



Case Study

Black Studies in Brown Spaces: The Benefits and Challenges of Teaching Black Studies at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in Southern California

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Abstract

Using California State University, Northridge (CSUN) as a case study, the benefits and challenges of teaching Black Studies at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in Southern California are explored in the hopes to not only open up space in the discipline of Black Studies for discussions on the unique experiences of teaching Black Studies at HSIs and Emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions (eHSIs), but to also

propose solutions on how to help end the anti-Black racism, white supremacy, and discrimination that still persists at universities, such as CSUN, despite the diverse student population.

Keywords

Black Studies, Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (eHSI), California State University, Northridge

Introduction

When the discipline of Black Studies is discussed in higher education, the conversation usually revolves around Black Studies at Historically White Colleges and Universities (HWCUs). Rarely is Black Studies discussed at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs); Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs); or Emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions (eHSIs). Similar to the many benefits and challenges present in teaching Black Studies at HWCUs, there are equally as many benefits and challenges in teaching Black Studies at HBCUs, PBIs, HSIs, and eHSIs. Just like how HWCUs differ throughout the country, so do HBCU's, PBIs, HSIs, or eHSIs. Geography; location; population; size; demographic; administration; etc., make the experience of teaching Black Studies at each institution very different. Consequently, what are the experiences of Black Studies faculty who teach at HSIs? More specifically, what are the experiences of Black Studies faculty who teach at HSIs in Southern California? Using the Department of Africana Studies at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) as a case study, teaching Black Studies at a HSI in Southern California will be explored from the perspective of two Black Studies faculty who have taught at CSUN for a combined total of 35 years, in order to demonstrate that despite the many benefits of teaching Black Studies at such a diverse space as a HSI, anti-Black racism, white supremacy, and discrimination are still very much present throughout campus.

What is a HSI and an eHSI?

According to the United States Census, as of July 2021, the population of Hispanic/Latinos in the United States is 18.9%, and the population of Black/African Americans is 13.6% (“Quick Facts: United States”). In the state of California, also as of July 2021, the population of Hispanic/Latinos is 40.2%, and the population of Black/African Americans is 6.5% (“Quick Facts: California”). Because of the large population of Hispanic/Latinos in California, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities states that California has the largest number of HSIs, 174 or 31%, and the largest number of eHSIs, 51 or 12.9%, in the country (“HACU 2020-2021 Hispanic-Serving Institutions and Emerging HSIs: State Breakdown”). HSIs, as stated by the California State University External Relations, are defined “...under the Higher Education Act (HEA) as colleges or universities where at least 25 percent of the undergraduate, full-time enrollment is Hispanic; and at least half of the institution’s degree-seeking students must be low-income” (“California State University’s Hispanic Serving Institutions”). Excelencia in Education states that “While emerging HSIs do not have the critical mass of Latino student enrollment required to meet the definition of an HSI, these institutions may soon meet the criteria as their enrollment grows and Latino representation increases” (“Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions [eHSIs]: 2020-2021,” para. 2).

HSIs and eHSIs in California

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities offers more insight into HSIs stating, “In the 2020-21 academic year, **559 institutions** met the federal enrollment criterion, enrolling 2.2 million undergraduate Hispanic students, by headcount. The number of HSIs is rapidly growing, from 137 institutions in 1990 to 189 in 1994, to 229 in 2000, to 245 in 2005, to 311 in 2010, 539 in 2018, and 569 in 2019” (“About Hispanic Serving Institutions [HSIs],” par. 3). Although the number of HSIs declined in 2021 from 569 to 559, Excelencia in Education reports that in 2018-2019, there were 176 HSIs in California. However, 95, or 54%, of the HSIs were two-year, public institutions (i.e., community colleges), and 40, or 23%, were four-year, public colleges and universities (“A California Briefing on 25 Years of HSIs” 2). Additionally, also in 2018-2019, Excelencia in Education states that

most of the 46 eHSIs in California were two- and four-year private institutions with only a few two-and four-year public institutions included (“A California Briefing on 25 Years of HSIs” 8).

In regard to four-year, public, higher educational systems, the state of California has two: the University of California (UC) system and the California State University (CSU) system. Because the state of California has such a large Hispanic/Latino population (40.2%), Excelencia in Education states that 5 of the 9 UC schools are HSIs (“A California Briefing on 25 Years of HSIs” 6-7). The HSIs in the UC system are: UC Irvine; UC Merced; UC Riverside; UC Santa Barbara; and UC Santa Cruz (“A California Briefing on 25 Years of HSIs” 6-7). The four UC schools that are, surprisingly, not HSIs are: UC Los Angeles, UC San Francisco, UC San Diego, and UC Davis.

The California State University External Relations states that 21 of the 23 schools in the CSU are HSIs (“California State University’s Hispanic Serving Institutions”). The HSIs in the CSU system include: CSU Bakersfield; CSU Channel Islands; Chico State; CSU Dominguez Hills; CSU East Bay; Fresno State; CSU Fullerton; California Polytechnic Humboldt; CSU Long Beach; California State, Los Angeles; CSU Monterey Bay; CSU Northridge; California Polytechnic Pomona; Sacramento State; CSU San Bernadino; San Diego State University; San Francisco State University; San Jose State University; CSU San Marcos; Sonoma State University; and Stanislaus State (“California State University’s Hispanic Serving Institutions”). The only two CSU schools that are not HSIs are California Maritime (California State University Maritime Academy) and California Polytechnic San Luis Obispo.

Due to California’s low population of Black/African American people (6.5% in California versus 13.6% nationwide), there is only one Historically Black Graduate Institution (HBGI) in the state: the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles. Despite this university being a private undergraduate and graduate institution focused on science, Black students in the CSU system usually gain their HBCU experience by spending a semester, or entire academic year, during their undergraduate career studying at HBCUs in states such as Mississippi, Alabama, Virginia, etc., through the National Student Exchange (NSE) program. According to California State University, Northridge, the NSE

program allows undergraduate students to study for a semester, or a year, at another university in the United States, including many HBCUs, and only pay the tuition of their home university or the university they are attending, if it is cheaper (“National Student Exchange,” par. 2). Although students in the CSU system have the choice to attend any university in the United States, as long as it is included in the NSE program, Black students often choose HBCUs in order to gain the Black college experience they are missing in California at their home CSU.

