Working Together to Forge an E.O. 1100-Compliant Comparative Cross-Cultural Solution

Provost Yi Li

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To:Masequesmay, Gina <gina.masequesmay@csun.edu>

Dear Faculty and Staff in the Division of Academic Affairs:

CSUN is absolutely committed to supporting the continued excellence and vitality of our ethnic, gender, women's and cultural studies departments and programs, which are among the oldest, largest and strongest in the country. As an institution, CSUN is unwavering in its commitment to educating our students in all the ways that are necessary for them to understand and thrive in the current world. We take seriously our pledge to ensure that comparative cross-cultural studies remain a part of the General Education (GE) program's 48 units so that we support the campus commitment to inclusive and interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge through our ethnic studies, gender and women's studies, and cultural studies departments and programs.

Let me restate that the President and I share many of the fundamental concerns of Executive Order (EO) 1100 expressed by our faculty. Indeed, we shared concerns with the Chancellor's Office. The EO was nonetheless issued. We have confidence, though, in our faculty to use the frameworks advanced in EO 1100 to continue to demonstrate our commitment to the competencies and knowledge that students have heretofore gained through the courses in Section F. And while the concerns over shared governance at the system level continue to be discussed, let me reassure you that the solution at CSUN will be found through our faculty.

Under EO 1100, campuses cannot have "extra" sections of General Education aside from A-E. Since CSUN has an extra section ("F"), one proposal has been advanced that would be both EO 1100-compliant and retain our longstanding commitment to comparative cross-cultural studies courses. This proposal suggests moving the courses from F to C and D with permission to have 9 units in C (arts and humanities) and 15 units in D (social sciences).

Under this proposal, all the moved F courses could be designated as a comparative cross-cultural course and we would still require 6 units from these same courses regardless of their structural placement in Areas C and D instead of F. Departments would determine with which Area (C or D) their course better aligns, and submit an appropriate proposal (as determined by EPC). The current F courses would not need to show alignment to comparative cross-cultural studies, as they have all been either recently approved or recertified after the adoption of the current General Education Plan "R".

This proposed plan solves the issue first-time transfer (FTT) students face (approximately 5,000 annually) who often need to take extra units at transfer. On average, current CSUN FTT students take 12 units of upper division GE, which is 3 more than required and delays time to degree, especially in high unit majors. Under this proposal, the comparative cross-cultural requirement is retained without requiring additional units to the degree by incorporating them into the EO 1100 required upper division courses in C and D.

This is only one proposal. I would encourage all to bring forward possible solutions so that they can be vetted through the appropriate academic review processes under the leadership of the Faculty Senate. I have confidence in our faculty to find a path forward that best serves the interests of our students. This will be almost as challenging as was the creation of Section F, but we owe it to our students to get this done. CSUN
has a legacy of finding common ground and solutions that propel us forward. In this case, the challenge of finding solutions will undoubtedly require that we recommit ourselves to the very student outcomes of Section F.

I am committed to keeping the comparative cross cultural requirement as part of CSUN's general education. As we search for a solution, let me reaffirm that our ethnic, gender, women's and cultural studies departments and programs shall continue to be an important component of a CSUN education, that any solution will still require 6 units of comparative cross cultural studies, and will consider the best interests of our students.

Academic Affairs will continue to meet as needed and provide resources to Faculty Senate and the taskforce convened to lead this effort. I'm convening a meeting next week with leaders of departments and programs represented in Section F.

Thank you for your essential work to help our students succeed.

Sincerely,

Yi Li, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs