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Version September 23, 2020

To: Members of the University of California Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools

**We, the undersigned, call for an amendment to Academic Senate Regulation 424 to integrate Ethnic Studies into the University of California's A-G Admissions requirements by either making 1 semester of Ethnic Studies required starting year 2030 or by immediately making Ethnic Studies an optional alternative to US or World History.**

Marginalized communities deserve to see themselves in the school curriculum that they are required to learn and all students deserve to learn about the complex history and societies of the United States. The fact that we don't is a failure of our educational system. For over 50 years, Black, Indigenous, and other Students of Color have been staging high school walkouts, college student strikes, rallies, sit-ins, and hunger strikes demanding for racial justice and equity in our curriculum and in the classroom.

The struggle continues. In the wake of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many others, we stand at a critical inflection point. We need to counter hatred and discrimination now. Communities of color, who are part of the global and state majority, cannot continue to be marginalized in our society, curriculum, and admission requirements.

Acts of racism continue to occur at every single University of California Campus and in high schools across the state. We need to do more to change the systems that perpetuate discrimination and white supremacy. Ensuring all students have a foundational understanding of race and racism is one way that the University of California (UC) Academic Senate can begin to create this change. By determining the A-G requirements, the UC Academic Senate has the privilege, power, and responsibility of shaping what high school students learn. Currently, the only history courses listed on the University of California website for subject (A-G) requirements are World History, U.S. History, and European History. Such policies fail to acknowledge the many different histories that communities of color have and do not include the anti-racist education that we all need.

By uplifting the narratives and voices of communities of color, Ethnic Studies fosters inclusivity among members of our diverse communities. An Ethnic Studies class is not just a course. It is also a framework and approach to pedagogy that can be applied as the foundation for anti-racist re-writings of any existing UC-approved high school course. Students need Ethnic Studies because it empowers and gives them the critical analysis tools to understand and address racism. Ethnic Studies connects students of color to their curriculum in ways that many existing courses have never been able to do before, and the effect of this is shown in the increased academic and social outcomes that researchers and teachers have witnessed among the students who take it.

Requiring high school students to take at least one semester of Ethnic Studies in the A-G requirements or enabling them to take an Ethnic Studies class instead of a U.S. or World History class is a step towards creating the inclusive education that students need.

In Solidarity,

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## UC A-G Ethnic Studies Integration Policy Proposals

### **Justification for Amendment to Senate Regulation 424.A.3<sup>1</sup>**

Ethnic Studies provides culturally relevant pedagogy that helps students develop inclusivity by fostering understanding of diversity, connecting students with their community, and giving them the tools to address racism in their community. Current admissions policies reflect dominant Euro-American perspectives that can disadvantage students of color who feel disengaged from the content currently required to gain admission at a UC school. Meanwhile, a 2010-2014 study by UCI Professor Emily Penner and Stanford Professor Thomas Dee published in the *American Educational Research Journal* found that taking Ethnic Studies had a positive and significantly large causal effect on at-risk students' academic outcomes, highlighting the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy.<sup>2</sup> By requiring all future UC applicants to take an Ethnic Studies course, the UC can begin to uplift the outcomes of minority students and change the institutional structures that perpetuate inequity. These are just some of the reasons why some school districts like Los Angeles USD, Compton USD, San Francisco USD, and Santa Ana USD have already passed district policies that institutionalize Ethnic Studies as a graduation requirement for their students. In addition, Ethnic Studies would help ensure future UC students have the understanding and skills they need to be respectful and inclusive members of our diverse UC communities, as well as the communities of California as a whole.

Furthermore, Assembly Bill 331 recently passed both the California State Assembly and State Senate, which would “add the completion of a one-semester course in Ethnic Studies, meeting specified requirements, to the high school graduation requirements commencing with pupils graduating in the 2029–30 school year.” Assembly Bill 331 also requires that all California high schools provide students with access to Ethnic Studies starting year 2025. In addition, the California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state and statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement. Therefore, it is highly likely that the state will be required to allocate funding for Ethnic Studies implementation in the next budget cycle.

Requiring students to take Ethnic Studies for admission starting year 2030 would give schools time and flexibility to implement new Ethnic Studies courses. In 2030, any student who could not fulfill the requirement due to limited course availability in their high school should be provided an exemption. Proposal B would enable students to fulfill the History/Social Science A requirement with Ethnic Studies. Proposal A and C would require 1 semester of Ethnic Studies course starting with the *entering first-time freshman class of 2030* in either the A or G subject area, respectively. Currently, there are Ethnic Studies courses approved in the A, B, C, F, and G subject areas. *Ethnic Studies Statistics* is a notable example of how Ethnic Studies can be implemented as even a math class.<sup>3</sup>

### **Proposed Amendments to Senate Regulation 424.A.3:**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bylaws-regulations/regulations/rpart2.html#r424>

<sup>2</sup> Dee, T. S., & Penner, E. K. (2017). The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence From an Ethnic Studies Curriculum. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(1), 127–166. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216677002>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.erusd.k12.ca.us/elrancho/classes/CourseDescriptions1.aspx?dept=SC>

A. Require high school students to take an additional semester of Ethnic Studies implemented in the A subject area, to be put in effect after year 2030.

- Amendment: “a. History/Social Science, 2.5 units. One unit of world history, cultures, and historical geography; and, one unit of US History or one-half unit of US History and one-half unit of Civics or American government; and, one-half unit of Ethnic Studies.”

*or*

B. Explicitly make Ethnic Studies an optional alternative to World or US History.

- Amendment: “a. History/Social Science, 2 units. One unit of world history, cultures, and historical geography, or one unit of Ethnic Studies, or one-half unit of Ethnic Studies and one-half unit of World History; and, one unit of US History, or one unit of Ethnic Studies, or one-half unit of US History and one-half unit of Civics or American government, or one-half unit of US History and one-half unit of Ethnic Studies, or one-half unit of Ethnic Studies and one-half unit of Civics or American government.”

*or*

C. Require at least 1 semester of the College Preparatory (G) requirement to be an Ethnic Studies course, to be put in effect after year 2030. Ethnic Studies courses may be one that is approved under any one of the A-G requirements.

- Amendment: “g. College preparatory elective, 1 unit. One-half unit of Ethnic Studies and one-half unit of an Aadditional approved a-f courses beyond the minimum required, or courses that haves been approved specifically in the ‘g’ subject area”