The Benefits of Teaching Black Studies in the State of California: AB 1460

Despite the Placentia-Yorba Linda School Board in Orange County banning Critical Race Theory in 2022 (M. Gomez) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) banning culturally spiritual words such as “In Lak Eche,” “Ase,” and “Nahui Olin” from their Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum also in 2022 (Los Angeles Times “California Removing Mayan Affirmation from Ethnic Studies Curriculum After Lawsuit”), Ethnic Studies is a priority in the state of California. In fact, California was the first state in the country to pass legislation requiring students in an entire university system to take Ethnic Studies as a graduation requirement. Dr. Shirley Weber, former Assemblywoman, Black Studies Professor Emeritus at San Diego State University, and the current Secretary of State of California, introduced AB 1460 in February 2019 (California State, Legislature “Assembly Bill No, 1460: AB-1460 California State University: Graduation Requirement: Ethnic Studies”). This Ethnic Studies Assembly Bill, signed into law by Governor Newsom in August 2020, requires all students, beginning in the fall of 2021, who attend any of the 23 schools in the CSU system, to take three units of Ethnic Studies in order to graduate. To ensure that only Ethnic Studies classes were included in this legislation, AB 1460 narrowly defines Ethnic Studies as “...an interdisciplinary and comparative study of race and ethnicity with special focus on four historically defined racialized core groups: Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latina and Latino Americans” (California State, Legislature “Assembly Bill No, 1460: AB-1460 California State University: Graduation Requirement: Ethnic Studies”).

The passage of AB 1460 initiated several additional Ethnic Studies laws and policies to be passed and implemented throughout California. For example, in July 2021, the California Community College (CCC) system (which includes 116 schools) passed a policy requiring all students, beginning in fall 2023, who are pursuing an associate degree “...to take a three-unit semester or four-unit quarter class in African American studies, Asian American studies, Latinx studies or Native American studies” (Weissman, par. 2). Also, in October 2021, Governor Newsom signed AB 101 into law requiring all high school students in California, beginning with the class of 2030, to take one semester of Ethnic Studies in order to graduate (California State, Legislature “Assembly Bill No. 101: Pupil Instruction: High School Graduation Requirements: Ethnic Studies”). There is also much discussion in Ethnic Studies throughout the state about the UC system also implementing an Ethnic Studies graduation requirement in the future. Despite needing to pass legislation for Ethnic Studies to be taught in all levels of public education in the state, Ethnic Studies, or Black Studies more specifically, in California has received many benefits from this legislation.

One of the first benefits of the passage of AB 1460 is the increased enrollment of students in Ethnic Studies classes now that every student on each CSU campus is required to take one Ethnic Studies course in order to graduate. This increase in enrollment can lead to additional sections of AB 1460 classes, which generates more department revenue, and can lead to a larger departmental budget. This exposure to Ethnic Studies can also lead to more majors, double majors, minors, and double minors in the various Ethnic Studies disciplines because students, who might not have taken Ethnic Studies classes otherwise, are now required to do so. This also encourages students who may have already taken an Ethnic Studies course to take an additional Ethnic Studies course to fulfill this specific graduation requirement. Overall, requiring the entire CSU student population to take Ethnic Studies can also lead to a better and more informed student body by offering the opportunity for the students to experience a culture they may not have been exposed to before.

Because AB 1460 is a law and not just a system wide policy, a second benefit is the mandated state funding allocated every year by the legislature to the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs on each CSU campus to implement and sustain this legislation. Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs throughout the CSU

have desperately needed substantial funding for years; thus, this money has allowed Ethnic Studies units to fulfill goals and complete projects that have long been priorities by directly connecting this work to AB 1460. Some of examples are: professional development and programming; the restructuring of the curriculum; creating new AB 1460 courses; implementing new strategies for the recruitment and retention of Black, Asian, American Indian, and Hispanic/Latino/Chicano students; creating an Ethnic Studies Center; and ensuring that Ethnic Studies faculty are paid for work that, based the common practice of Cultural Taxation, they are usually forced to complete for free.

A third benefit of AB 1460 is how it has given Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs in the CSU system more institutional control over curriculum at the university level. In fact, this law grants Ethnic Studies faculty autonomy to decide which courses fulfill the AB 1460 Ethnic Studies graduation requirement based on the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) collectively determined in the fall of 2020 by the statewide California State University Ethnic Studies Council (which is made up of faculty from Asian American, American Indian, African American, and Chicano/Latin American Studies). More specifically, each course with the AB 1460 designation must fulfill a minimum of three of the following SLO's

SLO 1: Analyze and articulate concepts such as race and racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, sovereignty, imperialism, settler colonialism, and anti-racism as analyzed in any one or more of the following: Native American Studies, African American Studies, Asian American Studies, and Latina and Latino American Studies.

SLO 2: Apply theory and knowledge produced by Native American, African American, Asian American, and/or Latina and Latino American communities to describe the critical events, histories, cultures, intellectual traditions, contributions, lived-experiences and social struggles of those groups with a particular emphasis on agency and group-affirmation.

SLO 3: Critically analyze the intersection of race and racism as they relate to class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age in Native American, African American, Asian American, and/or Latina and Latino American communities.

SLO 4: Explain and critically review how struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, solidarity, and liberation, as experienced, enacted, and studied by Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and/or Latina and Latino Americans are relevant to current and structural issues such as communal, national, international, and transnational politics as, for example, in immigration, reparations, settler-colonialism, multiculturalism, and language policies.

SLO 5: Describe and actively engage with anti-racist and anti-colonial issues and the practices and movements in Native American, African American, Asian American and/or Latina and Latino communities to build a just and equitable society.

Consequently, working together to implement and sustain this legislation on each CSU campus has increased coalitions among Ethnic Studies faculty; enabled more cross collaboration with Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs; and forced universities in the CSU system to take Ethnic Studies as seriously as the traditional, Eurocentric disciplines. Overall, AB 1460 saved many Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs from being dismantled and/or from being merged with other departments and programs, including the Africana Studies Department at CSUN. Additionally, this law has ensured a future full of growth for Ethnic Studies units throughout the state. However, this has not been without obstacles.

Ultimately, it took a year and a half for AB 1460 to be passed and signed into law, and this was because of opposition from the general public; legislators; the CSU's Chancellor's Office; administrators at the various CSU schools; and faculty outside of Ethnic Studies (CSU Faculty Against AB 1460 "Open Letter"). First, some individuals felt that the legislators were overreaching by passing a law on anything related to CSU curriculum, which is usually the purview of the faculty. Second, others felt that limiting the definition of Ethnic Studies to African American Studies, Chicano/Central American Studies, American Indian Studies, and Asian American

Studies excluded Women's Studies, Queer Studies, Jewish Studies, Muslim Studies, etc. Third, others worried this would inhibit students from graduating on time by adding an additional three units to the general education requirements. Lastly, some were just against Ethnic Studies as a graduation requirement because of their embracement of racism and white supremacy. Although none of these criticisms were true, it was quickly realized by the activist, Ethnic Studies faculty, who were working in the community to gain support for AB 1460, that much of the general public, including some of the legislators, had no real understanding of Ethnic Studies. Thus, it took much education and conversations with Ethnic Studies faculty and students to let people know, both inside and outside the academy, the true necessity of the bill, and the countless benefits of passing it.

Between the time that AB 1460 was introduced and signed into law, active campuses throughout the CSU system, including CSUN, tirelessly organized walk outs; protests; marches; social media campaigns; and met with the community, administrators, faculty, students, and local and state legislators for approximately a year and a half in order to gain support for this bill to pass (Bik, par. 2) (Image 1). The reality is that a graduation requirement in Ethnic Studies needed to be passed as a law in order for the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs in the CSU to receive the institutional support, funding, and recognition they have deserved since their inception more than fifty years ago.

Unfortunately, several challenges have continued even after AB 1460 became a law. The legislature allocated state funding for the implementation and sustainment of AB 1460, which resulted in up to \$765,000 per campus every year for the foreseeable future. Although on some campuses, such as CSUN, the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs have autonomy over this money, this is not the case at every CSU where there are issues with administrative overreach and encroachment. This large amount of money has also enticed faculty in disciplines outside of Ethnic Studies to feel entitled to this money because they are doing something that has to do with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Some curriculum bodies on the various CSU campuses have also tried to dictate to Ethnic Studies faculty what they believe should and should not be a course that satisfies this Ethnic Studies graduation requirement (i.e., arguing that courses on Africa are not allowed because the law only includes African Americans).



Image 1: Africana Studies major protesting for AB 1460 at the CSUN Library in fall 2019.
Photo courtesy of the author.

The CSU Chancellor's Office has also tried to interfere with the passing and implementation of AB 1460 several times by, first, proposing a competing requirement: the Ethnic Studies and Social Justice Requirement (Mayorquin, par. 1). The Chancellor's Office hoped this would dissuade the legislators from passing AB 1460, and the Governor from signing the bill into law by claiming we already had an Ethnic Studies requirement in the CSU. Second, the Chancellor's Office has allowed classes from various community colleges to transfer in as AB 1460 courses even though the designated university certification process was not completed, and several of these courses are not even Ethnic Studies classes. In fact, despite the specificity of the law, some of these courses are coming from departments such as

Sociology, Political Science, etc. This then increases the want for these Eurocentric departments in the CSU system to have their own courses on Black, Hispanic/Latino/Chicano, American Indian, and Asian people to ensure that students gain credit for these community college courses when they transfer into the CSU system. This is an underhanded way for non-Ethnic Studies units to gain AB 1460 courses by going around the law and the rigorous course certification process established on each CSU campus.

Requiring students to take Ethnic Studies has inevitably also brought racist and hostile students, of all cultural backgrounds, into our classrooms who do not want to be there. This can result in negative teaching evaluations; hostile classroom environments; death threats towards faculty; negative social media posts about faculty; etc. But, despite these challenges, the Ethnic Studies faculty throughout the CSU system hope that the passage of AB 1460 can be an inspiration for other university systems across the country, such as the City University of New York (CUNY), the State University of New York (SUNY), the University of Wisconsin (UW) system, and HBCUs, to follow suit with passing their own Ethnic Studies graduation requirement in the future.

The Benefits of Teaching Black Studies in Southern California: Our Close Proximity to Mexico

The main reason why California has the largest number of HSIs and eHSIs in the country is because of the large population of Hispanic/Latino people due to our shared border with Mexico. In fact, as you move closer geographically in the state of California to the Mexican border, according to the United States Census in 2021, the Hispanic/Latino population grows from 40.2% in the state of California in general to 49.1% in Los Angeles County (“Quick Facts: Los Angeles County, California”). Although the United States Census will only provide data on the number of Hispanic/Latino people living in the United States, California, Los Angeles County, etc., many Mexican Americans, especially in California, do not define themselves as Latino or Hispanic. Instead, they identify as Chicana, Chicano, and/or Chicax. Cheech Marin, a famous Chicano actor, comedian, and activist, in “What is a Chicano?,” defines this identity as “...a Mexican-American with a defiant

political attitude that centers on his or her right to self-definition. I'm a Chicano because I say I am" (par. 2). He continues to say

The word 'Chicano' was originally a derisive term from Mexicans to other Mexicans living in the United States. The concept was that those Mexicans living in the U.S. were no longer truly Mexicanos because they had given up their country by living in Houston, Los Angeles, 'Guada La Habra,' or some other city. They were now something else and something less. Little satellite Mexicans living in a foreign country. They were something small. They were chicos. They were now Chicanos. (par. 7)

This is why many universities located in California, such as CSUN, have Chicana and Chicano Studies Departments instead of, or in addition to, Latina/o Studies Departments ("Department of Chicano and Chicana Studies"). These Chicana and Chicano Studies Departments offer a large number of courses specifically focused on Chicana and Chicano life, history, people, and culture.

The Benefits of Teaching Black Studies in Southern California: Our Proximity to Central America

Since we are also located geographically closer to Central America than other Hispanic/Latino countries in the Caribbean or South America, this is why, between 2015-2019, Erin Babich and Jeanne Batalova in "Central American Immigrants in the United States" state there were at least 565,000 Central Americans living in Southern California (4.3% of the population) ("Table 1: Country of Origin for Central American Immigrants in the United States, 2019"). More specifically, Babich and Batalova state that these individuals from Central America are from countries such as El Salvador; Guatemala; Honduras; Nicaragua; Panama; Costa Rica; Belize; etc. ("Table 2: Top Concentration of Central American Immigrants by U.S. Metropolitan Area, 2015-2019"). This is also why Southern California, or more specifically CSUN, according to Hotcoursesabroad, has one of the only eight Central American and Transborder Studies Departments in the United States ("8 Universities in the USA Offering Central American Studies Degrees and Courses"). These Central American Studies units offer courses specifically on Central American

life, history, people, and culture (“Department of Central American and Transborder Studies”).

Thus, another benefit of teaching Black Studies in Southern California is our proximity to Mexico and Central America because this uniquely fills our classrooms with not only Black students, but Chicana/Chicano and Central American students who are interested and invested in learning about Black Studies, African/Black people, Afro Latinos/as, and Ethnic Studies overall.

California State University, Northridge

One of the 21 HSIs in the CSU system, California State University, Northridge (CSUN) is a public, four-year university located in Los Angeles County. The United States Census, as of July 2021, states that the Hispanic/Latino population in Los Angeles County is 49.1%, and the Black/African American population is 9% (Quick Facts: Los Angeles County, California”). Despite being in the jurisdiction of Los Angeles County, CSUN is physically located in the San Fernando Valley (approximately 20 miles north of Los Angeles) and in the city of Northridge, California. As of 2019, City-Data states that Northridge is 44.2% white; 26.5% Hispanic or Latino; 17.2% Asian; and 6.4% Black (“Northridge Neighborhood in Northridge, CA, 91324, 91325, 91326, 91343, Detailed Profile”). This means that the city surrounding CSUN, and the San Fernando Valley in general, has less diversity than many other areas in Los Angeles County.

