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**Ethnic Studies, the Diversity Requirement, and Multicultural Education at Santa Clara
University**

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Community Based Research Methods

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Abstract

This paper investigates the effects of the diversity requirement on the Ethnic Studies department and classrooms through the teacher perspective. Within the literature surrounding Ethnic Studies, there seemed to be a gap on how having diversity students in traditionally Ethnic Studies classes affects the classroom environment. There was lots of literature about the BIPOC experience at predominantly white institutions and how to create safe and humanizing classrooms for these students but not much about the teacher's perspective on both the administrative and academic aspects of the requirement. I analyze the history of the school and their multicultural education timeline as well as current conversations about diversity on campus to contextualize the moment in which this project was conducted. I interviewed with three professors within the Ethnic Studies department and found common themes between all their experiences in the classroom: imbalance of knowledge and harm reduction, dealing with the system, university intentions, and next steps.

Introduction

Ethnic Studies programs around the country have become hot spots for students of color at primarily white institutions. There has also been more of a push within higher education for a more multicultural curriculum for all students leading to the now common diversity requirement that many institutions have implemented within their core curriculum. Santa Clara University is not unique in either of these areas. Santa Clara University, as a Jesuit institution, preaches about educating the whole person, and one of the many ways that the university has tried to demonstrate that has been through the development of the Ethnic Studies department and the diversity requirement. In this paper, I analyze the relationship between the Ethnic Studies

department and the diversity requirement through the professor's perspective. I focused on how having all Ethnic Studies classes listed as diversity core classes with no prerequisites affects the classroom dynamic, student learning, and the status of the department.

This research comes at an important time as the university is about to go into a core revision process. Every five years the institution revisits the core curriculum to make any necessary adjustments and in this cycle, there has been a push to add more required diversity classes for all students. Currently, with the one class requirement, most students take their diversity class through either the Ethnic Studies or Women and Gender Studies department in cross listed classes alongside the major and minor students at both the lower and upper level. This already often creates a classroom environment with drastically different levels of related knowledge, and implementing an increase of required diversity classes without any adjustments will only exacerbate this issue. Because Ethnic Studies does not have prerequisites, this is a unique situation that other departments do not face.

The diversity requirement and its effects on the Ethnic Studies classes has been of interest to me since I first declared the major. I am particularly interested because I have had poor and compromising experiences in Ethnic Studies classrooms at the hands of diversity students, in lower-level introduction classes, as well as the more specific and intense upper division classes. It has been something that has frustrated me for years and I have developed strong feelings about it. This insider perspective gave me great passion, but I also recognize that this has framed all aspects of the paper. I acknowledge that even as I took my diversity course before I declared the major, I was still in a very different position as a black woman in this class, than some other demographic groups, because my life experiences provided me with information that my peers would later learn about in the course. Acknowledging both of those things, I collected data from

professors in the department. This is a perspective that I do not hold and do not have much insight into beyond the data that I collected for this project.

Literature Review

Researching for this project I wanted to go beyond the now common research about students of color's negative experiences at predominately white institutions. With my focus on the relationship between the diversity requirement and Ethnic Studies programs, there was a much smaller selection of relevant material, but I found articles that when looked at together gave context about the structures and behaviors that make the topic so complicated.

Before examining the true depth of this topic, I first had to contextualize the circumstances here at Santa Clara University. On the Santa Clara website, there is a web page entitled "History and Activism: Timeline of Ethnic Studies Institutional History and Development" that details the history of the program-to-department process, the student-led Unity movements, and the victories leading to the addition of various multicultural education advances, like the diversity requirement. This source contextualizes the position of the Ethnic Studies department on campus and exposes the pattern of university behavior surrounding multicultural education. There has been a history of waiting and performative action from the university which is essential information to the current circumstance that I chose to research. I also used some of the university's undergraduate bulletins to verify timelines and provide evidence for the history in the webpage, with information about the courses offered and professors within the department. Also, to dig deeper into the multicultural education goals that the school had set in the past, I used a two thousand and two publication from the university entitled "Diversity and Multicultural Education at Santa Clara University: An instructional overview of trends, challenges, and prospects." In this publication they lay out some of their

