

On August 28, 2018, CSUN President Dianne Harrison sent a memo to the campus titled “CSUN General Education Update.” There are several issues and questions that need to be addressed.

1) Harrison stated:

“EO 1100R incorporates changes recommended by CSU faculty, students, administrators and the CSU Academic Senate regarding how system-wide GE policy can better clarify requirements, ensure equitable opportunity for students' success and streamline graduation requirements.”

- In what form were CSU faculty, students, administrators and the CSU Academic Senate consulted? Who, specifically, were the individuals who participated in consultation? The departments and programs most impacted by EO 1100R were not invited to be part of the conversation.

2) Although Section F will be retained, given the EO 1100R mandate that all GE must double-count as GE and in the major, it is uncertain what the impact will be on courses that are designated in Section F. Additionally, this requirement undermines the purpose of having general education. Also, given EO 1100R mandates 3 units of upper division GE in Sections B, C, and D, the impact on upper division F is uncertain and likely detrimental to Section F courses--most particularly, Ethnic, Gender and Queer Studies courses in Section F.

3) Harrison stated:

“...there was never a moment when anyone at CSUN nor at the Chancellor's Office suggested we do away with our cross-cultural requirements or our ethnic studies programs.”

- The original EO 1100 would have done away with Section F, essentially destroying many of the comparative cultural studies courses.

4) Harrison stated:

“Over the summer, the Chancellor's Office (CO) clarified that CSUN's GE structure must conform to all aspects of the EO 1100R, as executive orders emanate from Title 5 and carry the weight and authority of California law. Consequently, recommendations that refute or contradict any part of EO 1100R amount to a violation of California law.”

- Does the Chancellor have the right to create laws? Executive Orders issued by CO are laws? Does the California legislature realize that the CO has the same power as elected representatives? Where exactly is it stated that executive orders issued by the Chancellor emanate from Title 5? Where does it state the Chancellor's Office has the ability to set “GE structure?”

5) On August 23, 2018, Stella Theodoulou, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, sent a memo to Mary-Pat Stein, the President of Academic Senate. Theodoulou stated:

“As you know, the Board of Trustees has the responsibility under California Education Code to adopt rules and regulations governing the CSU, including regulations focused on General Education. Individual campuses cannot ignore these rules. Failure to carry out system-wide policies exposes CSUN to possible sanctions or penalties imposed by the Chancellor's Office.”

- In Harrison's message, non-compliance is constructed as a violation of California Law, by contrast, in Theodoulou's memo, it is a violation of rules and regulations. These are completely different claims. Which is it? Is refusing to comply a

violation of California law or a code violation? Which laws or which codes?  
Also, what sanctions or penalties? We need information on what the Chancellor's Office has claimed they will do if CSUN does not comply.

6) Harrison stated:

“The week before last, Provost Theodoulou, Faculty President Mary-Pat Stein, several faculty representatives from Senate Executive Committee, the Educational Policies Committee and Ethnic Studies, and I hosted representatives from the CO to discuss our status in relation to the EO. After explaining that all 22 other campuses are on their way to compliance, the CO representatives made clear that - even though we have been granted the compromise of keeping Section F - we will still be required to comply with the other elements of the EO.”

- Only Dr. Theresa White from Africana Studies was there, and she was invited with less than twenty-four hour notice and was not advised that her role was to represent ethnic studies. The other departments were not invited so as to not make the Chancellor uncomfortable. Harrison's statement is a complete misrepresentation.

7) Last year, Harrison authorized a General Education Task force to work collaboratively to develop a GE program that aligned with the California Education Code (which includes Title V). The task force made recommendations that maintains Section F (Comparative Cultural Studies) requirement and reflected faculty, student, and advisor desires to promote quality education that embodies the diversity of CSUN. In her communication, she undermined the conclusions of this task force.

- Harrison stated: “The Task Force made many positive recommendations that have been shared with the Faculty Senate and may be used as we move forward, however, those recommendations fell short of aligning with the EO in the following areas: the need to designate upper division GE courses in Sections B, C and D only; the need to split Section C into C1 (Arts) and C2 (Humanities); and, allowing all Major-courses that are approved for GE credit to double count for the previously approved GE requirement, as many of our departments already do.”
- The charge of the Task Force was to align with the CA Ed Code and maintain Section F. To now fault the Task Force for not making recommendations that comply with the Executive Orders is not only disingenuous, it also misrepresents and misconstrues the stated purpose of the Task Force.

8) Harrison stated:

“Miscommunications, mistakes and assumptions have been made on all sides, including my own and others' misunderstanding of the relationship between the California Education Code, Title V requirements and the executive orders that further establish our requirements when I communicated parameters to the Task Force on GE.”

- Is Harrison qualified to be president of a university that is part of a system that she admittedly does not understand?
- Can we respect a president who sends erroneous information about California laws, claiming that her faculty are violating them?
- Can we allow someone who authorizes committees to complete vital work and then disregards their labor and discredits their conclusions by erasing them from the dialogue?