California, the First or the Only?

Ethnic Studies as a Graduation Requirement in Higher Education

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SOCIOL 1104: Sociology of Higher Education

***Abstract:*** *The offering of ethnic studies in higher education has been a topic of contention for decades. California, the birthplace of ethnic studies, became the first state to require it as a graduation requirement within their public university system, the California State University (CSU). What is of further interest is that it was the state government, and not the CSU system, that intervened to implement it with the passing of a legislative bill, Assembly Bill (AB) 1460. This paper investigates the movement that led to the codification of this legislation in hopes of answering a question on many stakeholders’ minds: will California be the first or the only state to make ethnic studies a graduation requirement in a higher education system? Drawing on literature reviews composed of various primary and secondary sources in addition to an expert interview, this study reveals the extent to which the movement that brought about AB 1460 can be replicated in other American states.*

I affirm my awareness of the standards of the Harvard College Honor Code.

Ashley Álvarez

**Introduction**

In August 2020, California became the first state to require ethnic studies as a graduation requirement in a higher education institution (HEI) (California Faculty Association 2021c). Required of all California State University (CSU) students graduating during or after the 2024-25 academic school year, Assembly Bill (AB) 1460 specifies that students must take an ethnic studies course related to at least one of the following four ethnic groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and/or Latin Americans (California Legislative Information 2020a). AB 1460 went into effect this academic school year, meaning fall 2021 was the first semester in which all CSU campuses were required to provide courses in ethnic studies across its twenty-three campuses (California Legislative Information 2020a).

California has long been a setting for historic moments in higher education, including the 1968 student strike that led to the birth of ethnic studies in higher education. Now, California becomes the first state government to intercede in their public higher education institution and make ethnic studies a graduation requirement. Thus, while the passing of AB 1460 is an occasion to be celebrated, its contemporary and unprecedented nature means it is largely uninvestigated. The primary research question of this paper- To what extent can AB 1460 serve as a model in other states’ HEIs?- will require answers to two sub-questions: 1) What shifts occurred in the fifty-year time span between 1968 and 2021 that led to the progression of the ethnic studies movement? and 2) Can this social movement be replicated? The answers to these questions will be of aid to individuals and groups hoping to replicate California’s decision and bring ethnic studies as a graduation requirement to their own HEIs.

The study begins with two literature reviews: one on the birth of ethnic studies, and another on the more recent events that brought about AB 1460. Using social movement theory (defined as follows), this paper then analyzes the literature reviews as well as an expert interview of a key player within the movement in order to determine the key actors, motives, and actions that propelled the codification of AB 1460. With this knowledge, I discern the shifts that led to the success of the overall social movement, and offer recommendations for those individuals hoping to replicate AB 1460 in other HEIs. This paper concludes with suggestions for future research, the limitations of my own, and a note of positionality from the author.

**Research Design**

This conceptual paper draws upon Jack Goldstone’s chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, *Demography and Social Movements* to define social movement theory. Goldstone (2014) focuses on how “significant shifts in the relative size, education, and especially the critical experiences of various groups can play a dramatic role in motivating people to seek changes in social policies and institutions, thus spawning new outlooks, aspirations, and social movements” (150). This framework will help me approach my literature reviews and not only identify the key actors and their motives in the AB 1460 movement, but it will disentangle the “significant shifts” across the two time periods that led to its codification (Goldston 2014:150). As for the literature reviews, the review on the development of ethnic studies relies on various primary and academic secondary sources, specifically journal articles. Due to the contemporary nature of the sources, the literature review on the passing of AB 1460 relies predominantly on primary sources in the form of news articles, online informational materials, and legislative documents.

In addition to the primary and secondary sources, an expert interview of a key actor within the movement is referred to throughout the second literature review and analysis. Because this person consented to a confidential interview, their name and position will not be provided. Instead, I will refer to the interviewee by the name ‘Professor Sam’ and use the pronouns they/them/theirs when referring to them out of that name. All information, including direct and indirect quotes, has been approved by the interviewee. To access the original interview questions, refer to Appendix A.

