



The CSUF Women and Gender Studies Department's Statement on AB-1460, regarding the ethnic studies requirement and President Virjee's "CSUF Response to the BSU & Our Commitment to the Titan Family"

We, the Department of Women and Gender Studies (WGST) and the Queer studies (QS) Minor at CSU Fullerton, would like to formally express our unequivocal support for the advancement of AB 1460. WGST and QS has a stated commitment to diversity and community-building that seeks to address and transform systems of oppression (such as racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism, to name a few) through our teaching and professional interactions. However, our commitments mean nothing if we are not willing to put our values into practice when the opportunity arises.

Some arguments against AB 1460 have deployed the omission of women and gender studies and LGBTQ communities as the justification for not advancing AB 1460. For instance, in the written response that was disseminated campus-wide on Friday, October 25, 2019 to the BSU, which demanded “a letter from President Framroze Virjee for the advancement of AB 1460,” one of the stated reasons for not supporting AB 1460 was that,

“AB 1460 also limits the area of study exclusively to Black, Asian, Latinx and Native American studies. The expressed omission of our LGBTQ community, women and gender studies, and other historically marginalized communities is as stunning as it is stark.”

We want to be very clear that President Virjee did not consult with any faculty in Women and Gender Studies and Queer Studies before invoking our intellectual fields and discipline in his response to the BSU. The misnaming of our disciplinary objectives and the lack of outreach to our department on this issue is troubling, particularly since we have taken every opportunity to publicly support AB 1460. Moreover, we feel it necessary to publicly object to the naming of women and gender studies and the LGBTQ community in President Virjee’s response for the following reasons:

1. This framing suggests that (cisgender) women and LGBTQ communities are somehow outside of ethnic studies, as though we are not also Black, Asian, Latinx, and Native American.
2. There is an implicit suggestion that ethnic studies is only concerned with a small percentage of the population, as though the field only addresses minority populations, histories, epistemologies and methods. However, if we consider the populations listed from a transnational perspective, we are able to see that ethnic studies collectively (Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native



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- American studies) speaks to a majority of the world's population. From a transnational perspective, for example, Black history (whether it be the Haitian Revolution or the Civil Rights Movement), is not "just the history of Black people," but it is our collective history, it is the history of the US and the world. This is similarly the case for Latinx, Asian and Indigenous histories.
3. This framing suggests that the historical struggles and activism that led to the creation and institutionalization of ethnic studies are synonymous with that of WGST/QS. While there are important linkages between the two, they are absolutely not synonymous and should not be conflated into the same category, particularly as it pertains to issues of diversity.
 4. From an intersectional perspective, it is clear to us that many cisgender women and LGBTQ folks also benefit from racial privileges that are not afforded to the groups explicitly named in AB 1460. However, the historical tendency to ignore these racialized differences has resulted in white women, for example, disproportionately benefiting from affirmative action initiatives. This has often served to further marginalize people of color and the very communities that fought to make these initiatives a reality.
 5. Ethnic studies has taught us that race and ethnicity can never be separated from gender and sexuality or other categories of social difference. Ethnic studies as field can never omit "our LGBTQ community, women and gender studies, and other historically marginalized communities" because it has always taken an intersectional approach to the study of race and ethnicity.
 6. Finally, this framing suggests that being a "woman" is synonymous with being a minority, as though the structural and systemic exclusions women experience as women are somehow synonymous to that of the groups listed in AB 1460. Such a framing minoritizes women right along with the issues that impact our lives. However, in the context of the US, women do not constitute a subset of the population, but rather a majority of the population, that should not be minoritized in this way.

There is an unfortunate national tendency to use women and gender studies and LGBTQ communities to advocate against initiatives such as AB 1460. One pernicious effect of this framing in higher education is that it puts departments like Ethnic Studies in competition with Departments like Women and Gender Studies and Queer Studies over limited resources. In the context of the university, the departments that inevitably lose are Ethnic Studies, whose histories and constituents are erased in the interest of an ahistorical and generally misinformed idea of what constitutes equity and a substantive, transformative, justice. These divisive tactics conveniently leave the historical forces that have marginalized these fields in the first place to operate through structural power and oppression thus reproducing the status quo and leaving them fully in tact.

It is for these reasons that we, the faculty of Women and Gender Studies and Queer Studies at CSU Fullerton, actively and vocally denounce the divisive project of

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naming women and gender studies as a “stark omission,” unequivocally support the advancement of AB 1460, and emphatically state to President Virjee, the CSUF Administration, and the campus community: **#NotInOurName** and **#WGStsupportsAB1460**.

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