goals for integrating more diversity and multicultural awareness around campus through multiple avenues. This furthers the narrative that the university has always had goals around multicultural education, but at the same time had students of color demanding real changes that were being continuously dismissed. All the goals that had been set by the university were decades behind what the student activists were asking for. At the time that this source was published, the Ethnic Studies department was still just a program and not affiliated with any college (meaning it did not have a major), it did not have any faculty, and there was not a school-wide diversity requirement set in place. All these things were demanded by students back in the nineteen eighties and still in two thousand two none of the “trends, challenges, and prospects” addressed these long-standing needs. These sources demonstrate the way in which multicultural education on campus has progressed and sets the scene for the current situation that is the proposed increase of the diversity requirement.

To bring this contextualization to the current day I pulled from the IESAC Fall Quarter Diversity Forum Notes. I attended this meeting and pulled inspiration for this project from a particular discussion that was had on the night of the event. A student had asked about what was being done in terms of diversity with faculty and staff on campus as well as steps being taken beyond just getting more BIPOC students on campus. From this there were responses thrown out from different people about hiring more BIPOC faculty and staff, but more pertinent to my topic was when Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Daniel Press, said that there were conversations happening about increasing the diversity requirement to more than one class within the college. There was acknowledgement of the other colleges and their need for diversity courses but there were no conversations about diversity within those spheres. This source details the ways in which the university claims to be working towards a more diverse and equitable

campus, while also revealing that the College of Arts and Sciences, home to the Ethnic Studies department is the only sphere that values a truly multicultural education for its students. This again portrays the positionality of Ethnic Studies, and the true value for diversity at the institution. Within my research, these notes place my project at the present or close future in relevance and importance.

With the context of the moment, I felt ready to continue my research further into the dynamics of the situation. This first source, *Students of color in white-dominated college classrooms: An examination of racialized roles, safety and empowerment*, a dissertation by Deanna Blackwell, explores what it means to be a student of color and feel unsafe, invisible, disrespected, stereotyped, and forced to be inauthentic because of racism or racialized incidents in the classroom. Although this article is not specific to diversity classrooms, this is oftentimes an issue that can arise in diversity mixed-major classrooms at our predominantly white institution. In my paper, I will discuss the harm that this does to major students, as well as other diversity students of color, and how professors must make adjustments to ensure that their classroom does not function to only harm BIPOC students and benefit ignorant prejudice students. This source also talks about actions that would be necessary to always humanize these classrooms for all students (even if there are no students of color present in the class). With the growth of the diversity requirement and the potential for professors who have never taught a diversity class before to begin doing so, this is a subtopic that gets addressed in this paper as well. This paper also discusses multicultural education and the different forms that it takes on within institutions because of varying levels of commitment. Blackwell explains that in the social movements that brought about multicultural education, it was intended to be radical and true commitment to a multicultural education would reflect this. When analyzing the history of the

Ethnic Studies department with the university and the current state of the diversity requirement, examining the true intentions around a multicultural education is inherent and it was naturally questioned during the data collection.

The next area that I needed to get more information on was the benefit of the diversity requirement, because if these classes don't function to promote a deeper understanding surrounding diversity issues, then there needs to be a reimagination of what diversity on our college campus means. Nicholas Bowman's paper *College diversity courses and cognitive development among students from privileged and marginalized groups* discusses who benefits and what the benefits of required diversity classes are. In the findings of his research, he concludes that different racial groups attain the benefits from diversity classes after different numbers of classes taken. These results allow me to speak about both why these racial differences are apparent specifically in diversity classrooms and who the different diversity requirements would be functioning to benefit.

Adding more components of a multicultural education can be positive but doing so without having multicultural representation and input in decisions may feel like an attack on already established multicultural arenas at an institution. This situation is detailed in an article for the *Chronicle for Higher Education* by Denise Magner's "Push for Diversity in Traditional Departments Raises Questions about the Future of Ethnic Studies." At San Francisco State University, there was a political science class that was created that was very similar to one that was already being offered within the Black Studies program at the school. The Black Studies students did not take this as an advancement towards diversity and a more inclusive curriculum and school environment like others were suggesting, but instead saw it as a threat to Black Studies. This article questions the intentions of the multicultural education movement when it

fails to include multicultural people. The push for diversity without a diverse group of affected people at the forefront seems to miss the whole point, and consequently, the actions seem to be performative. In my research the idea that outsourcing Ethnic Studies classes out to other departments that are not traditionally trained in these areas causes these classes to be utterly functionless because if not educated on how to teach a diversity curriculum these classes are just going to reproduce prejudiced mindsets and further embed the social problems that we face today. And if that is the case then the diversity requirement is performative. Also, in fear that a decision like this would be made without real input for a multicultural audience created space for the discussion around who should be centered in the multicultural education conversation here at Santa Clara.

One of the biggest complexities about the whole dynamic between the diversity requirement and the Ethnic Studies department hinges on the fact that the classes revolve around “controversial” topics, which sometimes elicit strong feelings from students. Ryan Miller, in his article for *Innovative Higher Education* “‘Heavy lifters of the university’: Non-tenure track faculty teaching required diversity courses,” discusses how professors are forced to navigate these waters. He explores how student evaluations, job security (or lack thereof), being a BIPOC professor, and having full autonomy over the creation of the class all have effects on the ways and the material that a professor chooses to teach in their diversity classroom. In the push for more diversity, there has been a push for more diverse faculty and staff as well here on campus. The article suggests that the professors’ social identities alone help the school contribute towards their diversity goals but Miller’s data distrusts this sentiment that hiring more diverse professors necessarily translates into more diversity because oftentimes these are the professors that are overworked and do not have proper access to all the benefits of being staff, so they become

disconnected. This article encapsulates the dynamic between diversity requirement professors and the institution as a place of employment that is discussed throughout the paper.

As a black queer woman having humanizing experiences in the classroom is never something that I take for granted and is in fact always something that I deeply appreciate and rave to others about because it does not happen often enough. Being able to go to class and feel validated in that space in all your authenticity is not a privilege that I always have, so when professors make it a point to have a classroom environment that validates and respect everybody in their whole being, it is really impactful to me as a student, but also just as a person. The power of a truly inclusive, antiracist, and pro-black diversity classroom is tremendous and necessary to prioritize the marginalized communities on campus in the movement for multicultural education on campus. To do this, there must be professors who are not only trained in the content of diversity classes, but also in social justice, antiracism, and pro-black ideologies. Sietta Parks writes about this in her paper entitled “Going beyond antiracist pedagogical practices: co-constructing a pro-black classroom.” Parks also advocates for the hiring of diverse faculty that are dedicated and have the training to advocate for the needs of BIPOC students on campus and in the classroom. The intentions and focus of the multicultural education movement on campus as well as harm reduction in the classroom are addressed through the collected data.

Methods

When it came to conducting research for this project, I was unsure about how I wanted to approach the topic. I wanted to set it up so that my research felt relevant and for others to be able to continue my research even after I had graduated. As a fourth-year student myself, I acknowledged that many of the student voices that I could have used in my research would have graduated already, or would be graduating soon after I had written this paper. This would leave

the research vulnerable to dismissal as some could reason that the issues found and discussed in this paper left with the graduates. So, I came to the decision to focus on the professor's perspective to try to avoid this dismissal. Collecting data from professors that have been at SCU longer, will be here after I have graduated, been in more diversity classrooms, have more access and a deeper understanding of the institution as a whole, and curate the material and structure of these diversity classrooms allows me to interrogate the effects of the requirement while still having tangible ties back to the university in my research.