**Literature Review: The Birth of Ethnic Studies**

The history of ethnic studies in higher education begins in California. Various student organizations- composed of various ethnic and racial organizations, most notably the Afro-American Student Union (AASU)/ Black Student Union (BSU), Asian American Political Alliance, Mexican American Students Confederation, and Native American Party- formed a coalition called the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) (Lye 2010; Dong 2009). The TWLF embarked on a five-month strike beginning on November 2, 1968 at San Francisco State University (SFSU) (Lye 2010; Dong 2009). This strike, which implored students to boycott classes and included other actions such as hunger strikes, sit-ins, and protests, is the longest student strike in American history and was joined by a parallel strike at the University of California (UC), Berkeley (Lye 2010; Dong 2009). Student protesters at both campuses included the graduate students who attended and/or taught at these institutions, as well as faculty and local community members who were outraged by the news coverage of the physical violence students endured at the hands of police (Ula 2010; Bates and Meraji 2019).

The strikes at SFSU and UC Berkeley had similar demands. According to their January 1969 statement, the TWLF demanded as it relates to ethnic studies:

* For funds to be allocated for the immediate creation of four departments- Department of Asian, Black, Chicano, and Native American Studies- under a Third World College, as well as “[any] other Third World studies programs as they are developed and presented” (TWLF 1969).
* For there to be a “[r]ecruitment of more Third World faculty in every department” (TWFL 1969).

It must be noted that the work of the TWLF did not come all at once. The BSU- which, unlike all of the other ethnic/racial organizations at SFSU, had existed prior to the foundation of the TWLF- laid much of the groundwork for the work of the TWLF three years prior to the 1968 strike (Lye 2010; Dong 2009). The BSU had been in ceaseless conflict with the school administration, which stemmed from inter-student racism and the low enrollment of Black students (Dong 2009:99). In November 1967, the arrest and suspension of four BSU members after they responded to the racist writings of the student newspaper added tension between the BSU and the school’s administration, who were caught in a “deadlock in negotiations over the formation of a Black Studies department” (Dong 2009:99). Harvey Dung (2009) notes that, despite this long-term animosity, it was the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968 that shifted the students’ approach. With a “stalled” fight for Black Studies and a long-time history of “unproductive negotiations, broken agreements, and increased police repression,” Dr. King’s assassination was a tragic catalyst that revitalized the student movement (The Berkeley Revolution 2021; Dong 2009:99). The BSU formed the TWLF with the aforementioned student groups in the spring of 1968, and the new coalition based their constitution off of the AASU’s constitution (Lye 2010; The Berkeley Revolution 2021). In the fall of 1968, the TWLF went on strike.

There are more incidents that occurred in the five months of protest than this paper can describe. However, it must be noted that the opposition of the then governor of California, Ronald Reagan, and the violent police presence was constant throughout the five months (Dong 2009; KQED News 2018). The strike concluded all activity in March 1969 when the Academic Senate of SFSU endorsed the establishment of an Ethnic Studies Department, prompting the school’s chancellor to approve a four-year Bachelor’s of Arts degree in Ethnic Studies to be offered beginning Fall 1969 (Dong 2009).

Beginning with the activism of Black students at SFSU, followed by years of student-administrator conflict, and spurned by the assassination of Dr. King, the progression to the 1968 student strikes at SFSU and UC Berkeley are responsible for the birth of ethnic studies programs in higher education. In the years to follow, other institutions of higher education followed suit. By the early 1990s, more than 700 ethnic studies programs and departments existed throughout the United States (Hu-DeHart 1993).

**Literature Review: Ethnic Studies in Recent Decades**

On August 17th, 2020, the legislative bill AB 1460 was approved by the governor of California, Gavin Newsom, and came into effect in the 2021-22 academic year. The bill requires all CSU campuses to offer ethnic studies courses and for all undergraduate students graduating in or after the 2024-25 academic school year to complete one three-unit course in ethnic studies. Section (Sec.) 1 of AB 1460 defines an ethnic studies course 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 Legislative Information 2020a). Sec. 1 also acknowledged that ethnic studies “[came] about from students of color demanding them,” crediting the 1968 coalition of students at SFSU, the TWLF, for beginning the advocacy for said programs (California Legislative Information 2020a). Sec. 1 also credits the bill to the 2016 report of the CSU Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies that was commissioned by the CSU Chancellor’s office, which recommended ethnic studies as a graduation requirement four years earlier.

Sec. 2 of AB 1460 states this legislature intends to grant CSU students “the knowledge and skills that will help them comprehend the diversity and social justice history of the United States and of the society in which they live” in order “to enable them to contribute to that society as responsible and constructive citizens” (California Legislative Information 2020a). Sec. 2 also outlines that, in relation to the “core competencies” these courses will have, the CSU must collaborate with the Academic Senate of the CSU (ASCSU) and the CSU Council of Ethnic Studies (CSUCES). The ASCSU is “the official voice of the faculty in matters of system wide concern” and the recognized governing power in the CSU system (California State University 2021a). The CSUCES is the collaborative forum that grants membership to any CSU faculty currently teaching in CSU Ethnic Studies departments across the twenty-three CSU campuses (San Francisco State University 2021).

To understand how AB 1460 came to pass, I studied various news articles and CSU documents. The *Ethnic Studies Requirement Development Timeline*, published by the official CSU website (2021a), began in January 2014 and did not mention the years of previous work by the California Faculty Association (CFA). The CFA is a union with the membership of 29,000 professors, lecturers, librarians, counselors, and coaches who work at the CSU campuses (California Faculty Association 2021a). Prof. Sam, who is a CSU faculty member and a member of the CFA, informed me during their interview that it was the various ethnic and identity-based caucuses under the CFA umbrella that first brought attention to the lack of support for ethnic studies programs. They explained that the majority of the caucuses were founded fifteen to twenty years ago; indeed, although no other caucus lists their founding date, the Chicanx/Latinx Caucus was formed in 2002 (California Faculty Association 2021b). Since their inception, the caucuses came together at statewide meetings and discussed the ethnic studies programs at their respective CSU campuses. Prof. Sam noted that faculty were concerned about the status of ethnic studies across the CSU system, with various campuses experiencing their ethnic studies departments being demoted to the program level, faculty leaving the university and not being replaced, and an overall lack of institutional support.

As a result of the CFA members organizing and raising their concerns for about a three to five year period at their various campuses (as shared by Prof. Sam), the then CSU Chancellor Timothy P. White established the CSU Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies in January 2014 (California State University 2021a). The task force’s mission “was to identify, review and make recommendations concerning critical issues, policies, and practices which impact the status, perceived and real value, functioning, sustainment and advancement of ethnic studies in the context of their role in the mission of the university to provide a multicultural quality education which enables and enhances students’ ability to function and relate effectively in a multicultural global society” (California State University Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies 2016: 1). The chair of this task force was Dr. Horace Mitchell, former president of CSU Bakersfield, and its twenty-two members included accredited faculty (20) and students (2) of the CSU system (California State University Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies 2016: v).

In January 2016, the task force published the *Report of the California State University Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies*, a comprehensive report that would later be honored for providing the research necessary to pass AB 1460 (California Legislative Information 2020a). The 102-page report was tasked with three deliverables: 1) an overview of the history of ethnic studies programs in the CSU; 2) a survey of trends over the past 8-10 years of hiring and enrollment trends related to campus’ ethnic studies offerings; and 3) systemwide recommendations to better support “the needs of [CSU] students, California and society in general” (California State University Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies 2016: 2). The report concluded with ten broad recommendations, with the one most relevant to this paper listed first: “Recommendation 1: Ethnic Studies General Education (GE) Requirement—Make ethnic studies a GE requirement throughout the CSU system” (California State University Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies 2016: 4).

