

DATE: September 12, 2017

TO: Chancellor Timothy White

FROM: Chicana and Chicano Studies Department of CSU Northridge

RE: Executive Order 1100

*Summary: Executive Order 1100 (EO 1100) Revised August 23, 2017 relating to the California State University General Education Breadth (CSU GE Breadth) requirements proposes to: (1) clarify requirements, (2) ensure equitable opportunity for student success, and (3) streamline graduation requirements. Additionally, the revised executive order includes a revised definition for mathematics/quantitative reasoning (CSU GE Breadth Subarea B4), in response to recommendations from a variety of sources.*

We, the faculty in the Chicana and Chicano Studies Department at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), demand that Executive Order 1100 (EO 1100) be repealed immediately. We adamantly oppose omitting (GE) **Section F: Comparative Cultural Studies** because omitting it does not advance any of the three proposed EO goals and, more importantly, subverts the integrity of the CSUN mission. On the other hand, CSUN's GE requirement in Comparative Cultural Studies contributes to student retention and graduation and stands as a model for the CSU. The most recently reported CSUN freshmen retention rate went from 72% to 81%<sup>1</sup>.

In light of the Chancellor's initiative to increase graduation rates from 19 to 40% in the CSU, we believe that EO 1100 cuts the most critical courses that will ensure student success.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, tens of thousands of students (mostly first generation college students) at CSUN benefit from ethnic studies, gender and women's studies, as well as queer studies classes at the undergraduate level. The demographic of our student population, according to recent CSUN Counts statistics, demonstrates that as of Fall 2016, over 67% of incoming freshman belong to historically underserved communities, most prominently identified as Chicana/o and Latina/o, African-American, and American Indian.<sup>3</sup> As first generation students of color enter into the university setting for the first time, they seek mentorship from professionals of color (often those housed in ethnic studies, queer studies, and women's studies departments). In GE courses, students develop a range of skills including critical thinking, writing composition, and how to conduct research. These courses are critical to student academic success because they initiate the intellectual formation of CSUN's student body so that they can succeed in their majors of choice. EO 1100 will potentially eradicate the fruitful benefits that ethnic studies, queer studies, and women's studies have to offer the entire CSUN student population.

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<sup>1</sup> CSUN College of Humanities Academic Council, 9/11/2017.

<sup>2</sup> "Graduation Initiative 2025 Approved," published September 20, 2016, accessed September 5, 2017, <https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/news/Pages/Graduation-Initiative-2025-.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> See Hansook Oh, "CSUN Implementing Strategies to Elevate Graduation Rates, Student Success," CSUN Today (December 13, 2016) <https://csunshinetoday.csun.edu/university-news/csun-implementing-strategies-to-elevate-graduation-rates-student-success/>.

. Also see "CSUN Counts" <<https://www.csun.edu/counts/>>.



## Concerns about the Impact and Implementation of EO 1100:

- 1) The Chancellor's Office issued EO 1100 without any consideration of faculty governance protocols and transparency. It committed an egregious violation of faculty governance and consultation by not consulting with CSUN Ethnic Studies, Gender and Women's Studies (GWS), and Queer Studies faculty concerning a GE program that was put in place by faculty at CSUN. This was hastily constructed in the absence of faculty (who contractually were not on campus until August 23<sup>rd</sup>, the same date that the EO was released).
- 2) The Graduation Initiative 2025's (GI2025) goal is "to increase graduation rates for all CSU students while eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps."<sup>4</sup> EO 1100 ignores significant educational research that demonstrates that Diversity/Global Learning courses and programs are one of the high-impact educational practices that increase student retention and student engagement.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, diffusing CSU students' access to Ethnic Studies, GWS, and Queer Studies courses and programs reduces their equitable opportunities to achieve a college degree.<sup>6</sup> Not only does this weaken the stated purpose of GI2025, but also, whether EO 1100 remains intact or not, the Office of the Chancellor's actions make it evident that these programs and departments are conceptualized as marginal and disposable.
- 3) The Chancellor's argument that the EO 1100 revision is driven by the need for portability within the CSU system and between community colleges and the CSU campuses in order to better accommodate transfer students is not supported by data. Implied in the EO eliminating Comparative Cultural Studies, Section F is the notion that standardizing the GE Plan across CSU would clarify and ease the path for transfer students from community colleges. However, our enrollment patterns indicate otherwise. The majority of students who transfer from community college to CSUN are GE certified; thus, they are not required to take any lower division GE. The EO is, therefore, meaningless for them.
- 4) Beyond the community college transfer students, is the issue of transfer students from one CSU campus to another. In fact, the overwhelming number of CSU students who complete their degrees, complete them at the campuses where they began their CSU experience. According to CSU Statistical reports, "Undergraduate Transfer headcount (2016-2017),"

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<sup>4</sup> The CSU System. "Graduation Initiative 2025," accessed September 4, 2017, <https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/why-the-csu-matters/graduation-initiative-2025>

<sup>5</sup> Association of American Colleges and Universities. "High-Impact Educational Practices: An Overview," accessed September 4, 2017, <https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips>

<sup>6</sup> If student success is evaluated based on graduation rates, for CSUN, students in the College of Humanities (COH), where Gender and Women's Studies, Queer Studies, and all (except for Africana Studies) ethnic studies department are housed, are relatively more successful. Using graduation numbers for the freshman cohort of 2009 who either graduated from or were enrolled at CSUN after six years shows that students in the COH graduate at a higher rate (57%) than students in any other college, with the exception of the College of Health & Human Development that also has a 57% graduation rate. Here is the breakdown: College of Health and Human Development- 57%, College of Humanities- 57%, College of Arts, Media and Communication- 56.8%, College of Business and Economics- 51.4%, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences- 50.6%, College of Science and Math- 49.7%, College of Education- 45.2%, and College of Engineering and Computer Science- 33.8%. CSUN Counts, "Graduation Rates," accessed September 1, 2017, <https://www.csun.edu/counts/graduation-rates.php>.



1615 students transferred within the CSUS out of a total of 67,124 transfer students.<sup>7</sup> The intra CSU transfers constitute about two percent of the total transfer population in that year. CSU reports that since 1996, seven percent of all students who began as freshmen and five percent for students who transferred from community college complete their degrees at a campus other than where they began.<sup>8</sup> These students can be accommodated without the EO since campuses are authorized to make exceptions and “reasonable adjustments” for students transferring within the CSU System. Thus, the “portability” argument is invalid.

- 5) As written EO 1100 reflects Western dominant culture and erases and silences disciplines that arose out of anti-racist, anti-colonial and feminist social struggles. For Ethnic Studies, Gender and Women Studies, and Queer Studies Departments reconfiguring Section F into Sections C and D runs counter to the 50 years of interdisciplinary approaches. EO 1100 would require Ethnic Studies, Gender and Women Studies, and Queer Studies to fit within disciplinary parameters that traditionally have limited or otherwise prohibited the inquiry into issues concerning race, class, gender, and sexuality.

The initial changes required by EO 1100 would have devastating consequences for Ethnic Studies, Gender and Women Studies, and Queer Studies departments and programs at CSUN. They would experience significant drops in student enrollment estimated at 20-80 percent of their course offerings. For some programs this drop in enrollment would mean their end as viable Departments. It would also result in a concurrent loss of faculty of color and women on a campus that already is composed of mostly white male faculty.<sup>9</sup>

- 6) Diffusing Section F of the CSUN GE through the “Overlay Compromise” onto EO 1100 Sections C and D undermines the CSUN mission. The CSUN mission is to prepare students to engage as members of a diverse society, capable of critically addressing issues of gender, race, class, sexuality and ethnicity. Currently, the United States is experiencing a resurgence of racism, misogyny, homophobia, as well as religious, immigrant, and transgender violence and hatred. Our students need a clearer understanding of these issues and more, not fewer, opportunities to address them.

The overlay compromise designates nine units for Section C, 15 units for section D, and students would be required to take three units of comparative cultural studies (CCS) in each. For CSUN, this would allegedly bring back enrollment to the same impacted courses. However, this “compromise,” arrived at without proper consultation with the

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<sup>7</sup> CSU Institutional Research and Analysis, “College Year Report (2016-17),” accessed September 5, 2017, <http://www.calstate.edu/as/cyr/cyr16-17/table21.shtml>.