Within this focus on the professor's perspective, I thought that interviews would be the best option. As I am an Ethnic Studies major and have engaged with these professors in and outside of the classroom, I have established rapport and comfortability with these professors that would make an interview an appropriate ask. I knew I wanted to gather data directly from the professor, rather than an observation-based method like ethnography. I needed to have space within the structure of the method for long answers, sharing of personal experience, to clarify and expand on questions myself, as well as keeping a more formal position in the whole process, and the interview method encapsulated all those qualities.

In these interviews, I asked about characteristics of their favorite and least favorite classes or days, the effects on the classroom and the department of not having prerequisites, how they would like to see the new multi-class diversity requirement be implemented and gave space for any other comments or demands that they had for the department, college, or institution. The interviews conducted were of three professors from the Ethnic Studies department at Santa Clara University: Professor Allia Griffin, Professor Anthony Hazard, and Professor Sakina Hughes. Professor Griffin is a non-tenure track lecturer for the department and has been teaching at SCU for nine years. Professor Griffin and I could only make time in our schedules to zoom, so her

interview was conducted and recorded through that means. Professor Hazard and Professor Hughes both have tenure and have been teaching at SCU for ten and two years, respectively. Professor Hazard finished his tenure track in spring of 2018. Professor Hughes came to our university with tenure already secured. The interviews with these two professors took place in their offices and I recorded audio using my phone. All of these professors teach various classes in different specialty areas throughout the department, but they all commonly teach ETHN 30: Introduction to African American Studies, a lower-level Ethnic Studies class.

Community Setting

The movement for multicultural education on SCU's campus has been a long and slow process, despite strong activism throughout the years. The Ethnic Studies department was first founded in 1969, at the same time as San Francisco State and UC Berkeley, who were the leaders of the movement for Ethnic Studies around the country. Although the program was instituted on campus then, there were only a few listed classes under the program, and they were all technically only listed within other departments. For a very long time the program was subject to many harmful "assimilation" models and was told that "Ethnic Studies is neither permitted nor encouraged to hire or house its own faculty" (History and Activism). In the 1992-1993 academic year the program finally offered a minor, which grew to the largest minor in the College of Arts and Sciences. In 2007 the Ethnic Studies program got its first full time tenure track faculty and offered a companion degree for students. This companion degree still did not recognize Ethnic Studies as a legitimate area of study because this companion major could only be declared after students had declared a more "traditional" discipline first. Only in 2015 did the Ethnic Studies program finally become a department that had its own full staff of professors and offered its own independent major.

Along with the push for Ethnic Studies, advocacy for a diversity requirement for all students came with it. The College of Arts and Sciences had a diversity requirement put in place alongside the creation of the Ethnic Studies program in the 1969-1970 year, but it wasn't until the 2009-2010 academic year that the diversity requirement was mandatory for all students, regardless of enrolled college. The university has technically had goals and agendas for advancing multicultural education since the national movement in the late sixties and early seventies but most of the progress that we have seen on campus has always been *in response* to decades of student and faculty activism (or explicitly racist incidents on campus) rather than actions taken based on the university's alleged strong value for diversity. This new multi-class diversity requirement suggestion is the newest example we have to be able to interrogate the university's behavior in this realm. Students, professors, and other faculty have been suggesting more diversity classes for all students for years now. With the new core revision, we get to analyze if and how the university responds and acts in reference to these demands.

Data Analysis

Once I finished conducting all of my interviews, I ran the audio recordings through a transcription program. I read along once with the audio to make any corrections in the transcriptions that the computer had incorrectly translated. Once I had the edited transcriptions, I read through each of them four more times. In the first read, I was listening for information on the general idea of the kinds of responses that I had received, taking mental notes about the sections that stuck out to me. On the next read, I was extracting main themes and commonalities that I saw in all of the interviews and assigned them each a different color. For my last read, I went through again and highlighted quotes in the assigned color of the theme that the quote fell into. Once I had all these themes and quotes, I reread again, for a fourth time, and analyzed even

deeper to categorize smaller, more specific themes into bigger overarching ideas. By the end of the whole process I gathered four all-encompassing themes that were found in all three interviews.

