

TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IN ETHNIC STUDIES BY COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

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I. SUMMARY

Colorado State University has submitted a proposal for a Baccalaureate Degree in Ethnic Studies.

The Ethnic studies degree will provide students with an understanding of the unique and interlocking experiences of racial/ethnic groups and how race intersects with other forces of social differentiation, such as gender, sexuality, and class, in the United States and international contexts.¹

II. BACKGROUND

The following is summarized from Colorado State University's proposal to offer a baccalaureate degree in Ethnic Studies.

In 1994, the Center for Applied Studies in American Ethnicity (CASAE), an academic unit under the College of Liberal Arts, was created to offer diversity courses. The program evolved over the years from an interdisciplinary program that certified course completion to a minor in Ethnic Studies to the current proposal for a Bachelor's in Arts in Ethnic Studies.

The objectives of the Ethnic Studies B.A. degree program are:

- To provide a high quality interdisciplinary and comparative training that will enable students to critically examine issues of race as it intersects with other forces of social differentiation, such as gender, sexuality, and class in the United States and international contexts;
- To maintain high levels of academic excellence while training students to be creative, critical thinkers and responsible leaders and citizens in the rapidly changing and increasingly global arenas of social, economic, and political life;
- To meet the workforce and research needs of the increasingly diverse industry in Colorado, the nation, and the world;
- To enhance student engagement in applied research through a curriculum that includes service learning, internships, and community-based research; and
- To attract out-of-state students who would not otherwise attend CSU, thereby further increasing the prestige of the university's undergraduate programs and enhancing the revenue stream.²

¹ CSU BA Ethnic Studies proposal page 1.

² CSU BA Ethnic Studies proposal page 2.

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT:

The Baccalaureate Degree in Ethnic Studies supports the role and mission of Colorado State University. The statutory mission of CSU is

*to be a comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards offering a comprehensive array of baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degree programs. Consistent with the tradition of the land grant universities, Colorado state university has exclusive authority to offer graduate and undergraduate programs in agriculture, forestry, natural resources and veterinary medicine. The Colorado commission on higher education, in consultation with the board of governors of the Colorado state university system shall designate those graduate level programs that are the primary responsibility of Colorado state university. Colorado state university has the responsibility to provide on a statewide basis, utilizing when possible and appropriate the faculty and facilities of other educational institutions, those graduate level programs.*³

The mission requires that the University “offer a comprehensive array of baccalaureate, Master’s and doctoral programs.” The Ethnic Studies Bachelor of Arts degree satisfies this requirement. Forces of globalization as well as ethnic conflicts and collaborations have significantly influenced social, political, and economic activities and policies. The B.A. degree will provide Colorado State University students with an opportunity to receive undergraduate training and research opportunities in both international and domestic areas that will equip them to offer solutions to societal problems and help public and private entities adapt to diverse individuals and perspectives.⁴

EVIDENCE OF NEED FOR THE PROGRAM:

Since the creation of ethnic studies programs at San Francisco State University and the University of California at Berkeley, similar programs spread quickly to the rest of the country. Today, almost every major university has a center, institute, or department that specializes in the study of race and ethnicity. Our peer institutions followed the national trend (See Figure 1). Evidence of demand can also be seen in the sharp increase in the number of course offerings, professional research projects, and graduate student papers dealing with multifaceted dimensions of race over the past twenty years. Even a casual perusal of major proceedings from sociology, American studies, English, speech communication, political science, psychology, education, social work, history, and ethnic studies professional meetings

³ C.R.S. 23-31-101. CSU statutory authority to offer graduate masters level programs.

⁴ CSU BA Ethnic Studies proposal page 2.

demonstrates that topics related to race and ethnicity are a major focal point of academics.⁵

Figure 1. Ethnic Studies Programs of CSU's Peer Institutions

Iowa State University	Center for American Intercultural Studies
Michigan State University	Ph.D. (African American Studies) Programs in Asian Pacific American, Chicano, American Indian Studies
North Carolina State University	B.A. in Africana Studies
Ohio State University	Concentration in Comparative Ethnic and American Studies
Oklahoma State University	B.A. in American Studies
Oregon State University	B.A. in Ethnic Studies; Graduate Minor
Purdue University	African American Studies and Research Center
Texas A&M	Race and Ethnic Studies Institute
Univ. of California, Davis	B.A. African American, Asian American, Chicano, and Native American Studies
Univ. of Colorado, Boulder	B.A. in Ethnic Studies
Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	M.A., B.A., and Minor Programs in Ethnic Studies
Washington State University	B.A. in Comparative Ethnic Studies

EVIDENCE OF STUDENT DEMAND:

Students who are or have been enrolled in CSU's ethnic studies programs and students on the President's Multicultural Student Advisory Committee have repeatedly expressed their desire for a bachelor's program. For a more systematic assessment of student interest, several years ago the CASAE administered a student survey seeking information about interest in an ethnic studies degree. The Center received over 800 surveys. A significant majority supported the establishment of a degree program in Ethnic Studies. Also demonstrating interest and demand is the growth in total student enrollment in the Liberal Arts ethnic studies concentration program. Enrollment continues to be fairly stable each semester without much advertisement or public relations about the concentration. With an active Ethnic Studies Department public relations plan, the University anticipates significant growth.⁶

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

⁵ CSU BA Ethnic Studies proposal page 4.

⁶ CSU BA Ethnic Studies proposal page 6.

The Department staff has reviewed this proposed program and letters of assurances from academic administrators to ensure that the degree program meets the State's performance measures outlined in C.R.S. 23-5-129.6.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Commission approve the baccalaureate degree in Ethnic Studies submitted by Colorado State University.

V. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. 23-5-129.6

VI. ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS

The program proposal materials are attached.