


REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: May 31, 2019

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections and
Intergovernmental Relations and Neighborhoods Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No: 19-0002-S92
Assignment No: 19-05-0547

SUBJECT: Ethnic Studies Requirement for the California State University System

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution to include in the City's 2019-2020 State Legislative Program, SUPPORT of Assembly Bill (AB) 1460 which would provide that the CSU system require, as an undergraduate requirement, the completion of one 3-unit course in Ethnic Studies, commencing in the 2020-21 academic school year.

SUMMARY

On May 21, 2019, a Resolution (Wesson-Price) was introduced to support AB 1460 (Weber) which would provide that the CSU system require, as an undergraduate requirement, the completion of one 3-unit course in Ethnic Studies, commencing in the 2020-21 academic school year.

The Resolution states that 50 years ago, on March 20, 1969, as a result of the student-led strike at San Francisco State University, the California State University (CSU) system established the first and only school of Ethnic Studies in the nation.

According to the Resolution, Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary and comparative study of race and ethnicity, with a special focus on four historically defined core groups: Native American, African American, Asian American, and Latina and Latino American. The Resolution states that, regardless of major, students who participated in Ethnic Studies courses graduated at a much higher rate than their peers who did not take Ethnic Studies classes.

The Resolution states that Ethnic Studies courses play an important role in building an inclusive multicultural democracy. Therefore, the Resolution supports AB 1460.

BACKGROUND

On May 21, 2019, a Resolution (Wesson-Price) was introduced to support AB 1460 which would provide that the CSU system require, as an undergraduate requirement, the completion of one 3-unit course in Ethnic Studies, commencing in the 2020-21 academic school year. The bill also provides that:

- Commencing with the 2020-21 academic school year, the CSU shall provide for courses in Ethnic Studies at each of its 23 campuses.
- CSU shall collaborate with the CSU Council on Ethnic Studies and the Academic Senate of the CSU to develop core competencies to be achieved by students who complete an ethnic studies course pursuant to implementation of this bill.
- The CSU Council and the Academic Senate shall approve the core competencies before commencement of the 2020-21 academic year.
- The CSU shall not increase the number of units required to graduate from the university with a baccalaureate degree

Existing law establishes the CSU and its various campuses under the administration of the Board of Trustees of the CSU (Board). Existing law requires the Board to adopt rules and regulations not inconsistent with the law of the State of California for the governance of the trustees. Existing regulations require students of the CSU to

complete courses in American history and American government or pass examinations in those fields for graduation.

According to the author of the bill, recent actions taken by the CSU chancellor's office to provide more clarity and standardization of general education requirements across CSU campuses has resulted in fewer ethnic studies courses being offered. Supporters of the bill indicate that all students benefit academically and socially from taking ethnic studies courses.

Opponents of the bill argue that the passage of the bill would set a precedent for future curricular mandates to be imposed by the legislature, potentially jeopardizing faculty control over the curriculum and the quality of the CSU degree.

AB 1460 Bill Status

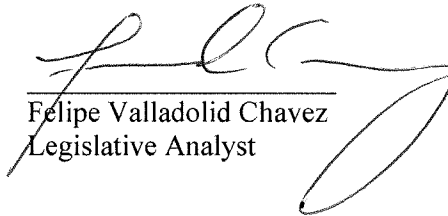
Introduced

Passed Assembly

Pending in Senate Committee on Rule

February 22, 2019

May 23, 2019



Felipe Valladolid Chavez
Legislative Analyst

SMT:fvc

Attachment: Resolution (Wesson-Price)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations, or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, 50 years ago, on March 20, 1969, the California State University (CSU) system established the first and only school of Ethnic Studies in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the formation of the Ethnic Studies Program was the result of a student-led strike at San Francisco State University; and

WHEREAS, today, all 23 CSUs have developed courses in Ethnic Studies; and

WHEREAS, Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary and comparative study of race and ethnicity, with a special focus on four historically defined core groups: Native American, African American, Asian American, Latina and Latino American; and

WHEREAS, regardless of major, students who participated in Ethnic Studies courses graduated at a much higher rate than their peers who did not take Ethnic Studies classes; and

WHEREAS, AB 1460 (Weber), introduced on March 28, 2018, requires commencing with the 2020-21 academic year, that the CSU system must provide courses in Ethnic Studies at each of its campuses; and

WHEREAS, Ethnic Studies courses play an important role in building an inclusive multicultural democracy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles, hereby, includes in its 2019-2020 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for AB 1460 (Weber) which would provide that the California State University system require, as an undergraduate graduation requirement, the completion of one 3-unit course in Ethnic Studies, commencing in the 2020-21 academic school year.

PRESENTED BY: _____

HERB J. WESSON, JR.
Councilmember, 10th District

SECONDED BY: _____

dhp

MAY 21 2019