Results

From the data analysis, I gathered four general themes: imbalance of knowledge and harm reduction, dealing with the system, university intentions, and necessary action. The most prevalent theme was imbalance of knowledge and harm reduction. This theme was expressed as the difficulties in having mixed major Ethnic Studies classes and the effects that the knowledge difference has on major students and the classroom environment. The dealing with the system theme centers the institutional positionality of the interviewees. It focuses on job security, or the lack thereof, evaluations, creating and getting new classes approved, as well professor experiences as people of color at a predominately white institution. University intention is hinged on the diversity requirement and how it functions at our university. The last theme of necessary actions is all about suggestions and ideas for the university to eradicate some of the mentioned issues and how to truly be equitable and intentional about the diversity requirement.

Imbalance of Knowledge and Harm Reduction

Usually when students decide to major in a subject, they do not anticipate that they will often be in classes where the majority of students are not studying the same thing, let alone are in a whole different academic college, but for Ethnic Studies majors and minors, this is the reality. Because all students are required to take a diversity class, and all of the Ethnic Studies classes are listed as such, with no prerequisites, students from all disciplines fill these classes. This means that there are students that have dedicated their entire college career to this field of study and students who

have not the slightest clue about the basics of the topic are in the same class. This already changes the dynamic of a classroom, but the content material of Ethnic Studies classes adds another layer of complexity on top of it all. Major and minor students in the Ethnic Studies department and people of color come into these classes with a very different perspective and understanding of much of the content because of their life experiences, compared to the other diversity students who might be entirely unfamiliar or limited in their understanding of the concepts in these classes. This is what I am referring to when I say imbalance of knowledge. All three interviewed professors acknowledged this problem. Griffin talked about how “students who are Ethnic Studies majors, often their engagement with the systems that we're talking about in this classroom is far more intimate.” Professor Hazard discusses this same problem from his own experiences explaining that

“You are in a room of 30 and the majority of the 30 have never taken a class like this and have never really had discussions about this stuff. As the instructor, you have to figure out how to keep the 30 together while providing space for folks to kind of get up to speed.”

They mention having to “teach two different classes” or “speak different languages” within the classroom to be effective for all students. Professor Hughes describes the issue as “unfair” to major/minor students and other students of color. Now this also means that sometimes for these ordinary diversity students to learn, there will be ignorant comments made that might harm their BIPOC peers in the classroom. Blackwell explains why this phenomenon takes place when she writes this:

“Many White students wield racial attitudes that are blind to White privilege, naïve to racial politics, and in denial about the impact of racism on people’s everyday lives. They often enter into spaces where there are students of color (e.g., Center for Ethnic Student Affairs) or in which racial equity is the designated topic (e.g., multicultural education classroom), with the attitude that racism is an ‘event’ that took place in the past or that they have already ‘done the diversity thing.’”

When these students come in and invalidate BIPOC lived experiences every day and cannot agree on fundamental ideas, it becomes increasingly hard to be able to have a respectful and productive classroom. Not only this but these other diversity students refuse to acknowledge race and its system in the present day, or their part in it. They often end up stereotyping, dismissing contributions, and feeling entitled to the lived experiences of their peers, or what professor Hughes claimed was “putting us [black people] on the syllabus.” When I refer to harm reduction, I am referring to practices that professors set in place to try to limit the amount that this kind of stuff can happen. Both Griffin and Hughes talked about using preliminary surveys and assignments to better understand students' previous knowledge on the topic, and then using that information to create smaller groups for discussion. Griffin states it as “ a space to grapple with what [BIPOC students] need to grapple with without, like, without dealing with offensive shit” from the other students. In the Parks paper, they found that another harm reduction technique was having a classroom environment that was built on and valued genuine care between everyone, classmates, and professor, beyond just academics. They found that this allowed students to bring their whole authentic selves to the class and inspired students to continue working outside of the classroom. Griffin mentions trying to get back to this technique after the pandemic stating that she “also recognizes that when students feel seen, when they see, when

they feel comfortable around each other, they're able to like really immerse themselves in the learning in a different way than if they feel like they don't know anyone or they feel like they don't belong." In the Park scenario and in relation to Professor Hughes this looked specifically like Black love and care. Parks found that in these spaces with care and love it "felt safe to be Black, but it was also a space where students could express their Blackness in authentic, uncensored ways" and Hughes said she creates classes "thinking about what I needed as a black student in all white schools and, you know, I just, I thought I want to create a class that gives, especially black women what I felt like I needed at that time in my life." The imbalance of knowledge in a diversity class causes harm to BIPOC students in those classes, and professors acknowledge that so they structure their class in ways to try to reduce this harm and foster relationships to instill a culture of care instead of hostility.

Dealing with the system

To us students, professors seem to have so much power and the ability to move freely at the higher levels of the institution, but we don't see the systems in place at levels above them that shape the classroom experience. Within the diversity requirement, professors "teach about controversial subject matter, which leaves them open to negative student evaluations" and "these faculty experiences eventually influence student experiences and outcomes (e.g., Kezar et al., 2019; Umbach, 2007)" (Miller, 2020). Tenure is one of the biggest systems that affects professors in the classroom and before, when they are curating new classes. Miller suggests that "in teaching diversity courses, instructors must consider whether and how to push boundaries on topics perceived as controversial, therefore risking negative evaluations and adding to their precarity." For Professor Griffin who does not have tenure, this rang true. She says "my contract is renewed based on my performance every three years. And, you know, I think that that tends to,

that renders me in a vulnerable position.” Both Hazard and Hughes also spoke about having to be strategic to try to avoid “deadly” evaluations. In terms of proposing new classes there are a bunch of hoops to jump through and Hazard talks about his experience “being patient and being strategic. I waited until I got tenured to design the class” that he knew might be a little controversial instead of fighting to get it through without the secured tenure position. He acknowledges “a whole set of politics that, you know, we as faculty of color deal with.” This bleeds over into the physical classroom as well because often “when diversity courses are taught by people of color and women, students may resist and push back against the instructors, requiring them to perform substantial emotional labor” (Miller, 2020). Hazard speaks to this too saying, “there's a kind of the intellectual labor, that is also at times emotional labor, because some of the stuff that we teach is really an expose on the violence of the American project” and sometimes “like at the end of the day I get home and it's like, [long sighs].” Hughes seconds this with her own experience: “it's also really emotionally taxing...there were a couple days that I went home and cried.” Diversity professors, especially BIPOC and non-men professors, are already teaching traumatic histories and then on top of that, they worry about causing controversies with ignorant students who might leave them terrible evaluations at the end of the term, while still trying to please their higher ups in administration.

University intentions

Santa Clara has always seemed to be on the forefront of advancing multicultural education, based on the media perception and amount of awards the institution has received, but there are still many people questioning who the voices and minds behind these initiatives are, who these initiatives are supposed to be serving, as well as who they are actually working to serve. Some might question “now that mainstream departments are moving--both by choice and under

pressure--to hire minority professors and to bring ethnic issues into their course offerings, what happens to ethnic studies” or if “the ‘multicultural’ movement, as it is known on campuses these days, an ally of ethnic studies or a threat?” (Magner, 1991) This may seem nonsensical to some, but when these initiatives are being created and discussed without a multicultural collective of people in the room, it feels like an attack on already established multicultural communities doing the work. Currently analyzing the requirement right now, and taking into account Bowman’s findings that “introductory diversity courses at many colleges and universities are likely designed so as to minimize resistance among White students” and that “students of color who take three diversity courses experience benefits that are similar to those of White students” (Bowman, 2009) after one class, then the diversity requirement is working only to benefit white students at our institution. This is just to say that if diverse and marginalized people are not the focus of the multicultural education movement, then the movement only functions as a means for a positive public image and further disenfranchisement of marginalized communities on campus. “A diversity course requirement—particularly the type among which students choose from a large menu of courses—can be considered mere celebration of difference or tokenism rather than representing substantive change” (Miller, 2020), and this is the direction that the institution will be heading without listening to the demands of the broader community. Professor Hazard passionately agrees that there needs to be a focus on the most marginalized communities in the decisions about advancing a multicultural agenda:

“We [black and indigenous peoples] need to have our voices heard, period. First and last in the process and in defining what diversity is” because “I think the university actually diminishes the power of the diversity core requirements because there is a lack of clarity”

and we “literally have PhDs in this stuff. Like we have lived it. We should be the ones leading the entire process.”

