

VIA EMAIL

December 10, 2024

Dear University of California Academic Assembly Member,

I served as a lecturer in the Education Studies Department (EDS) at the University of California San Diego for twenty-five years, from 1992 to 2017. My courses, although not Ethnic Studies, included extensive content that focused on racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S. In particular, they required students to engage in an analysis of equity gaps in education and the role of structural and institutional racism in maintaining such gaps. I found that the student outcomes in my courses reflect the scholarly literature on the educational benefits of Ethnic Studies. My students made significant gains in critical thinking, conceptual analysis, differentiation and integration of course content, communication skills, and other outcomes. I wholeheartedly endorse Ethnic Studies, as does the organization I co-chair, the San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education.

Please vote yes on Area A-G/H on December 12 and support student success in the state of California! Research shows that ethnic studies strengthens the overall academic performance of California students and [will bring a broader pool of better-prepared and more diverse students to the UC](#). In fact, research shows that Latinx students who take even one ethnic studies course in high school are 50% more likely to go to college. In this respect, Area A-G/H is a key factor in the success of the [UC Hispanic-Serving Institutions \(HSI\) Initiative](#), which aims to create “a learning community whose makeup reflects California’s population.” Likewise, Area A-G/H will support pathways to graduate and professional schools, bolstering, for example, UC PRIME’s work to bring students from historically marginalized communities into medicine.

AB 101, the state’s ethnic studies graduation requirement, is a funded mandate with [\\$50 million provided in the 2021-22 fiscal year](#) by the state of California to help schools and teachers prepare to offer ethnic studies classes. By identifying Areas A-G as one of the main means of fulfilling the ethnic studies requirement, the state has positioned the UC to help lead the implementation of ethnic studies throughout California. In a time of wide ethnic studies expansion, California teachers need the UC to provide guidance on ethnic studies as the UC does for all high school graduation requirements. The course criteria developed by UC ethnic studies educators align with and complement the state’s Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) by furnishing clear guidance on ethnic studies methods.

Area A-G/H represents a historic opportunity to serve all students in California! Please vote yes!

Thank you.

Patrick Velasquez, Ph.D.  
Co-Chair, San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education