Not only is CSUN one of the largest universities in the nation, but it is the largest undergraduate university in California and in the CSU system. As of fall 2021, CSUN had a total enrollment of 38,551 undergraduate students (“CSUN Profile: Enrollment Characteristics”). In comparison, the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) had 31,600 undergraduates in fall 2020 (“Facts and Figures”) and the University of Southern California (USC) has 21,000 undergraduates enrolled in 2022-2023 (“About USC: Facts and Figures”).

In terms of the student population at CSUN, as of fall 2021, 55.2%, or 21,263 students, are Hispanic/Latino/Chicano; 4.6%, or 1,765 students, are Black/African American; 9.2%, or 3,538, are Asian American; and 0.1%, or 37, are American Indian (“CSUN Profile: Enrollment Characteristics”). Therefore, CSUN has a higher number of Hispanic/Latino/Chicano students than the population of

Hispanic/Latino/Chicanos in Los Angeles County (49.1%). However, the population of Black/African American students at CSUN (4.6%) is half of the population of Black/African American people in Los Angeles County (9%).

Additionally, many of our students at CSUN are first-generation colleges students, and are often the first person in their family to attend college. Lorena Salinas and Clarissa Corral in “1st Generation: Overcoming Obstacles on the Path to Success” state that “Nearly half of CSUN’s 35,000 undergraduates are first-generation students, according to the CSUN Counts data dashboard” (par. 12). Salinas and Corral continue to say that “The Latino community is driving the change. About 12,000 of CSUN’s Latino student body of 19,000 are first-generation students” (par. 13).

In terms of economics, most of our students are using loans, grants, and/or scholarships to pay for college. In fact, as of fall 2021, 10,354 students at CSUN were using loans to pay for college; 25,730 were using grants; and 5,623 students were on scholarship (“CSUN Profile: Enrollment Characteristics”). Many of our students also work either full time or part time, and some even work more than one job in order to survive in Los Angeles, a city where the cost of living, according to Numbeo, is one of the highest in the nation (“The Cost of Living in Los Angeles”).

CSUN is also a commuter campus where the majority of students commute daily from all over Los Angeles County and beyond. Although some students do commute to CSUN by car, many students commute via the Metro bus or train that can take up to two hours one way. In fact, 30,406 (or 78.9%) of the students at CSUN are from Los Angeles County (“CSUN Profile: Enrollment Characteristics”). Even if our students choose to live in the dorms on campus or in an apartment nearby, their permanent home is still somewhere within the 4,084 square miles of Los Angeles County (REAL RocknRoll Movers, par. 4). In terms of the Black students specifically, they have traditionally attended CSUN from areas in Los Angeles County such as Westchester; Central Los Angeles; Inglewood; Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw; etc. However, with the high cost of housing and the migration of Black people to other parts of Los Angeles County and beyond, we are seeing an influx of Black students attending CSUN from places such as Palmdale.

Some of our Black and Brown (Latina/o, Chicana/o, Hispanic, Latin American, etc.) students also struggle with unique academic and personal challenges.

These challenges result from living in a white supremacist world where they endure daily acts of racism, discrimination, and exploitation. Consequently, some of our Black and Brown students arrive at CSUN in need of taking additional or stretched courses in writing and math. Others have experienced trauma that can, understandably, interfere with their academic pursuits. This includes: being young parents with children; experiencing PTSD from racist encounters with the police; having survived sexual assault, domestic abuse, and/or stalking; being houseless; previously being in foster care; having mental health challenges; experiencing acts of violence and crime; experiencing the loss of a family member and/or friend; etc. This is why Ethnic Studies is so important at institutions such as CSUN because the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs are able to give more personal support and attention to our Black and Brown students who need it, but, often, do not receive it, even at HSIs.

The Birth of the Department of Africana Studies; the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies; and the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at CSUN

According to the film, *The Storm at Valley State*, in the fall semester of 1967, San Fernando Valley State College (now CSUN) only had 23 African American and 7 Latino/Chicano students out of a student population of approximately 18,000. In the fall of 1968, this only increased to 150 African American students and 75 Latino/Chicano students (Moreland, par. 8). Consequently, racism was very much present on campus.

This racism came to a head in November 1968 when the white Assistant Coach for the San Fernando Valley State College football team, Don Markham, literally kicked an African American football player, George Boswell, in his backside during a live football game in front of spectators (Soto, par. 4). His teammates, and other African American students on campus, immediately asked for a meeting with the white Athletic Director, Glenn Arnett (Soto, par. 6). However, Arnett was very dismissive and condescending to the students. Consequently, the students tried to meet with the President of the university, Paul Blomgren, who was also white, and were constantly told he was unavailable. This event, and the disrespect given towards the students' concerns, was the catalyst that led the Black Student Union (BSU),

formed by Gerome Walker, to create a list of demands that would address the university's institutional racism. In the unpublished document entitled "1968 Document: Black Student Unions November 4th [1968] Demands," seven of their twelve demands included

The President will dismiss Markham as volunteer football coach and bar him from the campus.

The President will strongly recommend an Afro-American Studies Department and curriculum to be headed by a black man. The Director and the curriculum will be chosen by faculty and B.S.U. on a 50-50 basis. The curriculum will consist of 124 units leading to a B.A. degree, with an implementation date of February 1969. Oviatt and Chatman will be will co-chair on this committee. B.S.U. will submit a curriculum proposal.

The President will get black instructors to teach courses. These are to be qualified instructors (not just academically qualified, but also with an expertise in the area).

The President will agree to admit a minimum of 500 black students in the spring of 1969 and every semester following. The President guarantees he will exert every effort to obtain financing, to open new channels of financing (foundations, etc.) for the program. He will work in conjunction with the B.S.U.

The President will not take disciplinary action against students involved in the activities of November 4, 1968. The President will not press charges.

The President will provide a tutorial office that the B.S.U and U.M.A.S. (United Mexican American Students) can keep in touch with and handle tutorial needs and advisory needs of E.O.P students.

There will be daily meetings with B.S.U. and administration to implement this agreement will all deliberate speed. If the Title 5 change is passed, the President will still recognize B.S.U. as an autonomous organization.

Members of the BSU; Students for a Democratic Society (SDS); Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA); community activists; and others occupied the administration building with their list of demands for President Blomgren. The President signed the list of demands; but then recanted, and claimed he had signed it under duress. The students occupied the building again, and this time, they were beaten and arrested by the Los Angeles Police Department. A compromise was eventually reached, and six of the student's demands were met. However, one demand, amnesty for those who had occupied the administration building, was not. Consequently, the students arrested served time in jail, and this incident remains on their records still today.

Following on the heels of the protests at San Francisco State (College) University and their establishment of an Ethnic Studies College (including several Ethnic Studies Departments) in 1968, these events at CSUN led to the development and creation of the Pan African Studies Department (now the Department of Africana Studies); the Chicano Studies Department (now the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies); and the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) in 1969. In addition to the creation of two Ethnic Studies Departments, EOP, the program where one of the authors of this article has advised for over 25 years, was established to provide "...services to historically low-income, historically educationally disadvantaged, first-generation college students; a population that not only reflects the diversity of CSUN's feeder communities but also the diversity of the University itself" ("Education Opportunity Program [EOP]: What is CSUN EOP?"). These events built the foundation for Asian American Studies, American Indian Studies, and Central American and Transborder Studies to be established in the future.

The Department of Africana Studies has supported, initiated, and/or created countless resources, programs, and events for the Black students on CSUN's campus for the past 53 years. These include: the Africana Studies Writing Center, the Black House, and Black Graduation. Other events originated by Africana Studies faculty and students include: the Africana Student Welcome Reception; Africana Studies Week; the Bi-Annual Men of Color Enquiry & Student Poster Session; Black History Month; the Africana Studies Writing Program Presentation; the Black Youth Guidance Forum; the Afrocentric Student Research Conference; and the Africana

Studies Graduation Awards Reception. The Department of Africana Studies also publishes the following student journals every year: *Kapu Sens* (a creative writing journal); *C.A.P.T.U.R.E.D.: Multi-Media Research Journal*; and *The Afrocentric Student Research Journal*. Several faculty who are well known in the discipline of Black Studies and have taught at CSUN, past and present, include: James Dennis; Barbara Rhodes; James Bracy; David L. Horne; Tom Spencer-Walters; David Fulton; Johnnie Scott; Tyo Soga; Selassie Williams; Rosentene Purnell; and Karin L. Stanford.

The Benefits of Teaching Black Studies at CSUN, a HSI

One of the benefits of teaching Black Studies at a HSI is the large number of Ethnic Studies units present due to the diversity of the student body. At CSUN, we have the following Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs: Asian American Studies; Chicana and Chicano Studies; Central American and Transborder Studies; Africana Studies; and American Indian Studies. Although Departments, such as Africana Studies, are in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and the rest of the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs are in the College of Humanities, all of the Ethnic Studies at CSUN have a strong coalition and bond, especially Chicana and Chicano Studies and Africana Studies.

As a HSI, it makes sense that Chicana and Chicano Studies is the largest Ethnic Studies Department or Program at CSUN. Not only do they offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in Chicana and Chicano Studies; but, they are the only Ethnic Studies unit to offer a graduate degree at CSUN. They also have 24 tenure and tenure track faculty; 35 adjunct faculty/lecturers; and were approved for a new faculty hire this year (“Department of Chicana/o Studies”). Being a HSI, it also makes sense that CSUN has one of the only eight Central American and Transborder Studies Departments in the United States, and the only Central American and Transborder Studies Departments in the state. They are a growing department at CSUN with two tenure and tenured track faculty members, and 10 adjunct faculty/lecturers (“Department of Central American and Transborder Studies”).

Since Africana Studies and Chicana and Chicano Studies were birthed out of protest at CSUN at the same time, there is a strong, historic bond between these two

departments. Not only are these departments highly radicalized, but they are strong allies for one another. In fact, Chicana and Chicano Studies has been very supportive of any Black led movements, such as the Black Lives Matters Movement, and Africana Studies has been equally supportive of any Chicana and Chicano led movements, such as immigration and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). For example, when there was a campus wide walk out to force the university to protect our DACA students after changes were made nationally by Former President Trump, Africana Studies faculty not only encouraged their students to participate in the walk out, but even offered extra credit to their students for participating. This reminded our Africana Studies students that although the conversation around immigration in California is usually associated with Hispanic/Latino/Chicano people that many African and African Caribbean people in the United States are also undocumented.

Chicana and Chicano Studies faculty and students have also participated in the many Black Lives Matters Movement rallies and marches not only at CSUN, but in Northridge and throughout Los Angeles. Chicana and Chicano Studies has also been a large advocate for the Black students on campus, especially those who have experienced racial profiling and police brutality. One of our Black students, Quinten Thomas, died while in Los Angeles Police Department custody in 2018. Chicana and Chicano Studies has not only been outspoken about Thomas's unexplained death while in custody, but they also created the Quinten Thomas Memorial Scholarship at CSUN ("Education Opportunity Program [EOP]: Quinten Thomas Memorial Scholarship"). Even if issues, such as police brutality, immigration, etc., did not affect both the Hispanic/Latino/Chicano and Black/African American communities, our departments would still support each other because of our long, shared, and collective history.

Since 55.2% of the students at CSUN are Hispanic/Latino/Chicano, another benefit of teaching at a HSI is how many Hispanic/Latino/Chicano students take Africana Studies classes. Since Hispanic/Latino/Chicano share a common African origin with Black people (Van Sertima 146), there are many similarities these groups of people share historically, culturally, experientially, etc. (Gomez 200). In fact, not only do Hispanic/Latino/Chicano and Central American people have African ancestry, but some of our Black students also have Chicano, and, at times, Central

American, ancestry as well (i.e. their families are from Belize). Therefore, many Hispanic/Latino/Chicano students are interested in taking Africana Studies classes to learn more about the African/Black experience; to compare and contrast the African/Black experience with their own experiences; and to learn more about themselves and their own African ancestry. We even have Chicano/Latino and Central American students who have majored, double majored, minored, or double minored in Africana Studies because they have learned so much about themselves in our discipline.

Although there is a 53-year history between Chicana and Chicano Studies and Africana Studies at CSUN, all of the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs on campus have strong bonds uniting us together. For example, the five Ethnic Studies units at CSUN adamantly fought against the Chancellor's Executive Orders 1100 and 1110 in 2018-2019 (The California State University System). These Executive Orders made detrimental changes to class requirements and course placement for our freshman in an attempt to push the students to graduate faster. They also proposed the elimination of any individual campus Cultural Studies requirement, and required students to take more upper division science units. In protest of these changes, the five Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs held protests, marches, walk outs, etc., including organizing a large protest during Freshman Convocation in 2018 (Munoz, par. 1) (Images 2 and 3). Despite campus administration passing these Executive Orders in the summer of 2019 with no faculty support, this paved the way for state legislation to be enacted in the future (i.e. AB 1460).

The bond between all of the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs at CSUN has been further strengthened through the work revolving around the implementation and sustainment of AB 1460. In fact, the CSUN Council for Ethnic Studies (CSUN CES), composed of all of the tenure, tenure track, and lecturer faculty in Ethnic Studies at CSUN, created the Implementation Working Group (IWG), now the Steering Committee, to implement AB 1460 at CSUN. Originally, this committee consisted of one representative from each of the five Ethnic Studies units. Today, it includes the Chairs/Directors of each Ethnic Studies Department and Program; one representative from each of the five Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs, including one of the authors of this article; and additional members



Image 2: CSUN Women's Basketball Team protesting against the Chancellor's Executive Orders 1100 and 1110 at Freshman Convocation on September 13, 2018 at CSUN.
Photo courtesy of the author.



Image 3: Africana Studies minor protesting against the Chancellor's Executive Orders 1100 and 1110 at Freshman Convocation on September 13, 2018 at CSUN.
Photo courtesy of the author.

who hold positions such as: the Assessment Coordinators, the Budget Liaison, and the Ethnic Studies Education and Policy Liaisons. The Steering Committee meets at least once a week, and is responsible for creating proposals that are then taken to the CSUN CES for approval. Work that has been accomplished by the Steering Committee in the two years since AB 1460's implementation include: writing the Steering Committee Bylaws; creating an Ethnic Studies Center; implementing assessment for the AB 1460 courses; professional development for members of the Steering Committee; managing a \$765,000 a year budget; etc. Although the responsibilities of the Steering Committee have changed since we have moved from implementation to sustainment, this has been an opportunity for the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs to work closely together in a way we had not really done before.

In addition to the Steering Committee, the CSUN CES also created the Ethnic Studies Academic Council (ESAC): the governing body at CSUN that approves all of the courses that receive the Ethnic Studies Graduation Requirement designation. ESAC consists of one representative from each of the five Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs, and is currently chaired by one of the authors of this article. As ESAC moves from implementation to sustainment, the committee has begun to work even more closely with the community colleges that transfer a large number of students to CSUN. In fact, in spring 2023, ESAC is taking the lead, in conjunction with Undergraduate Studies, in bringing in approximately 19 community colleges from throughout Los Angeles County to CSUN for a day of professional development with the Steering Committee, ESAC, and the various Curriculum Committees from the five Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs. As the California Community College system begins to implement their own Ethnic Studies requirement, we hope this will strengthen our relationship with them as well.

The Challenges of Teaching Black Studies at CSUN, a HSI

Since the population of Hispanic/Latino/Chicano students at a HSI is high, it is understandable that most of the university's attention goes to the Hispanic/Latino/Chicano students. However, the low population of Black students not only at CSUN, but at other HSIs in Southern California, is largely problematic. At CSUN, as of fall 2021, 4.6%, or 1,765 students, of the 38,551 students enrolled

were Black/African American. Additionally, according to California State, Los Angeles, as of fall 2022, they only have 1,024 Black students of the 26,027 students enrolled (3.93%) (“Who Are Our Students”). With such a low population of Black students not only at CSUN, but at other HSIs in Southern California, more serious consideration and attention must be given to the current enrollment of Black students. Since the population of Black/African American people in Los Angeles County is 9%, the population of Black students at CSUN, and any other university in Los Angeles County, should, minimally match the population of Black people in the county.

However, one of CSUN’s unique challenges when it comes to the enrollment of Black students is its location in the San Fernando Valley, and in the city of Northridge. Many of the Black students who attend CSUN do not live in Northridge, or even in the San Fernando Valley, and, instead, are from, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, predominately Black areas throughout Los Angeles such as Central Los Angeles; Inglewood; Leimert Park; Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw; etc. (“Black”). Even though it is geographically closer for our Black students to attend CSU Dominguez Hills or California State, Los Angeles, those who do attend CSUN travel long distances, in traffic, and often on public transportation.

One of the main reasons why Black students do not live near CSUN is because Los Angeles is still highly segregated (Smith, par. 2). In fact, there are currently areas and neighborhoods in Los Angeles that are made up of predominately one specific cultural group of people. For instance, the *Los Angeles Times* states that East Los Angeles is highly populated by Latinos/Chicanos (96.7%) (“Latino”) and Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw is highly populated by Black/African American people (71.3%) (“Black”). The United States Census also states that Beverly Hills is highly populated by white people (81.5%) (“Quick Facts: Beverly Hills”). Although this is shifting due to gentrification, the high cost of living, exorbitant housing costs, etc., Los Angeles is still very segregated today. In fact, this segregation has even affected the enrollment of Black students at CSUN, especially with the implementation of impaction.

Impaction is a practice that began several years ago when enrollment was so high at CSUN that the university could no longer service the large number of students who wanted to attend. Instituting impaction meant that a student would not be admitted to CSUN if they were coming to pursue an overpopulated major, such

as Psychology, Kinesiology, and Biology, and that we were no longer admitting transfer students in the spring semester. Impaction also made it harder for students to be admitted to CSUN the further away they lived from the school. CSUN's Admissions and Records states

Impaction means that a campus anticipates more qualified applicants than available spots for which there is adequate state funding. To manage enrollment within current budget constraints while preserving the highest quality academic experience and services to students, California State University, Northridge has declared **campus-wide impaction** for first-time freshmen and first-time transfer applicants as well as all first-time freshmen and first-time transfers to the academic **majors** discussed below [i.e., Psychology, Kinesiology, Biology]. This means that, with the exception of the majors discussed below, the University will give **priority** admission consideration to first-time undergraduate applicants who have attended schools located within a closely-defined **local geographic area**. Non-local applicants are required to meet **supplementary criteria**. (par. 1)

Unfortunately, this means that because Black neighborhoods in Los Angeles are further away from CSUN, it is harder for Black students, living in these Black spaces, to be admitted leading to the continual decline of Black students at CSUN. Therefore, in order to increase the population of Black students at CSUN specifically, the practice of impaction must end since the student's geographic distance to the campus should not have any impact on whether or not they are admitted to CSUN. Larger recruitment efforts of Black students must also be launched because focusing recruitment efforts close to CSUN has not, and will not, yield productive results. These recruitment efforts must also be taken on by upper administration, and should not fall on the shoulders of the Africana Studies faculty alone, which is what is occurring now, since we are already Culturally Taxed beyond our limits.

Recruiting Black students to attend CSUN is important, but so is retaining them, and ensuring they graduate. Therefore, any discriminatory policies that disproportionality affect Black students from continuing their education at CSUN must be reexamined. These policies include, but are not limited to: academic

progress policies that take away financial aid from students based on GPA; extreme housing costs; policies that force students to leave the university for not passing certain classes during their first year; etc. Thus, a challenge of teaching of Black Studies at an HSI is to persuade the university, with such a low population of Black students, to make the recruitment, retention, and graduation of Black students more of a priority.

The low population of Black students at CSUN also makes it difficult to recruit Africana Studies majors, double majors, minors, and double minors. Although non-Black students do declare Africana Studies as their major or minor, most of the majors and minors in Africana Studies are Black. As of 2021-2022, CSUN had 38 majors; 5 double majors; 94 minors; and 3 double minors in Africana Studies (140 total). Often, the number of majors and minors in Africana Studies are compared to the number of majors and minors in Eurocentric disciplines (like Anthropology or Geography) not only in our college, but throughout the university despite being in a completely different situation. If more Black students were recruited to attend CSUN, the number of Africana Studies majors, double majors, minors, and double minors would increase. But, determining the allocation of funding and resources based on the number of Africana Studies majors, double majors, minors, and double minors without placing this in perspective with the low population of Black students at CSUN is unfair, and is intentionally setting up the Africana Studies Department for failure.

Unfortunately, the situation regarding the number of Black faculty at CSUN is not much better. As of fall 2021, out of 794 tenure and tenure track faculty, only 45, or 5.7%, of the faculty at CSUN are Black/African American, and 7 of these faculty are in the Africana Studies Department (“CSUN Profile: Enrollment Characteristics”). This means that the other 38 Black faculty are sprinkled throughout 9 colleges and approximately 133 disciplines. Just as recruiting and retaining Black students needs to be a priority, so does recruiting and retaining Black faculty.

If not much attention is given to the recruitment and retention of Black students and Black faculty at a HSI like CSUN, then obviously not much attention will be given to the Department of Africana Studies either. Currently, the Department of Africana Studies at CSUN has 8 tenured faculty; one tenure track

faculty; and 10 adjunct faculty/lecturers (“Department of Africana Studies”). However, one faculty member is on sabbatical this semester, and another faculty is on a leave of absence resulting in only 6 tenure and tenure track faculty. Despite having 14 tenure and tenured track faculty members at one time in our history, there are no new hires in sight (despite the fact that most of the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs were given hires this year). Therefore, our department has to rely heavily on adjunct faculty/lecturers to teach our classes.

After the Black Lives Matter Movement gained popularity throughout the country over the past few years, CSUN, and other HSIs, have attempted to give more attention to Black students, Black faculty, and Black Studies. Examples of this at CSUN are: creating the Black Student Success Council (BSSC); creating the Black Scholars Matters (BSM) program: offering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) grants (even though Black Studies faculty have to compete with faculty from Eurocentric disciplines for this money); creating identity based centers on campus, including a resource center for Black students; supporting the Ethnic Studies faculty in the institutionalization of AB 1460; etc. However, most of this has fallen on the shoulders of Black Studies, Black faculty, and Black staff, causing a larger workload, and has not yielded much change at CSUN; not yet.

Despite Being a HSI, Anti-Black Racism, White Supremacy, and Discrimination is Still Present at CSUN

Although CSUN is designated as a HSI, anti-Black racism, white supremacy, and discrimination are still very much present in all areas of campus life. In regard to the cultural background of the faculty at CSUN, surprisingly, only 91, or 11.5%, of the faculty are Hispanic/Latino/Chicano despite being a HSI (“CSUN Profile: Enrollment Characteristics”). Additionally, most of the Hispanic/Latino/Chicano faculty, 26 in total, are in Chicana and Chicano Studies (“Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies”) or Central American and Transborder Studies (“Department of Central American and Transborder Studies”). Therefore, the majority of the tenure and tenure track faculty at CSUN are white: 447 White faculty out of 794, or 56.3% (“CSUN Profile: Enrollment Characteristics”). This means that our Black and Brown students at CSUN rarely, outside of Ethnic Studies, have a professor who

shares their same or similar cultural background. This also means that the curriculum in the classes taught by the white faculty is most likely Eurocentric, and emphasizes a European perspective. Therefore, the Black students at CSUN are most likely taking classes from white faculty; they are learning Eurocentric curriculum; and are one of the only Black students in their classes.

The elders and ancestors who established Ethnic Studies at CSUN experienced so much racism and white supremacy that this is why they organized the various Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs in the way they did. At CSUN, Africana Studies is currently the only Ethnic Studies unit in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. The rest of the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs (Chicana and Chicano Studies, Asian American Studies, American Indian Studies, and Central American and Transborder Studies) are in the College of Humanities. Although American Indian Studies was also once in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, they moved to the College of Humanities after experiencing much racism and white supremacy by one of our former Deans.

When asked why the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs were organized this way, the elders in Africana Studies said this was to ensure that if the university administration tried to dismantle Ethnic Studies, it would be harder for them to do so if the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs were in two separate colleges. Despite having this amazing foresight and strategy for the future, having two different Deans; two different Associate Deans; two different budgets. two different sets of protocol to follow; two different Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) guidelines and policies; two different college curriculum committees; etc. has been challenging, and even divisive. However, with the passage of AB 1460, the Ethnic Studies faculty at CSUN are hoping to establish, like San Francisco State University, and, more recently, California State, Los Angeles, a College of Ethnic Studies to collectively house all of the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs together.

The U.S. Department of Education states that “In 2019, of the more than 27,000 criminal incidents that occurred on the campuses of postsecondary institutions and were reported to police or security agencies, 757 incidents were classified as hate crimes. The three most common types of hate crimes reported by institutions were intimidation, destruction, damage, and vandalism, and simple

assault” (“Department of Education’s Latest Data on Campus Hate Crimes,” par. 2). Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education states “Of the 757 reported hate crimes on college campuses, more than 400 were motivated by race or ethnicity. Some 57 of these hate crimes were assaults” (“Department of Education’s Latest Data on Campus Hate Crimes,” par. 3). Just because a university is designated as a HSI does not make it immune from racism, white supremacy, hate crimes, and/or death threats; this also includes CSUN.

Despite being a HSI, racism, hate crimes, and death threats towards Ethnic Studies faculty are very much present at CSUN. In fact, at least three of the Africana Studies faculty have experienced hate crimes and death threats over the past 11 years. One of the authors of this article had the N Word written on the back of their car parked in one of the faculty lots, and, later, also had “FU” written on the front of their car (Glocke, par. 3). In both instances, no one was prosecuted, and there was no real support from administration. This same faculty member also received a death threat via email from a student in one of their classes (Glocke, par. 4). Although this student ended up withdrawing from the university voluntarily, ironically, the CSUN Police offered the most support by physically protecting the faculty member during the time the violence was threatened to occur.

A second Africana Studies faculty member was forced to take out a restraining order against a student who had physically threatened them. Since this restraining order also included campus, university administrators convinced this professor to amend the restraining order so the student had more freedom to move around on campus despite what the court originally ruled. This same faculty member, and one of the authors of this article, also received a 10-page, single spaced, typed death threat through the mail initiating the involvement of the Los Angeles Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) (Kelley, par. 15). Despite reporting this death threat to both university administration and campus police, this death threat was downgraded to a hate letter, and no further action was taken. In fact, these two faculty members never heard anything back from any entity involved in the investigation demonstrating how this was not a priority for CSUN.

A third professor in Africana Studies also received multiple death threats from white supremacists after questions from their online exam were screenshotted and

uploaded on to several right-wing websites (Chimurenga, par. 2). This professor was told by administration that these threats were “not that bad,” and that they could not protect them, resulting in this professor taking a leave of absence from teaching. Despite all of these death threats and hate crimes being nationally publicized and investigated in *The Huffington Post*, the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, and the *Southern Poverty Law Center*, none of these Black Studies faculty received the institutional support they should have after experiencing this type of terrorism at their job.

Because administration never publicized these hate crimes and death threats on campus, many CSUN faculty and students had no idea these events even occurred. In fact, it was only through working on the implementation of AB 1460 that Ethnic Studies faculty in departments and programs outside of Africana Studies were even notified of these occurrences. This is when it became evident that many Ethnic Studies faculty throughout campus, like in Chicana and Chicano Studies, have also experienced, and are currently experiencing, similar acts of terrorism. Therefore, in the future, the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs plan to hold a Townhall meeting to discuss the racism, hate crimes, and death threats experienced by the Ethnic Studies faculty and students on campus. University administration need to be reminded that these acts of terrorism experienced by Ethnic Studies faculty directly affect and impact the recruitment and retention of Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino/Chicano, American Indian, etc. faculty.

These acts of terrorism also affect students because if violence were to ever occur to a faculty member, most likely, it would occur on campus where students are present. In fact, one of the authors of this article was volunteering at an Africana Studies Open House in fall 2021 at the Black House, and one of the parents of a potential student asked if it was safe to send her daughter, who is Black, to CSUN. Not only do these acts of terrorism threaten the safety of the students we have on campus right now, but it can affect the retention and recruitment of future Black students. Students and faculty should not be collateral damage for administration’s lack of protection when it comes to acts of racism and white supremacy.

The reality is that the content we teach in our Ethnic Studies classes (i.e., racism, white supremacy, white privilege, etc.) sometimes brings negative and violent reactions from our students who are unwilling or unready to discuss these issues. Unfortunately, passing AB 1460 and requiring every student on all 23 campuses in

the CSU to take Ethnic Studies is going to result in more hate crimes and death threats towards Ethnic Studies faculty across the CSU since students who do want to take Ethnic Studies now have to. Therefore, CSUN must protect its Ethnic Studies faculty at all costs.

Hate crimes have also been experienced by some of our Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino/Chicano, and American Indian students on campus. In December 2018, white supremacist threats were written in several bathroom stalls on CSUN's campus including swastikas, the N word, and a date when a mass shooting would occur. Not only did the mass shooting threat scare the entire campus community, but the swastikas and N word further threatened the Black students, especially the Black Jewish students on campus (Tchekmedyan, par. 1).

During COVID-19, some of our Asian/Asian American students also reported being harassed and threatened on campus due to the racist stereotype that Asian people were responsible for COVID-19. Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino/Chicano, and American Indian students have also reported experiencing racism in their classroom and from some of their professors and classmates. This has included racist statements said in class; offensive class readings; derogatory emails; faculty and staff advisors telling our students not to take Black Studies courses and persuading them to courses in a Eurocentric disciplines instead (i.e., English for their writing class instead of Africana Studies); faculty and staff advisors telling students they should not major, minor, double major, or double minor in Africana Studies; and an overall negative treatment of many of our Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino/Chicano, and American Indian students from some faculty, staff, and students.

Conclusion

Overall, there are many benefits to teaching Black Studies in California such as the passage of AB 1460; the future implementation of AB 101; the future implementation of the California Community College's policy requiring Ethnic Studies; and the diverse population throughout the state because of our close proximity to Mexico and Central America. Some of the benefits of teaching Black Studies at a HSI in Southern California are: the presence of five strong Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs; the 53 plus year history and relationship

between Africana Studies, Chicana and Chicano Studies, and EOP; the large number of Latino/Hispanic/Chicano students who take our Africana Studies courses; the activist tradition that continues still today because several of our Ethnic Studies disciplines were birthed out of protest; and the unbreakable bond the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs have through the fight against the Chancellor's Executive Orders and the implementation of the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement.

However, after existing at CSUN for 53 years, Black Studies, Black students, Black faculty, and Black staff are almost in the exact same position we were in when the protests began in 1968 that lead to the establishment of the Department of Africana Studies. In fact, if demands were given to administration today, they would be very similar to what was demanded in the past with only a few additions

1. For the open enrollment of Black students since the number of Black students should increase to at least the percentage of Black people in Los Angeles County.
2. For upper administration to take the lead on the recruitment of Black students to CSUN so this responsibility does not just fall on the shoulders of the Africana Studies faculty.
3. For more Black faculty to be hired since the number of Black faculty should also increase to at least the percentage of Black people in Los Angeles County. These Black faculty should be hired in every college and in every discipline throughout the university.
4. For more Black staff to be hired: although CSUN has not presented much data on this, the number of Black staff should also be at least the percentage of Black people in Los Angeles County.
5. For Black Studies to be given more attention outside of AB 1460: for example, with several faculty hires.
6. For the curriculum in every discipline to be decolonized, diversified, and inclusive of American Indian, Hispanic/Latino/Chicano, Asian American,

and African American people, life, history, culture, experience, accomplishments, etc.

7. For all courses on Black people to be housed in Black Studies, especially since many departments have, or are trying to, pass or teach courses on Black people outside of Black Studies, which is outside of their training and research areas.
8. For more Ethnic Studies faculty to sit on committees that make major decisions on CSUN's campus (i.e. Personnel Planning and Review Committee; the Educational Policy Committee; the Faculty Senate; Faculty Senate Exec., etc.).
9. For the creation of an Ethnic Studies College so that the Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs can work together in the same space collectively and collaboratively.
10. For administration to take hate crimes and death threats towards Ethnic Studies faculty more seriously. For example, reach out to the faculty member or members being terrorized; make a public statement in support of the faculty member and against any type of racism and white supremacy; create a separate reporting process for hate crimes and death threats to ensure the entire campus is aware of these types of occurrences; and ensure that the party or parties responsible are brought to justice.
11. To end impaction not because our enrollment has declined, but because it is directly interfering with the enrollment of Black students, and their ability to declare majors, such as in the STEM fields.
12. The defund and re-examine the budget of the campus police.

Despite a lack of knowledge and the large number of misconceptions people may have regarding teaching Black Studies at HSIs or eHSIs, we have demonstrated that having a diverse student body does not make Black Studies, Black students, Black faculty, and/or Black staff immune from experiencing racism, white supremacy, and discrimination in a myriad of ways. In the discipline of Black Studies, we need to expand our discussions to include what Black Studies Departments and

Programs experience at HSIs and eHSIs across the country, both positive and negative. This dialogue would allow us to also work collectively together throughout the discipline to find strategies and solutions to the many challenges we experience at HSIs and eHSIs. This would also result in the implementation of more permanent change so that 30 years from now, we are not still submitting the same list of demands to administration that we did in 1968. Consequently, we need long term and permanent change, and we need it now. If Black Lives truly do Matter to HSIs and eHSIs, then that means Black students, Black faculty, Black staff, and Black Studies must matter, too.

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