

April 17, 2020

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Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi  
State Capitol, Room 2179  
Sacramento, CA 94249

Subject: AB 3310 (Muratsuchi, as of 22 March 2020): Community Colleges: Ethnic Studies

**Position: Oppose**

Dear Assemblymember Muratsuchi:

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) is writing to express its reluctant opposition to AB 3310 (Muratsuchi, as of 22 March 2020). AB3310 would, commencing with the 2021–22 academic year, require each community college district to offer courses in ethnic studies at each of its campuses. The bill would require that the units earned by students for successful completion of these courses would be eligible for transfer and, if applicable, would meet ethnic studies graduation requirements at the California State University. The bill would also, commencing with the 2023–24 academic year, require each community college district to require the completion of at least one course in ethnic studies of at least three units as a requirement for a student to obtain an associate degree. The bill would require the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to develop and adopt appropriate regulations for the implementation of these provisions.

The ASCCC recognizes and embraces the vital role that ethnic studies curriculum plays in all levels of education; Title 5 §55063(b)(2) requires that “Ethnic Studies will be offered in at least one of the areas required by subdivision (1) [which outlines associate degree requirements],” and many colleges have a separate ethnic studies graduation requirement. We are deeply appreciative of the recognition by the legislature that ethnic studies is a crucial element in the education of California’s community college students. In addition, we are committed to the principles of equity and diversity and believe that relegation of those concepts to a single course demeans the need to evaluate all aspects of curricular design and college structures through an equity lens.

However, we are concerned that curriculum, particularly curriculum that leads to the expansion of required courses and units, should be inherently driven by the faculty within the system. Much of the curriculum that may fall into the area of ethnic studies also must align with potential transfer programs, career educational programs leading to a certificate, and even baccalaureate degrees within the California community college system. The addition of three or more units to programs such as the associate degrees for transfer will increase the total number of units within those programs, potentially eliminating the guarantee of transfer that was mandated with the passage of SB 1440 (Padilla, 2010) and SB 440 (Padilla, 2014).

The possible curricular content identified in the bill can vary widely, depending on whether it is intended to be focused on a particular ethnic group, discipline, or community. Each college and the community it serves must be allowed to assess local needs, including individualized instruction, transfer opportunities at surrounding universities, and the likelihood of being able to hire faculty in specialized disciplines that would be required by the bill.

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The curriculum process required by statute and regulation requires the review and updating of curriculum in a continuous cycle to ensure programs remain relevant. The ASCCC is very concerned that by writing elements of curriculum into statute as mandated by AB3310, the ability of colleges to adapt to the needs of individual communities or regions will be hindered and that transfer to the California State University system may be disrupted. The ASCCC, like all faculty teaching in systems of higher education, emphatically maintains that curricular design is and should be the responsibility and purview of faculty who are experts in their specific disciplines.

For these reasons, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges must reluctantly take a position of **oppose** to AB 3310 (Muratsuchi, as of 22 March 2020). The insertion of curriculum into statute does not appropriately address the very laudable goals of the author, goals which we appreciate and share. We would also welcome the opportunity to engage in further dialog with the author regarding the wording of AB 3310.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Respectfully,



John Stankas, President

Cc: Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly  
Honorable Jose Medina, Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee  
Honorable Toni Atkins, Senate President Pro Tempore  
Honorable Connie Leyva, Chair, Senate Education Committee  
Lande Ajose, Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Education  
Joey Freeman, Chief Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary for Policy  
Chris Ferguson, Department of Finance  
Paul Steenhausen, Legislative Analyst's Office  
Monica Henestroza, Special Assistant to Assemblymember Rendon  
Jeanice Warden, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Higher Education  
Megan Baier, Educational Consultant, Senator Atkins  
Olgalilia Ramirez, Consultant, Senate Committee on Education  
Anita Lee, Consultant, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Mark Martin, Consultant for the Budget Committee on Higher Education  
Tom Epstein, President, California Community Colleges Board of Governors  
Eloy Ortiz Oakley, Chancellor, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office  
Daisy Gonzales, Deputy Chancellor, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office  
Marty Alvarado, Executive Vice Chancellor, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office  
David O'Brien, Vice Chancellor of Government Relations, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office  
Catherine Nelson, Chair, Academic Senate for California State University