The response to this report by the then CSU Chancellor Timothy P. White was less than satisfactory to various proponents of ethnic studies. In his July 2016 response, the chancellor emphasized that he stands by each CSU campuses’ right to self-governance, which includes individual campuses deciding upon their curriculum and hiring processes. While this stance was supported by the CSU Board of Trustees, it was unacceptable to the faculty who raised their concerns, whose concerns were validated by the report, but whose concerns were unaddressed by the institution. That fall, the then Vice President of the CFA addressed the report and the Chancellor’s response, writing, “Events over the last few years in America clearly indicate the need for all of us to be culturally literate and competent of different races, ethnicities, and perspectives… CSU students, who will be the leaders in California, the nation, and the world, must be equipped with these diverse perspectives, histories, and epistemologies” (Toombs 2016:8).

There was one person whose voice particularly rose amongst those who criticized Chancellor White’s response: the current California Secretary of State, Dr. Shirley Weber. Prior to her appointment in early 2021, Dr. Weber was a State Assembly Member (California Secretary of State 2021; San Diego State University 2013). In January 2018, Dr. Weber introduced AB 2408 to the California legislature, which had the same goals AB 1460 later would: it would require a three-unit course in ethnic studies in order to graduate (California Legislative Information 2018). The ASCSU wrote a resolution that opposed the bill which Dr. Weber recalled because, according to Prof. Sam, it was confused with a similar bill that wanted to make ethnic studies a requirement in California’s K-12 public schools. Dr. Weber reintroduced the bill in 2019 and, as the original bill was recalled, the new bill was renamed AB 1460.

AB 1460 was met with great resistance again from the ASCSU, who released a resolution in May 2019 to claim a “commitment to Ethnic Studies curricula in the CSU but [opposition to] legislative intrusion into the curriculum” (California State University 2021b). In the year that followed, Dr. Weber moved the bill through the Assembly before it reached the Senate. In May 2020, a month before the state Assembly and Senate would vote on whether the bill would pass to the governor, the ASCSU put forth the Ethnic Studies and Social Justice proposal (California State University 2021b; California Legislative Information 2020b). The proposal was described by Prof. Sam as the “watered-down version” of AB 1460, one which would go outside the four disciplines first advocated by the TWLF in the 1968 student strike. The CFA published an article that brought together the voices of students, faculty, and other community members against the proposal and in favor of AB 1460 (California Faculty Association 2020b). Although the proposal was approved by the CSU Board of Trustees in July, AB 1460 passed the state legislature in early August and was signed by Gov. Newsom, taking legal precedence over the proposal (California State University 2021b; California Legislative Information 2020b). I wish to note that Prof. Sam shared that, in the ten-day period between when the bill reached the governor’s desk and when he decided to sign it, CFA members were consistently writing letters, conducting news interviews, and asking other unions in California to support the bill.

Following the codification of AB 1460, the CFA released another news article, *AB 1460, the True Ethnic Studies Requirement, Now the Law of California; Work Still Remains*. The article directly honored various players and events for the passing of AB 1460, including the 1968 student protests at SFSU, the activism of faculty, and the support of various community organizations and movements.

**Analysis**

With the literature now presented, I will use social movement theory to discern the answers to this study’s sub-questions- 1) What shifts occurred in the fifty-year time span between 1968 and 2021 that led to the progression of the movement? and 2) Can this social movement be replicated?- in order to address the greater research question: To what extent can AB 1460 serve as a model in other states’ HEIs? Using social movement theory, it becomes clear that no single factor is responsible for AB 1460; instead, the *sustained* motivation of the proponents for ethnic studies and the *shift* in the movement’s primary leaders as well as state political ideology created a more socio-politically powerful movement and receptive space, respectively. These shifts led to a new approach by the movement that was more successful in achieving permanent success in the form of a legislative bill.