<sup>8</sup> CSU Institutional Research and Analysis, “A Primer for Understanding Graduation Rates at CSU: Degrees Earned at Origin Campus.” accessed September 5, 2017, [http://asd.calstate.edu/faq/gradrate\\_faq.shtml#\\_Toc84052821](http://asd.calstate.edu/faq/gradrate_faq.shtml#_Toc84052821).

<sup>9</sup> During the Fall 2015, whites made up 62.6% of tenured and tenure-track faculty, and 69.7% of non-tenured faculty. In contrast, Chicanas/os/Latinas/os made up 11% and 10.8%, respectively. The disproportionate number of white faculty to Chicana/o/Latina/o faculty becomes a graver issue when we account for our student population. For the same time period, white students made up 24% and Chicana/o/Latina/o students were 44.4% of the student population. CSUN Office of Institutional Research, “CSUN Counts,” accessed August 28, 2017, [https://www.csun.edu/counts/?pslnkid=NRPA\\_DA\\_IR\\_CSUN\\_COUNTS\\_L](https://www.csun.edu/counts/?pslnkid=NRPA_DA_IR_CSUN_COUNTS_L).



most impacted departments and programs, lacks adequate analysis to truly understand its impact. No consideration has been given to the process and labor of redesignating GE courses at CSUN and reassigning them to Sections C and D.

Given the hastiness of this process, we doubt that the Office of the Chancellor has had an opportunity to study whether all CSUs are equipped to meet the proposed requirements.

- 7) A final concern is how EO 1100 contradicts the statewide movement towards increasing the teaching of ethnic studies throughout California's K-12 educational system. On September 13, 2016 California Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2016, sponsored by Assembly member Luis A. Alejo, requiring the implementation of ethnic studies curriculum in high schools by the beginning of the 2020 academic year.<sup>10</sup> Part of the rationale for AB-2016 is the demonstrated importance of "culturally meaningful and relevant curriculum" and its positive impact on students of color<sup>11</sup>. AB-2016 maintains that students benefit in various ways from ethnic studies curriculum, including "becoming more academically engaged, increasing their performance on academic tests, improving their graduation rates, and developing a sense of self-efficacy and personal empowerment." The curriculum is being developed in collaboration with ethnic studies faculty across California colleges and universities.

The evidence demonstrates that the CSU produces over half of California's credentialed teachers. For the 2014-2015 academic year, the California Commission on Teacher (CTC) Credentialing granted credentials to 5,502 (48%) CSU students, 883 (7.9%) University of California students, and 4,845 (43.1%) students from private/independent institutions, for a total of 11,230. During the same period, of the twenty-three CSU campuses, Northridge ranked fourth in terms of the number of students awarded preliminary and clear credentials (333).<sup>12</sup> CSU ethnic studies departments and programs will be key partners in the efforts to develop high school ethnic studies curriculum and train and support teachers in its implementation. Indeed, CSUN Chicana/o Studies has begun implementation of a CTC approved Social Science waiver program (B.A. Chicana/o Studies) this Fall 2017 to begin to meet the need for secondary teachers prepared to address Social Science and ethnic studies content. Therefore, EO 1100's initial reduction of ethnic studies courses, and in some cases decimation of interdisciplinary programs and departments, and the current understudied overlay compromise proposal, undercuts the state's educational mandate, when the need for people trained in ethnic studies is as important as ever.

While EO 1100 does little to actualize the CSU mission statement, CSUN's GE requirement in Comparative Cultural Studies contributes to students' academic success and stands as a model for CSU. We demand that EO 1100 be rescinded effective immediately.

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<sup>10</sup> California Legislative Information. "AB-2016 Pupil Instruction: Ethnic Studies, (2015-2016)," accessed September 1, 2017, [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB2016](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB2016)

<sup>11</sup> See Sleeter, C.E. (2011). *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies, A Research Review*. Washington D.C.: National Education Association.

<sup>12</sup> Office of the Chancellor. "Credentials Granted to CSU Students: 2014-2015," accessed September 1, 2017, <http://asd.calstate.edu/cctc/reports.shtml>