increase particularly in part-time lecturers teaching Ethnic Studies
 - Increase in students that they are teaching ethnic studies, expected to continue
 - Increase in faculty on tenure track, but looking to keep it going
 - Proposed solution:
 - Early in fall 2020, they realized that if they (faculty) didn't take control of the process of implementing Ethnic Studies, someone else was going to do it for them, so they prepared an Academic Senate Resolution in which they defined Ethnic Studies as three departments. It's only these three departments could count for Area F
 - Implications:
 - Have to collaborate with different levels of administration
 - For the future:
 - What is making Ethnic Studies work? What is this requirement *doing*? What is its impact on the students and their learning? Looking to bring ES and AS into majors and minors
- **Darlene Lee:**
 - Problems:
 - Defining Ethnic Studies
 - No credential in Ethnic Studies which presents challenges for the UCLA teaching program
 - There's a challenge when defining Ethnic Studies—and a benefit of it being “culturally relevant” because schools will look at the majority of their student population and say “Oh we have a majority of Latinx students, we'll just implement Chicana Studies” as opposed to thinking of Ethnic Studies as disciplined, where it's important to understand how race and racism work across racial groups and the particular ways that white supremacy plays out and not just because you identify but because you want to be a part of changing that dynamic
 - Trying to create an UC A-G Ethnic Studies Requirement for high school students who are applying in or are transfer students
 - Proposed solutions:
 - UC resolution to support UC A-G Ethnic Studies requirement: non-additive, one semester course, students can take social studies class that meets both social studies and ethnic studies requirements
 - Creating a teaching certification/authorization in Ethnic Studies
 - What does it mean for teachers to be prepared to teach ethnic studies?
 - What does it look like if we don't have a definition for Ethnic Studies?
 - What does Subject Matter Competency look like in Ethnic Studies?
 - Have to be vigilant about defining Ethnic/Asian American Studies
 - If we want Ethnic/Asian American Studies, we cannot let Black Studies be erased

- **Lauren Higa:**
 - Problem:
 - Negative (mis)representation/lack of representation of AAPI histories and stories
 - Proposed solution:
 - Overview of the AAPI Multimedia textbook
 - Breaking stereotypes, redefining the narrative
 - 4-pronged approach: AAPI scholarship, curriculum development, online platform, teacher training
 - Will contain various forms of digital objects and multimedia to engage teachers and students
 - Includes chapters on foundation, ethnic groups, and people, places, and events
 - Includes a Scholar Advisory Council
 - Collaborating with institutional and chapter partners

Community Reactors

- **Stewart Kwoh:**
 - The landscape is rocky for Ethnic Studies requirements, but it is starting early in LAUSD in comparison to others
 - Working with several unions in several states to push for Ethnic Studies requirements
 - Working with 5-6 groups because they have good stories but they haven't been translate in K-12 lesson plans
 - Ethnic Studies teachers at a training in Nevada wanted to do workshops in Ethnic Studies
 - Working on translating stories to be meant for K-12 for the AAEP
 - Recommendation:
 - Focus on cross cultural solidarity
- **Estella Owoimaha-Church:**
 - 50 year fight/struggle for us to be seen heard acknowledge, points out that it's not hard to define Ethnic Studies because of this
 - If you are promoting something that speaks only to one event, know that one topic alone does not equate to Ethnic Studies
 - Concerned about legislation that typically focuses on one group in this "very large umbrella" that we are all in
 - Recommendations:
 - Folks need to get out of the way of young folks, let the next generation tell you what they need to tell you, follow their lead
 - We need you (elders) to help pass on your knowledge, your ancestry, all the things you have done, and help the next generation figure out all the new ways to do what you did
 - Instead of fighting for AP courses, as we looking to fill all these amazing positions, go to your high schools and find your Ethnic Studies practitioners, who have been doing this work on their own regardless if the curriculum existed or not
 - Dual enrollment and concurrent enrollment on high school campuses
 - Shoutout to [Liberate Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Consortium](#)
 - Be cautious about using the term "AAPI" if we are not going to make space for NHPI folks
 - Provide what our students need

Policy Reactors

- **Asm. Mike Fong**
 - Assembly Bill 506, would improve with AB 1040
 - All high schools will have to teach Ethnic Studies by 2024 school year
 - Current work:

- Fong and his team have been working with the CSU Chancellor's office and community college districts here in California to look at the approval of community college Ethnic Studies courses and make sure they're eligible for transfer to the CSU
- In conversation with leadership from CCs, CSUs, and UCs to build leadership pipeline

Action Discussion

• Questions from audience:

- **Kevin (attendee):** concerns about anti-CRT rhetoric, don't recognize BHM, LGBTQ month
 - How do we reconcile, at the local level, these discrepancies?
- **Estella Owoimaha-Church:** get to know union leaders in the area, there are bound to be leaders working on the issues
 - Education civil rights alliance has built a body of work around this issues
 - Support parents and showing up to school board meetings to voice their concerns
 - Have students show up to school board meetings to hold board members accountable, even on Instagram. Things move when this happens.
 - Equip parents and students with they need to show up
 - ACLU did a teach-in at her classroom to inform them of their rights, helping students and educators how to navigate these processes
- **Arlene Inouye (attendee):**
 - How do we prepare educators who are going to teach in the schools?
 - If there is going to be a credential, what does that look like?
 - Concerns about the quality of the teaching not being supported, teachers not having collaboration time and/or autonomy
 - Teachers don't have enough time to prep
 - There have been Black educators teaching CRT for 50+ years, need educators who have a true in-depth experience
- **Darlene Lee:**
 - Reaffirms that there does need to be credential and certificate programs
 - Must be a thoughtful, robust, and varied approach to supporting the teachers
 - If there are educators already doing this work, they should have more work and professional development placed on them
 - We need envision what this support should look like
 - Good teaching, in general, is going to depend on giving teachers time and space to reflect rather than adding to their workload
 - Also brings up teacher sustainability and how teachers having to pay out-of-pocket for school supplies and other classroom materials (for instance, Ethnic Studies material)
- **Eric:**
 - Help new teachers qualify to teach Ethnic Studies; community college educators have come to him asking about a certificate program in Ethnic Studies
- **Priscilla (attendee):**
 - Are there efforts to address anti-Ethnic Studies misinformation in school districts?
 - Can we start a campaign to educate our communities? Parents?
- **Estella Owoimaha-Church:**
 - Creating teacher toolkits and guides
 - Learning Center in Downtown Los Angeles where ES practitioners would host parent teach-ins, multiethnic and Ethnic Studies lessons for parents so they understood what students would be learning
 - Feedback was great, they loved attending
- **Elizabeth Kerr:**
 - Get something passed as a law and signed into statute after the requirement is already in place
- **Darlene Lee:**
 - Opposition is extremely well organized and well funded (e.g. Parents Defending Education)

- Being attacked/harrassed by the opposition (i.e., having email contacts up during presentations/conferences)
 - Need to figure out how we can act collectively? Lawyers to defend educators? Policy writers? Grant writers? We need to do the individual on-the-ground work.
 - How can we understand where our assets are? How can we defend Ethnic Studies? How can we be as organized as our opposition? If we just leave it to individual teachers for classrooms it's not going to happen (i.e., teacher burnout).
- **Stewart Kwoh:**
 - When people come to us for help, we have to give them the help they need
 - Different people need to do different things
- **Mike Fong:** amplify your voices, amplify data, create narrative and action
- **Asm. Muratsuchi (attendee):** concerns about getting more well-trained educators in classrooms, overall teacher shortage crisis, constant discussion about what happens if we add more requirements (e.g., ES) and what impact that will have on the teacher shortage?
 - What efforts is the UCLA teacher ed program to recruit more teachers?
 - Are there collabs with teacher UCLA ed program and teacher unions?
- **Darlene Lee:**
 - Ethnic Studies Pathway Program at UCLA, first in the nation to focus on ES
 - Credential only available in English and Social Studies at the moment because of capacity issues
 - Teachers who have participated in the program are very active in the teachers' union
 - Must rethink structures of schooling, there are no other professions where you have to provide your own pen and paper
 - Teachers need to have a more reasonable workload
 - Not a sustainable profession, teachers of color have higher turnover rates
- **Estella Owoimaha-Church:** left the classroom herself after 6 months, says one extra requirement is not the issue
 - TPAs = adding to the work for teachers
 - If we can make it work during the pandemic, we can make Ethnic Studies work
 - Whole system is set up for educators to fail (i.e., lack of teachers is a systemic problem)
 - Lack of access to Ethnic Studies and mental health resources—it benefits someone to make sure that teachers not equipped to teach, for parents to not have language access
 - Reimagine and dismantling systems, structures, and policies that were meant to break folks down
- **Attendee:**
 - Where in the government does change need to happen? How does it happen, when is it going to start to happen? Folks are doing the work but no change is seen.
- **Asm. Mike Fong:**
 - Make sure to make your voice heard at board/town hall meetings
 - Government needs to do a better job, needs to do more work to support AAPI nonprofits
 - If you are not being heard, then somebody else's voice is being heard at the table
- **Stewart Kwoh:**
 - Reallocating funds to education
 - Home rule: each school in each school district determines what they want to do, so when you organize, organize locally. If you don't, the local schools will do what they want organize statewide
- **Elizabeth Kerr:**
 - Progress at the state and local levels bubbles up and affects change at the federal level
- **Reverend P.K. Thompson (attendee, separate comment, no question):**
 - Expresses deep concern about his children learning about themselves "out of his own grasp"
 - "It's easy to give something away, but to reclaim it is next to impossible."
 - Folks who are making the decisions: look at ways where we can continue to sustain and and ensure our histories and languages remain in our communities, so that we (re)claim ownership of these things