



Associated Students of Western Washington University
Board of Directors

A Resolution Regarding White Supremacy and the Role of Ethnic Studies in Higher Education
August 2017

WHEREAS, a group of white supremacists marched at the Unite the Right rally at the University of Virginia on August 11, 2017, which has resulted in extreme racist violence and harm, claiming the lives of three individuals; and,

WHEREAS, WWU President Sabah Randhawa released a statement saying, “Western is committed to building a safe, authentically inclusive environment in which all people, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion or ability, have the opportunity to reach their full potential”; and,¹

WHEREAS, the National Association for Ethnic Studies released a statement saying “With access to Ethnic Studies, we can all better understand how this latest attack connects to longstanding questions of history, violence, nationalism, voice, and inclusion; and,²

WHEREAS, there are 21 active hate groups in the state of Washington according to the Southern Poverty Law Center; and,³

WHEREAS, the city of Bellingham had a chapter and history of Ku Klux Klan presence in early 1920s; and,⁴

WHEREAS, WWU was infiltrated by white supremacists with a banner that read “Diversity = White Genocide” which resulted in the “Diversity Is” rally back in April 2014; and,

WHEREAS, racist death threats were made to students of color through social media, which resulted in the cancellation of classes in November 2015; and,

WHEREAS, Western’s mission statement says, “Diversity is immeasurable and [we] practice inclusion within the classroom, beyond the classroom, and throughout our community”; and,

WHEREAS, the current Comparative Gender and Multicultural Studies (ACGM & BCGM) graduation requirement is not encompassing of the issues that continues to marginalize students of color, queer and trans students, students with disabilities, and the intersectionality within these identities; and,

¹ Randhawa, Sabah, <https://president.wvu.edu/president-randhawas-statement-charlottesville>

² National Association for Ethnic Studies.

<https://www.facebook.com/NationalAssociationforEthnicStudies/photos/a.201473833295978.8.38999.111603605616335/1273100252799992/>

³ Southern Poverty Law Center, <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>

⁴ Griffey, Trevor. “The Strongest Chapter in WA: Bellingham’s KKK.” http://depts.washington.edu/civili7kkk_bellinghamhtm#ednl

WHEREAS, research evidence shows that well-designed and well-taught ethnic studies curricula have positive academic and social outcomes for students, and that required diversity courses have a greater positive impact on White Students than on students of color; and,⁵

WHEREAS, the construction of the new Multicultural Center begins February 2018, which will be a space to provide support for students of color and students with marginalized identities; and,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Associated Students of Western Washington University supports the marginalized and underrepresented communities of Charlottesville, Virginia who were greatly affected by this riot.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Associated Students urges Faculty Senate and University Administration to establish Ethnic Studies curriculum within our General University Requirements.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Associated Students continues to fund resources and programming that educate the student body regarding social issues that affect marginalized communities.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Associated Students maintains and strengthens the relationship with faculty, staff, and administration to establish a student-centered multicultural services within the new Multicultural Center.

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⁵ Sleeter, Christine. "The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies." 2011. <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf>