



To: Equity and Education Council
Cc: Advisory Council
Community and Communication Council
Revenue and Resources Council
Administrative Council

Fr: Thuy Thi Nguyen, President 
Date: April 7, 2021
Re: Ethnic Studies

Thank you for your recommendations regarding ethnic studies at our college.

Full-time, Tenure-track Faculty Hiring:

I agree with the Advisory Council's recommendation, along with yours, that a full-time, tenure-track faculty member needs to be hired to teach ethnic studies courses. Such hiring process is underway as I write, under the Language Arts Division.

As you noted, "Student testimonials speak to the transformative impact of Ethnic Studies on those from historically marginalized as well as historically dominant populations. Further, establishing a new academic department is a concrete and visible statement of Foothill's commitment to equity transformation."

Curriculum

Thanks to the leadership of Academic Senate and College Curriculum Committee, along with your support, we are able to honor the request of students in their first Open Letter to the college on June 15, 2020. Special thanks to the following faculty for the development of the Course Outline of Record (CORs) for the following areas:

- David Marasco: Intro to Ethnic Studies
- Voltaire Villanueva: Intro to Ethnic Studies
- Sam White: African American Studies
- Hilda Fernandez: Latinx Studies
- Susie Huerta: Latinx Studies
- Stephanie Chan: Asian American Studies
- Kella Svetich: Asian American Studies

Although the college is not allowed to pay retroactively, I want to express my deepest appreciation to faculty colleagues, along with Dean Valerie Fong who facilitated such curriculum development and support housing such courses under Language Arts Division at this time.

Thank you also to Professor Michael Wilcox who is currently writing curriculum for the Native American Studies course.

Division, Location, and Budget

You have said that you defer to me as to whether there should be a department or division, and where such department or division should be housed. There are two possibilities: a division under one of the current division deans or a division under the Dean of Institutional Equity.

I appreciate that the Strategic Vision for Equity (a.k.a. "Equity Plan 2.0") makes it clear that our college wants the creation of a division, as requested by the student leaders:

Issue 7. Insufficient culturally responsive, relevant and sustaining pedagogy and other asset-based approaches in teaching and serving our students of color.

Goal 4: The college creates an Ethnic Studies division, and hires demographically diverse faculty.

I also agree that we need to focus on "arranging for ongoing administrative and budgetary support of Ethnic Studies."

Thanks to the Revenue & Resources Council's recommendation for use of unspent carryforward funds for "equity investment," I anticipate a proposal to fund such a division for the short-term once you and R&R Council set guidelines for the process to make all such requests. Look forward to working with the Academic Senate, the Instruction Office, and Equity Office along with student leaders to get their advice on such division creation.

Transformative Impact Structurally

One critical question that I have inquired with you is what organization structure would best promote a college-wide approach that enables the tenets of ethnic studies to be infused in all subject matters at Foothill, creating that structural and cultural shift. (Note, this aforementioned question is not to suggest cross-listing of ethnic studies in other subject areas.) Every student when they graduate from Foothill College should have a fundamental understanding of their racial identity and how it plays out in their lives, along with the ability to navigate among other racial groups with a level of consciousness and humanity that is meaningful and productive. Such ability is a fundamental educational preparation for students

to enable them to lead their own personal and professional lives and their communities in the future.