As evident by the original demands of the TWLF in 1968 and Sec. 1 of AB 1460, the goal of the ethnic studies movement was always to establish four ethnic studies departments- a department for Asian, Black, Chicano, and Native American Studies- and to hire more faculty of color. The 1968 student strike led by the TWLF succeeded only in the creation of an Ethnic Studiesdepartment, which is not the same as having a department specific to the study of each individual ethnic group. However, the coalition of students faced a very different California. The state was governed by Republican Ronald Reagan and, in the 1968 presidential election, the majority of the state voted for the conservative Republican nominee (“Election Listing: The American Presidency Project” 2021). The strike only concluded because the Academic Senate of the SFSU went forward with the legislation, *not* because the state government was in support of the students.

The passing of AB 1460 occurred fifty-two years later and in different circumstances: a different California, and with different groups at the forefront of the movement. In 2020, California was governed by Democrat Gavin Newsom and, in the 2020 presidential election, the majority of the state voted for the liberal Democratic nominee (“Election Listing: The American Presidency Project” 2021). And, instead of students being at the forefront, it was the faculty of the CSU system- specifically, the CFA members who were involved in the caucuses- that applied the pressure on the CSU system to evaluate the state of ethnic studies across the campuses. This pressure is what prompted Chancellor White to create the CSU Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies. It is important to note that the motive, however, remained the same. Prof. Sam mentioned that faculty were concerned their ethnic studies departments were being demoted to programs and new faculty were not being hired, meaning that the original demands of the TWLF strikers were again at stake.

Perhaps no actor can serve as a synecdoche for what these shifts in leadership and political spheres can make possible than Dr. Weber. Dr. Weber was, in fact, a founding faculty member of the Africana Studies Department at San Diego State University in 1972, where she was a professor for forty years before transitioning into her political roles (San Diego State University 2013). When asked what inspired her to introduce this bill, Dr. Weber noted her past motivated her exceedingly. In an interview, Dr. Weber stated, “Because I spent the last fifty years in the discipline of ethnic studies helping to develop those departments… I’ve seen the impact that it has upon young people’s lives when they have an opportunity to learn about those folks who live here, who are part of their life every day” (KUSI News 2020). In the same interview, Dr. Weber noted her decades of experience in the CSU system granted her the necessary insight into how to combat her opposition, which, as noted in the literature review, was the ASCSU (KUSI News 2020). And, as an ethnic studies scholar herself, Dr. Weber was also equipped to address concerns about AB 1460, particularly surrounding curriculum (KUSI News 2020).

However, Dr. Weber did not note the most obvious tool she had at her disposal: her newfound political power as a then State Assembly Member. As an Assembly Member, Dr. Weber was in a position to fight for ethnic studies with a different approach. Instead of waiting for institutional change within the CSU system, she paved the way for the other actors in the movement- the CFA, students, and other community organizations- to advocate for legislative intervention. This approach differs from that of the original TWLF and their allies, who wished to make the university change itself. Of course, the TWLF was in a different political space and faced opposition within and outside the university. In contrast, Prof. Sam noted that Gov. Newson is “a real people’s governor on social justice and racial issues,” a contrast to Gov. Reagan, who called the state military against the 1968 student protestors (KQED News 2018).

Because of Dr. Weber’s position and the more receptive sociopolitical space, the CFA was able to pivot from petitioning to the CSU administration and use a more political approach. Indeed, Prof. Sam said in their interview, “But there are times, and I will tell folks, in our history that we don’t really make progress unless it is either through legislative action or judicial actions. It’s not as though people are just going to say, ‘Oh, I'm going to do the right thing now.’ You know, it takes some of that real push to make things happen.” Prof. Sam noted, however, that a legislative bill would not have been necessary if the CSU had responded accordingly to the number one recommendation of its own task force. When the faculty realized that the CSU system was not going to address their concerns, they changed their approach from working within to working without the CSU administration. This shift in approach benefited from having someone like Dr. Weber- who had strong personal motivation to achieve the movement’s goals- on their side, but it also required great organizing on the CFA’s part. As mentioned before, the CFA wrote letters, conducted interviews, and urged other organizations to show support for AB 1460, actions that reflect strong organizing within the union.