Others, like Professor Griffin, question whether the institution values diversity as highly as it advertises. She provides the comparison of the religion requirement saying “we understand that the university values religion courses and illustrates their value in religion courses by having students take a full year of religion courses. So, if our investment in racial justice and equity is the same...then it would make sense that at minimum, we would have two quarters, if not three.” Professor Hughes says that “they can put their money where their mouth is, if they do see this as a priority.” Miller points out that even hiring diverse professors without any structural change to support them will bolster “overall faculty demographics for the institution and... the institution might point to the ‘diverse’ instructors’ presence as evidence of diversity” (Miller, 2020). All these approaches seem to be lackluster and performative diversity. Blackwell offers that there are “varying levels of commitment to those original radical ideals and methods” (Blackwell, 2012) of the multicultural movement and suggests that the realest commitment is what she defines as critical multiculturalism: “Critical multiculturalists set out to transform established norms, ideologies and institutions in ways that fundamentally restructure society to become more accessible, inclusive, equitable and just as opposed to other forms of multicultural education that set out to refine the process of cultural assimilation” (Blackwell, 2012). Santa Clara does not seem to be at the commitment level of cultural multiculturalism.

Next Steps

When I asked the professors how the additional class model for the diversity requirement should look for the department and the institution as a whole I was met with prerequisites, and an

expansion of the Ethnic Studies department. Formal listed prerequisites on upper division courses or informal prerequisites (along with the removal of class limits), something like the language placement test or a required e-course before enrollment, were some of the specifics proposed. In terms of the expansion of the department, the biggest demand was more diverse faculty hires and available tenure positions. They all hoped that with the commitment to the diversity requirement that there would be a commitment to hiring trained professors, exclusively, or predominantly within the Ethnic Studies and Women and Gender Studies departments. This was to ensure “that educators will take responsibility for and be proactive in building a supportive and challenging academic environment for racial ethnic minority students” (Blackwell, 2012), as well as creating safe and humanizing classrooms built upon joy and radical care (Parks, 2022). There were also requests for a general expansion of the curriculum and resources. Professor Hazard wants a fully funded research institute. Professor Hughes was passionate about creating classes or a program that taught students “how to organize, . . . student leadership skills, and activism skills.” Professor Griffin was enthusiastic about recruiting more Ethnic Studies major students. There is no lack of ideas, passion, commitment to student success, or dedication to equity and diversity on campus within this department.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the diversity requirement is creating difficult-to-navigate situations for professors and harmful experiences for Ethnic Studies majors and minors enrolled in these classes as their primary field of study. Professors of diversity classrooms must deal with many different issues that professors in other departments do not often face. They have to structure their class to deal with the various levels of student familiarity with the content, strategize about how to curate and approach the material of their classes as to not trigger an ignorant student and receive a negative

evaluation, as well as deal with their own emotions about the traumatic material of their classes, and to top it all off worry about their diverse identities being used as checkbox categories for an institutional multicultural agenda. The diversity requirement complicates the life of the Ethnic Studies majors and minors as well as the professors but in the end is not functioning to create a safer and more humanizing campus environment for students of all cultural backgrounds, but rather a facade for the white students and media presentation. Lastly, with the opportunity for the next step in multicultural education progress on campus approaching, asking the marginalized communities and others educated about and dedicated to the equity and diversity of this establishment garnered requests for prerequisites on Ethnic Studies classes and an expansion of the Ethnic Studies department to be able to better educate and care for diversity and Ethnic Studies students.

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