

Date of Hearing: August 14, 2013

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Das Williams, Chair
ACR 71 (Weber) – As Amended: August 5, 2013

SUBJECT: Africana studies programs.

SUMMARY: Endorses the invaluable work of California's Africana studies programs and their faculty, staff, and students; recognizes the leadership provided by the beneficiaries of those programs; and supports the continuation of Africana studies programs in California's institutions of higher education. Specifically, this resolution:

- 1) Makes numerous declarations and findings, including the following:
 - a) The academic discipline of Africana studies encompasses research, scholarship, and programs that analyze and reflect the experiences and contributions of African natives and African Americans;
 - b) Formal Africana studies programs and departments at California's universities resulted from student-led movements dating back to the 1960s whereby the movements included demonstrations and student protests, where students, faculty, and community members demanded university courses relevant to them and their communities;
 - c) Since the 1960s, Africana and Black studies have been the academic and intellectual extension of the Civil Rights Movement;
 - d) The formalization of Africana studies increased awareness of the need for faculty, students, and staff from diverse communities in California's universities and the study of the roles, contributions, and achievements of African natives and African Americans provides for a rich and in-depth perspective for understanding California and United States history;
 - e) Africana and related studies incorporate the influence of African natives and African Americans on the California education system and on America's diverse racial and ethnic groups;
 - f) Africana studies and related academic disciplines promote a view of ethnic groups as significant contributors to the history and diversity of California and the United States history;
 - g) Africana studies has been the model and inspiration for other ethnic, gender, and social education programs throughout the United States;
 - h) The continuation and expansion of Africana studies within our state's educational system would encourage students to analyze and synthesize information with a global perspective; and,

- i) Support for postsecondary Africana studies departments, programs, and related projects, including financial support, will allow for the continued guidance and teaching of a new generation of students who will enrich and contribute to California policy, education, and government.
- 2) Recognizes that Dr. Nathan Hare, known as the father of Black studies programs in the United States, was the department chair of the nation's first African American studies academic program in 1968 at San Francisco State University and subsequently faculty members including, but not limited to, Carrol Wayman, Vernon Oaks, Norman Chamber, Shirley W. Thomas, Shirley N. Weber, and Harold K. Brown developed the first Black studies program at San Diego State University in 1972.
- 3) Recognizes that in addition to offering the first African American studies program in the United States, the California State University (CSU) has nine programs statewide as well as seven ethnic and gender studies programs leading to undergraduate and graduate degrees.
- 4) Recognizes that over 400 CSU students chose to major in African American studies for fall 2012 and another 200 in gender or ethnic studies.
- 5) Recognizes that the University of California (UC) campuses at Berkeley, Davis, Riverside, Irvine, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara offer undergraduate degrees in one of African American studies, Black studies, or Afro-American studies.
- 6) Recognizes that Africana studies is comprised of several disciplines, including art history, humanities, political science, behavioral science, and history and that Africana studies, known in some departments as Black, Pan-African, or Afro-American studies, encompass the origin, history, culture, experiences, heritage, achievements, and contributions of African natives and African Americans.
- 7) Recognizes that Africana studies is a respected academic field that has fostered the development of professional organizations, institutionalized departments, research journals, award-winning publications, and other related programs across the United States.
- 8) Requests the Legislature to do the following: a) Formally endorse the invaluable work of California's Africana studies departments, programs, and related projects and their faculty, staff, and students; b) Recognize that the leadership provided by the beneficiaries of these programs have contributed greatly to the academic rigor, prominence, and distinguishing qualities of California's colleges and universities and the vitality of other public and private institutions, including California state government; and, c) Support the continuation of Africana studies departments, programs, and related projects in California's institutions of higher education.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This resolution is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS: Background. Earlier this year F. King Alexander, former president of CSU, Long Beach (CSULB) informed the Legislature that CSULB, due to declining enrollment in their Africana Studies department and overall budgetary constraints on its College of Liberal Arts and other colleges, would aim to preserve the academic area of Africana studies by designating it as an academic program. This decision caused concern for many legislators; they followed up with

meetings with the CSU Office of the Chancellor asking for the system to reconsider its position and to review and re-evaluate the significance and importance of ethnic studies on all campuses.

In June of this year, Timothy White, Chancellor of the CSU, informed the Legislature that the decision to consolidate the Africana Studies department into an academic program at CSULB would be put on hold until a new president is in place at CSULB and able to work closely with faculty and gain an understanding of the complexity of the issues involved. The goal is to make a determination on the status of Africana Studies by fall 2015.

Segments. According to the UC Office of the President, UC campuses offer several majors and minors in the field of African and African American Studies. In March of this year, the faculty of the interdepartmental program major in Afro-American Studies at the Los Angeles campus submitted a formal proposal for the campus to create the Department of African American Studies.

According to the CSU Office of the Chancellor, as of fall 2012, nine CSU campuses have African American Studies programs. The number of majors range from 7 to 40 across campuses. Additionally, seven CSU campuses have African American Studies embedded within a broader program. Among the 201 declared African Studies majors, three-fourths (or 153) of the students are African Americans. However, from fall 2003 to fall of 2012 undergraduate enrollment of lower division African American Studies has declined by 3 percent. In 2001-02 the CSU conferred 122 Bachelor of Arts degrees in African American Studies, but in 2011-12 only 70 Bachelor of Arts degrees in African American Studies were conferred.

According to the California Community College Chancellor's Office, most campuses offer at least one African American Studies related course. Additionally, many of the offered courses count towards degree transfer.

Need for the resolution. The author states, "This resolution is important because it highlights the role and significance that Africana Studies has played historically and continues to play in the progressive transformation of the academy and in the enrichment and expansion of this department, especially in light of this recent situation at CSULB."

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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