Ultimately, within the fifty-two year time period between the 1968 student strike in San Francisco to the passing of AB 1460 in Sacramento, there was a shift in the leaders of the ethnic studies movement and the state sociopolitical atmosphere, one that spurned a shift in the movement’s approach. In 1968, students led the charge for the creation of ethnic studies as a department in higher education. Their movement was focused on the individual institutions that they attended, SFSU and UC Berkeley. On the other hand, AB 1460 rose in part because of the statewide organizing of CSU faculty via the CFA, an organization that had not yet existed in 1968. As this organizing was statewide, the faculty were able to apply pressure to various CSU campuses instead of a single campus. And, because of the shift in statewide political ideology and Dr. Weber’s position, the faculty were able to pivot and use a political approach to succeed in their goals when they were met with resistance within the CSU system. Regardless of the difference in leaders and approach, it is important to emphasize that the motivation of all these actors remained strong across the decades. From the 1968 students to the 2020 faculty, the proponents for ethnic studies in California’s HEIs were strongly motivated. Black students at SFSU had been advocating for a Black Studies department prior to the 1968 strike, just as faculty of color had been pressuring the CSU administration prior to Chancellor White creating a task force. It was the lack of response from both administrations that pushed the movement forward and, regardless of who was the group applying the pressure, there was always pressure coming from somewhere to make change occur.

With the above analysis in mind, the second sub-question can be addressed: can this movement be replicated? To begin, it must be noted that no other ethnic studies movement will have to begin in the same place as the movement in California. The 1968 student activists succeeded not only in gaining ethnic studies department at SFSU, but they helped to create an entire field of study. Any other ethnic studies movement would benefit from having an established field with over fifty years of curricular material and leading scholars to draw upon. It must also be noted that AB 1460 passed in a Democratic-leaning state, meaning its politicians were more open to discussing racial and ethnic justice issues. Prof. Sam warned in their interview that more conservative areas- which, they note, tend to be “conservative at every level that you can imagine,” from the university and state political leaders to the students themselves- would have a more difficult time making ethnic studies a graduation requirement. An ethnic studies movement would be almost guaranteed to fail in such a hostile sociopolitical climate.

All information considered, I argue that the movement *can* be replicated. Perhaps the individual actors- such as a CFA or a Dr. Weber- cannot be replicated because these are unique individuals, but the use of social movement theory highlighted the aspects that canbe. Although there was a shift in the movement’s leaders, the motivation and goals of its actors remained consistent across the decades. And, while working with the institution worked at the individual institution level for the 1968 student activists, the actors that pushed forth AB 1460 shifted their approach to a political one only when working with the CSU failed. I highlight this not to advocate for working with or against a HEI; instead, I note that the CFA largely succeeded because they had a *willingness* to change their approach. Unlike the student protestors, who accepted the concessions of SFSU even if they did not match their original demands, the CFA did not accept the ASCSU’s “watered down” prospectus. It becomes clear that, even if the exact people and events cannot be the same, the movement’s key components- consistent motivation and goals, a willingness to shift approach, and overall ability to organize- can serve as a model for parallel movements in other states.

**Conclusion**

This paper’s overarching research question was to determine the extent to which AB 1460 can serve as a model for other states’ HEIs in order to make ethnic studies a graduation requirement. I conducted two literature reviews, one to study the induction of ethnic studies in higher education due to the 1968 student strike at San Francisco State University, the other which traced the movement that led to the successful implementation of AB 1460. Using social movement theory, I highlighted the key (leading) events, the actors involved, and their motives from both movements. I determined that a combination of sustained motivationand a shift in the movement’s leadership and approach (aided by a shift in sociopolitical climate) made it possible for AB 1460 to pass.

From my literature reviews and analysis, it became clear that perhaps the replication of AB 1460 should not be the goal, but the replication of the *movement* that led to its codification. As discussed, the proponents for AB 1460 only shifted their approach to a legislative route when the CSU administration was unwilling to accept their task force’s recommendation to make ethnic studies a graduation requirement. Stakeholders hoping to have ethnic studies brought to their HEI as a graduation requirement may wish to go directly to the legislative route, but a version of AB 1460 was never the goal of California’s movement; the goal was simply ethnic studies. And, just as individual proponents cannot be replicated, it is possible that other HEIs will not be as opposed to an ethnic studies requirement as the CSU system was. Therefore, I conclude by emphasizing the features of California’s movement that can serve as a model for future movements in other states: consistent motivation and goals, a willingness to shift approach, and overall ability to organize.

There are a number of possibilities for future research. If AB 1460 is replicated and/or ethnic studies is made a graduation requirement at a HEI similar to the CSUs, these movements can be studied in addition to California’s in order to create a more accurate model for replication. Another opportunity for research was a topic that was outside the scope of this study: the effect of contemporary events upon the two time periods discussed in this paper. Although I compared the political climates of the 1968 student strike and the 2020 passing of AB 1460, a parallel event I did not explore was the assassination of Dr. King in April 1968 and the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. As such, I did not analyze the effects of the late 1960s protests (both because of Dr. King’s assassination and the general student protests) and the rise of Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020 on the student strike and AB 1460’s codification. This is a critical area for future research, particularly for academics hoping to describe, explain, and ultimately understand these critical moments in history and the society they occurred in.

The greatest limitation of this paper is its contemporary nature. This paper was limited in its ability to call upon the expertise of other academic works. But the plainest limitation is that, regardless of my aim to help others replicate these events, only time will be able to determine if California will be the first or the only state to make ethnic studies a graduation requirement.

**Positionality**

I acknowledge that, as an Indigenous Latinx woman born and raised in California, I have a personal stake in the movement to have ethnic studies included in the curriculum of higher education institutions. Instead of allowing it to hinder me, I used my positionality to inspire me to pursue such a relevant, contemporary topic. Moreover, the absence of academic literature on this landmark event is what made this research all the more relevant and, dare I say, necessary. The replicability of AB 1460, what it means for the ethnic studies movement, and what it can do for higher education as a whole is now, hopefully, better understood.

**Appendix A**

**SOCIOL1104: Sociology of Higher Education**

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

My name is Ashley Álvarez and I am excited for you to take part in my course research project for the course SOCIOL1104: Sociology of Higher Education offered at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University. I am researching the extent to which the movement that helped codify California AB 1460 can be replicated in other higher education institutions (HEIs).

The following are the questions I may use to guide your interview. Since your participation is voluntary, you may skip questions that you do not wish to answer. I will also hold space prior to the interview for you to ask me, your interviewer, any questions necessary to better understand who I am and my project.

**Section A – Your Background**

1. Please share as much as you are comfortable with about your personal, educational, and professional background. This may include where you call home, the institutions you attained your degrees, and what led to your career path into the higher education space.
2. What is your past/current role in relation to the California State University (CSU) system and the California Faculty Association (CFA)?
3. For a separate research strand being investigated, can you recall where you were academically/professionally during 1968?

**Section B – Your Experience with AB 1460**

1. What was your involvement, if any, with the movement that brought about AB 1460?
2. Speaking as a faculty member of the CSUs, how has AB 1460 manifested in the classroom? Has it been, in your view, successfully implemented?
3. Do you think a policy like AB 1460 (the making of ethnic studies a general education requirement) can be successfully replicated in other HEIs? Why or why not? You may address specific HEIs, such as strictly public universities, private universities, etc… within the United States.

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